

Counseling Programs

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Juveniles at Intake

From 1994 to September 1999, Counseling programs admitted 277 delinquent youths from Philadelphia (see Figure 1). As the total number of juveniles entering the system has slowly grown, the number of admits to Counseling programs remained stable, at about 40 to 45 juveniles a year -- about 2% of all admits. In 1998 and 1999 the figures show an increase to about 60 juveniles.

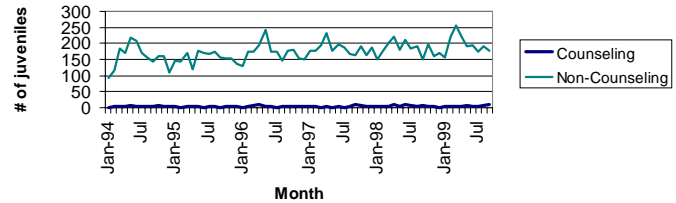
The juveniles who entered Counseling programs ranged in age from 10 to 20, with 54% between 15 and 17 and an average age of just over 15½. Slightly more than three-quarters (78%) of incoming clients were African-American, 14% were White, and 8% Latino. The overwhelming majority (98%) were male.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of the youths had no prior arrests and 22% had a history of prior dependency referrals to DHS. About one-sixth (16%) of juveniles have had a reported history of family violence. Only 5% of mothers of juveniles had a criminal record, but for fathers, the figure is 11%.

About 85% of incoming juveniles were referred for personal offenses and 6% for property offenses (see Figure 2). About one-sixth (14%) of all intakes involved offenses where a victim was injured, and about half this amount (6%) involved the use of a weapon. Using CJRI's risk assessment tool, we find that 26% of the incoming clients were low risk, 53% moderate risk and 21% at high-risk of re-offending.

Only 14% of juveniles lived with both parents at the time of intake; 39% lived with their mother alone, 14% lived with their natural mother and stepfather/ paramour, and 18% lived with other relatives.

Figure 1: Counseling -- Monthly Intake of Philadelphia Juveniles (1994-1999)



Alcohol abuse by the mother was noted in 11% of cases; by the father in 8% of cases. Maternal drug abuse was reported in 19% of cases; paternal drug abuse was reported in 8% of cases. The proportion of juveniles with a history of alcohol abuse was higher -- at 22% -- with 6% said to have a chronic drinking problem. Juvenile drug abuse was reported in 30% of cases -- with 12% reported to have a chronic abuse problem. In addition, juvenile records show about 17% of Counseling clients to have had a history of mental health problems.

Like most delinquent youths in Philadelphia, most (66%) clients of Counseling programs entered the program with generally high self-esteem. In addition, the majority (70%) had prosocial (or very prosocial) values orientation at the point of intake.

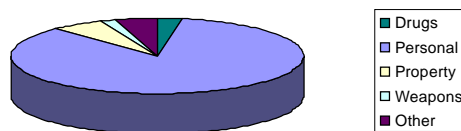
Juveniles at Discharge

The average program stay in Counseling programs was 41 weeks -- second longest behind Supervised Independent Living (see Figure 3). Counseling programs report that about 31% of their clients were "inappropriate" for the program-- one of the highest rates for program types.

Almost one-third of the intake (33%) are reported as having completed the program. About 15% are reported as being discharged 'unsuccessfully/reason unknown', 14% because the juveniles was not responding to the program and 12% because the juvenile was not considered 'appropriate'. In addition, about 4% were discharged because of an arrest and another 5% because they went AWOL.

If we examine the changing behavior and attitudes of the youth from intake to discharge we find some mixed results. Overall, it is common for between half and three-quarters of the youth to remain fairly stable from intake to discharge on most of the measures. However, there are some measures where the findings are quite different or offer notable results. Before describing these results we should note that there is a relatively small number (approximately 36) of complete pre-post cases for Counseling programs and therefore we report numbers instead of percentages.

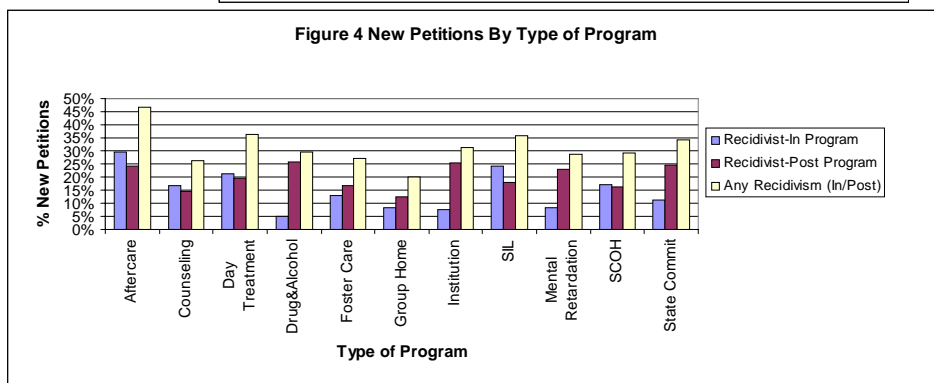
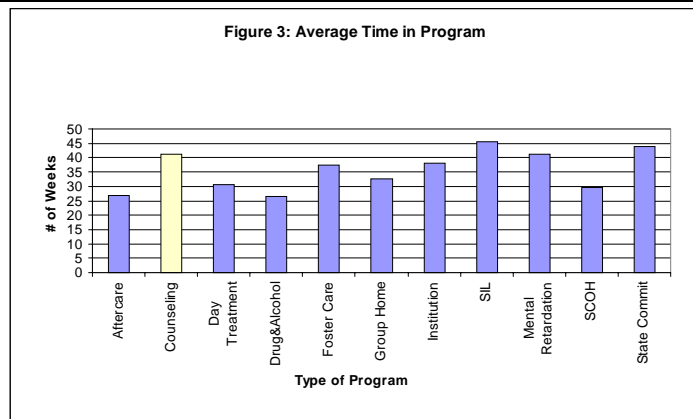
Figure 2: Type of Offense of Counseling Programs Incoming Clients



- Of the 8 juveniles for whom self-esteem changed while in Counseling programs, there were almost as many for whom self-esteem decreased (3) as increased (5).
- While the majority of juveniles (25) experienced no change in values orientation from intake to discharge, almost twice as many juveniles (7) had more prosocial values than had more antisocial values (4) at discharge.
- On the family bonding measures, *most juveniles remained unchanged. However, where there was change, it was more likely to involve a worsening of perceived relations with parents/caregivers than it was to reflect an improvement in dimensions such as communication, support, and supervision.*
- On the school bonding measures of **school commitment, school attachment and attachment to teachers**, there were more juveniles that had worsened than had improved perceptions of school.
- However, for the dimensions of school and community involvement, the opposite is true. Though the majority still remained unchanged, more juveniles experienced greater involvement in school and their community than had worsened involvement.
- Staff reports show that there was a change in the level of **overall juvenile need** in 35 of the cases -- with slightly more showing an increase in overall need (26) than a decrease (20).

Juveniles at Follow-up

When juveniles have been discharged for at least six months CJRI independently completes a follow-up court record check. Of the 127 Counseling cases for whom we have these data, about one in six (17%) received a new petition for an arrest while in the program. Almost as many (15%) received a petition for a new arrest during the six months following discharge. In total, about 28% of juveniles received at least one new petition for an arrest occurring some time between program intake and six months following discharge. If we examine the new petition rates over time, we find that there is evidence of a slow but



consistent decline in new petitions from just over 30% in early 1994 to less than 25% for late 1998 intakes. The new petition data show that the overall (in- and post-program) new petition rate varies considerably by the intake risk-classification of the juveniles -- 16% of low risk juveniles had new petitions compared with 45% of high risk juveniles.

We can compare overall rates of new petitions for Counseling and other program types -- see Figure 4. The data show that the in-program new petition rate for Counseling programs is slightly higher than the average for all program types. However, the post-program new petition rate is among the lowest of all program types.

If we control for the risk classification of juveniles at intake, we find that the new petition rates (in- and post-program) for Counseling programs are about average for low and high risk clients, when compared to other program types. However, new petition rates for medium risk clients are lower than the average for all program types.

For more in-depth information on the information presented here, or to request additional analyses, please contact Jamie Fader at (215) 627-7812 or jfader5253@aol.com.