

Juvenile Justice in Maryland: The Evidence Based Approach to Youth with History of Victimization and Trauma

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Abstract : Maryland efforts to decrease the juvenile criminality and recidivism shifts towards evidence based sentencing. While in theory the evidence based sentencing has an impact on the reduction of juvenile delinquency and drug abuse; the assessment of juveniles' risk and needs usually lacks crucial information about juvenile's prior victimization. The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment and Service Planning (MCASP) Initiative is the primary tool for developing and delivering a treatment service plan for juveniles at risk. Even though it consists of evidence-based screening and assessment instruments very little is currently known regarding the effectiveness and the impact of the assessment in general. In keeping with Maryland's priority to develop successful evidence-based recidivism reduction programs, this study examined results of assessments based on MCASP using a representative sample of the juveniles at risk and their assessment results. Specifically, it examined: (1) the results of the assessments in an electronic database (2) areas of need that are more frequent among delinquent youth in a system/agency, (3) the overall progress of youth in an agency's care (4) the impact of child victimization and trauma experiences reported in the assessment. The project will identify challenges regarding the use of MCASP in Maryland, and will provide a knowledge base to support future research and practices.

Keywords : Juvenile Justice, assessment of risk and need, victimization and crime, recidivism

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