



JJPOC Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2021

2pm-3:30pm

Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker

Undersecretary Marc Pelka

Rep. Anthony Nolan

Sen. Gary Winfield

Christina Quaranta

Rep. Craig Fishbein

Erica Bromley

Rep. Liz Linehan

Macklin Roman

Janeen Reid

Hector Glynn

Rep. Greg Howard

Sarah Eagan

Judge Patrick Carroll

Judge Bernadette Conway

Gary Roberge

Christine Rapillo

Brian Casinghino

Michael Williams

Sharonda Carlos

John Frassinelli

Amy Marracino

Astread Ferron-Poole

Stacy Schulman

Chief Joshua Bernegger

Chief Fernando Spagnolo

Veron Beaulieu

Dr. Derrick Gordon

Natasha Pierre

TYJI Staff:

William Carbone

Erika Nowakowski

Kelly Orts

Danielle Cooper

Donna Pfrommer

Susan Cusano

Welcome and Introductions

Undersecretary Marc Pelka filled in for Deputy Secretary Kostas Diamantis of OPM.

Rep. Toni Walker welcomed everyone and addressed concerns of the recent car thefts that have been circling the media and the importance of everyone's role in regard to help juvenile issues. Concerns were voiced regarding lack of programming, parent engagement, funding, and transportation. The importance of youth programming, diversionary efforts, and alternatives to incarceration was discussed. It is also important to recognize the context of the pandemic and the impact it has on a child's life, on top of their everyday experiences. Because of the pandemic, everything is just starting to re-open and the services to the juvenile population are re-engaging figuring out what to do and how to do it. The anomaly for juvenile car theft in Connecticut was 2019, which has significantly low numbers and can cause this year's numbers to look like a huge spike. We should focus on what was done in 2019 and how can we use this information to help us today.

Acceptance of Minutes for JJPOC

Rep. Toni Walker asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the June 17th, 2021 meeting. The motion to accept the minutes was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.



Presentation on Sexual Violence and Criminalized Youth by the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence

The Alliance presented on the topic of trauma of sexual violence and other forms of violence on young people in ways that can manifest itself among youth. Their organization seeks to serve, help, and improve outcomes for individuals as well as a family unit and community structure. The pandemic has also had a great impact on the vulnerability of youth experiencing sexual violence and child sexual abuse. They hope to return to the JJPOC Executive Committee for a debriefing session after they have had time to process the information.

The Alliance is a statewide coalition that supports 9 sexual assault crisis centers with direct service. Sexual violence is any unwanted contact or noncontact sexual acts or behaviors; this is a broad definition due to the broad spectrum of how sexual violence can be for different people. Sexual violence is very devastating and impacts can include increase of drug/ alcohol issues, mental health issues, or self-harming behaviors. For children, all of these impacts can be seen and include STIs, isolation, or regressive behaviors. A way that survivors are reclaiming a sense of control or safety is hypervigilance, which is where people are hyper aware of their environment, the people in it and what is happening. It was then asked to the group, why a young person who is experiencing sexual violence would not want to disclose? There were multiple similar answers stating fear, embarrassment, sense to protect, no support, or even denial. Research shows that 31% of girls in the juvenile system have a history of sexual abuse, and for boys it is 7%. Young people who are in the system and are expressing multiple levels of trauma that can include sexual violence, physical violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, or any other form of violence.

The first model presented is the trauma to prison pipeline, essentially saying that many survivors, especially young black girls, are criminalized for the ways they experience and navigate trauma. A child who has experienced childhood abuse, in this case sexual violence, is experiencing an unmet need for safety, housing, food and human connection. As human nature, if you are experiencing an unmet need, you're going to try and do things to make them met. However, these behaviors are seen as criminalized behaviors; for example, if a youth is experiencing sexual violence at home they might run away. Often times in these dangerous situations, young people are compelled to crime so they may act out in violence in order to defend themselves. These criminalized behaviors can lead them to be involved in the juvenile justice system and while they are there, their trauma symptoms can be triggered or exacerbated or even experience new instances of abuse. When they are released back into the community, they have unmet and unaddressed health needs that can cause them to return to their criminalized behaviors, take on new behaviors, or even re-enter an abusive environment.



The survived and punish model is how our systems are supposed to protect us from violence but often impact the most marginalized sections of our population of our society and how survivors of violence try to protect themselves and are punished for the way their behavior.

The last model addresses what is happening in juvenile facilities, which are known for being places of rehabilitation. However, sexual violence does happen in juvenile detention centers, as they happen everywhere else. It is also important to consider the tensions between bodily autonomy and security measures that are happening in any detention facility. In a facility, one's bodily autonomy is being negotiated because of the need for security, so even if there is no sexual violence, this can trigger or exacerbate a lot of symptoms.

Increase knowledge on sexual violence, being trauma informed, developing partnerships, and early intervention are strategies to address these issues. The Alliance is also trying to develop a similar model by thinking about sexual violence and the trauma to prison pathway. The project is going to help identify gaps and services and are able to help instead of having the youth go through the system.

Discussions followed the presentation and focused on additional data, system accountability, and early intervention.

Next Meeting: September 16th, 2-3:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 3:40pm