

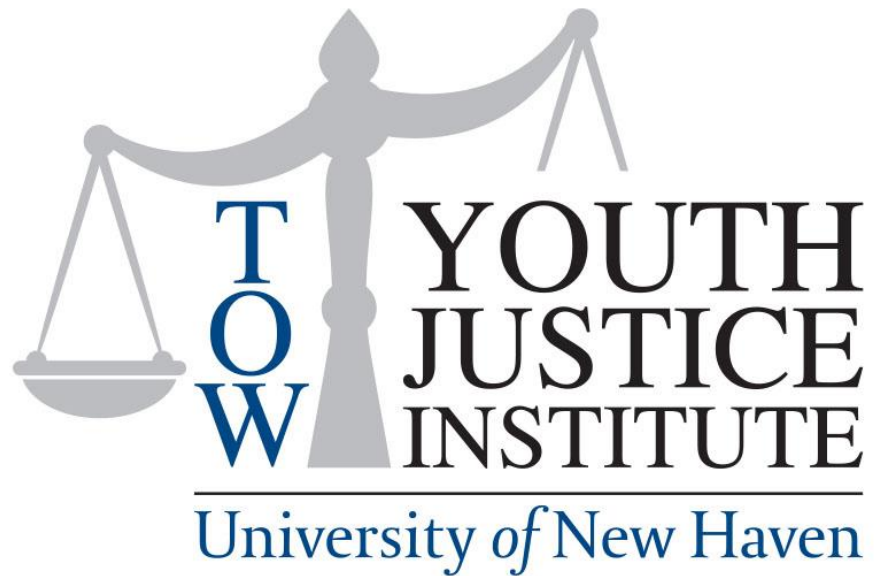
***JJPOC Meeting
November 19th, 2020
Zoom (Online)***

Opening Remarks

- Roll Call
- Meeting facilitation
 - Meeting is being recorded
 - Remain “muted” on Zoom, unless speaking
 - Refrain from interrupting with comments or questions until each presenter is finished speaking
 - Questions and Comments will be limited to JJPOC members
 - Use the “Chat” and “Hand Raising” feature so TYJI can help monitor and facilitate the meeting

Agenda

- Acceptance of Minutes of JJPOC
 - October 15th, 2020
- Presentation: Connecticut Youth Homelessness Project
- Presentation: Office of the Child Advocate Update on the Conditions of Confinement for Youth Age 15 to 21 in Department of Corrections



JBCSSD Housing Instability/Homelessness Survey and Cross-Systems Coordination

A project of the Reaching Home Campaign

Alicia Woodsby

*Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.
formerly the Partnership for Strong Communities*

Stacey Violante Cote

Center for Children's Advocacy

Tasha Hunt

Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division

National Landscape

1 in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 endures some form of homelessness in a year. Half of the prevalence involves couch surfing only.

1 in 30 adolescent minors ages 13 to 17 endures some form of homelessness in a year (A quarter of the prevalence involves couch surfing only)

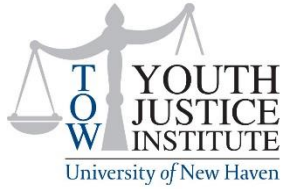
Findings from Voices of Youth Count, an initiative of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago voicesofyouthcount.org

National Landscape

- Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a **346%** higher risk
- Black or African American youth had an **83%** higher risk
- Hispanic, non-White youth had a **33%** higher risk

Findings from Voices of Youth Count, an initiative of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago voicesofyouthcount.org

Youth Homelessness and Justice Involvement



Multiple studies:

- ~ 50 to 75% of youth experiencing homelessness had been arrested, while 50 to 60% had been incarcerated
- Drug abuse, mental health issues, and lack of access to services associated with increased criminal activity for homeless youth
- Length of time homeless/disconnected = more frequency and likelihood of being involved with the criminal justice system
- Services that included housing, employment, and behavioral health supports were most effective

Best Available CT Data

- ~ 5,000 youth under 25 estimated to be experiencing homelessness/unstably housed in CT
- Disproportionately youth of color (37% black; 36% Latinx)
- 1 in 5 reported system involvement in juvenile detention, jail or prison

2018 Annual Point in Time Count, Statewide Youth
Count, CCEH

Best Available CT Data

- 1/3 of the homeless and unstably housed youth surveyed indicated they've been in DCF or foster care.
- The rates of youth who admitted to ever being in a situation where they were encouraged, pressured, or forced to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, clothing or protection were slightly higher for youth between 18 and 24 at 14% compared to 11% for youth under 18.

2018 Annual Point in Time Count, Statewide
Youth Count, CCEH

Background

- The Judicial Branch - CSSD worked with cross system partners through the statewide Reaching Home Campaign to design a key set of questions on homelessness and housing instability for data collection and to inform practice.
- The purpose of the survey is to track and respond to homelessness.

Background

- The effort is aligned with system goals to ensure individuals are not criminalized for experiencing homelessness and that those who do come into contact with the justice system exit to safe, stable and secure housing.
- Housing stability for vulnerable populations is proven to reduce recidivism and prevent use of crisis and emergency systems.

Practical Implications

- Data
- Target Interventions
- Diversion & Connection
- Educational implications for children and youth pursuant to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Homeless/Homeless-Education/How-To>
 - www.ctyouthhelp.org

Purpose and Importance

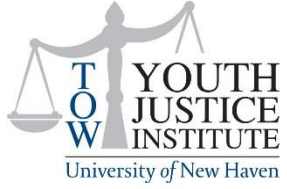
- Why the Judicial Branch is committed to this effort
- Distinction between minors/juveniles and adults
- Challenges and what to look out for

CSSD Housing Survey

Design and Implementation

- CSSD Housing Survey released June 28, 2020.
- Located in the Client Intake screen as a new tab.
- Completed by Juvenile Detention Officers (JDOs) and Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) at intake.
- JDOs and JPOs review the Housing Survey for red flags and, when necessary, work together to coordinate housing needs.
- If a change in the client's housing status is reported, the survey is updated and a plan is developed.

CSSD Housing Survey Design and Implementation



- DCF Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect (DCF 136) and an incident report is completed in accordance with JBCSSD policy and procedure.
- Need to ensure the client has a safe place to live upon release from detention and stably housed during and upon discharge from probation.

CSSD Housing Survey

Design and Implementation

- The survey is completed in CSSD's Case Management Information System **CMIS will generate electronic reminders.**
- The survey consists of 6 questions designed to illicit information that will help the officer determine: whether or not a pattern of homelessness exists; if the client resides in safe, adequate housing; and identifies an adult the client mostly resides with and what, if any, resources are needed to help stabilize the client.

CSSD Housing Survey Design and Implementation

- Responses to the survey will determine the necessary services to support stabilization and sustainability.
- Housing information becomes a part of the client's case management and planning during the period of supervision.

CSSD Housing Survey Design and Implementation



Outcome

- Obtain stable housing, which is a major factor in reducing recidivism, and improving the quality of their lives.
- Data will be used to inform CSSD policy and procedures and continuum of services.

Key Takeaways

- Understanding the housing/homelessness status of the people we serve is necessary for ensuring effective policy, planning, resources, and client outcomes
- Coordination between the homeless system and juvenile and criminal justice systems can reduce duplication of effort and improve connections to housing and service supports for those in need

Key Takeaways

- Efforts to explore housing options with individuals can help them avoid having to even enter the homeless system
- Efforts to track this information in CMIS and coordinate with the homeless system when appropriate will help to ensure that our clients have a safe, stable place to live, which is the foundation of opportunity

Next Steps

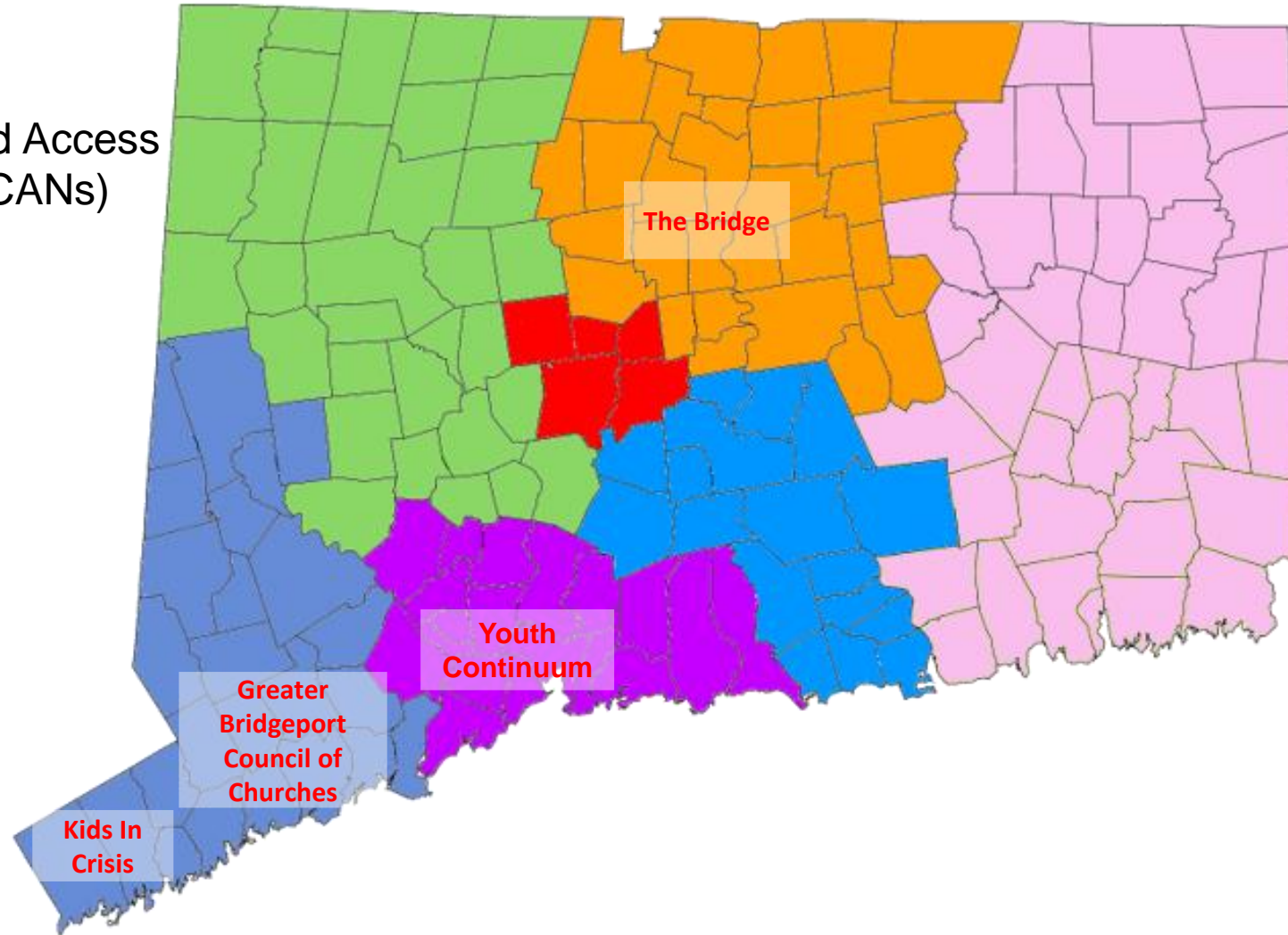
- Collaboration for Change Project
 - Piloting work in the Stamford Court District area
- Statewide Minor Homelessness Taskforce
- Developing a coordinated approach to ending youth homelessness for youth coming out of the justice system.

Homeless System Including Minors & Young Adults

7 Coordinated Access
Networks (CANs)



Runaway & Homeless Youth Providers (RHY): provide shelter for *minors*; sporadic throughout the state



Next Steps

- Address the gaps in homelessness data for minors (creating a functioning “by name” list)
- Multi-system case conferencing
- Systems integration/coordination for minors with cross sector partners (including Youth Service Bureaus, Child Welfare, Judicial Branch, etc.)
- Training on the intersections of youth justice and homelessness

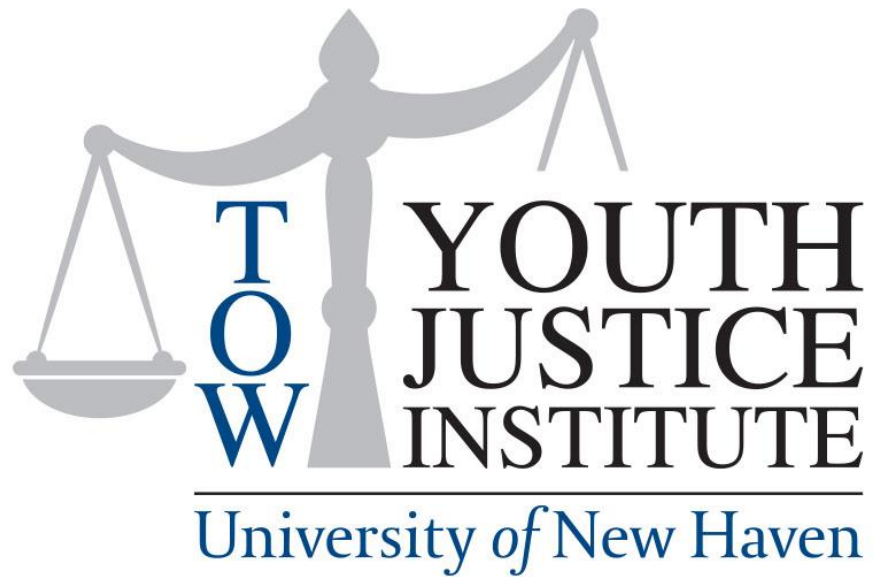
Thank you!

awoodsby@tacinc.org

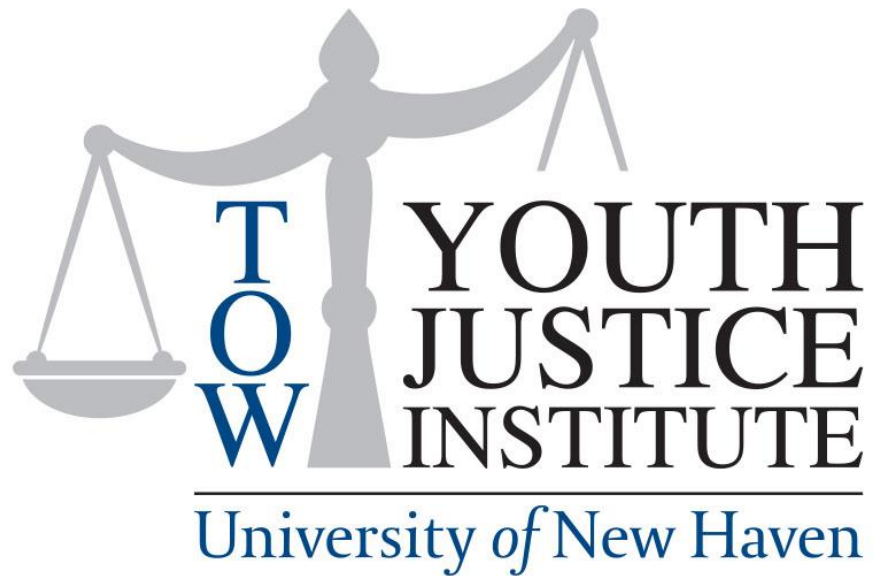
sviolante@cca-ct.org

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For more information on the Reaching Home Campaign, please contact Carline Charmelus, carline@pschousing.org, or visit www.pschousing.org



Questions?



Office of the Child Advocate Update on the Conditions of Confinement for Youth Age 15 to 21 in Department of Corrections

Sarah Eagan, Office of the Child Advocate

OCA Report

- Statutory Requirement that OCA report to the legislature regarding conditions for incarcerated youth every two years.
- OCA also required to review efficacy of publicly-funded services for children and youth; and review facilities where juveniles are placed.
- 2020 Report focuses on conditions at Manson Youth Institution and York Correctional Institution, including during first months of COVID-19.

OCA Report

OCA's first report found:

- Children of color are disproportionately confined and incarcerated in Connecticut.
- The adult prison system is not designed to provide children with the programming and treatment services necessary so they can rehabilitate and safely return to their communities.
- The state lacks uniform standards for meeting the treatment and educational needs of incarcerated children and youth, thereby undermining the state's goals --promoting youth rehabilitation and improving public safety.

2019, Changes to State Law. Public Act 19-187

- JJPOC conduct study on how other states house youth transferred to the adult system.
- The adoption of best practices and policies by the Judicial Branch and DOC, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, in all public and private juvenile correctional facilities with regard to solitary confinement, the use of chemical agent, the use of prone restraint, and other matters.
- DOC and CSSD issue regular reports to JJPOC on all instances where chemical agents and prone restraints are used in facilities.
- CSSD and DOC issue annual reports to the JJPOC on all instances of suicidal and self-harming behaviors by youth; the use of force against, and imposing physical isolation on minors; and on all identified educational and mental health concerns.
- Enhanced protection of juveniles from abuse and neglect in custodial settings by making all staff who work in such settings “mandated” reporters for any abuse of neglect in such settings.
- Implementation of “independent ombudsperson services” in all facilities where juveniles are incarcerated.

OCA Report 2020

The DOC describes MYI as follows:

MYI is a high security, adult correctional institution. MYI is a celled facility. The use of cells to confine offenders is a long-standing practice in high security, adult correctional institutions, as is the use of mechanical restraints, chemical agent, and gang management strategies.

- The majority of all boys in the facility are black. (68 % of minors and over 50 % of youth age 18 to 21).
- There are typically under 50 minor youth and now under 200 older youth at MYI.

OCA Report: YCI

- YCI is a high-security facility and serves as the state's only correctional institution for females of any age. The population of female youthful offenders has decreased significantly over the years. Girls, like their male counterparts at MYI, are housed separately from the adult population.
- In 2019, there were 5 girls under the age of 18 incarcerated at YCI. As of September, 2019, there were 21 youth age 18-21 years old at YCI.
- More than half of all youth age 15 to 21 at YCI are Black.

OCA Report: Meeting with DOC

DOC administrators observed the following to OCA during this investigation:

We are just waiting for kids to re-enter their community, a system that failed them.

We need to work with parents too. Resources and education for parents. Kids need mentors, peer supports, credible messengers. That is hard to do in this environment.

Staff need training to work with youth. If you don't want to work with kids, you shouldn't work here. But we often focus on the wedding and not the marriage.

Resources are not here to do what we know we need to do with kids and their families. Do more with less doesn't work. I wouldn't want to go to a doctor who is told 'do more with less.'

Our whole facility should be set up like the TRUE and WORTH units. And we need to do a better job with transition and discharge for youth.

Everything that we do here that works goes against DOC directives.

We all agree, what we all have in common is we don't want future victims.

Pictures. Cell for minor boy at MYI



Pictures: toilet and shower for minor boys



Pictures: Segregation Cells at MYI



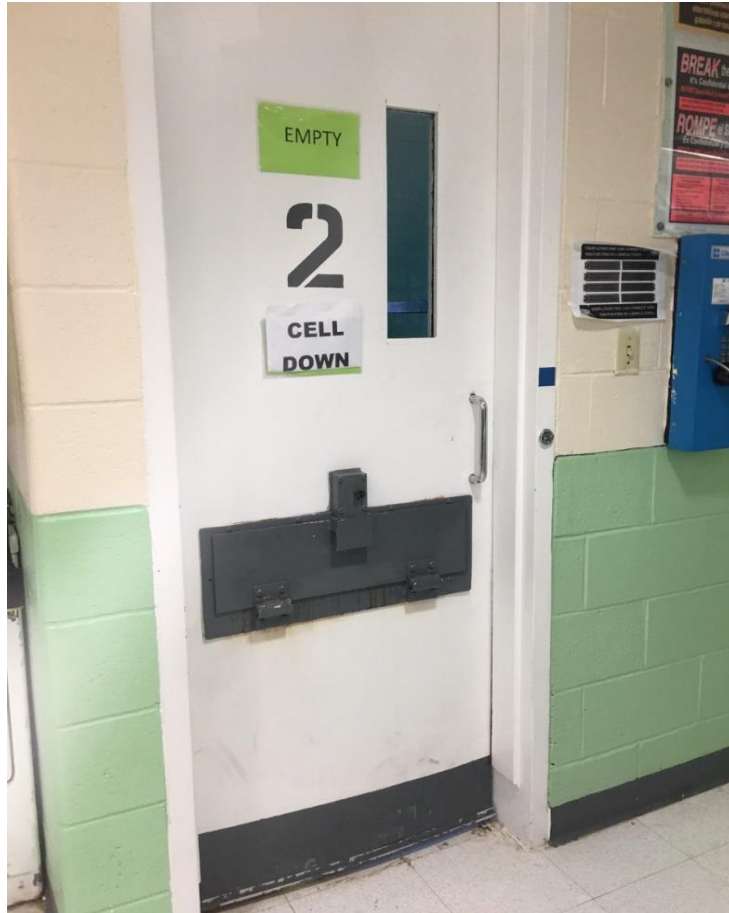
Segregation cells, shower, and unit cage.



Pictures: YCI cottages for minor girls



Pictures: YCI Segregation Unit



DOC concerns about MYI

A senior DOC administrator, during site visits to MYI with OCA, observed that DOC disliked MYI because of its restrictive lay-out, and because it was an outdated facility for the population it is serving. Multiple DOC Commissioners have previously talked to OCA about the inadequacy of the MYI facility for the youth population and their needs for developmentally appropriate movement and programming. OCA was told that by one former Commissioner that he disliked the celled facility and would like to “take the doors off” for the many youth there that they thought did not need to be in locked cells for so much of the day.

OCA Report- Children's Histories

- Most boys at MYI have a history of involvement in the juvenile/adult criminal justice systems.
- More than half of the boys' families had been investigated four or more times due to concerns of child abuse and neglect.
- Approximately one-third of boys' families had been investigated by DCF ten or more times.
- The majority of incarcerated boys have a parent, most often a father, who has also been incarcerated.
- All of the minor girls lived in families that had some or extensive history with DCF due to concerns of child abuse and neglect.

OCA Report: MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



More than 60 percent of youth in a Department of Justice-commissioned national survey self-reported problems with anger, and more than half reported symptoms of depression, anxiety and loneliness, and a prior traumatic experience, including physical or sexual abuse or both. Survey results and research show a significant relationship between youth's substance misuse and serious delinquent behavior.

Girls typically have even more mental health needs than boys, worse abuse histories, and more significant histories of suicidality.

OCA Report: Mental Health Treatment and Programming



- Similar to OCA's previous findings, **DOC classified two-thirds of the minor boys at MYI as not needing regular individual mental health care.**
- **The majority of boys participated in 0 or 1 program** during the duration of their confinement (avg. 8 months at the close of OCA's review).
- **Most programming is offered on first shift when boys are scheduled for school.**
- Examination of records for youth at MYI who participated in no programming during their confinement revealed that almost all of these youth carried historical or current diagnoses, most commonly: Conduct Disorder, Cannabis Dependence/Abuse, and ADD/ADHD. Other diagnoses in the records of non-program participating youth included: Unresolved Grief, Anxiety Disorder, Alcohol Abuse, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Bipolar Disorder.

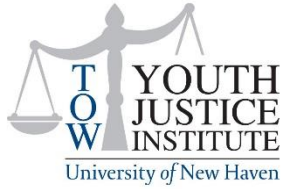
OCA Report: Mental Health Programming

- Two-thirds of older youth at MYI age 18 to 21 for whom OCA was provided mental health scores were classified by DOC as not needing any regular individual mental health care.
- Half of older youth at MYI participated in some group programming during the review period.

Staff to OCA

- *“They need to have an opportunity to do well, they don’t have a chance if we don’t help them see they can do it.”*
- *“Not everyone will want that, but a lot of these guys just need good role models and some structure.”*

OCA Report: Mental Health Programming



- **The minor girls at YCI were all classified as needing regular mental health treatment, and girls participated in multiple programs while incarcerated.** All girls entered YCI with historical and significant treatment needs.
- **All female youth age 18 to 21 at YCI were classified by DOC as needing some mental health treatment,** and the majority of sentenced youth participated in three or more rehabilitative programming groups.

OCA Report: Education

- OCA met with several teachers and administrators regarding educational services.
- All stated that resources have historically been a barrier to providing the level of educational and vocational services they think are needed for youth at MYI.
- **One educator described youth new to MYI:**
“They come to school and are overwhelmed, physically exhausted, already at the breaking point. You can see they are not sleeping. Adjustment to MYI for kids is really hard.”

OCA Report: Education

Federal law provides that any state agency involved in the provision of special education and related services to students in correctional facilities must ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), even if other agencies share that responsibility.

- Almost all of the minor boys tested at MYI during the 2018-19 school year were assessed as capable of Grade 4 to 5.9 academic content. Of the boys who were re-tested the same school year, the majority made some academic progress. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of boys made no progress, and approximately 40 % of boys were not retested due to intake/discharge timing.

OCA Report: Education

- Boys' rate of full day school participation (meaning, how often was the child in school for 5 hours) was essentially unchanged from OCA's last review, with a median full day participation rate of 50%. The majority of coded absences were attributed to Custody or Teacher Absence.
- Educational participation for older youth age 18 to 21 at MYI was variable. As of January, 2020, the majority of older youth in school were on the GED track. Only a quarter of older youth participated in vocational programming, though only two out of four vocational programs ran consistently in 2019. Teachers and administrators raised concerns about the adequacy of educational and vocational resources for youth.

OCA Report: Education

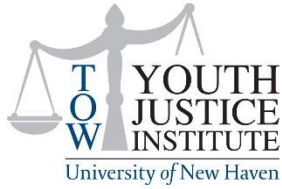
At YCI, the median rate of girls' full-day school participation rate was 61.5%. Most older youth age 18 to 21 at YCI still participated in vocational education if they already had their diploma. There are multiple vocational opportunities for older youth at YCI.

OCA Report: ISOLATION/RESTRICTIVE HOUSING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



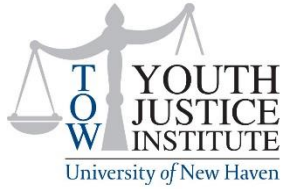
The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (“NCCHC”) issued a 2016 Position Statement against the use of solitary confinement, defining it as the housing of an adult or juvenile with minimal meaningful contact with others and with access to few or no programs. NCCHC recommended against placing juveniles or people with mental illness in any length of solitary confinement.

OCA Report: Isolation/Restrictive Housing



- DOC made changes to its use of sanction-driven cell-confinement in 2019 and **ended long term administrative segregation for minors** at MYI.
- **OCA finds that in 2019 there were still over 100 incidents of minor boys being placed on cell-confinement status** (Confined to Quarters) due to behavioral concerns.
- **Sanctioned youth were still often cell-confined on a separate wing for 23 hours per day**, most youth did not participate in programming, and only a few participated in a full school day.

OCA Report: Isolation/Restrictive Housing



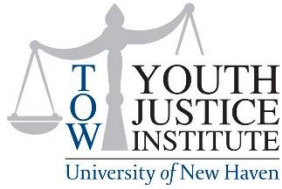
- **In 2019, there were more than 360 instances of 18 to 21 year olds at MYI being placed into Segregation on the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU), typically for 7 or 14 days at a time, often for fighting or failing to follow directives.**

Conditions on RHU are stark, youth are in cell 23 hours per day, and they do not engage in rehabilitation or educational programming.

Incident

Inmate was to be placed in RHU pending investigation for gang affiliation. The escort to RHU was routine, once in cell, IM refused to comply with a routine strip search. Verbal intervention attempting to gain compliance by escorting staff and mental health staff were unsuccessful. IM remained adamant he would not comply with strip search. Due to IM's current noncompliant behavior, and for the safety of staff and the IM, it was determined he would be placed on in-cell restraint status. He was secured on in-cell restraint and cleared for placement in RHU by medical and mental health. Placed in in-cell restraint at 11:03 a.m. And removed from in-cell restraint the following day at 7 a.m. Throughout second and third shift, IM would not comply with strip search. IM eventually agreed in the morning, though he was still upset. Nothing was found during strip search.

OCA Report: Isolation/Restrictive Housing

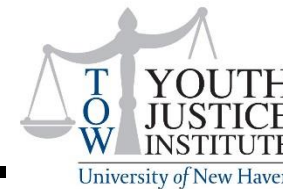


- At YCI, there were only a handful of Confined to Quarters sanctions issued to **minor girls**, and the sanction is less isolation-based than at MYI, and typically accompanied by extra duties such as cleaning and other chores. Girls on CTQ may not go to school.
- **Older youth age 18 to 21 at YCI were placed on the Segregation Unit 39 times in 2019**, with a range of confinement of 5 to 28 days. Similar to MYI, older youth on Segregation are in their cells 23 hours per day and do not participate in education or rehabilitation programming.
- Older youth were placed in Segregation for a range of reasons including fighting, contraband, not following directives, and failing to comply with a strip search.

OCA Report: Family Contact

- **Approximately ¼ of all minor youth at MYI had no visits** during the review period, and visitation overall remains a concern. However, a higher percentage of youth had more than five visits, and with the changes in contact visits practices **OCA does see an increase in contact visits** and greater efforts at the facility to engage families.
- **Many barriers remain for in-person family visits**, including transportation and child-care challenges, as well as youth not wanting their families to see them in prison.

OCA Family Contact. Statements from youth.



“I don’t want my mom to see me in this jump suit and talk to her through the glass.”

“It’s too hard for my mom to get here to see me, I’m just happy she has money to put on my books to call home.”

“I got myself into this situation, it’s not on them to come see me, I’ll be home soon.”

“I can’t wait to have contact visits so I can hug my mom and my grandma. It’s been a year since I was able to do that.”

“It is really hard not having someone hug you, I know I’m 17, but I haven’t had anyone give me a hug in 2 years. I can’t wait to get out of here.”

OCA Report: Family Contact

- All of the girls at YCI had at least one visit, but the frequency of family visitation is still low.
- **Most of the older youth at YCI had no visits during the review period.**

OCA Report: Chemical Agent Utilization

- The National Institute of Corrections' guide to working with youth in confinement states that pepper spray puts the health of youth at risk, particularly youth with asthma and psychiatric disabilities.
- State law in Connecticut does not prohibit use of chemical agent with minors.
- DOC reported to OCA that chemical agent is an essential tool for the safe management of an adult correctional facility, to be deployed only as needed.

OCA Report: Chemical Agent Utilization

- During 2019, **chemical agent was utilized with 18 minor boys**, including boys with psychiatric disabilities and/or asthma, a decrease of 1 incident from 2018. All incidents were due to boys fighting with each other.
- In 2019, **there were 33 older youth age 18 to 21 at MYI subjected to chemical agent**. Most of the incidents of chemical agent deployment involved youth fighting; two were secondary to “cell extractions,” and one incident was designed to stop a youth from self-harming.

Incident

Charlie was in RHU pending investigation for SRG [gang affiliation status]. Charlie covered window with a sheet and mattress stating he did not want to be in RHU/jail and wanted to be with his family. Charlie did not respond to staff intervention and was threatening to hang himself. [Response] team was activated, and Charlie was sprayed with chemical agent. Charlie was placed on Behavioral Observation Status and in-cell restraints after decontamination. [Charlie received daily cell-side check-ins from mental health staff while on BOS but remained in Segregation.]

OCA Report: Chemical Agent Utilization

- Similar to OCA's previous review, there were **no minor girls at YCI subjected to chemical agent** use during 2019.
- **Twelve (12) older girls age 18 to 21 were subjected to chemical agent.** Three of these instances took place in the facility's mental health unit, **and two deployments of chemical agent were to stop the youth from engaging in self-harm or suicidal behavior.**
- YCI records indicate that there were ten incidents with older girls that resulted in the use of **in-cell restraints**, ranging in duration from ten minutes to 18.5 hours, typically due to self-harming behaviors and psychiatric distress.

COVID-19. Infection Control at MYI

- Testing was initially limited from March to June at MYI. Youth were not tested upon admission or discharge. Infection control consisted of quarantining all youth at admission or upon suspected exposure, having youth and staff wear masks when youth were out of cell, and having youth regularly clean cells and units.
- All programming was shut down, including school and rehab groups.
- Youth were still permitted to gather with each other out of cell, in small groups, on their hardware secure wings or outside.

COVID 19: Infection control at MYI

- Mass testing was conducted by the summer. **290 youth age 15 to 21 were tested between June and August**, and the facility began testing youth at admission. Staff were also provided tests in June. **DOC reported 9 staff and 1 youth positive for COVID between April and August.**
- **OCA found that youth on quarantine/observation status were typically confined 23 hours per day for two weeks.** Based on MYI's reporting, more than **60 youth age 15 to 21 were placed on quarantine/observation status between April and August.**

COVID- Cell Confinement at MYI

- 15 to 17 year old **boys were in their cells 18 to 22.5 hours per day** most of March through July.
- 18 to 21 year olds at MYI were in their cells typically 22 hours per day, every day.
- Cell confinement was largely due to the cessation of all programming.

COVID- Education at MYI

- Youth were provided educational packets to complete individually between March and June.
- OCA learned, after requesting records, that as of end of May, no youth had turned in any completed work.
- Engagement and incentive efforts were strengthened in June, leading to increasing education service delivery and participation.

COVID- Mental Health and Rehab Programming at MYI



- All programming was shut down between March and July.
- Mental health tours were conducted daily: visualization or brief check-ins through youth's cell doors.
- Youth identified as higher need typically received individual sessions through their cell window. Some youth were taken out of cell to engage with a clinician.

COVID- Visits/Family Contact

- All youth age 15 to 21 were provided with 2 free phone calls per week.
- **Minor youth were also provided with access to video conferences.**
- OCA contacted 12 minor boys' families to discuss caregivers' experiences and interactions with their child and facility staff during the pandemic. Families discussed a general lack of communication (some had contact with educational staff); financial difficulties; and hardships due to COVID.

COVID: YCI

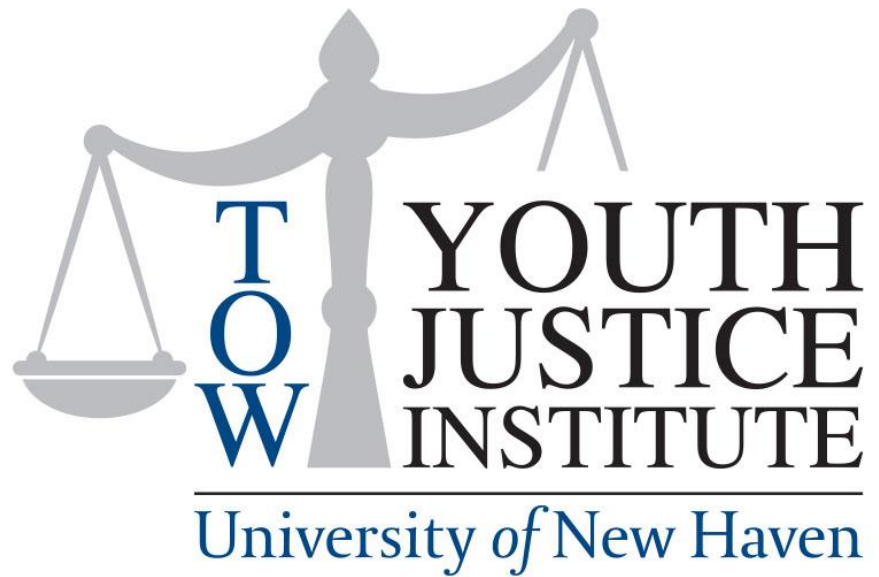
- Due to their low numbers, minor girls do not live in cells at YCI.
- Girls had video conferences with their families and close contacts between March and July.
- Girls participated in Circles (in-person) throughout shut-down.
- Education consisted of educational packets.
- No disciplinary incidents leading to CTQ placement.
- Older youth received cell-side mental health check-ins similar to MYI, with some contact in common areas. Older youth were still subject to segregation (9 incidents, 7 days in length).

Recommendations, Excerpts

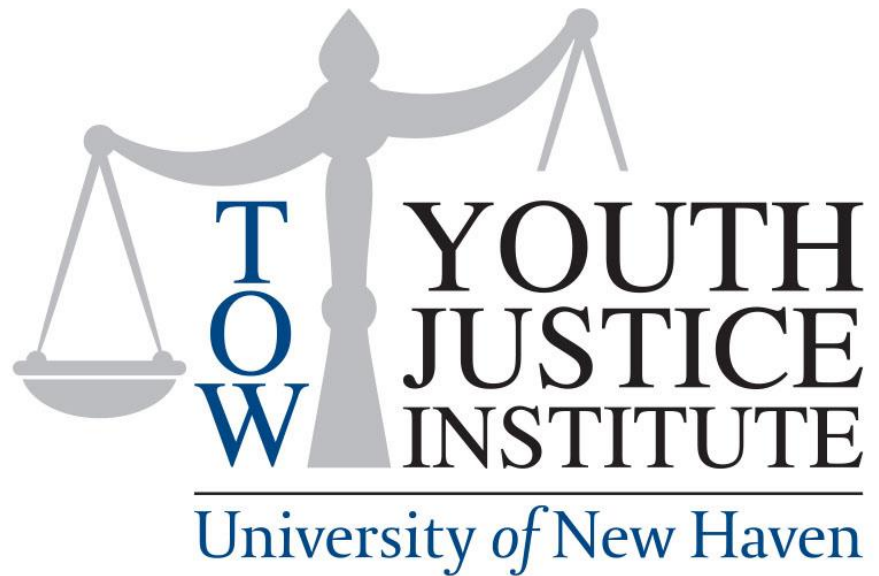
- **End placement of minor youth in the adult prison system.**
- **Oversight:** JJPOC Should Review Standards of Service: mental health, behavioral support, nutrition/exercise, for Incarcerated Youth, and **oversight should include older youth ages 18 to 21.**
- **JJPOC members should tour the housing units at DOC facilities** confining youth age 15 to 21, including the Segregation units.
- **Chemical agent with youth should be banned.**
- **Cell confinement limitations for youth must be addressed by statute.**
- **Immediate review of practices regarding use of chemical agent, isolation and restraint of individuals with mental illness.**
- **DOC and SDE should jointly report to JJPOC regarding education/vocational programming for incarcerated youth age 15 to 21.**

Recommendations COVID

- The state should ensure, in consultation with experts in pediatric infectious disease and children's mental health, that state agencies managing youth in congregate care have appropriate standards for infection control that maximize youth's access to developmentally appropriate living conditions while ensuring public health precautions are in place. JJPOC should receive information regarding this effort as it pertains to incarcerated youth.
- The state should provide internet access and computers to support youth education and programming.
- Provide all youth age 15 to 21 with free phone calls and opportunity for virtual visits. Virtual visits should be maintained to ensure all youth can contact family.



Questions?



***Next JJPOC Meeting
December 17th, 2020***