

APPENDIX

JJPOC Presentation • July 18 2024





FY23-24 Q1-Q3 of Reporting Development Year



The following pages cover a full summary of the data that was collected during the second pull of FY23-24 data that included Q1-Q3 from the new online data collection systems for YSBs across the state. Data collected across the majority of YSBs was compiled across the areas of Tier 1 Programming, Tier 2 Individual Youth Records, the JRB process and Collaborators, despite the latter's submission not required until the end of FY23-24. This Q3 data submission went much more smoothly than the first submission with an impressive 99% of YSBs submitting some, if not total to-date, FY23-24 data on time. As many YSBs will notice, subsequent submissions will continue to be less arduous and time consuming as YSBs acclimate to the process and stay current with their data entry.

The summary begins with a state-wide analysis and then that is followed by chapter-level analyses. Takeaways throughout the document are designed to help you and your staff to begin to think critically about the data and we hope will help guide and develop your thinking over time. As is the case with all new endeavors, this is a work in progress and we value feedback and insights on this summary. If you have comments, suggestions, and/or ideas you would like to share, please feel free to share them with us at info@dillingerrad.org.

Common Issues with YSB Data Submitted

Collaborators



- Collaborator data **should not** be submitted in Summary form. Collaborator Data should be listed individually, ideally, although not yet required, with Collaborator details such as name and date of first reporting year collaboration.

Tier 1 Programming



- Tier 1 data **should not** be submitted in Summary form. Tier 1 Data should be listed individually, ideally, although not yet required, with Program/Event details such as title and Program/Event date.

Tier 2 and JRB Youth Data:



YSBs are encouraged to collect whatever data is relevant and necessary for their organization to best meet the needs of their community, however, data submitted to DCF must be limited to the [required categories, fields and formatting](#).



- YSBs with customized systems are submitting additional unique fields within the categories of their DCF data making it difficult to aggregate. (ex. *additional race classifications or program categories not included in the DCF data set*). **DCF expects for YSBs to only submit approved fields and formatting regardless of what they collect internally.**
- Multiple services grouped together in a reporting field (*no indication of primary service*)
- Essential fields not collected/reported (*intake dates etc*)

The next DCF quarterly data submission will be June 21st.

The data submission will capture year-to-date data up to the end of the June 2024.

Why are we submitted end of the year data early?

The data submission is scheduled early so that there will be sufficient time to conduct analysis and generate reports ahead of CYSA's presentation to the JJPOC in July.

Any data from the end of June that is missed for the Q4 pull will be added to the data set at the end of July to enable a complete FY23-24 data set to be compiled. As a result, all YSBs should finalize any missing data by the end of July.



YSB Data Submission SY23-24

STATE-WIDE

SY23-24 State Enrollment : 512, 652 students
 SY23-24 RACE/ETHNICITY:
 White- 46.2%, Hispanic- 31.1%, Black- 12.5%,
 Asian- 5.2%, 2 or more Races- 4.7%

SY23-24 FREE/REDUCED LUNCH: 44%
 SY23-24 DISABILITIES*: 17.9%
 SY22-23 CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM: 20%
 SY22-23 SUSPENSION/EXPULSION: 7%
 *Does not include 504 plans



Collaborators

Compiled from 73 YSBs that provided collaborator data out of 98 that collect

2,782

Total Collaborator Entries

Unique Collaborators
2,046

Most Common

Collaborator Categories:

- Business/Community 508
- School 431
- Nonprofits 401
- Town officials and other town departments 246
- Other youth service agencies and YSBs 216
- Police departments 132

23

different categories of collaborators

The median number of collaborators was 23
(some YSBs had significantly more)



Tier 1 Programming

Compiled from 83 YSBs that provided Tier 1 data out of 87 that collect

1,937

Programs were identified

571

Large Group Events

1,352

Short-term Programs

Short Term Programs and Participation

- 82 Alcohol and Drug Education programs with 7,213 participants (median per 62)
- 2 Anger Management programs with 166 participants (median per 166)
- 24 Conflict Resolution programs with 1104 participants (median per 44)
- 60 Job skills and Employment Training programs with 632 participants (median per 12)
- 383 Life Skills programs with 5984 participants (median per 36)
- 692 "Other" programs with 21,421 participants (median per 120)
- 148 Parent Education programs with 5,286 participants (median per 50)

Large Event Participation

- **One-time Events**
94,213 Participants
(median per 795)
- **Series**
20,641 Participants
(median per 231)

The median number of programs per YSB
16
 Short Term- 10
 Large Group- 5



Tier 2 Youth (Non-JRB)

Compiled from 65 YSBs that provided Tier 2 data out of 79 that collect

17,411

Total YOUTH



Just over 50% of the youth live with 2 birth parents.
 ~13% live with a Female Single Parent and 19% DNR

24

YSBs had over 200 Tier 2 Youth

Average youth per YSB was 229
 The median was 106

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age of Tier 2 Participant

80% are 8-17 yrs old

Gender DNR 124

- Females 9,064
- Males 8,050
- Non-Binary 92
- Transgender 83

Ethnicity DNR 2,198

- Not Hispanic 11,223
- Hispanic 3,234

Race DNR 1,656

- White 10,886
- Black 2,198
- Multiracial 1,180
- Asian 730
- Other 628

- Majority of youth & families aren't homeless
- Majority had not been suspended
- Majority had not been expelled
- Half are not Special Ed.

REFERRALS

REFERRAL SOURCE

- Parent 6,889
- School 3,882
- Self 3,843
- Other 849
- Police 370
- Social Services 118
- JRB 71
- DCF 61
- Court 44

REASON FOR REFERRAL

- Positive Youth Development 9,595
- Parenting/family issues 726
- Non-school issues 577
- Other 484
- School issues 420
- Delinquent Behavior 335
- Depression 325
- Truancy 241
- Defiance of school 168
- Substance abuse 156

SERVICES PROVIDED

Summer Programs
5,115

Life Skills Training
3,402

Individual Therapy
2,618

After-School Programs
2,367

Leadership Development
2,381



Juvenile Review Board

Compiled from 75 YSBs that provided JRB data out of 84 that collect

1547

Intakes

1367

Service Agreements

970

Close-outs

Free/Reduced Lunch

YES 608 • No 213
 • DNR 726

Suspension

YES 793 • No 371
 • DNR 383

Expulsion

NO 1037 • Yes 126
 • DNR 384

SPED

NO 828 • Yes 387
 • DNR 332

Arrested

YES 830 • No 522
 • DNR 195

INTAKE

Age of JRB Participant

95% are 12-17 yrs old

Race DNR 124

- White 725
- Black 504
- Multiracial 99
- Other 69
- Asian 16

Previous Participation

NONE 834 • Once 100
 • Twice 10

Gender DNR 18

- Males 931
- Females 582
- Non-Binary 9
- Transgender 7

Ethnicity DNR 116

- Not Hispanic 905
- Hispanic 526

SERVICE AGREEMENT

1367

average 23
 median 10



ATTENDED PANEL?
 Yes 925
 No 112

Most Common Services:

Individual Therapy, Other, Community Service Programs, Essay, Apology Letter

CLOSEOUT

970

COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS?
 Yes-537, No-86
 CLOSE-OUT STATUS?
 Successful-537

CLOSEOUT TYPE
 Letter 256, Face-to-Face Board 184, By Phone 91, Other 92



The majority of JRB participants are not homeless. Of youth that reported on family constellation, ~33% live with a single parent, ~20% with two birth parents, and ~8% live with a step-parent and birth parent.

- **Highest Incident Types-** Breach of peace, Disorderly Conduct, Assault, Illegal Drug Possession
- **Common Incident Location-** School 841, Community 562
- **Incident Category-** Arrest 853, No Arrest 375
- **Common Referral Source-** Police 897, Court 334, School 149
- **Reason for Referral-** Delinquent Behavior, Defiance of School Rules, Positive Youth Development, Substance Abuse, Other

DNR= Did Not Report

In some cases, percentages may not add up to 100% due to some categories that are not reflected in the report.



Collaborators identified across the state



Collaborators by Chapter

EASTERN REGION

475 Collaborators

Most Common: Schools, Non-Profits, Town

Officials/ Offices, Business/Community, Other Youth Serving Orgs

FAIRFIELD

909 Collaborators

Most Common: Business/Community, Non-Profits,

Schools, Town Officials/ Offices, Other Youth Serving Orgs

MIDDLESEX

327 Collaborators

Most Common: Schools, Business/Community,

Non-Profits, Town Officials/ Offices, Other Youth Serving Orgs

NEW LONDON

241 Collaborators

Most Common: Non-Profits, Business/Community,

Schools, Police Dept. and Other Youth Serving Orgs

NORTH CENTRAL

377 Collaborators

Most Common: Schools, Business/Community,

Town Officials/ Offices, Non-Profits and Police Department

NORTHWEST

332 Collaborators

Most Common: Schools, Non-Profits, Town

Officials/ Offices, Other Youth Serving Orgs, Business/Community

SOUTH CENTRAL

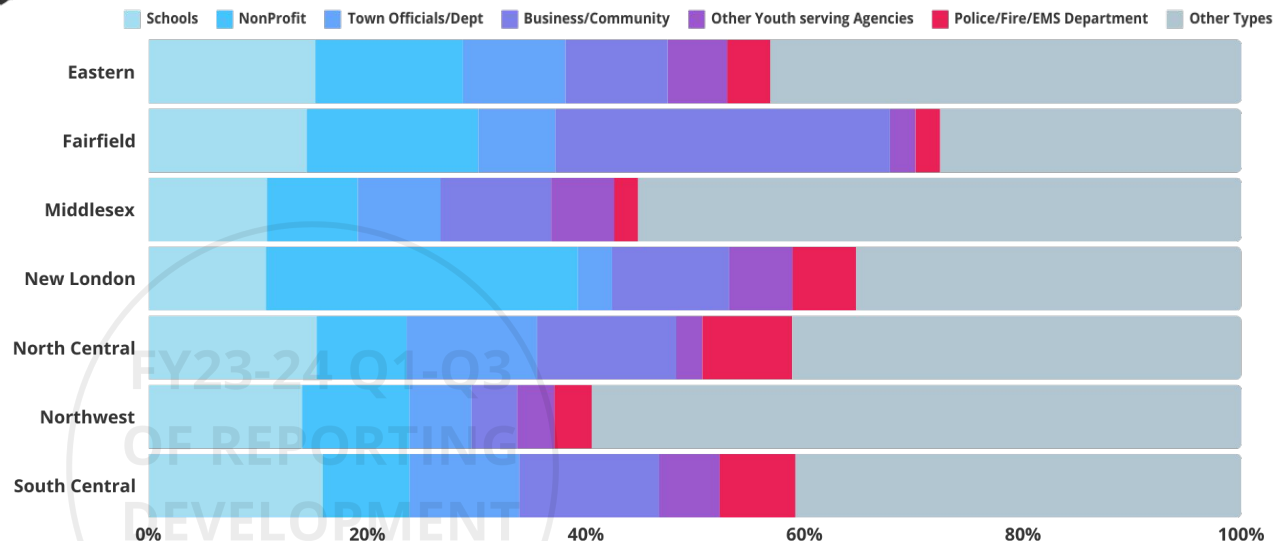
289 Collaborators

Most Common: Schools, Business/Community

Non-Profits, Town Officials/ Offices, Police Department



Percentage of Collaborator Category by Chapter



COLLABORATOR TAKEAWAYS

Detailed collaborator data that was collected produced some interesting common collaborations being utilized across the state in terms of the type of entities with which the YSBs partner.

The more detailed information shared about common collaborations can help introduce opportunities and spark innovative ideas to broaden local partnerships and in some cases, service offerings.

COMMON COLLABORATOR TYPES

Auto	Educational Groups	Libraries	Schools
Art Centers	Eye Doctors	Mental Health	Sports Orgs
Attorneys	Family Centers	Outdoor Activities	Supermarkets
Bakeries	Fire Departments	Centers	Veterinarians/
Churches/Synagogues	Jewish Centers	Restaurants	Shelters
Dentists	Landscaping	Salons/Barbers	YMCA

COMMON COLLABORATORS UTILIZED ACROSS MULTIPLE CHAPTERS & YSBs

- 211
- Alliance for Community Empowerment
- American Legion
- Amplify
- BHcare
- Boys and Girls Club
- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
- Camp Simon
- Connecticut Association of Prevention Professionals (CAPP)
- Community Health Resources (CHR)
- Community Child Guidance Clinic
- CT Children's Collaborative
- CT Office of Early Childhood
- Dept Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS)
- Dept of Social Services (DSS)
- FAVOR CT
- Generations Family Health
- Governor's Prevention Partners
- Head Start
- Healthy Futures CT
- Hearing Youth Voices
- Interval House
- Kids in Crisis
- Ledge Light Health District
- Lion's Club
- LiveGirl
- Mystic Aquarium
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- Project Graduation
- Project Music
- Rotary Club
- Sacred Heart University
- Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC)
- Silver Hill Hospital
- Tails of Joy
- The Network CT
- The Village
- UCONN
- United Way
- Western Connecticut Coalition
- Wheeler Clinic
- Women's
- Mentoring Network
- Yale New Haven
- YMCA



Tier 1 Programming

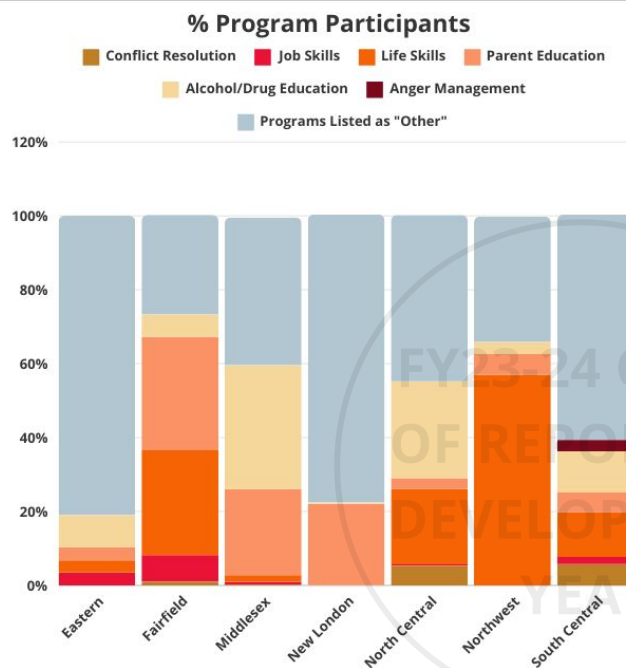
CHAPTER-ALL REGIONS

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3



1352 Short Term Programs*

- **Eastern**- 183 programs with 2,852 participants
- **Fairfield**- 137 programs with 4,260 participants
- **Middlesex**- 142 programs with 7,167 participants
- **New London**- 169 programs with 6,483 participants
- **North Central**- 426 programs with 13,835 participants
- **Northwest**- 190 programs with 1,909 participants
- **South Central**- 106 programs with 5,951 participants



Participants by Program Type

Chapter	Other	Life Skills	Parent Education	Conflict Resolution	Job Skills	Alcohol/Drug Education	Anger Management
Eastern	2310	95	102	0	99	246	0
Fairfield	1138	1206	1311	44	307	254	0
Middlesex	2896	124	1673	13	60	2401	0
New London	4952	0	1402	0	5	24	0
North Central	6190	2817	404	734	55	3623	0
Northwest	652	1089	106	0	0	62	0
South Central	3283	653	288	313	106	603	166
State-wide	21421	5984	5286	1104	632	7213	166

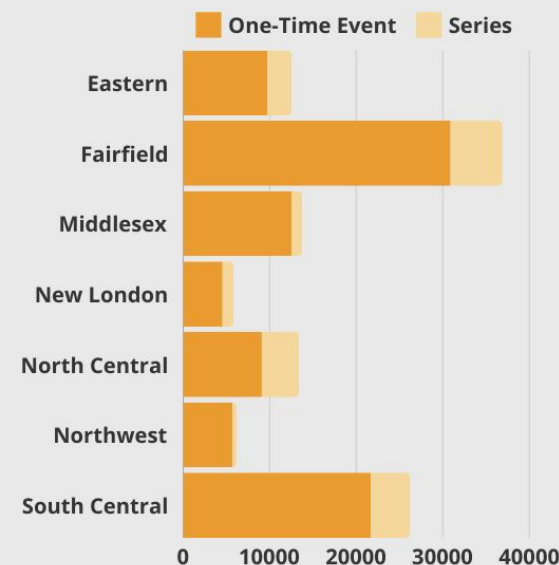
ALL CHAPTER REGIONS

*Q1-Q2 Report Correction: Q1-Q2 Tier 1 Programming should have reported the Eastern Chapter with 117 programs and 1864 participants and the North Central Chapter with 263 programs with 8,909 participants

571 Large Events and Participation

- **Eastern**- 73 events
- **Fairfield**- 53 events
- **Middlesex**- 128 events
- **New London**- 21 events
- **North Central**- 115 events
- **Northwest**- 58 events
- **South Central**- 123 events

Event Participants



TIER 1 TAKEAWAYS

In the 3 months between data submissions, overall Tier 1 programming reported by YSBs has increased 68%. Increases were primarily due to new programming in the “Life Skills” and “Other” categories. Short term program participants increased by nearly 50%. Programs that were broadly categorized as the “Other” still remained in the top spot for overall popularity among programs offered and youth participation. Large group events saw similar consistencies and changes; overall large events reported increased by 46% from the first two quarters and the distribution of participants among the One-Time Event and Series categories stayed largely unchanged.



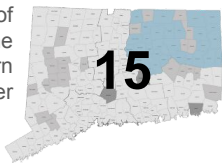


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- EASTERN REGION

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
Eastern
Chapter



15

*Tier 2 data set- 13 of 14
YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 14 of 15
YSBs that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

YOUTH

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	1,198	56%	64	36%
Male	891	42%	110	61%
Transgender	16	<1%	1	1%
Non-binary	5	<1%	5	5%
DNR		<1%	-	-%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	1,634	77%	121	67%
Hispanic	330	15%	40	22%
DNR	163	8%	19	11%
RACE				
White	1,390	65%	119	66%
Black/African American	226	10%	22	12%
Multiracial	222	10%	20	1%
Asian	121	6%	2	11%
DNR	91	4%	17	9%

	TIER 2		JRB	
SUSPENSION				
No	1,314	62%	67	37%
Yes	75	4%	91	51%
DNR	736	34%	22	12%
EXPULSION				
No	1,394	65%	149	83%
Yes	3	<1%	8	4%
DNR	734	35%	23	13%
SPED				
No	1,210	57%	84	47%
Yes	254	12%	57	32%
DNR	667	31%	39	22%

Eastern Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the Eastern Chapter as a whole saw a large increase in Tier 2 referrals for "Parenting/Family Issues". Over the same time period, JRBs saw an increase in JRB referrals resulting from "Dating Violence" and "Larceny". Both Tier 2 and JRB youth were more frequently receiving "Individual Therapy". Even with an increase in cases, the overall breakdown of youth demographics remained unchanged.

FAMILY CONSTELLATION
(Most Common)

TIER 2	Two Birth Parents- 57%
	Single Parent Female-16%
JRB	Single Parent Female-40%
	Two Birth Parents- 28%

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS
The vast majority of youth and their families for Tier 2 and JRB are not homeless.

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

	TIER 2			JRB		
REFERRAL SOURCE						
Parent Guardian	1,017	48%	66%	118	Police	
School	605	28%	17%	30	Court	
Self	297	14%	9%	16	School	
Other	137	6%	<1%	1	Parent/Guardian	
Police	25	1%	-	0	Social Services	
DCF	13	<1%	8%	15	Did Not Report	

- TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL**
- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Delinquent Behavior |
| 2. Parenting/Family Issues | 2. Positive Youth Development |
| 3. School Issues | 3. Defiance of School Rules |
| 4. Other | 4. Other |
| 5. Non-School Issues | 5. Parenting/Family Issues |
| 6. Depression | 6. Internet Related |
| 7. Truancy | 7. Dating Violence |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED

26% INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Other common services included were Summer Programs, "Other", Mentoring, and After-School Programming

45% INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Other common services included were Positive Youth Development, Essay, "Other" and Community Service

JRB PROCESS	ATTENDED PANEL	CLOSE-OUT STATUS
Top 6 Incident Types	Yes-115 No-13, DNR-9	Successful-75
1. Breach of Peace- 30%		
2. Larceny-12%		
3. Disorderly conduct- 11%		
4. Other- 10%		
5. Illegal drug possession- 9%		
6. Assault- 6%		
	CLOSEOUT TYPE	
	Face-to-Face Full Board- 37,	
	Phone Call- 35, Face to Face Other- 7, No Communication 3, DNR 22	

In some cases, percentages may not add up to 100% due to some categories that are not reflected in the report.



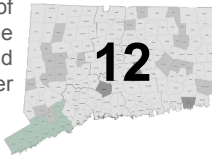


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- FAIRFIELD

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
Fairfield
Chapter



12

*Tier 2 data set- 7 of 11
YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 5 of 7 YSBs
that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

YOUTH

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	1,358	56%	76	36%
Male	1,134	42%	133	64%
Transgender	-	<1%	-	-%
Non-binary	12	<1%	-	-%
DNR	2	<1%	-	-%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	1,412	77%	106	51%
Hispanic	763	15%	85	41%
DNR	328	8%	18	9%
RACE				
White	1,066	65%	104	50%
Black/African American	254	10%	81	39%
Multiracial	74	10%	7	3%
Asian	161	6%	2	<1%
DNR	734	4%	16	8%

2,510	209
TIER 2 YOUTH	JRB YOUTH
85% are 8-17 yrs	94% are 12-17 yrs

	TIER 2		JRB	
SUSPENSION				
No	899	8462%	60	29%
Yes	1,527	4%	113	54%
DNR		34%	36	17%

	TIER 2		JRB	
EXPULSION				
No	719	29%	149	71%
Yes	14	<1%	18	9%
DNR	1,777	71%	42	20%

	TIER 2		JRB	
SPED				
No	847	34%	123	59%
Yes	81	3%	49	23%
DNR	1,582	63%	37	18%

Fairfield Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the Fairfield Chapter as a whole saw a decrease in records listing "Did Not Report". This decrease helped illustrate that the majority of Tier 2 youth are "Non-Hispanic" and "White". The Chapter also saw an increase in the number of "Police" referrals of Tier 2 youth, possibly due to the increase in "Delinquent Behavior" referrals for Tier 2 youth. JRB statistics remained consistent over the last quarter.



FAMILY CONSTELLATION

(Most Common)

TIER 2	Did Not Report- 50%
	Two Birth Parents- 35%
JRB	Single Parent Female-24%
	Two Birth Parents- 25%



UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS

The vast majority of youth and their families for Tier 2 and JRB are not homeless.

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

	TIER 2				JRB			
	REFERRAL SOURCE							
Parent Guardian	1,137	45%	75%	156	Police			
Self	747	30%	10%	21	School			
School	419	17%	8%	16	Court			
Police	178	7%	2%	4	Parent/Guardian			
Other	14	<1%	-	1	Social Services			
Social Service Agency	5	<1%	5%	11	Did Not Report			

TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Delinquent Behavior |
| 2. Parenting/Family Issues | 2. Other |
| 3. Delinquent Behavior | 3. Defiance of School Rules |
| 4. Other | 4. Parenting/Family Issues |
| 5. Non-School Issues | 5. Substance Abuse |
| 6. Depression | 6. Truancy |
| 7. Truancy | 7. Non-School Issues |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Other common services included were Summer Programs, "Other", Employment Training, Individual Therapy and After-School Programming



"OTHER" SERVICE

Other common services included were Individual Therapy, Community Service Programs, Positive Youth Development, and Behavioral Health Evaluation

JRB PROCESS

Top 6 Incident Types

- Breach of Peace- 21%
- Assault- 13%
- Other- 9%
- Illegal drug possession- 6%
- Disorderly conduct- 11%
- Larceny- 2%

ATTENDED PANEL

Yes-151
No-25, DNR-43

CLOSE-OUT STATUS

Successful- 93

CLOSEOUT TYPE

Letter- 65, Face-to-Face Full Board- 32, No Communication 20, Phone Call- 15, Face to Face Other-4, DNR 67

In some cases, percentages may not add up to 100% due to some categories that are not reflected in the report.

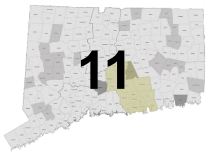


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- MIDDLESEX

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
Middlesex
Chapter



YOUTH

*Tier 2 data set- 7 of 11
YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 9 of 10 YSBs
that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	199	53%	11	21%
Male	164	44%	40	77%
Transgender	4	1%	-	-%
Non-binary	6	2%	-	-%
DNR	3	<1%	1	2%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	304	80%	43	83%
Hispanic	21	6%	8	15%
DNR	51	14%	1	2%
RACE				
White	293	78%	40	77%
Black/African American	6	2%	3	6%
Multiracial	20	5%	6	11%
Asian	4	1%	1	2%
DNR	51	14%	2	4%

	376 TIER 2 YOUTH 84% are 8-17 yrs		52 JRB YOUTH 98% are 12-17 yrs	
SUSPENSION				
No	205	55%	21	40%
Yes	144	7%	23	44%
DNR		38%	8	16%
EXPULSION				
No	235	63%	43	83%
Yes	4	1%	5	10%
DNR	137	36%	4	7%
SPED				
No	151	40%	35	67%
Yes	38	10%	14	27%
DNR	187	50%	3	6%

Middlesex Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the Middlesex Chapter as a whole saw no significant change in the demographics of either Tier 2 or JRB youth. "Substance Abuse" fell off the list of top reasons for Tier 2 referrals, while "Parenting/Family Issues" became a more prevalent reason for referral for JRB youth. There were some major changes in JRB incident type over the quarter, "Criminal Mischief" and "Motor Vehicle Violations" left the list, while "Illegal Drug Possession", "Assault", and "Larceny" were added.

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

TIER 2	REFERRAL SOURCE				JRB
Parent Guardian	158	42%	77%	40	Police
School	117	31%	9%	5	Court
Self	72	20%	2%	1	School
Police	7	2%	6%	3	Superior Court
Other	5	1%	-	-	Social Services
Juvenile Review Board	5	1%	6%	3	Did Not Report

TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Defiance of School Rules |
| 2. Parenting/Family Issues | 2. Delinquent Behavior |
| 3. Non-School Issues | 3. Non-School Issues |
| 4. Substance Abuse | 4. Parenting/Family Issues |
| 5. Depression | 5. Other |
| 6. Truancy | 6. Positive Youth Development |
| 7. School Issues | 7. Substance Abuse |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED

39% INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Other common services included were After-School Programs, Summer Programs, Leadership Development, Family Therapy, Substance Abuse Evaluation

52% INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Other common services included were Community Service Programs, Positive Youth Development, Apology Letter, "Other"

JRB PROCESS

Top 6 Incident Types

1. Disorderly Conduct -19%
2. Breach of Peace- 8%
3. Larceny- 8%
4. Assault- 4%
5. Illegal drug possession- 4%
6. Other- 2%

ATTENDED PANEL

Yes- 50
No -, DNR-

CLOSE-OUT STATUS

Successful
18

CLOSEOUT TYPE

Face to Face Other-8, Letter- 6, Face-to-Face Full Board- 4, No Communication 1, Phone Call- 1, DNR 3



FAMILY CONSTELLATION

(Most Common)

TIER 2	Did Not Report- 50%
	Two Birth Parents- 35%
JRB	Two Birth Parents- 31%
	Single Parent Female-25%



UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS

The vast majority of youth and their families for Tier 2 and JRB are not homeless.

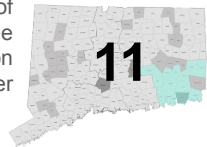


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- NEW LONDON

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
New London
Chapter



YOUTH

*Tier 2 data set- 9 of 9
YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 7 of 9 YSBs
that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	1,384	50%	21	34%
Male	1,347	49%	39	64%
Transgender	10	<1%	-	-%
Non-binary	10	<1%	1	2%
DNR	6	<1%	-	-%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	2,159	78%	46	75%
Hispanic	406	15%	13	21%
DNR	192	7%	2	3%
RACE				
White	2,005	73%	41	67%
Black/African American	200	7%	9	15%
Multiracial	198	7%	5	8%
Asian	30	1%	2	3%
DNR	174	6%	4	7%

2,757	61
TIER 2 YOUTH	JRB YOUTH
67% are 8-17 yrs	89% are 12-17 yrs

	TIER 2		JRB	
SUSPENSION				
No	248	9%	27	49%
Yes	15	<1%	30	44%
DNR	2,494	90%	4	7%

	TIER 2		JRB	
EXPULSION				
No	268	10%	38	62%
Yes	-	-%	12	20%
DNR	2,489	90%	11	18%

	TIER 2		JRB	
SPED				
No	218	8%	36	59%
Yes	50	2%	15	25%
DNR	2,489	90%	10	16%

New London Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the New London Chapter as a whole saw an increase in "Non-Hispanic" and "White" Tier 2 youth. There were no major changes in the demographics of JRB youth. The number of "Self Referrals" for Tier 2 youth saw a large increase. "Substance Abuse" and "Parenting/Family Issues" entered the top reasons for referrals for JRB youth referrals. Programming across the Chapter remainder consistent.

FAMILY CONSTELLATION (Most Common)

TIER 2	Two Birth Parents- 64%
	Single Parent Female- 9%
JRB	Single Parent Female-41%
	Two Birth Parents- 20%

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS
The vast majority of youth and their families for Tier 2 and JRB are not homeless.

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

	TIER 2		JRB		
	REFERRAL SOURCE				
Self	1,664	60%	49%	30	Police
Parent Guardian	702	25%	21%	13	Court
Other	205	7%	11%	7	School
School	75	3%	-	-	Parent/Guardian
Juvenile Review Board	15	<1%	-	-	Social Services
DCF	12	<1%	18%	11	Did Not Report

TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Delinquent Behavior |
| 2. Other | 2. Defiance of School Rules |
| 3. Parenting/Family Issues | 3. Truancy |
| 4. Depression | 4. Beyond Control |
| 5. School Issues | 5. Other |
| 6. Delinquent Behavior | 6. School Issues |
| 7. Truancy | 7. Running Away |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED

54% SUMMER PROGRAMS

Other common services included were After-School Programs, Other, Leadership Development, Individual Therapy, Life Skills Training

39% "OTHER" SERVICES

Other common services included were Individual Therapy, Community Service Programs, Positive Youth Development, Apology Letter, Essay

JRB PROCESS

Top 6 Incident Types

- Breach of Peace-31%
- Larceny-25%
- Illegal Drug Possession- 5%
- Assault -3%
- Disorderly Conduct - 2%
- Other- 2%

ATTENDED PANEL

Yes 38
No 2, DNR 9

CLOSE-OUT STATUS

Successful 22

CLOSEOUT TYPE

Face-to-Face Full Board- 21,
Letter- 5, Face to Face Other-4,
Phone Call- 1, DNR 10

In some cases, percentages may not add up to 100% due to some categories that are not reflected in the report.



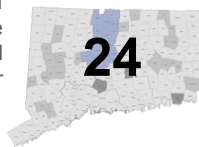


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- NORTH CENTRAL

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
North Central
Chapter



24

*Tier 2 data set- 22 YSBs
of 24 YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 22 of 23
YSBs that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

YOUTH

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	1,426	53%	224	37%
Male	1,214	45%	359	60%
Transgender	11	<1%	-	-%
Non-binary	18	<1%	3	<1%
DNR	30	1%	16	3%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	1,295	48%	325	54%
Hispanic	275	10%	228	38%
DNR	1,139	42%	49	8%
RACE				
White	1,200	44%	244	41%
Black/African American	828	31%	224	37%
Multiracial	273	10%	29	5%
Asian	141	5%	7	1%
DNR	192	7%	95	16%

	TIER 2		JRB	
SUSPENSION				
No	956	35%	106	18%
Yes	143	5%	279	46%
DNR	1,610	59%	217	36%
EXPULSION				
No	1,117	41%	336	56%
Yes	13	<1%	53	9%
DNR	1,579	58%	213	35%
SPED				
No	747	28%	249	41%
Yes	209	8%	138	23%
DNR	1,753	65%	215	36%

2,709
TIER 2 YOUTH
80% are 8-17 yrs

602
JRB YOUTH
96% are 12-17 yrs

North Central Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the North Central Chapter as a whole saw an increase in overall number of organizations that provided data. As a result, the demographic breakdowns for both Tier 2 and JRB youth saw large shifts relative to the previous quarters. Referral sources stayed the same for both groups as did reason for referral. "Individual Therapy" is now the most referred service for JRB youth but there were no major changes in the JRB Incident Types reported.

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

	TIER 2				JRB			
	REFERRAL SOURCE							
Parent Guardian	645	24%	50%	300	Police			
School	566	21%	30%	182	Court			
Self	329	12%	14%	84	School			
Police	98	4%	5%	32	Parent/Guardian			
Juvenile Review Board	15	<1%	-	-	Social Services			
Did Not Report	1,009	37%	1%	4	Did Not Report			

TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Delinquent Behavior |
| 2. Parenting/Family Issues | 2. Defiance of School Rules |
| 3. Non-School Issues | 3. Substance Abuse |
| 4. School Issues | 4. Truancy |
| 5. Other | 5. Parenting/Family Issues |
| 6. Depression | 6. Community-Based Arrest |
| 7. Truancy | 7. Other |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED

36% SUMMER PROGRAMS

Other common services included were After-School Programs, Leadership Development, Individual Therapy, Group Therapy

22% INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Other common services included were Other Services, Community Service Programs, Positive Youth Development, Apology Letter, Essay

FAMILY CONSTELLATION
(Most Common)

TIER 2 Did Not Report- 37%
Two Birth Parents- 33%

JRB Did Not Report- 51%
Single Parent Female-20%

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS
The vast majority of youth and their families for Tier 2 and JRB are not homeless.

JRB PROCESS

Top 6 Incident Types

1. Breach of Peace- 32%
2. Disorderly Conduct - 10%
3. Assault - 9%
4. Illegal Drug Possession- 5%
5. Larceny- 4%
6. Other- 4%

ATTENDED PANEL

Yes 275
No 41, DNR 189

CLOSEOUT TYPE

Face-to-Face Other- 66, Face to Face Full Board-36, No Communication- 20, Letter -18, Phone Call- 14, DNR 275

CLOSE- OUT STATUS

Successful 119

In some cases, percentages may not add up to 100% due to some categories that are not reflected in the report.



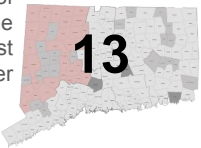


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- NORTHWEST

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
Northwest
Chapter



YOUTH

*Tier 2 data set- 11 of 12
YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 8 of 10
YSBs that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	2,928	50%	87	37%
Male	2,879	49%	148	62%
Transgender	26	<1%	2	-%
Non-binary	17	<1%	-	1%
DNR	45	<1%	-	-%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	3,706	48%	134	57%
Hispanic	1,334	10%	91	38%
DNR	855	42%	12	5%
RACE				
White	4,211	71%	98	41%
Black/African American	557	9%	67	28%
Multiracial	330	6%	21	9%
Asian	240	4%	3	1%
DNR	332	6%	43	18%

	TIER 2		JRB	
	5,895		237	
	TIER 2 YOUTH		JRB YOUTH	
	77% are 8-17 yrs		96% are 12-17 yrs	
SUSPENSION				
No	2,938	50%	40	17%
Yes	277	5%	187	79%
DNR	2,680	45%	10	4%
EXPULSION				
No	3,182	54%	209	88%
Yes	41	<1%	21	9%
DNR	2,672	45%	7	4%
SPED				
No	2,731	46%	157	66%
Yes	590	10%	67	28%
DNR	2,574	44%	13	6%

Northwest Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the Northwest Chapter as a whole saw a large increase in the number of Tier 2 youth reported. Even with this large increase, there were no major changes in the demographics of Tier 2 youth. "Parent/Guardians" are now the largest referral source, however, there were no major changes in the Reasons for Referrals for Tier 2 youth. "Truancy", "School Issues", and "Bullying" dropped off the list of most common JRB Reasons for Referral, however, "Parenting/Family Issues" were added to the list.



FAMILY CONSTELLATION

(Most Common)

TIER 2	Two Birth Parents- 63%
	Single Parent Female-16%
JRB	Did Not Report- 35%
	Single Parent Female-29%



UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS

1.4% of reporting youth indicated that they were experiencing some form of housing instability

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

	TIER 2		JRB		
	REFERRAL SOURCE				
Parent Guardian	2,652	45%	67%	159	Police
School	1,961	33%	23%	55	Court
Self	583	10%	8%	19	School
Other	350	6%	1%	2	Parent/Guardian
Social Services Agency	79	1%	-	-	Social Services
Did Not Report	161	3%	1%	2	Did Not Report

TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Delinquent Behavior |
| 2. Non-School Issues | 2. Defiance of School Rules |
| 3. Parenting/Family Issues | 3. Positive Youth Development |
| 4. School Issues | 4. Substance Abuse |
| 5. Depression | 5. Other |
| 6. Truancy | 6. Parenting/Family Issues |
| 7. Defiance of School Rules | 7. Other |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED

42% LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

Other common services included were After-School Programs, Summer Programs, Individual Therapy, Employment Training

52% ESSAY

Other common services included were Community Service Programs, Positive Youth Development, Individual Therapy, Apology Letter

JRB PROCESS

Top 6 Incident Types

1. Breach of Peace- 37%
2. Disorderly Conduct - 12%
3. Illegal Drug Possession- 8%
4. Assault - 7%
5. Larceny- 1%
6. Other- 7%

ATTENDED PANEL

Yes 169
No 29, DNR 1

CLOSE-OUT STATUS

Successful
111

CLOSEOUT TYPE

Letter/Email -55, Face to Face Full Board-41, No Communication- 3, Phone Call- 12, Face-to-Face Other- 5, DNR 6

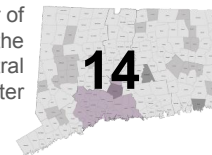


Tier 2 Youth & JRB

CHAPTER- SOUTH CENTRAL

YSB DATA
SUBMISSION
Q1-Q3

Number of
YSBs in the
South Central
Chapter



14

YOUTH

*Tier 2 data set- 7 of 12
YSBs that collect

*JRB data set- 7 of 10
YSBs that collect

DNR- Did Not Report

	TIER 2		JRB	
GENDER				
Female	571	55%	100	48%
Male	421	41%	105	50%
Transgender	16	2%	3	<1%
Non-binary	12	1%	1	1%
DNR	13	1%	1	<1%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic	713	69%	134	64%
Hispanic	105	10%	61	29%
DNR	215	21%	15	7%
RACE				
White	721	70%	82	39%
Black/African American	118	11%	98	47%
Multiracial	63	6%	12	6%
Asian	33	3%	1	<1%
DNR	84	8%	16	8%

	TIER 2		JRB	
	1,033		210	
	TIER 2 YOUTH		JRB YOUTH	
	85% are 8-17 yrs		91% are 12-17 yrs	
SUSPENSION				
No	780	76%	51	24%
Yes	21	2%	73	35%
DNR	232	22%	86	41%
EXPULSION				
No	792	77%	117	56%
Yes	6	<1%	9	4%
DNR	235	23%	84	40%
SPED				
No	637	62%	148	70%
Yes	149	14%	47	22%
DNR	247	2%	15	7%

South Central Chapter Changes

Over the last quarter, the South Central Chapter as a whole saw a large increase in the number of youth reported for both Tier 2 and JRB. There was a large increase in the number of "Non-Hispanic" and "White" Tier 2 youth and a decrease in "White" JRB youth. There was no major change in referral sources for Tier 2 youth but a noticeable increase in "Parent/Guardian" referrals for JRB youth. "Individual Therapy" still continues to be the most referred services for Tier 2 youth.

REFERRALS AND SERVICE

	TIER 2			JRB		
	REFERRAL SOURCE					
Parent Guardian	578	56%	47%	98	Police	
School	278	27%	21%	45	Parent/Guardian	
Self	151	15%	14%	30	Court	
Other	82	8%	<1%	1	School	
Police	26	3%	-	-	Social Services	
Social Services Agency	14	1%	17%	36	Did Not Report	

TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Positive Youth Development | 1. Delinquent Behavior |
| 2. Other | 2. Defiance of School Rules |
| 3. Depression | 3. Positive Youth Development |
| 4. School Issues | 4. Non-School Issues |
| 5. Parenting/Family Issues | 5. Other |
| 6. Delinquent Behavior | 6. School Issues |
| 7. Non-School Issues | 7. Beyond Control |

TOP SERVICE PROVIDED

40% INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

Other common services included were Leadership Development, Life skills Training, Family Therapy, After-School Programs

21% "OTHER" SERVICE

Other common services included were Individual Therapy, Mentoring, Essay, Community Service Programs



FAMILY CONSTELLATION

(Most Common)

TIER 2	Two Birth Parents- 58%
	Did Not Report-12%
JRB	Single Parent Female-51%
	Two Birth Parents- 19%



UNACCOMPANIED MINOR & FAMILY HOUSING STATUS

The vast majority of youth and their families for Tier 2 and JRB are not homeless.

JRB PROCESS

Top 6 Incident Types

1. Breach of Peace- 23%
2. Assault - 10%
3. Disorderly Conduct - 9%
4. Larceny- 6%
5. Other- 2%
6. Illegal Drug Possession- 1%

ATTENDED PANEL

Yes 127
No 2, DNR 83

CLOSE-OUT STATUS

Successful
53

CLOSEOUT TYPE

Letter/Email -107, Phone Call- 13, Face-to-Face Other- 8, Face to Face Full Board-3, DNR 83

Process and Limited Impact Evaluation Report

for the

**Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice
Youth Diversion Team Pilot Program**

Prepared for the Connecticut Youth Services Association

by

**Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC
Richard Cain and Joe Brummer, Evaluators**

July 2024

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Executive Summary

This report presents a program evaluation conducted by Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC, on behalf of the Connecticut Youth Services Association. The evaluation focused on six Youth Service Bureaus implementing a pilot Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice Youth Diversion Team program.

The evaluation includes a process evaluation and a limited impact evaluation. The process evaluation assessed various aspects of fidelity in how the pilot sites *implemented* the Youth Diversion Team program, which is based on the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual, how the pilot sites promoted *awareness* of the program, and how it was *utilized* by youths and their families, panel members, and referring agencies. Considering the program's brief history, the limited impact evaluation assessed closed diversion cases to demonstrate preliminary evidence of the program's effectiveness in addressing incidents that could result in arrest, expulsion, or suspension and in establishing community connections to prevent future offenses.

The evaluators used a descriptive research design and the Utility Standards Methodology. The methodology was designed to inform the program's implementation, promote its growth, address professional development needs to improve practice and identify ways to enhance the important work through additional resources. The evaluation plans were developed with input from the Connecticut Youth Services Association and the pilot sites to tailor the approach and increase the usefulness of the results for informed decision-making and program improvement.

This report begins with an overview of the goals and methods employed in executing the evaluation. It then presents the process and impact evaluation results with a discussion and recommendations.

The results indicate that the Youth Diversion Team program has not been fully implemented at the pilot sites. At all sites, it is only partially implemented as intended. Each pilot site is at a different stage in the implementation process, with varying levels of success and limitations. These findings can be used to modify and strengthen the program at the current sites and other future locations. Feedback from a web-based survey of stakeholders shows that the YDT process is progressing toward reaching its goals. It has the potential to achieve its primary goals for each referred youth, including addressing the incident that may have led to or may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension and establishing community connections to prevent future arrests.

A summary of the most salient findings follows.

The diversion staff is commended for recognizing many factors contributing to successful case closure, such as early family engagement in the diversion process, effective communication with parents, and one-on-one case management sessions with the youth.

Various techniques are used to establish and maintain YDT support within and between organizations, including ongoing professional development, regular meetings, collaboration with other systems, and attending community engagement events.

With their valuable experience and skills in processing cases through the JRB diversion model, the diversion staff are dedicated to implementing restorative practices. However, shifting from retributive justice to restorative justice requires continuous learning and commitment. Therefore, while the staff's efforts are commendable, providing them with additional training is crucial to enhance their understanding of restorative practice further.

The pilot sites had varying success in implementing the restorative aspects of the program objectives. Some sites could have benefited from technical assistance but declined to seek it. The pilot sites must recognize their needs and accept guidance and coaching as needed. The CYSA might consider a YDT implementation guide that includes clear and specific criteria for self-assessment.

The diversion staff actively promotes awareness of the YDT program to various stakeholders, but the lack of a consistent and uniform protocol hinders their efforts. This makes it difficult to define restorative practice and outline its core features, objectives, and critical ingredients across all stakeholders and to the general public. An overarching message is needed to define restorative practice and outline its objectives. This encompassing message should clearly define the restorative practice, its objectives, core features, and examples of formal restorative justice programs in the justice system.

The self-study findings and lack of victim engagement in the limited impact evaluation suggest that engaging victims is challenging. Diversion staff and panel members prioritize a protective approach over a proactive one for victim awareness and engagement. Their concerns are that involving the victim may not always be clinically appropriate and may not always feel safe. Diversion staff identified an additional need for themselves and panel members' training, as well as methods to effectively engage unresponsive or disinterested victims in the restorative justice process.

The pilot sites used various methods to raise awareness about the YDT diversion program among panel members. They provided onboarding or orientation training for new members, offered trauma-informed restorative training, and encouraged completion of RJ 101 and 201 training. Panel members who completed the CYSA RJ training tended to understand the diversionary process better.

Improving training for referring agency staff and clearly defined, consistent messages about the YDT program and its referral process are necessary. The referring agency should be able to determine if a case is eligible for diversion to the Youth Diversion Team and understand the eligibility criteria and the function and purpose of the JRB/YDT process. This is essential to ensure that all youth and family referees have a basic understanding when they enter the diversion process.

Diversion staff may conflate case management, wraparound, and skill-building services with restorative justice diversion approaches. Staff involved in diversion programs have diverse training and background experiences, which support them in program case management delivery. However, some diversionary assignments may not effectively restore. There should be a clear connection between the actions for which the youth are held accountable and the diversionary assignment. The assignment should help young people understand the consequences of their actions and enable them to reconnect with the community. Providing additional training may be beneficial.

Data collection methods vary across the pilot sites. Streamlining and customizing the process to meet specific YDT program improvement objectives is crucial. The methods should be transparent, minimize biases, and be easily accessible. Standardization and reliability are key, and it's important to establish the psychometric properties of data collection instruments for accurate and accessible data comparison across all YDT sites.

The criteria for cases accepted by the Youth Diversion Teams need clarification. It's uncertain whether every case involves a youth who has committed an offense warranting diversion from the judicial system or other entity (e.g., school) or if there is harm to another individual or the community. The *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual should be revised to include clear and specific criteria for determining appropriate diversion cases and should be followed by appropriate training.

Part I: Introduction

This evaluation report details the results of a process evaluation and a limited impact evaluation for the Connecticut Youth Services Association (CYSA) Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice Youth Diversion Team (YDT) pilot program. Diversion programs aim to provide programming, support, and supervision to redirect youth who commit offenses from the traditional juvenile justice system.

The traditional juvenile justice system often relies on punishment, such as arrest, expulsion, or suspension, to hold young people accountable for minor law violations and prevent them from committing further crimes. However, these punitive measures can have long-term negative consequences and often do not affect recidivism. Moreover, these traditional responses often worsen the complex behavioral health needs of youth who enter the system (Branson et al., 2017; McCarthy, Schiraldi, & Shark, 2016; National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017), with many having a history of trauma and up to 80 percent of incarcerated youth meeting criteria for a mental health diagnosis (Underwood & Washington, 2016). Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (McCarthy, Schiraldi, & Shark, 2016) and LGBTQ+ youth (Center for American Progress, 2017) are especially likely to experience negative outcomes, given their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system.

Trauma-informed restorative justice diversion programs offer an alternative to involving youth in the traditional juvenile justice system. These programs are more responsive to young people's needs and are more effective in preventing future crimes. Restorative justice programs help young individuals accept responsibility, take accountability for their behavior, and make efforts to repair the harm caused to the victims and the broader community. Additionally, they aim to reduce youth involvement in the juvenile justice system by addressing their behavioral health needs and ensuring public safety.

The CYSA recognizes that young people may make mistakes and commit minor offenses. It understands that many of these behaviors stem from unmet needs and past or ongoing trauma. To address this, the former Juvenile Review Board (JRB) diversion model process has been revised to become trauma-informed and restorative. The updated, now called the Youth Diversion Team diversion model, takes a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and developmentally informed approach. It utilizes restorative justice principles and practices to build understanding, encourage accountability, and help responsible youth make amends when harm has occurred while minimizing long-term consequences. This approach to diversion is collaborative and inclusive.

The two primary goals of the YDT diversion program for each referred youth are to address the incident that may lead to arrest, expulsion, or suspension and to establish community connections to prevent future arrests.

Objectives of this Evaluation

The primary objective of this evaluation was to determine how the participating Youth Service Bureaus (YSB) operating JRBs participating in a pilot initiative followed the revised CYSA *Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual to make Connecticut's juvenile diversion process trauma-informed and restorative. Through the process evaluation, the CYSA hoped to learn:

1. To what extent has each site implemented the YDT program according to the CYSA *Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual?
2. What methods and procedures did the pilot agency staff use to promote program awareness to the referring agencies, panel members, referred youth, their families, and victims?
3. What are the utilization rates among responsible youth and their families, victims, and referring agencies?

A secondary objective of this evaluation plan was to conduct a limited impact evaluation to determine how well the project is reaching its intended goals and how well short-term changes have been achieved. The program has been operating for approximately ten months (i.e., June 2023 to April 2024). While ten months is not adequate to assess long-term outcomes, a limited impact evaluation assessing closed cases and those nearing closure allowed the CYSA to support the program's effectiveness through the following questions:

1. How is the program evolving to achieve its intended outcome goal to address incidents that may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders, such as referred youth and their families, victims, and referring agencies, regarding the necessary changes to establish community connections that prevent future arrests?

Overall, this report will show that this evaluation provided analysis and learning from the pilots to inform the sustainability of the YDT program. The data provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses in implementing the program's structure and delivery, whether the revised manual provided enough clarity for the implementation process, whether members of the diversion team, including panel members, received adequate and appropriate training, and how the pilot sites promoted awareness and utilization of the program to referred youth, their families, victims and referring agencies. These data provide important feedback for making mid-course corrections that will help improve the program's operation.

Part II: Youth Diversion Team Program Background

The diversion theory holds that people's exposure to the criminal legal system provides an alternative to arrest, prosecution, and incarceration and is significantly more effective in reducing recidivism than the traditional justice system (Wilson & Hoge, 2013). These programs also provide possible insight into unmet needs that can lead to criminalized behavior, such as food and housing insecurity, joblessness, lack of educational resources, and unmet mental health needs (Vera Institute of Justice, 2022).

Diversion programs for responsible youth aim to prevent their involvement in the formal juvenile court system and redirect them through programming, support, and supervision. The long-term outcomes of these programs allow youth to lead a responsible life without a criminal record while holding them accountable for their behavior without legal sanctions, court oversight, or confinement threats to mitigate future risks and delinquent behavior. To have their case dismissed, responsible youth must fulfill the terms and conditions of the diversion program.

Restorative justice programs are better at meeting the needs of young people and are more effective at preventing future crimes. This is achieved by helping young individuals take accountability and accept responsibility for their behavior. These programs also try to repair the harm caused to the victim(s) and the broader community. Adding value to diversion programs by making them more trauma-informed helps reduce youth involvement in the juvenile justice system by addressing youths' behavioral health needs while also ensuring public safety.

In 2021, the Tow Youth Justice Institute released an Issue Brief – *JJ Reform and the Importance of the Community-Based Diversion System* – supporting several benefits of diversion programs (Tow Youth Justice Institute, 2021). The brief highlighted the following findings:

1. Court involvement for low-risk youth often does more harm than good and takes limited resources away from focusing interventions on youth whose behavior poses a public safety risk.
2. Most low-risk youths grow out of their behavior and stop reoffending without system intervention.
3. Diversion is a more cost-effective public safety strategy than court processing for low-risk youth.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are especially likely to experience negative outcomes, given their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system (McCarthy, Schiraldi, & Shark, 2016). The Tow Youth Justice Institute Issue Brief (2017) highlighted diversion as a viable solution to tackle racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. The Brief pointed out that disparities arise when law enforcement officials, court officials, or other practitioners use discretion differently when dealing with individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, an increasing amount of research reveals that LGBTQ (lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender, and queer) and gender non-conforming youth are overrepresented in juvenile detention and correctional facilities when compared to the general population, with double the representation in the juvenile system (Center for American Progress, 2017). By automating diversion for certain low-level offenses, young individuals are held accountable similarly, and the system promotes equity (Tow Youth Justice Institute, 2021).

Many youths entering juvenile court systems show manifestations of psychological trauma. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (2014) defines trauma as the impact on the mind and body that “happens when an individual experiences an event or series of events, or a set of circumstances, as physically or emotionally harmful or even life-threatening, and their body’s ability to cope with distress is overwhelmed and results in long-lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being. Addressing trauma is increasingly seen as an essential part of effective behavioral health care and integral to the healing and recovery process (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association, 2022).

Trauma can result from a single, distressing event or recurring incidents. It exists among everyone and has no boundaries concerning age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, geography, or sexual orientation. It can be caused by a wide range of situations and experiences, both physical and emotional. Witnessing or learning about a traumatic event from others can also cause trauma. It is pervasive and exists in societies worldwide.

Families and social groups also pass down trauma coping mechanisms and behaviors through narrative. Genetically, the theory is that individuals and families pass traumatic experiences down from one generation to another (i.e., epigenetics). On the other hand, there is also evidence that the impacts of trauma may be mitigated or buffered by the amount of relational connectedness a person has (Perry & Winfrey, 2021).

Traumatic experiences can vary greatly in severity and duration. These events can threaten an individual's sense of self and safety, impacting their ability to regulate emotions, navigate relationships, and cope with their surroundings. Trauma can result from a single occurrence or repeated events over time. It's important to note that while many people may have experienced stressful situations, trauma occurs when an individual feels powerless and lacks control.

One’s *experience* of events or circumstances helps determine whether an event is traumatic. When one experiences a traumatic *event*, it is processed through all the previous experiences the brain has stored in memory, meaning no two people experience the world similarly. Since everyone is born into a unique set of life experiences, consisting of an entirely different time, place, family, and others, with diverse natural attractions to objects, activities, and motivations, the impact of trauma is unique to the individual and the developmental stage when the experience occurred.

Developmental trauma refers to the exposure to multiple and cumulative traumatic events, mainly of an interpersonal nature, during childhood that can lead to various adverse consequences such as attention deficit, impaired decision-making, learning difficulties, and altered stress response (van der Kolk, 2005). Child maltreatment includes various forms of abuse and neglect. It is broadly characterized as any act or failure to act by a parent or an alternate caretaker that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child (Smith, 2010).

Researchers have found that many young people who exhibit delinquent behaviors, including unlawful or criminal acts, have experienced significant childhood adversities (Matza & Sykes, 2017). Adverse Childhood Experiences (referred to as ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood and can have a lasting impact on physical and mental health, overall well-being, and life opportunities. A study conducted from 1995 through 1997 by Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, et al. (1998) matched patient health records with a survey about social well-being, career, and health. It included questions about physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, neglect, and household dysfunctions. The research revealed that experiencing multiple traumatic events during childhood is associated with worsening physical and social impacts in adulthood. Further research has shown that trauma during critical developmental stages can lead to impairments in memory, learning, and physical and emotional development. Existing intergenerational, historical, and collective traumas can further exacerbate these impacts.

YDT Pilot Project Development

Recognizing the widespread occurrence of trauma in society, the CYSA YDT pilot initiative has redesigned the previous JRB diversion model. It aims to process incidents through a trauma-informed, culturally-informed, and developmentally-informed approach, using restorative justice principles and practices.

Like the JRB model, a YDT recognizes that young people will make mistakes, and those actions can be addressed positively outside the court system, thus protecting youth from negative outcomes often associated with a retributive justice model that may lead to long-term consequences. Unlike the JRB model, CYSA recognizes that a trauma-informed restorative diversion model not only focuses on ownership and accountability but does so in a way that centers on community, relationships, and the youth's development, thus supporting the need to revise the JRB process to become trauma-informed and restorative.

In a restorative justice framework, accountability is actively taking responsibility and action to repair the harm and prevent it from happening again (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015). Responsible youth participating in the YDT program must take accountability for the actions that have caused harm. The accountability process uses restorative justice principles and practices to balance the needs of the responsible youth, the victim(s), and the community. Hence, accountability is also collective. While the offender takes accountability for the harm they have inflicted, the community takes accountability by examining and addressing the root causes that may have led to the events.

A focus on this type of accountability allows YDTs to collaboratively find ways for responsible youth to address the harms they have caused to themselves, their direct victims (if applicable), and indirect victims, as well as offer services, interventions, and support to youth and families to help prevent future issues; all while promoting a strong sense of personal identity and connection to the community through a trauma-informed lens. The YDT helps youth understand and repair the harm they have done within their communities. The program recognizes the value of relationships within content and program delivery and in all the spaces surrounding those activities.

Youth participation is voluntary; however, the referred youth must accept responsibility for their actions and agree to explore the harm they created to both direct and indirect victims and make reparation. There are many ways for youth to repair harm, such as cleaning up property damage, writing a letter of apology, or making other reparations that meet the needs of the responsible youth, victims, and community, decided collaboratively. The program may also provide support, such as educational support, or help older youth achieve independence, such as assisting the youth in building developmental relationship skills and finding a job.

The YDT is run by staff who manage the process from beginning to end. Youth are supported by volunteers who participate in a panel meeting and circle process to create an agreement that, when completed successfully, will prevent the case from reaching the court and provide the opportunity for the youth's record to remain "clean." Diversion staff works with youth and their families to conduct necessary screenings and assessments and identify strengths and needs. Meeting the plan's goals takes three to six months for most participants.

Connecticut's youth diversion programs are primarily administered through JRBs. Most JRBs in Connecticut are under a YSB, with only about 10% being run by another entity. The first JRB was established in Enfield, CT, in 1968. Currently, 90 JRBs serve 135 communities in the state. Although no specific enabling Connecticut statute establishes a JRB, the YSB model has existed in Connecticut for over 50 years. These diversionary processes are meant to help young people referred to or eligible to be referred to juvenile court for delinquency or status offenses. Typically, JRBs consist of members from the Youth Service Bureaus (e.g., diversion team staff), school personnel, law enforcement, juvenile probation, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), community providers, and community members.

Training and Education

As part of the education and training process to redirect the former JRB process to become more trauma-informed and restorative, CYSA developed and provided introductory webinars and two in-person trainings (i.e., advanced training in trauma-informed restorative justice and victim engagement). Additionally, the CYSA revised the former *JRB Protocol and Procedures* manual as the *Standard Protocols and Procedures Model for Youth Diversion Teams* to be trauma-informed and restorative. These two initiatives are considered inputs into developing the YDT program.

The introductory webinars (RJ 101 and 201), which educate stakeholders involved in the JRB, began in late Winter and early Spring 2020 and continue to the present day. Joe Brummer of Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC, and Justin Carbonella, the director of the City of Middletown's Youth Services and past president of the CYSA, team-facilitated these webinars.

Through the University of New Haven and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention federal grant and internal funding, CYSA has provided restorative justice training to many JRB members, YSB staff, and Local Interagency Services Team (LIST) members, all serving our youth. CYSA has trained more than 1500 people between the RJ 101 and RJ 201 training, roughly 25 JRB case managers or administrators in the Advanced RJ training, and approximately 35 JRB staff through Victim Engagement Training. A summary of the trainings follow.

Restorative Justice 101. Webinar. This webinar deconstructs the juvenile justice system (i.e., why and how it is often harmful) and how we replicate many of its elements in our diversion processes. Participants examine how restorative justice speaks to the failures of our justice system and allows us to operate in a way consistent with research about how the developing minds of young people work. They also explore how trauma interrupts development and impacts children's behavior. This workshop provides participants with a deeper understanding of restorative justice and how it differs from our traditional systems while still getting the outcomes we want.

Restorative Justice 201. Webinar. Expanding on the learning from RJ101, this webinar helps participants learn the skills that support restorative justice. Participants learn and experience specific communication skills, the use of the circle process, and how these practices interact with the adolescent brain. Specific strategies to bring this work to diversion work are also discussed. Participants must have taken Restorative Justice 101 or other recent RJ training.

Restorative Justice Advanced. In-person. This two-day intensive workshop for JRB staff expands the learning from the RJ 101 and RJ 201 sessions of what trauma-informed restorative justice look like in action. This advanced training allows participants to take a closer look at the current practices to discover opportunities for the shift from the punitive approach to justice to a restorative mindset that allows us to avoid creating additional trauma. On day one, participants deepen their experience with being in a circle and ways to incorporate a circle into their JRB/YDT process. They further explore how trauma impacts the lives of children so they can hold youth accountable without doing further harm. Participants practice their restorative justice skills, from using questions to listening and speaking with empathy on day two. Participants explore contract writing and action plans to repair harm. Through games, activities, videos, and the circle process, participants deepen their ability to live out the principles of trauma-informed restorative practices. This workshop is limited to JRB and YDT staff.

Victim Engagement. In-person. This one-day training supported delivering comprehensive, quality services to crime victims through the lens of restorative and trauma-informed practices.

Participants were asked to evaluate the above webinars, and their average overall score was 4.6 (R = 1 – 5). Respondents reported that the speakers were knowledgeable (4.7), presented content appropriate for the audience (4.6), and were valuable to their professional development (4.4).

Youth Diversion Team Manual Development

Beginning in the Fall of 2022, the CYSA revised the former JRB diversion model manual to include a trauma-informed restorative justice approach. Youth Service Bureaus participating in the pilot project were expected to do their diversion work through a trauma-informed, culturally informed, and developmentally informed lens utilizing restorative justice principles and practices. While revising the original JRB manual, CYSA changed the name of the Juvenile Review Board to Youth Diversion Team. During spring 2023, the former JRB manual underwent revision and review by the seven organizations participating in the pilot project.

In June 2023, the revised manual was distributed to the seven participating pilot organizations. It was proposed that existing, experienced YDTs could adopt most protocols and procedures immediately. It was further recommended that YDTs use this document in discussions with their team members and modify or create policies and procedures based on the information in the manual.

In summary, the CYSA theory suggests that young people can effectively and efficiently restore the harm done to their community by collaboratively finding ways for responsible youth to address the harm they have caused. This includes providing services, interventions, and support to youth and families to prevent future issues while promoting a strong sense of personal identity and connection to the community. It is important to note that these efforts should not cause any additional trauma to the referred youth. The RJ 101 and 201 webinars, Restorative Justice Advanced training, Victim Engagement training, and the revised manual provided educational support to do this work.

Part III: Methodology

Evaluation Design And Outcomes Of Interest

The evaluators used a descriptive research design and the Utility Standards Methodology to understand various aspects of implementing the Youth Diversion Team program. This included how the pilot sites promoted awareness, how the referring agencies utilized the program, and how the youths and their families engaged. The methodology was designed to promote the program's growth, address the professional development needs of the diversion staff to improve their practice, inform the program's implementation at other locations based on current efforts, and identify ways to enhance the important work through additional resources.

Utility Standards methodology is an evaluation design using a mixed qualitative data collection method with additional quantitative methods. It is intended to increase the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and outcomes valuable in meeting their needs (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2024).

The usefulness of the Utility Standards methodology supports and strengthens the YDT program using the experience of those implementing it. Involving the stakeholders in the evaluation process design increases the opportunity to identify information needs, expectations, and values and tailor the evaluation questions, methods, and reporting accordingly. Working with stakeholders increases their understanding of what changes are being made to programs and how they will impact process and outcome data. It also increases the likelihood that evaluation results will be more useful for YSBs and the CYSA in making informed decisions and improving the program as we advance.

This evaluation mainly focused on formative evaluation, with some attention to summative evaluation through limited impact assessment. The primary goal of the formative evaluation was to determine if the pilot YSBs were following the revised *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual with fidelity and identify any areas needing improvement, training, or adaptation. The limited impact evaluation allowed the evaluators to assess how the program is evolving to achieve its intended outcome goal of addressing incidents that may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension. This was done by assessing the perceptions of key stakeholders, such as referred youth and their families, victims, and referring agencies, regarding the necessary changes to establish community connections that prevent future arrests.

Process Evaluation Outcomes and Evaluation Questions

The process evaluation assesses implementation, methods of promoting awareness, and utilization. The following outlines the evaluation outcomes, how they are operationalized, and the evaluation questions.

Implementation Process Evaluation

The implementation evaluation outcome is that pilot sites fully implemented all components of the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual with fidelity.

Implementation is operationalized as focusing on action after the needs and priorities are identified and established. The *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual identified and established these needs and priorities. Program implementation is about making programs work, and high-quality implementation plays a significant part in bringing about effective outcomes. If a program is implemented poorly or moderately well, its goals are unlikely to be achieved, or the results will be less significant.

Evaluation Questions.

1. To what extent has each site implemented the YDT program according to the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual?
 - a. How are the pilot sites implementing the YDT program?
 - b. What are the unique aspects of the YDT program at each site?
 - c. How does the program administration differ among the sites?
2. How has training assisted pilot site staff in adequately serving referred youth, their families, and the victims and troubleshooting concerns as they arise?
3. What is the implementation enabling and disabling factors at each site?

Awareness Process Evaluation

The awareness evaluation outcome is all pilot sites ensured that all stakeholders involved in the YDT process, including referred youth and their family members, victims when appropriate, panel members, and referring agencies, were informed about its benefits and potential outcomes. Awareness is operationalized as all relevant parties know about the program. This includes how the program is presented to referred youth, their families, referring agencies, and panel members. The program's online and print promotional materials should also be clear and informative to all stakeholders. The level of awareness about the YDT program can affect how frequently it is utilized.

Evaluation Questions.

1. What methods and procedures did the pilot agency staff use to promote program awareness to the referring agencies, panel members, referred youth, their families, and victims?
2. How does the awareness process differ among the sites?
3. What are the enabling and disabling factors of the awareness process at each site?

Utilization Process Evaluation

The utilization outcome is how the referring agencies, the referred youth, their families, and the victims view the YDT program as an appropriate alternative to other typically punitive measures. Utilization is operationalized as *utilization rates* or the number of young people referred to the program actively participating during a specific period. These rates provide insight into the program's effectiveness and whether it benefits the youth involved. Additionally, the feedback from stakeholders who refer the youth is critical in determining the program's usefulness. Ultimately, evaluations should be judged based on their actual use or

utility. It's a key metric that the CYSA can use to evaluate the program's effectiveness (i.e., outcomes).

Evaluation Questions.

1. Of the referred youth, how many appropriate referrals accepted the YDT option?
2. Do the pilot sites accept only those eligible referrals they have the ability, resources, and experience to handle effectively?
3. What are the concerns of referring youth, their families, victims, and panel members regarding the YDT program?
4. What are the concerns of referring agencies regarding the YDT program?
5. What are the utilization-enabling and disabling factors at each site?

Limited Impact Evaluation

Although a full outcome evaluation was not recommended due to the short duration of the YDT, the evaluation aimed to assess the project's potential effectiveness toward achieving its intended goals and bringing about short-term changes. This was done through a web-based survey of stakeholders, including referring agencies (e.g., a police department, the juvenile court, a school), panel members, and the youths and families. Attitudes of the diversion team staff about the program were assessed using the pilot site self-study (see below). Assessing closed cases allowed the CYSA to demonstrate the program's potential effectiveness to stakeholders, including funders, by addressing two questions.

1. How is the program evolving to achieve its intended outcome goal to address incidents that may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders, such as referred youth and their families, victims, and referring agencies, regarding the necessary changes to establish community connections that prevent future arrests?

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The methods for collecting and analyzing data are presented, with all instrument copies included in the appendices.

Pilot Site Self-Study

Between March 11, 2024, and March 25, 2024, the staff members at each pilot site completed a self-study questionnaire. They documented their implementation of the YDT process according to the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual. Respondents answered questions directly in a Word document shared via Microsoft OneDrive. Each participating YSB was provided with informed consent. The self-study was primarily qualitative, although some quantitative data (e.g., utilization rates and completed cases) were collected. A copy of the self-study questionnaire appears in Appendix A.

The self-study allowed the diversion staff to assess their strengths and weaknesses. They identified enabling factors (factors that directly support work, such as training or help from a person or group) and disabling factors (actions that fail to support or actively hinder work). The staff described their program's current status and any need for additional resources. They could express concerns about issues such as space limitations for conducting a circle process, the need for materials written in languages other than English, the diversity of panel members, or more trauma-informed and restorative justice training and technical assistance. Staff could also share instances in which the YDT program experienced success. Success stories can document a program's effectiveness over time and demonstrate its value to program stakeholders.

Upon receipt of each pilot site's self-study, the evaluator completed an initial review and documented concerns on an evaluator's query form that was returned to the pilot site for completion. The evaluator's query addressed concerns about missing data, incomplete answers, and ambiguities.

Once the evaluator's queries of the self-studies were returned, the evaluator began coding the responses. During this process, notes about certain concepts identified in the findings were recorded to develop tentative themes and ideas that pertain to the evaluation questions and relationships among the data. As Maxwell (1996) suggested, this process allows the opportunity to "fracture" the data and rearrange it into categories that would, in turn, allow for comparing data within and between categories. Ultimately, this aids in developing concepts that may allow for program improvement. Interval data, such as the number of referred cases, were analyzed using descriptive statistics and reported descriptively.

All qualitative data were presented in aggregate form. Except for the pilot site utilization data and, in some instances, program administration, no individual pilot site is identified.

A Zoom meeting was held with the pilot site participants on March 4, 2024, to review the self-study survey instrument, explain the process, and ask for input.

Stakeholder Web-Based Surveys

The web-based surveys were completed by youths referred and their parents or guardians, panel members, and referring agencies using SurveyMonkey.com. Unfortunately, no victim data were collected due to concerns raised by the pilot site diversion staff, further explained in this report's Results and Discussion section. All data were collected between April 26, 2024, and May 10, 2024. The web-based surveys, along with the informed consent, can be found in Appendix B.

Staff involved in the YDT program identified all closed cases and cases nearing closure from the program's launch in summer 2023 through April 30, 2024. With their initiative, using materials developed by the evaluator to explain the evaluation, the pilot sites contacted the responsible parent or guardian, youth, panel members, and referring agencies. They requested their participation in completing an anonymous survey. After receiving a verbal commitment to

participate, the staff person emailed the SurveyMonkey.com link to the address provided by the stakeholder.

As a participation incentive, each parent and youth who completed the survey received a \$25 electronic gift card. The survey collected the respondents' email addresses. To ensure anonymity, the evaluator removed the email addresses from the survey responses before sending only the email addresses to the pilot sites and the CYSA for payment.

Ordinal quantitative data, such as responses on a scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," were used for descriptive analysis and included mean, standard deviation, and range calculations. Nominal data, like the names of the pilot sites, were categorized and analyzed descriptively. Respondents were given space to provide written comments, which were analyzed qualitatively.

All data were presented in aggregate form. No individual was identified.

A Zoom meeting was held with pilot site participants on April 23, 2024, to review the survey instruments for each stakeholder (i.e., youths, parents, victims, panel members, referring agencies), explain the process, discuss the \$25 incentives that were provided to youths and parents (or guardians) to encourage their participation, methods for survey distribution, and ask for input.

YDT Panel Meeting and Circle Process Observations

Between March 26, 2024, and June 3, 2024, the evaluators observed pilot site panel meetings and the circle process in real-time at five pilot sites. They developed an evaluation tool, primarily a checklist with space for additional comments. The on-site observations were coded and analyzed for relevant themes, and the results were presented in aggregate form. The forms for parental informed consent, youth assent, panel member informed consent, and panel meeting and circle process observation form can be found in Appendix C.

Evaluation Technical Assistance

To enhance the usefulness of the evaluation in supporting and strengthening the YDT program, the evaluator provided technical assistance to the pilot site diversion staff on an as-needed basis. Additionally, as previously mentioned, Zoom meetings were conducted with pilot site diversion staff to keep them well-informed and engaged in the design and implementation of the evaluation process. The aim was to involve the stakeholders in the evaluation process to understand their information needs, expectations, and values and customize the evaluation questions, methods, and reporting accordingly. It was hoped this approach would also increase the likelihood that the evaluation results would be more useful for the pilot sites and the CYSA in making informed decisions and improving the program. The meetings were held on the following dates: December 19, 2023 (Introduction to Pilot Evaluation Study), February 8, 2024 (Orientation to Pilot Study), March 4, 2024 (Self-study Overview), and April 23, 2024 (Overview of web-based Survey process and youth and parent participation incentives).

Part IV: Results And Discussion

Description of the Pilot Sites Involved in this Evaluation

The evaluation included six pilot sites from the cities of Bridgeport, Hartford, Naugatuck, Norwich, Waterbury, and Wethersfield, which were running the JRB diversion program. An advisory board, which included the Department of Children and Families (DCF), selected the sites. The pilot sites were chosen based on specific criteria, including receiving DCF funds, having the necessary personnel, willingness, and a strong JRB process to support them in the pilot program.

The JRB program from New Haven started participating in the YDT program and received training on the YDT model. However, due to management limitations caused by staffing challenges during fall 2023, they faced difficulties fully implementing the program's protocols and procedures. It is important to note that by January 2024, New Haven had increased its staffing to 3.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Despite the improvement in staffing, concerns persisted that staffing limitations might have affected the complete implementation of the YDT program in New Haven, causing potential confusion with the former JRB process. To address these concerns, New Haven's participation in the process evaluation of the pilot program was limited to select self-study findings, which are noted herein where appropriate. Data collection of web-based survey data for this study's limited impact evaluation portion were arranged to be collected separately. Despite this adjustment, no information was obtained from the youths and their parents or panel members.

Process Evaluation Findings

The process evaluation helped the CYSA assess how well the YDT diversion program was being implemented and whether it was meeting its objectives. The evaluation focused on three main areas: *implementation, awareness, and utilization*, and looked at various enabling and disabling factors, or what was helping or hindering the program in these areas. The findings will help the CYSA improve the program, ensure it is being implemented correctly, and refine the evaluation methods while it is ongoing. The section includes a summary of the key findings for each evaluation criterion and the relevant questions, followed by a discussion of the results and any recommendations.

Implementation Process Evaluation Findings

The Youth Diversion Team program has not been fully implemented at the pilot sites and, in some instances, is not being implemented with fidelity. Each site is at a different stage in the implementation process, with varying levels of success and limitations. While not inclusive of all sites, the implementation results identify many enabling and disabling factors. Some of the most salient ones are as follows:

Enabling Factors.

- Multiple factors have been identified as contributing to successful case closure, such as ensuring that families express their willingness to participate in the diversion process at an early stage, maintaining effective communication with parents, and conducting one-on-one case management sessions with the youth. These factors can help promote a positive attitude among the diversion team and encourage open engagement and optimism among parents and youth.
- The staff involved in the diversion programs have a wide range of training and background experiences in areas such as addictions, case management, criminal justice, mandated reporting, marriage and family therapy, mental health, probation work, social work, trauma and trauma-informed treatment with youth, and suicide prevention that support them in diversion program delivery.
- Staff at different sites employ various techniques to establish and uphold support within and between organizations. Techniques include investing in ongoing professional development for staff, ensuring understanding of program goals through regular meetings and check-ins, collaborating with other systems to share knowledge and support programming, participating in collaborative meetings, and establishing relationships by attending community engagement events, such as L.I.S.T or R.E.D., using CYSA's training and events as networking opportunities, and establishing relationships by attending community engagement events.

Disabling Factors.

- While all sites actively participated during the RJ 101 and 201 training, and most also completed the Restorative Justice Advanced training, many of the training objectives have been implemented at the pilot sites with different levels of fidelity and success. The pilot sites could have benefited from using the technical assistance provided by the CYSA, but they chose not to. Despite indicating in their self-study that they did not need technical assistance, the results show that it would have benefited the pilot sites to accept technical assistance and restorative justice coaching to improve their processes. This coaching could have been tailored to address the specific needs of each site.
- The pilot sites face a significant challenge involving victims in restorative diversion. Victim engagement helps offenders comprehend the impact of their actions, facilitates their reconnection with the community, and encourages accountability. It also addresses the needs of victims to repair the harm caused by the crime, even when the victim is not identified. The pilot sites recognize their difficulties in engaging victims. Although the pilot sites aimed to bring together victims, offenders, families, and other stakeholders through restorative justice diversion programming, there were several disabling factors. The pilot sites have highlighted the necessity

for additional victim engagement training for diversion staff and panel members to navigate conflicting opinions, involve victims meaningfully, and address challenges by incorporating the victim's voice in the diversion process. It is recommended that the CYSA review the victim engagement results in this report and seek further clarity from the pilot sites to better address these needs. Furthermore, the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual should include enhanced victim engagement guidance.

- Based on observations from panel meetings and circle processes, it seems that some pilot sites are not effectively using the restorative circle process to address the behaviors of offenders and the needs of victims and communities. The restorative circle aims to promote healing for all involved parties, provide opportunities for offenders to make amends, empower victims and community members, and address the underlying causes of behavior while fostering a sense of community through shared values. It is important to recognize that circle processes may not always suit all diversion cases. CYSA has provided restorative justice circle training, and it's recommended that additional guidance on circle processes, including circle process coaching, be offered. Furthermore, it is suggested that the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual should be updated to include stronger guidance on facilitating circles.
- Based on the observations from self-studies and panel meetings, it is clear that the pilot sites need to fully commit to using the introductory trust/relationship questions, the restorative questions, the 4-quadrant agreement format, the script to maintain the restorative language, and completing the closing round. While each pilot site may be at a different stage of implementing these restorative diversion criteria and want to maintain its autonomy to local culture, it is recommended that the CYSA continue to observe panel meetings and circle processes and provide coaching as needed.
- From the panel meeting and circle process observations, there is evidence that the process did not provide the responsible youth with opportunities to make amends with the community, take full responsibility, and understand the full impact of their actions.
- The pilot sites might conflate counseling and skill-building programs with restorative justice diversion approaches. Some diversionary assignments may not be entirely restorative. There might be a disconnect between the diversionary assignment and its restorative component. While it's important to provide personalized services to meet the specific needs of young people, there must be a link between the actions for which the youth are held accountable and the diversionary assignment. It is crucial to connect case management and wraparound services to the behavior that caused harm; otherwise, the restorative message may not be clear to the young

person. The diversionary assignments should help young people understand the consequences of their actions and allow them to reconnect with the community.

- The diversion staff has valuable experience and is skilled in processing cases through the JRB diversion model. Implementing restorative practices requires dedication, commitment, and continuous learning. While the diversion staff are recognized for their efforts, the CYSA may consider additional training to help them shift from retributive justice to restorative justice.

Implementation Evaluation Questions

The following summarizes the findings related to the evaluation questions concerning the implementation.

1. To what extent has each site implemented the YDT program according to the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual?

a. How are the pilot sites implementing the YDT program?

The process evaluation involved comparing the self-study responses with the observations from the panel meetings and circle processes to assess fidelity. The evaluators could only observe panel meetings and circle processes at five sites. A low number of cases, scheduling conflicts between the pilot panel meetings, and the evaluator's schedules made it difficult to schedule the sixth observation.

The panel meeting and circle process observations showed that three of the five sites had the following restorative meeting diversion processes fully or partially in place: following the meeting script, using the icebreaker questions chosen by the responsible youth, and following the restorative questions. Regarding the agreement process of the restorative circle, the observations showed that two sites had the processes fully in place, such as using the 4-Quadrant Agreement format, allowing the youth to understand their impact, make amends to the community, and have plans not to have the incident happen again.

The panel meeting and circle process observations demonstrate that most cases were appropriate for the restorative process. However, one observation raises concerns. While the panel meeting addressed behavior and suspension issues at school, the team did not clarify these specific concerns. It was challenging for the observer to determine whether the case was suitable for diversion (e.g., Did the incident being diverted involve an arrestable offense?) or whether the incident should have involved case management or wraparound services and not a diversionary assignment.

As highlighted in this report, it's worth noting that some diversionary assignments at particular sites may involve case management or wraparound services. The pilot sites

need to be cautious when utilizing diversionary assignments, particularly for mental health or substance use interventions, to ensure that the purpose of restorative justice diversion programming is met and that these assignments are not solely driven by the need to "fix" a problem or address other concerns.

Regarding the outcomes of the panel meeting and circle process observations, caution is advised to ensure that the process is collaborative with the youth and family and not imposed by the diversion staff or panel members or that the staff or panel members are not lecturing, that the offense meets the requirements for diversionary programming, and that the diversionary assignment is restorative and in unity with the offense.

Some evidence supports that the information reported in the pilot site's self-studies aligns with what was observed during the panel meeting and circle process. The evaluator's observations are as follows:

- All observations showed that the process began with everyone introducing themselves.
- The self-study showed that several sites lack the physical space or have impediments to setting a panel meeting and circle process in a restorative circle format without obstructions (i.e., tables). This was evident in four of the five observations.
- As reported in the self-study, during the observations, all panel members, the youth, and their families were present during each panel meeting and circle process.
- Although using a centerpiece and talking piece is optional, only one observation showed using a centerpiece. Most sites reported not using either in their self-study.

Other evidence supports that the information reported in the self-study by the pilot site does not align with what was observed during the panel meeting and circle process. This may indicate that the process is not in place or that the site is working to put the process in place. The evaluator's observations are as follows:

- While the self-study indicated the sites have no concerns with the trust/relationship (i.e., icebreaker, get to know you questions), the observations show that only three asked the responsible youth to choose icebreaker questions.
- Three of the five observations showed that the script was used (or modified and continued to contain restorative language). Two sites did not use the script or a modified version containing restorative justice principles.
- While the self-study shows the pilot sites have no concerns about allowing the responsible youth to bring a supporter to the YDT panel meeting and circle process, no supporter was present at any of the five observations.
- While two offenses involved a victim, this person was not present at the meetings.

Regarding the agreement process,

- Two sites fully utilized the 4-quadrant agreement questions (i.e., How will the youth repair the harm done to themselves? How will the youth repair the harm done to their direct victims? How will the youth repair harm to their family? How will the youth repair the harm done to their community?). Three sites did not use them during the panel meeting and circle process observation, with one of these sites reporting in their self-study the 4-quadrant agreement questions had not yet been implemented.
- Only during two observations was it evident that the agreement process allowed the responsible youth to make amends with the community; this protocol was not in place during the other three observations.
- Only in two of the observations did the responsible youth have an opportunity to take full responsibility for their actions; this protocol was only partially in place during the other three observations.
- Only during two observations was it evident that the process allowed the responsible youth to understand the impact of their actions fully; it was partially in place during another observation but not during the other two.
- The agreement reached utilized the youth's strengths in two observations, which were partially in place during two and not in place for the other.

At the closing round,

- No site observation completed a closing round.
- All observations showed that support does not end with the day's panel meeting and circle process.

b. What are the unique aspects of the YDT program at each site?

Some evidence from the self-studies indicates that pilot sites would like some autonomy to customize the YDT program to fit their organization's language and local culture. However, it's crucial to make sure that any changes to the program are trauma-informed, restorative, and aligned with the standards of restorative diversion programming. Coaching in restorative diversion programming can assist the pilot sites in maintaining autonomy while adhering to restorative justice diversion principles.

The self-study assessed the diversion team staff's overall attitudes and perceptions of the YDT diversion model compared to the organization's previous JRB diversion model. Three questions were asked, and responses were measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree. The number in parentheses represents the average score among the sites responding to the question.

Staff perceptions at five of six pilot sites strongly agreed or agreed with two questions. One site disagreed with this and did not elaborate.

- (1) *“The staff at this organization believes the Youth Diversion Team diversion model impacts youths’ development more positively compared to the JRB model our organization previously used”* ($\bar{x} = 3.2$).
- (2) *“The staff of this organization is more interested in using a Youth Diversion Team Model than the JRB diversion model our organization formerly used”* ($\bar{x} = 3.2$).

Staff perceptions at three of the sites strongly agreed ($n = 1$) or agreed ($n = 2$) with the statement, *“A restorative diversion model focuses on youths’ accountability and ownership but also centers on community, relationships, and the youth’s development compared to the JRB diversion model your organization formerly used”* ($\bar{x} = 2.6$). One site strongly disagreed without elaboration. One site disagreed, elaborating that they had already used restorative justice concepts in their former JRB process. One chose not to respond. A pilot site in agreement explained that the actions and behaviors of adolescents are mostly age-appropriate mistakes that arise from their environment, social circle, and personal circumstances, and they may become more isolated and engage in risky behaviors if they do not feel like an equal part of their community.

c. How does the program administration differ among the sites?

The self-study helped to understand better how the YDT program is implemented by identifying organizational factors that can either help or hinder the process. These factors include administrative and staffing stability, connections within and between pilot sites, a common vision for success, and the adaptation of the CYSA YDT standards of professionalism, which are crucial for successful program implementation.

Administration. The six pilot sites have varying full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing for administering the JRB/YDT diversion programming and are structured as follows:

- Bridgeport: 4 FTEs (program director, program supervisor, intake coordinator, case manager)
- Hartford: 3 FTEs (program supervisor and two case managers)
- Naugatuck: 1.5 FTEs (0.5 FTE executive director, 0.5 FTE program manager, 0.5 FTE case manager)
- Norwich: 1.5 FTEs (1 FTE program coordinator, 0.5 FTE case manager)
- Waterbury: 2 FTEs (team leader and case manager)
- Wethersfield: 2 FTEs (assistant director, case manager)

Staffing Stability. New Haven joined the YDT program and received training and knowledge of the YDT model. However, after the training, they encountered limitations preventing them from adopting all protocols and procedures due to staff turnover and

process management constraints. During the self-study, New Haven reported that staffing needs were up-to-date, with 3.5 FTEs as of January 2024. However, limited staffing hindered the site's full implementation in the fall of 2023.

Hartford and Naugatuck also faced staffing challenges but did not report any significant barriers to implementation. Hartford mentioned that DCF funding does not entirely cover the staffing budget, and the parent organization supplements the JRB/YDT program funding to retain staff. Another challenge facing Hartford is ensuring that temporary staff, who fill in while permanent staff are on leave, are trained in restorative justice. Naugatuck has three part-time staff members working on the JRB/YDT programming, and they may face challenges when their responsibilities overlap with other duties. Nonetheless, weekly case management check-ins ensure that the cases are handled and staff feel supported.

Connections Within and Between Pilot Sites. Throughout various sites, staff members employ different techniques to establish and uphold support within the organization. This includes investing in continuous professional development for staff, ensuring their understanding of YDT program goals through regular meetings and check-ins, and maintaining an open-door policy.

Additionally, pilot sites detailed their collaboration with other systems to share knowledge and support JRB/YDT programming. This involves building relationships and sharing resources with other JRBS/YDTs, participating in collaborative meetings such as L.I.S.T or R.E.D., using CYSA's training and events as networking opportunities, and establishing relationships by attending community engagement events.

Standards of Professionalism. The CYSA has set standards of professionalism for YDT members to ensure that their actions align with the program's goals. This involves creating clarity around expected behaviors, aligning actions with program priorities, and establishing accountability based on core values.

Pilot site staff reported already being familiar with the standards of professionalism. The self-study revealed that:

- All pilot sites reported having the professional standards fully (n = 5) or partially (n = 1) in place and using the standards in any training, orientation, and onboarding process for *staff* involved in the YDT program.
- The results differed in that fewer pilot sites reported using the professional standards in any training, orientation, and onboarding process for *panel members*, described as fully (n = 4) or partially (n = 2) in place.

The sites' perceptions of the impact of professional standards on the YDT program compared to the organization's previous JRB diversion model differed more widely. Three sites reported "no" difference, one reported "a little difference," and

another reported “some difference.” The one site that reported “a significant difference” connected the questions to the restorative agreement process and elaborated, “Asking families to be a part of finding solutions and agreements that meet the four quadrants is a much more collaborative practice that gives the family ownership in the process.”

Concerning the need for professional standards training, no site requested more or clearer guidance on using the professional standards. One site requested support for specific roles (e.g., staff, administration, panel members) and workshops or face-to-face events to discuss the professional standards.

2. How has training assisted pilot site staff in adequately serving referred youth, their families, and the victims and troubleshooting concerns as they arise?

To improve the former JRB process, the CYSA provided resources, including webinars, restorative justice advanced in-person training, and a manual for the implementation process. Pilot sites were asked to assess the effectiveness of these resources in implementing the program and to identify any need for further training.

The results of the resources provided by the CYSA should be considered in light of the prior knowledge and experience of the diversion staff, as this can influence their perception of the training. The pilot sites vary in terms of their levels of training and background experiences in different areas, including addictions, case management, criminal justice, mandated reporting, marriage and family therapy, mental health, probation work, social work, trauma and trauma-informed treatment with youth, and suicide prevention. The training perceptions of New Haven are not included in this section, as they expressed that their assessment of the restorative justice training was affected by staffing turnover. Therefore, the perceptions in this section only pertain to six pilot sites.

Diversion Staff Perceptions of CYSA Resources (Training and Manual). Three questions were asked, and responses were measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree. The number in parentheses represents the average score among the six sites responding to the question.

- (1) Two sites strongly agreed, two agreed, and two disagreed that “*The CYSA resources (training and manual) helped our organization better understand the differences between retributive justice and restorative justice*” ($\bar{x} = 3.0$).
- (2) Two sites strongly agreed, three agreed, and one disagreed that “*The CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures Manual for Youth Diversion Teams helped them implement the key components of trauma-informed restorative justice concepts*” ($\bar{x} = 3.2$).
- (3) Two sites agreed strongly, three agreed, and one strongly disagreed with the statement, “*We were able to implement most of the protocols and procedures of*

the YDT program immediately” ($\bar{x} = 3.0$). The site that disagreed did not provide further details.

Most pilot sites positively perceive CYSA-provided resources (e.g., training and manual) as useful. The resources help them better understand the differences between retributive and restorative justice, and the revised manual helps them implement key components of trauma-informed restorative justice concepts. One site disagreed, stating, “Our organization had a good understanding of [retributive and restorative justice]” and believing that “. . . many of the items are being implemented already.” However, several concepts of restorative justice diversion were not in place during that site’s panel meeting and circle process observation.

CYSA Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice Training. The pilot sites took full advantage of the CYSA training opportunities, with nearly all staff attending and most perceiving the training positively, except for the Victim Engagement training.

The six pilot sites reported 12 full-time and four part-time staff members, all receiving various CYSA training (e.g., RJ 101, RJ 102, Restorative Justice Advanced, and Victim Engagement). This section provides information on the number of staff enrolled in four training programs provided by the CYSA, their perceptions of the usefulness of the training (i.e., Not Useful, Adequate, Very Useful), and their need for additional training to implement trauma-informed restorative justice objectives (i.e., No Additional Training, A Refresher, Need for Extensive Training). As of the date of the self-study, only two organizations had not completed the Restorative Justice Advanced training. Table 1 highlights the sites’ perceived usefulness and additional training needs.

Table 1: Perceived Usefulness and Additional Training Needs						
	Perceived Usefulness¹			Additional Training Needs		
	Adequate	Very Useful	Not Useful	No	Refresher	Extensive
RJ 101	2	4			X	
RJ 201	2	4			X	
Advanced RJ²	2	2			X	X
Victim Engagement	3		3	X	X	
¹ Refers to the number of pilot sites reporting.						
² Two sites did not attend training prior to self-study.						

Restorative Justice 101. Fourteen of the 16 diversion team staff members completed the RJ 101 training. Staff members who already had knowledge, education,

training, or background experience in mental health, substance use, trauma, and therapeutic methods might have found the RJ 101 material less useful. While the pilot sites reported mixed results, it is recommended to provide additional training or a refresher on the following RJ 101 objectives:

- Developing a deeper understanding of restorative justice and how it differs from our traditional systems while still getting the outcomes we want.
- Examining how restorative justice speaks to the failures of our retributive justice system and allows us to operate in a way consistent with research about how the developing minds of young people work.

Restorative Justice 201. Thirteen of 16 diversion team staff members completed the RJ 201 training. The self-study, compared to the on-site observations of panel meetings and the circle process, revealed conflicting evidence about how the pilot sites are using the meeting script as presented in the CYSA Standards Protocols and Procedures Manual for Youth Diversion Teams, the use of the restorative questions in the circle process, and the use of the 4-quadrant format for agreement questions in writing the agreement plan. Although the pilot sites maintain certain levels of autonomy in presenting the script, it must be done with fidelity to ensure that what is spoken is trauma-informed and restorative. While the pilot sites reported mixed results, more extensive training must be provided for the following RJ 201 objectives:

- Learning how to run diversion meetings using the circle process, the restorative questions, and the 4-quadrant format agreement plan.
- Learning to apply specific trauma-informed restorative strategies to diversion work.

Restorative Justice Advanced. Nine of 16 diversion team staff members completed the Restorative Justice Advanced training. Two sites had not completed the Restorative Justice Advanced training at the time of the self-study. While the pilot sites reported mixed results, and there is conflicting evidence between the self-study and the panel meeting and circle process observations, it is recommended that additional training of all the Restorative Justice Advanced objectives is necessary.

- Examine current practices to discover opportunities for the shift from the punitive approach to justice to a restorative mindset that allows us to avoid creating additional trauma.
- Deepen the participant's experience of being in a circle and explore ways to incorporate a circle into their YDT panel meeting and circle process.
- Expand restorative practice skills from using questions to listening and speaking.
- Explore contract writing and action plans to repair harm.
- Deepen their ability to live out the principles of trauma-informed restorative practices.

Victim Engagement Training. Fourteen of the 16 diversion team staff members completed the victim engagement. The self-study results show that victim engagement and increasing awareness of the YDT program for victims are major challenges for the pilot sites. Half of the six sites found the training not useful and expressed the need for additional training. While five of the six pilot sites indicated that they do not need additional training about learning the impacts of crimes on victims and their families, they did identify several areas for improvement in victim involvement:

- Providing victim engagement training to panel members to help them navigate conflicting opinions about including victims in the restorative process.
- Additional training focused on learning methods to involve victims in clinically appropriate ways.
- Extensive training on methods to engage victims with the YDT process meaningfully.
- Addressing challenges to include the victim’s voice within the diversion process.

Training Discussion and Recommendations. Based on the self-study results, it was found that engaging victims and increasing awareness of the YDT program for victims are major challenges for the pilot sites. Three out of the six sites did not find the victim engagement training useful. However, in general, the sites expressed the need for victim engagement training for panel members to help them navigate conflicting opinions about including victims in the restorative process, learn methods to involve victims in meaningful and clinically appropriate ways, and address challenges in including the victim’s voice within the diversion process.

Throughout the self-study, the pilot sites had the opportunity to identify areas where they lacked proficiency in implementing the program, especially during the panel meetings and circle process. It must be noted that the panel meeting and circle process observations showed that only two sites fully implemented the 4-Quadrant Agreement format, while the other three sites did not show evidence of using it. Additionally, RJ 201 offers training on how to use the 4-Quadrant Agreement format. Three out of the six pilot sites indicated the need for a refresher of this training.

Although the CYSA offered technical assistance to the pilot sites during the implementation process, they did not take advantage of this opportunity. It would be beneficial for the pilot sites to proactively seek technical assistance to address any identified deficiencies in their implementation.

In addition to the training, it is recommended that CYSA implement coaching focused on restorative diversion. This coaching should offer personalized support to staff in restorative skills, frameworks, and program implementation. It can enhance staff capabilities and confidence by identifying gaps and needs and creating actionable steps to address and bridge them in diversion practice. This approach is especially important in skill

areas where diversion staff may be lacking, as it ensures that staff and panel members receive relevant and useful information tailored to their specific practice.

3. What are the YDT implementation enabling and disabling factors?

During their self-studies, the staff involved in the diversion process were asked about their concerns. These concerns include factors that could facilitate or hinder the process, areas of confusion or lack of understanding, the need for improvement, additional training, and adaptation to the penal meeting and circle process. The most salient findings from these concerns are presented next.

Initial Contact. The pilot sites are generally consistent in their methods for contacting the referred youths and their families. Five of the six sites primarily use telephone calls to reach out to the families initially to explain the YDT program process and follow up with a letter if there is no response. Norwich uses a different method and has a 100% acceptance rate for their YDT option. Norwich mentioned that they trained the city's police department on their processes and have one officer dedicated to conducting an initial intake to determine eligibility for YDT. Schools with School Resource Officers (SROs) also conduct these screenings and initial assessments to determine eligibility for YDT.

Intake Meeting. The diversion staff's self-studies did not reveal concerns regarding administering screening and assessment tools, explaining and executing intake forms and releases, confidentiality, preliminary discussion about recommendations to repair the harm, or what happens if the youth does not fulfill the agreement obligations.

During intake, the main concern was that some youths and families were not familiar with or properly prepared for the YDT process after referral and when presenting at the intake. These concerns and specific issues about the referring agencies that hinder the referral and intake process are discussed in more detail in the next section, "Awareness Process Evaluation Findings."

Families are generally satisfied with the convenience of scheduling the intake process.

Based on the 27 parent responses to the web-based survey, 18 parents agreed strongly, and six parents agreed that the family could meet with the Youth Diversion Team staff for the intake meeting when it is convenient for them. Three additional responses were neutral, strongly disagreed, or did not know, respectively.

The Youth Diversion Team (Panel) Meeting. The pilot sites reported in their self-studies that the panel meetings and circle processes typically last up to one hour, ranging between 10 and 60 minutes. However, after observing two panel meetings and circle processes, it was noted that one meeting lasted 90 minutes, and the other was nearly two hours.

One self-study noted that shorter panel meetings typically indicate that more work was completed during the intake session, such as brainstorming possible diversionary activities. It is important to recognize that formal restorative circles and conferences provide the most structure and require significant planning. The panel meeting and circle process observations showed that many of the restorative aspects of the YDT process are not present in these processes.

All sites reported that the panel meeting and circle process were held in a neutral and confidential room at the pilot site. One pilot site indicated a lack of private space due to physical space limitations for families to wait before the meeting or for separate families to wait when meetings would be scheduled back-to-back on the same day. One site expressed being creative because families work late and cannot take time off; therefore, they offer Zoom or untraditional panel times for the family. One pilot site will schedule the panel meeting and circle process for new and returning cases on the same monthly date and time.

Most parents agreed strongly (n = 16) or agreed (n = 7) that they could meet with the Youth Diversion Team when it was convenient for them for the larger team meeting and circle process. Four additional responses were neutral (n = 2), strongly disagreed, or did not know.

While the pilot sites reported no concerns regarding the youth and family acknowledgment and acceptance that they should be present for the entire YDT meeting at the date and time the meeting is scheduled, there are reported instances when panel meetings need to be rescheduled. While not consistent across all pilot sites, the following factors may cause disruptions, shortening, or lengthening of the process:

- Families may attempt to join late to their scheduled time or while another case is being processed.
- Disrespect or non-compliance from the family or youth with the YDT process.
- Parents who speak badly about their children in front of the panel or who become verbally aggressive towards panel members.
- The restorative conversation may be steered differently if a youth disrespects their parent or the case manager.
- If the youth or parent disagrees with diversion panel recommendations.

While the self-study reports from the pilot sites indicated no concerns about inviting supportive individuals to contribute ideas and thoughts during the panel meeting and circle process, the observers noticed that at the five observations, only the youth's parents were present, with no other supportive individuals.

Youth Diversion Team Panel Representation. There are concerns about panel member representation during the YDT panel meetings. The objective of the Youth Diversion Team panel is to customize it to the specific community it serves. The panel

comprises professionals and community members who focus on recruiting volunteers to connect with youths' diversity.

In the self-study, no site reported having a full representation of community volunteers with collective experience in child development, adolescent behavior, family dynamics, youth development, and juvenile laws and procedures to participate in a panel meeting and circle process. All sites reported a lack of professional representation in one or more of the following areas:

- Two sites lack representation in one area (i.e., community provider or law enforcement)
- Two sites lack representation in two areas (i.e., DCF and community members)
- One site lacks representation in three areas (i.e., DCF, school personnel, juvenile probation)
- One site lacks representation in four areas (i.e., DCF, law enforcement, school personnel, juvenile probation)

While all pilot sites reported their attempts to have a well-rounded, participative, and representative panel, several concerns remain.

- Several sites reported scheduling conflicts, a lack of communication, or panel members' no-shows, which could interfere with the consistency of the panel meeting and circle process.
- Some sites expressed concerns about developing a more diverse panel membership that reflects the race, ethnicity, culture, language (interpreters), gender, and geographic representation of the areas served.
- One site reported frequent scheduling conflicts regarding the availability of Department of Children and Families (DCF) representatives for meetings, and another site indicated that DCF representation at panel meetings creates tension with families.
- One site expressed a challenge in recruiting members interested in helping young people.

One pilot site emphasized the importance of having diverse volunteers from various professional sectors related to child development, adolescent behavior, juvenile law, and procedures. They believe having more people who care about young people and want to connect them to resources is beneficial, and this inclusive approach would create a more supportive and safer environment. This site had community representation from three community segments - a community provider representing a professional capacity, law enforcement, and school personnel. However, they also expressed concern that the more professionals are involved, the less likely a child will connect with them.

One pilot site reported that some panelists are more traditional and believe that the process should be tougher on the youth or that all issues must be addressed instead of only focusing on why the youth was referred initially. While this site compared the YDT model to the JRB diversion model to help members understand the differences, including data to demonstrate that the model is more effective, diversion staff concerns of panel members persisted. As a result, the site reported that some members who were in opposition eventually withdrew their participation from the program. One site recommended continually training panel members on practices to address this issue. This training would keep everyone up-to-date with the best practices, allowing them to continue applying them.

Another site echoed similar concerns, pointing out how some panel members hold conventional ways of thinking, which become evident during circle discussions. For instance, panel members refer to the "consequences" of the panel meeting and circle process, saying things like "the court is the other alternative," along with other punitive statements. This tends to happen when a youth or parent presents as having difficulty engaging or taking accountability, and a panel member uses these statements to make youth and families realize the gravity of the situation. Empathetically, the diversion staff person completing the self-study stated that, in some cases, statements like these steer youth and families in the wrong direction, and constantly reminding them can hinder the relationship-building process.

In the self-study, the pilot sites have offered suggestions for improving their panel membership, such as:

- Seeking dedicated panel members with a positive, supportive, and nurturing attitude to enhance interactions with young people and their families during vulnerable times.
- Selecting panel members one-on-one to attend the YDT meeting based on their relevance to the case and the youth and their ability to make families and youth feel at ease. For example, the panel makeup for a case meeting may be changed if a youth reports a bad relationship with a teacher, police officer, or panel member by asking that individual not to attend the panel on that day.
- Allowing families, as experts on themselves, to educate their diversion staff and panel members at the panel meetings.
- Several sites seek and retain panel members who represent the community and can offer unique perspectives and options when creating agreements.
- Scheduling the panel meeting at the same time and date each month to see new and returning youths and families helps prevent scheduling conflicts at one site.

Case Closing. All cases must have a case-closing meeting. Whether a case is completed successfully or unsuccessfully, the youth and family should be brought back before the YDT to discuss the outcome whenever possible (especially in the case of successful completion). Of the six pilot sites, one does not conduct a case closing meeting,

indicating, "We have struggled to get families to return to the final panel," and elaborated that the family's decision to engage in a closing meeting is "sometimes economically driven and affected by the type of employment supporting the family, owning a vehicle, or relying on public transportation, childcare for siblings while at the meeting." This site's case closings are documented by a letter. Of the five sites that conducted case-closing meetings, one site mentioned that a key factor for success was the pilot site's flexibility in allowing the youth to hold the closing meetings anywhere, whether at school or their jobs.

Follow-up After the Panel Meeting. All pilot sites reported following up with the youth and family after the panel meeting and circle process to ensure compliance with the agreement's conditions. While not consistent across all sites, the Youth Diversion Teams offer assistance in accessing recommended services or tasks, monitor school attendance, discipline, and academic performance, monitor the youth's conduct in the community, and collaborate with other service providers. The YDTs reconvene to develop appropriate services and referrals when a concern arises. In cases of family relocation, the process may continue with a referral to the new location or the referral may be returned to the Juvenile probation office for forwarding to the JRB in the new location.

Factors Contributing to Successful Case Closures. Several factors were identified as contributing to successful case closure. Common among most pilot sites, these include ensuring that families indicate their willingness to participate in the diversion process at an early stage, maintaining effective communication with parents, conducting one-on-one case management sessions, and offering diversion programming and services acceptable to the youth. These initiatives can help promote a positive attitude among the diversion team and encourage open engagement and optimism among parents and youth. While not consistent across all pilot sites, additional factors contributing to a successful case closing include:

- A positive diversion team attitude helps parents and youth to engage more, be open to opportunities, and feel optimistic.
- Using Dialectical Behavioral Therapy skills and any life skills that can apply to youth currently or in the future.
- Conducting thorough intakes and restorative circles to develop recommendations to repair the harm.
- Utilizing diversion activities such as writing a letter of apology and prosocial activities that help the youth understand their behavior and its outcomes.
- Case management services that tie diversion activities to the behavior that caused the harm.
- The duration of the case's open period; shorter durations may be better, depending on the youth's needs.
- Taking the time to develop a relationship with the youth before offering programming.

Factors that Contribute to Delayed and Unsuccessful Case Closures. There are reasons why the YDT programming may be delayed or unsuccessful. While not inclusive of all pilot sites, these include:

- A lack of communication between youths and their parents, their unwillingness to participate in the program, their lack of dedication to the process, their disengagement after the panel meeting and circle process, or the youth's continued re-offending may result in their disqualification or disengagement.
- Some cases are unsuccessful due to the need for a higher level of care, or the families may experience financial difficulties, housing challenges, hospitalization, emergencies, and language barriers for non-English-speaking families. Custody disputes or inconsistent parenting practices between homes can affect the establishment of relationships during intake, panel meetings, and circle processes.
- Conflicts involving youth, families, and the organization, such as missed appointments, rescheduling, and scheduling conflicts, can hinder the program's progress.
- The case manager's workload and time management may limit their capacity to assist clients. Different clients require varying amounts of time to establish rapport and identify with the program's recommendations, which may take up to 3 to 6 months. Please refer to "*Utilization Process Evaluation Findings*," specifically Table 6 – Ratio of Accepted Cases to # FTE Diversion Staff and Panel Members to consider workload.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality was not a concern. All panel members at each site must sign a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of their appointment, at the start of each year served, or both. Additionally, circle process observers are also required to sign confidentiality agreements. Some sites verbally explain the case without distributing packets, while others verbally explain the case, distribute packets, and collect them at the end of the meeting. To maintain the integrity of the YDT process, all information, documents, records, and files related to YDT cases must be kept strictly confidential. All sites reported that case files are kept in a secure location with limited, controlled access.

Data Collection. The pilot sites were only requested to describe their organization's data collection processes. Although the methods of data collection vary among the six pilot sites, the following methods are used: YSB intake forms completed by the Youth's parent/guardian, DCF Excel sheet, CT Youth Connect, Bonterra Tech-Social Solutions Efforts to Outcomes, CYSA Surveys for youths and families, Ohio Scales, Salesforce, Dillinger RAD CT Youth Database.

It is important to understand that data collection methods may vary across different YSB organizational structures, each offering various programs and services in addition to the YDT diversion program. Regarding the YDT program, it's crucial to streamline data collection and customize it to align with the specific objectives of ongoing program improvement,

including professional development needs. The data collection methods must be transparent, chosen to minimize biases and human errors, systematic, and easily accessible to ensure easy access to the data when needed. The process should be controlled and standardized to ensure high reliability and validity. It is recommended that the data collection processes include establishing the psychometric properties of the outcome data collection instruments and selecting appropriate measurements to ensure that the data are accurate, complete, and accessible for comparison across all YDT sites.

A Shared Vision for Success. Five sites shared examples of successes their organization experienced while implementing the YDT process and are paraphrased as follows:

- The implementation process has effectively developed a shared vision for all its diversion staff and panel members, ensuring everyone involved is on the same page regarding trauma-informed restorative justice practices. For example, implementing the new YDT format for the panel has resulted in a more enriching experience.
- The relationship and trust-building questions at the beginning of the panel meeting and the circle process effectively highlighted the commonalities among the stakeholders while they played their diverse roles.
- The new diversion process helped establish a culture of honesty and empathy, which may contribute to nurturing a culture of trust and psychological safety. Feedback from some families regarding the process has been overwhelmingly positive. Case managers and some families have expressed comfort in participating in the meetings, citing meaningful conversations and smooth engagement.
- Modifications were made to ensure fidelity to the YDT program, such as reducing the team size and ensuring all team members remained flexible in splitting their time. This site created a schedule to improve positive and supportive panel meetings and circle processes and asked school representatives only to attend when their student's case was being represented.
- One site explained how the new diversion process helped to achieve a positive outcome for one youth. The case manager connected with the young person by regularly checking up on them, offering guidance and support, and engaging them in positive activities like cooking and boxing. As a result, the young person discovered a newfound passion for boxing. By the end of the program, the young person had undergone a complete transformation, with a completely different outlook on life.

Compliance with Meeting Script. Five of the six sites mentioned changing the meeting script outlined in the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams*. When observing the panel meeting and circle process, the observer noticed that three sites followed the meeting script outlined in the manual or used a revision that contained trauma-informed and restorative language. In comparison, two additional sites

did not follow the script or use a similar script containing restorative language as recommended. Three sites provided their meeting script or an outline for review with the submission of their case study. Of these, two met restorative language criteria, and one did not.

Conflating Case Management with Diversion Programming. While this evaluation is limited in scope and not generalizable to all pilot sites participating in the YDT diversion pilot program, there are concerns about the pilot sites mixing up case management and wraparound services with restorative diversion practice. While providing the necessary case management and wraparound services is important, it's equally important to ensure that these efforts align with the objectives of a restorative justice diversion program.

The different pilot sites use varying approaches for managing cases and supporting youths who need clinical or therapeutic referrals to address underlying issues. The self-studies and observations of panel meetings and circle processes indicate that intervention programs to address harm and restore connections may not be entirely restorative, or there may be a disconnect between the diversionary assignment and its restorative component. Two of the six sites described the following scenarios in their diversionary programming and are paraphrased:

- *A young person faced school-related drug charges, poor attendance, and family challenges. The agreed-upon plan included completing a drug prevention program, attending therapy, and improving attendance. However, the family did not support these efforts, increasing tension. During the YDT panel meeting, the parents expressed a negative attitude, and the family could not fulfill the agreed-upon plan.*
- *Another case surrounded the difficulties in addressing the challenges that diversion staff and families face when participating in the diversion program. Some young people require clinical or therapeutic referrals to deal with underlying issues. Unlike some of their partners, their organization cannot offer on-site counseling.*

While it is crucial to provide personalized services through case management or wraparound services to address the specific needs of youths, there must be a connection between the actions for which the youth are held accountable and the diversionary assignment; otherwise, the restorative message may not be clear to the young person. (Farrell, Betsinger, & Hammond, 2018). Case management services may involve participating in diversion activities, such as writing an apology letter and engaging in positive social activities to help the young person understand the impact of their actions. These activities can be identified through comprehensive assessments and restorative circles to create recommendations for repairing the harm.

Generating Ideas to Repair the Harm. In a restorative context, generating ideas to repair harm, including brainstorming, must involve all persons. Although all the sites reported using a brainstorming approach in their self-study to generate ideas for repairing the harm, the process is not being completed in a restorative context since it must be conducted with all voices at the meeting and circle process.

In the self-study, five pilot sites had no concerns with the restorative or agreement questions. However, during the panel meeting and circle process observations, only two sites used the 4-Quadrant Agreement format provided in the manual. One site, which did not use the format, reported in its self-study that it had not implemented the Agreement format as of the date of its self-study.

One site explained that brainstorming is usually done with the youth and parent at intake. Then, they discuss it with the panelists and brainstorm again with everyone in the room, which is acceptable.

However, there are instances when the process used to generate ideas to repair the harm is unacceptable. One site reported that the team usually discusses the matter amongst themselves, then with the panelists, and then presents the results to the family. In two panel meetings and circle process observations, the agreement appeared to be imposed by the case worker rather than being done collaboratively. In another instance, the discussion appeared to be more like therapy, with a panel member lecturing. These examples are not acceptable.

Awareness Process Evaluation Findings

The diversion staff promotes awareness of the YDT program to various stakeholders. However, the lack of a consistent and uniform protocol hinders their efforts. An overarching message is needed to define restorative practice and outline its objectives, core features, and critical ingredients necessary for a fully restorative process to achieve its goals. It should also include common attributes of restorative justice programs, a description of a restorative justice program, and examples of formal restorative justice programs in the justice system.

The evaluation questions related to utilization follow.

1. What methods and procedures did the pilot agency staff use to promote program awareness to the referring agencies, panel members, referred youth, their families, and victims?

To address this question, in some instances, data from the web-based survey of various stakeholders is combined with findings from the pilot site self-assessments to understand the pilot sites' methods for promoting awareness and identifying improvement areas.

Referring Agencies

The referring agency must determine if a case is eligible for diversion to the YDT and should understand the eligibility criteria and the function and purpose of the YDT diversion program. This ensures that all youth and family referees have a basic understanding when entering the diversion process. The recommendations from these findings suggest a need for better training of referring agency staff and a clear, consistent message about the YDT program and its process for referring agency staff.

There is no standardized process for increasing awareness among referring agencies across all sites. Each site decides on the approach that works best for them. Although individual pilot sites have attempted to maintain internal consistency, the methods used vary across different pilot sites. While these efforts are not inclusive of all sites, some action has been taken to promote awareness, including:

- The YDT case manager attends juvenile probation once a week to assess new cases.
- Scripts are provided to referring agencies to ensure parents receive the same information regardless of referral source.
- The police department is trained on the YDT processes (including role-playing activities), officers are provided refresher presentations, and new police officers are given self-paced, restorative justice training opportunities.
- A diversion staff member meets regularly with the school resource officers and police supervisors to discuss the diversion process, what constitutes a referral, and how referrals can be made.
- Updates on the YDT program are provided at Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) meetings.

- Addressing inappropriate referrals with the referring agency on a case-by-case basis.
- Monthly check-ins are conducted with middle and high schools to review diversion referrals.
- Seeing that a dedicated officer or school resource officer conducts an initial intake to determine eligibility for YDT.
- Close relationships are maintained with schools and the police department to ensure open communication channels.

The self-studies indicated that diversion staff are familiar with the reasons for denying cases, such as a lack of ability, resources, or experience within the pilot organization. The self-studies also mention that diversion staff recognizes that youths would not qualify to participate in the program if they have been referred multiple times with no improvement in behavior or if the youth denies the charges and is unwilling to take accountability, if they already have an open case or are on probation, or if new and more violent charges have been made between the initial referral and the YDT intake. Additionally, pilot site diversion staff know that some referrals are ineligible if a higher level of care is needed than the site can provide.

However, the self-studies also uncovered that, after the referral, families may sometimes be unclear about the YDT process during the initial intake assessment. In one instance, diversion staff reported that the referring agency representative informed a family that their child could "do a program" and would not have to go to court. In their self-study, diversion staff explained that a police department officer did not provide enough detail about the program. This suggests that the arresting officer may have found it challenging to explain the process thoroughly. As a result, when the case manager received the referral and contacted the family, they were confused or upset. This is a common occurrence, as explained by another pilot site. Parents may arrive at intake without knowledge of the program their child is referred to or have a misconception that their child must do community service.

One pilot site reported receiving referrals for young people who do not live in or have committed a crime in the area that the site serves or for another who is already on probation and, therefore, cannot participate in the program. In addition, the staff at another site explained that some schools have referred young people to the program without understanding that they must first go through their community's Youth Service Bureau. While the referring sources usually avoid sending over cases where the level of offense is too high, one pilot site has had to send a few cases back to the police department or other referring agency because the level of the offense or the young person was too high of a risk for the diversion program.

The web-based survey of referring agencies received 11 responses that identified awareness and needs from their perspective. Table 2 shows responses from individuals who represent six police departments, two juvenile courts, and four schools (note: one of

these responses represents an individual who makes referrals from a school and a police department). At three pilot sites, responses came from two sources, such as a police department and a school or a police department and a juvenile court. In contrast, responses came from only one source at three other sites: a police department, a juvenile court, or a school. Thus, it is important to note that not all pilot sites received responses from all the agencies that refer cases to them. Therefore, these results may not fully depict the perceptions of all referring agencies.

Regarding the perception of referring agencies about the YDT diversion model compared to the old JRB diversion model, opinions are almost evenly split in response to the question: "*Does the Youth Diversion Team model have a more positive impact on youths' development than the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) model?*" (refer to Table 2). Out of the 11 responses, two strongly agree, and four agree (n = 6), with two strongly disagreeing, two not knowing, and one with a neutral opinion about this perception.

There appears to be a disconnect between the referring agencies and the pilot sites regarding understanding the YDT process. As shown in Table 2, the referring agencies indicated that they understand the JRB/YDT process well, with nine out of eleven responses reporting that they "*adequately understand how the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process works.*" However, responses from the pilot sites suggest otherwise, noting that some referring agencies do not fully comprehend the Youth Diversion Team process. This lack of understanding can lead to confusion for families seeking help from the Youth Diversion Team, resulting in the need for staff to spend more time answering questions and explaining the process during intake or before panel meetings for new cases. Please refer to "*Utilization Process Evaluation Findings,*" specifically Table 6 – *Ratio of Accepted Cases to # FTE Diversion Staff and Panel Members* to consider workload.

Participation in the RJ 101 and 201 training could enhance the referring agencies' understanding and perceptions of the YDT process. One individual from a police department and two from the juvenile court completed RJ 101 and 201 training (see Table 2). The individual from the police department found the RJ 101 and 201 training adequate. One of the two individuals from the juvenile court found both trainings to be very useful. On the other hand, one individual from the juvenile court found RJ 101 to be adequate and RJ 201 to be very useful. As for the school respondents, they are either unaware of the training or are aware but have not attended.

Table 2: Referring Agency Perceptions of the JRB/YDT Process & Response to RJ Training		
	“The new Youth Diversion Team model impacts youths’ development more positively than the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) model.”	Adequately understands how the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process works.
<p>Police Department (n = 6)</p> <p>RJ 101 Training Adequate – 1 Aware of, Not Attended – 1 Not Aware - 4</p> <p>RJ 201 Training Adequate – 1 Aware of, Not Attended – 1 Not Aware - 4</p>	<p>Strongly Agree – 1 Agree – 2 Neutral - 1 Strongly Disagree - 1 Don’t Know – 1</p>	<p>Strongly Agree – 4 Agree – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1</p>
<p>Juvenile Court (n = 2)</p> <p>RJ 101 Training Adequate – 1 Very Useful - 1</p> <p>RJ 201 Training Very Useful - 2</p>	<p>Agree – 2</p>	<p>Strongly Agree – 1 Agree – 1</p>
<p>School (n = 4)</p> <p>RJ 101 Training Aware of, Not Attended – 1 Not Aware - 3</p> <p>RJ 201 Training Aware of, Not Attended – 1 Not Aware - 3</p>	<p>Strongly Agree – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Don’t Know – 2</p>	<p>Strongly Agree – 2 Agree – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1</p>

Additional Training Needs. The referring agencies did indicate a desire for additional training (see Table 3). Except for the juvenile court response, police officers and school personnel requested training in trauma-informed restorative justice, a better understanding of the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process, and the JRB/Youth Diversion Team eligibility criteria.

Table 3: Referring Agency Requests for Additional Training			
	Eligibility criteria for the JRB/Youth Diversion Team (e.g., residency requirements, level of offense, prior history of the youth)	A better understanding of the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process.	Trauma-informed restorative justice.
Police	1	2	3
Juvenile Court	0	0	0
School	2	2	2
Total	3	4	5

Panel Members

The pilot sites used different methods to raise awareness among panel members about the YDT diversion program. Although the methods varied across the pilot sites, they all provided some form of onboarding or orientation training for new panel members to learn about restorative diversionary approaches. Some also mentioned providing trauma-informed restorative training opportunities through partnerships with schools and government agencies. The diversion staff encourages panel members to complete the RJ 101 and 201 training, but most panel members have not completed the training. Panel members who have completed the CYSA RJ training tend to understand the YDT diversionary process better. More detailed results of the awareness-promoting methods follow.

From the self-study, each pilot site shared the various strategies to increase the panel members' awareness of the YDT diversion program. While different across the pilot sites, all provide some form of onboarding or orientation [in-house] training for new panel members to review YDT diversionary approaches. Two sites referred to passing along trauma-informed restorative training opportunities offered through other partnerships or venues such as schools and government agencies.

The results of the web-based survey of panel members show that, of the 26 respondents, six strongly agreed, and ten agreed that the Youth Diversion Team staff helped them understand the YDT process (see Table 4). Nineteen of the 26 panel respondents would like to learn more about training and other ways to enhance their involvement in the Youth Diversion Team process.

Five sites encourage panel members to complete the CYSA Restorative Justice 101 and 201 training. Of the 26 panel members responding to the web-based survey, nine completed RJ 101, and eight completed RJ 201 (see Table 4). Most panel members either were aware of the training but did not attend or were unaware of it.

Enhancing in-house training and onboarding processes with the RJ 101 and 201 training appears to have two main benefits: (1) Improved panel members' perceptions that restorative questions help youth identify the harm they caused and develop a plan to repair it, and (2) greater impact on panel members' perceptions of how the restorative process helps youth learn to take accountability for their actions.

Two panelists, each from a different site, expressed concerns about diversionary programming being too broad in their web-based survey. They had favorable perceptions of the YDT framework, but programming needs to be specific to each community. They also emphasized the need for communities to adapt restorative practices according to their needs. One of the panelists mentioned that the restorative questions and diversion assignments often lack individualized modification and are framed so broadly that they do not help develop client insight. One noteworthy comment is that while the YDT suggestions offered may be used at the time, they are not incorporated [for the youth] for future use despite clarifying the assignment(s) for the client [at the time the activity was assigned].

The above comments are worthy of further investigation by the CYSA. While not confirmative, as with diversionary staff, it is important to be sure that panel members do not conflate case management and wraparound services with diversionary assignments. Please refer to question 3, "*What are the enabling and disabling factors in the YDT implementation?*" in the "Evaluation of Implementation Outcomes" findings section regarding the possible conflation of case management and wraparound services with diversionary assignments among diversionary staff. While it is important to provide the necessary case management and wraparound services, it is equally important to ensure that these efforts are aligned with the objectives of a restorative justice diversion program. There must be a connection between the actions for which the youth are held accountable and the diversionary assignment; otherwise, the restorative message may not be clear to the young person (Farrell, Betsinger, & Hammond, 2018).

The self-study revealed that all the sites reported having the opportunity to provide the panel members with a basic understanding of the offense and the youth and family's background before the panel meeting and circle process. Although handled on a case-by-

case basis, most sites reported the ability to resolve conflicts of interest before the panel meeting and collect all necessary information beforehand. One site provided further details, stating that a youth will sometimes disclose information not previously shared during the intake, or new relevant information will be provided. Diversion staff reported openly discussing the information with the family in these instances.

Table 4: Panel Member Training	
My training helped me understand the Youth Diversion Team process better.	Strongly Agree – 6 Agree – 10 Neither – 2 Don't Know/Didn't Attend – 7
How useful has the RJ 101 training, provided by the Connecticut Youth Services Association, been in supporting your work on the Youth Diversion Team panel?	Very Useful – 2 Adequate – 7 Aware, Did not attend – 10 Not Aware – 7
How useful has the RJ 201 training, provided by the Connecticut Youth Services Association, been in supporting your work on the Youth Diversion Team panel?	Very Useful – 3 Adequate – 5 Aware, Did not attend – 11 Not Aware – 7
Would you like to learn about training and other ways to enhance your involvement in the Youth Diversion Team process?	Yes – 19 No – 7

Victims

The self-study findings indicate that engaging victims is a significant challenge at the pilot sites. Diversion staff and panel members may prioritize a protective approach over a proactive one regarding victim awareness and engagement.

While not consistent at every site, diversion staff expressed several concerns. Victim involvement may not always be clinically appropriate, and diversion staff may have concerns about causing further harm if victims relive traumatic experiences or react negatively. In some cases, involving victims may negatively impact the collaborative process. The victim needs to be willing to participate in the diversion process; otherwise, the restorative purpose of the meeting can be affected. There were also mentions that engagement strategies may create an unsafe environment, especially in ongoing tension or

inappropriate timing, even when the guardians approve. Staff and panel members may also struggle with liability issues or how to handle situations that get out of hand.

The self-study suggests that diversion staff engage with victims on a case-by-case basis. For example, diversion staff and panel members may view a victim statement as more effective than direct face-to-face interaction. One site mentioned collecting a victim statement and sharing victim requests during the panel meeting and circle process. The approach to engaging with the victim depends on the location. One site mentioned that engagement is more effective when the incident occurs at school rather than in the community.

Fourteen of the sixteen staff members involved in the YDT diversion program have completed Victim Engagement training. However, they are still seeking ways to effectively involve victims in the diversion process. In their self-studies, the diversion staff identified several training needs. Firstly, they need to learn how to engage victims who are unresponsive or disinterested in participating in the restorative justice process, as the victim needs to have faith in the restorative process. Secondly, they need training on including victims in meaningful and clinically appropriate ways, such as incorporating the victim's voice within the diversion process. Lastly, providing victim engagement training for panel members to address conflicting opinions about involving victims in the restorative process would also be beneficial.

Youths and Families

Most methods to inform youths and their families about the YDT process occur at intake. To improve awareness, while not consistent across all pilot sites, diversion staff uses various self-created scripts or checklists, provides printed materials, and uses one-on-one discussions to build rapport that continues through case management sessions to raise awareness and explain the YDT process such as the program's potential outcomes, the length of time the case will remain open, the requirements for an extension beyond six months, the potential to refer the case back to the referral source for non-compliance, and how family participation can benefit the youth by providing access to resources. One pilot site explained that it provides a printout of the YDT timeline to help families better understand the process.

Generally, the new YDT framework helps families feel more confident and hopeful. One site reported that many families and youths enter the intake very guarded, quiet, and hesitant. The new strategies allow youths and their families to understand better and to be more receptive to the process during the intake. Another site explained that before implementing the new YDT program, youths and families seemed more "scared" with how intakes were previously conducted and that intakes now take less time than before.

Youths and parents agreed that the Youth Diversion Team staff helped them fully understand how the process works.

Based on the 27 parent responses to the web-based survey, 18 strongly agreed, eight agreed, and one strongly disagreed that the Youth Diversion Team staff helped them fully understand how the process works.

Based on the 22 youth responses to the web-based survey, 14 strongly agreed, and eight agreed that the Youth Diversion Team staff helped them fully understand how the process works.

The self-study revealed that diversion staff at several sites had concerns about the lack of youths' and families' understanding of the YDT process at intake. During the initial contact, for those who accepted or rejected the option, youth and their families may have had questions and concerns about the YDT program, such as:

- If the process is mandatory, do they need legal representation, and whether jail time is required if the program is not completed?
- If they complete the process, will the arrest be erased? Will there be a record or history of the arrest that can be used against them?
- How long does the process take, or will the case remain open, and what types of services must be completed to complete the program?

While the referring agency can provide the basic answers to the above questions, more detailed information can be provided by the diversion staff.

One site expressed concerns about thoroughly explaining the YDT diversion process to the youths and families, stating that some families continue to have trouble understanding the process or get especially confused about the waiver of rights document. At another site, diversion staff explained that family resistance was about the parents wanting to move on after the agreement was completed. The family explained that the extended contact [for six months] was unnecessary [once the diversionary assignment is completed] and could undo their progress as a family. The diversion staff explained to the families that the case could be completed sooner depending on how responsive the youth is to completing the agreement or if additional resources are needed. After the explanation, the family became more open to the process.

Of the 27 web-based survey parent responses, 16 strongly agreed, and seven agreed they were involved in developing the agreement plan for [their] child/family. One parent neither agreed nor disagreed, two strongly disagreed, and one didn't know.

In some cases, diversion staff are worried that some youth and their families might struggle to grasp the process as an accountability model without the presumption of innocence. They are also concerned about the responsible youth's recognition of taking full responsibility for their actions and willingness to explore potential ways to identify the harm, who has been harmed, and what might be done to make things right. In any event, one site expressed sensitivity surrounding a core pillar of a restorative process, that the

YDT diversion program presumes the youth isn't 'innocent.' The self-studies indicate the following concerns:

- Some youths do not take accountability and feel like victims, making engaging them challenging.
- Some families do not understand that opting for the Youth Diversion Team process means the young person accepts responsibility and takes ownership of their actions.
- Families sometimes don't fully understand the youth's role in an event or don't believe that the youth did anything wrong or violated any rules.
- Other families' concerns are that it seems unfair that their child has been referred to a serious program when the youth was "defending themselves" or "doing what we taught them to do" in certain situations.

The sites use various techniques to help neutralize concerns about accountability and responsibility.

- One site described how the youths are provided with accountability assignments in the hope that, by building rapport, they will open their perspective and view the situation differently than they did during intake.
- Another site expressed the need to be open to [the youth's] perspective and to each youth's uniqueness in how long it takes to take responsibility—that sometimes, the full acknowledgment happens after the panel meeting and circle process.
- Another site expressed initial concerns about the youth taking accountability. Still, it was less concerned when [the youth] saw the process unfold, stating that some youths come into the meetings denying what they did was wrong, especially if it was a fight where they thought they were 'defending themselves.'
- When reviewing the four quadrants with the youth and family using a flip chart, one site expressed how the youths connect and see how their actions led to the behavior.

No site revealed concerns related to the following:

- Properly present and review the restorative questions with the youth and family, or provide a copy to supporters.
- The youth and family's acceptance that if an agreement cannot be reached, the case may be sent back to the referring agency.
- Confidentiality and fully explaining and executing all appropriate intake forms and releases, screening and assessment tools, and interpreting the results.
- Reviewing the responsible youth questionnaire with the responsible youth and feeling confident they understand the questions.

- Allowing the responsible youth to bring a supporter to the YDT panel meeting and circle process that sees them in a positive light, such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle, coach, scout leader, or clergy member.
- Conducting preliminary discussions about possible recommendations before the panel meeting and circle process happens, even though decisions are not made until the YDT panel meeting and circle process when everyone present has had an opportunity to provide input into the process and final recommendations.
- Explaining how the circle process works during the YDT panel meeting and circle process.

2. How does the awareness process differ among the sites?

As mentioned in answering awareness of the previous questions in this section, consistent and informative materials and methods for informing the various stakeholders about the Youth Diversion Team program vary across the pilot sites, and an overarching, consistent, and uniform process is lacking.

3. What are the YDT enabling and disabling factors of the awareness process at each site?

The main enabling factor is that each site has developed strategies that improve awareness in the best way for them. The primary disabling factor is the lack of an overarching, consistent, and uniform protocol that sets the tone of the message. This overarching message could include a clear definition of restorative practice, objectives outlining the aims of restorative practice, core features and critical ingredients for a fully restorative process to achieve its objectives, common attributes of restorative justice programs, a description of a restorative justice program, and examples of formal restorative justice programs in the justice system.

Utilization Process Evaluation Findings

The statistics show that stakeholders will use the YDT diversion approach as an alternative to punitive measures. The ratio of referred cases to diversion staff and panel members indicates that some pilot sites may become overwhelmed with the number of cases, which could reduce the amount of time diversion staff can dedicate to each case. While the utilization results identify many successes and limitations, the most salient ones are as follows:

- Despite numerous awareness strategies conducted by the pilot sites, there is a lack of consistency in approach and understanding of the purpose of the trauma-informed restorative justice diversion process among panel members, referring agencies, youths, and parents. As cited in the awareness outcome finding, better consistent messaging about the YDT program may alleviate this concern. Better awareness strategies can impact more effective utilization and strengthen the restorative process and its outcomes.
- The self-study does not provide enough evidence about whether some diversion teams may be handling cases inappropriately through a restorative diversion process or whether offenses that require a restorative approach have occurred. Still, this evaluation raises concerns. It is suggested that the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual be revised to include clear and specific criteria of examples for what offenses best fit the Youth Diversion Team diversionary program.
- The victims' voices are largely absent from the utilization data. The pilot sites expressed their concerns clearly, and efforts must be made to address their training needs in addition to the victim engagement training provided by the CYSA. Further study is recommended to delineate their concerns and needs beyond what this report identifies.
- Panel members' lack of buy-in and absence of training may not necessarily hinder the program's utilization but could discourage the restorative process and its outcomes. Other concerns regarding panel members are identified in the *implementation and awareness outcome findings* earlier in this report. Beyond a recommendation by the diversion staff to panel members to complete the RJ 101 and 201 training, there is evidence from the evaluation that it should be mandatory. Further, it is recommended that a formal program be created for panel member training. This may be accomplished in a train-the-trainer format where diversion staff are taught to administer the training to panel members as needed.

The evaluation questions related to utilization follow.

1. Of the referred youth, how many appropriate referrals accepted the YDT option?

The pilot sites started the Youth Diversion Team diversion program between June 1, 2023, and August 23, 2023. From the start of each program until the self-study's completion on March 25, 2024, the pilot sites received 271 referrals, of which 229 were accepted, resulting in a utilization rate of 84.5%. The number of cases referred and accepted varies by site. Table 5 compares the total number of referrals to the number of cases accepted by the Youth Diversion Team at each pilot site.

Site	# Referrals	# Cases Accepted (Utilization Rate)	# Refusals / No Response
Waterbury	88	69 (78.4%)	19
Hartford	37	23 (62.2%)	14
Bridgeport	65	60 (92.3%)	5
Naugatuck	22	20 (91%)	2
Norwich	27	27 (100%)	0
Wethersfield	32	30 (94%)	2
Total	271	229 (85.5)	42

New Haven introduced its program on July 1, 2023, but stated in its self-study that it was ineffective due to staffing challenges. Nonetheless, it continued to practice using the JRB diversion model. During this time, it processed 144 referrals. Of these, 103 accepted the JRB program, 19 rejected it, and 22 did not respond to communication.

2. Do the pilot sites accept only those eligible referrals they have the ability, resources, and experience to handle effectively?

According to the manual and congruent with the self-study results, Youth Diversion Team staff know they should only handle cases when their capability, resources, and experience allow them to manage cases effectively. As requested in the manual, the teams take into account residency requirements in the community, the referral source (e.g., police, school, or court), the severity of the offense (e.g., infractions, violations, misdemeanors, and low-level felonies), and the juvenile's prior history (e.g., number of offenses, previous interactions with the Youth Diversion Team, juvenile court record, and risk level).

The pilot sites follow consistent methods for contacting referred youths and their families. Five out of six sites mainly use telephone calls to reach the families and explain the YDT program process. If there is no response, they send a follow-up letter. All sites, except

Norwich, had cases where the family refused to participate in the YDT diversion process or did not respond to the pilot site's communication attempts.

Norwich's process is unique in that the referring agency must explain the YDT program, provide the youth questionnaire, and encourage the family to contact the YDT to start the process. Table 5 shows Norwich has not experienced any refused cases or instances where the family did not respond to their communications. Providing training to referring agencies to conduct thorough intakes could lead to more appropriate referrals, reduce the number of families rejecting the YDT diversion process, and decrease the number of families not responding to communication attempts.

There are concerns about the possibility of inappropriate referrals and the Youth Diversion Team handling cases for which diversion may not be suitable. This evaluation did not investigate why certain cases are referred to a YDT or why some referrals are accepted or rejected. While the self-study does not provide this evidence, it raises questions about whether some diversion teams might be handling inappropriate cases through a restorative diversion process or if an offense that necessitates a restorative approach has occurred. For instance, it's unclear if every case accepted by the Youth Diversion Team involves a youth who has committed an arrestable offense that warrants diversion from the judicial system or if there is harm to another individual or the community. There are two recommendations:

- Further study is recommended to determine if the pilot sites only handle appropriate diversion cases.
- This evaluation shows that the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual fails to outline best practices for determining appropriate diversion cases. It is suggested that the *Manual* be revised to include clear and specific criteria of examples for what offenses best fit the Youth Diversion Team diversionary program. This should be followed up with appropriate training.

It is important to note that some diversion assignments at some sites may be mixed (i.e., conflated) with case management or wraparound services. While this evaluation is focused on the six pilot sites in the YDT diversion program, the pilot sites must be cautious about using diversionary assignments solely for mental health or substance use interventions or the problems that caused the harm. It's essential to ensure that the purpose of restorative justice diversion programming is met and that these assignments are not solely driven by the need to "fix" a problem or other concerns.

Please note that restorative justice diversion is an accountability model that involves organizing a meeting led by a trained facilitator that brings together the youth involved in the justice system, the harmed individuals, and other community members in which the responsible youth accepts responsibility for the harm caused and accountability to repair

that harm. During this meeting, the participants address the offense and the harm it caused, and they work together to connect the young person to personalized services that support their success in repairing the harm and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

There is a concern from the data on utilization that the number of referrals may overwhelm some members of the diversion staff and panel due to the high number of cases. Table 6 compares the ratio of accepted cases to the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) diversion staff and panel members. According to the self-study, it was found that the case manager's limitations may include handling a large caseload and time constraints. Other limitations may involve certain clients requiring more time than others and the varying time it takes to establish rapport with different clients. Some clients may not fully engage with their recommendations until almost the end of the 3-to-6-month period.

When diversion staff and panel members are overwhelmed with caseloads, they cannot dedicate enough time to each case. A reasonable caseload would allow staff to allocate time to engage with and better support youths and families. It is equally important for volunteer panel members to effectively manage their workload when rotating through the cases, as this may impact panel members' dedication to individual cases and their retention.

Site	# FTE Staff	# Panel Members	# Cases Accepted	Ratio of Diversion Staff FTE to Cases Accepted	Ratio of Panel Members to Cases Accepted
Waterbury	2	11	69	1:35	1:6
Hartford	3	5	23	1:8	1:5
Bridgeport	4	8	60	1:15	1:8
Naugatuck	1.5	8	20	1:13	1:3
Norwich	1.5	8	27	1:18	1:4
Wethersfield	2	13	30	1:15	1:2
Total	14	53	229	1:16	1:4

3. What are the concerns of referring youths, parents, and panel members regarding the YDT program?

Results from the limited impact analysis (collected using web-based surveys for the youths and parents) show that most parents believed that the help their child received from the YDT was beneficial. They agreed that their child received the right amount of help and that the YDT process exceeded their expectations. Further, most parents reported seeing improvement in their child due to the YDT process.

Most youths felt that the YDT process helped them learn to be accountable for their actions and see themselves as better off. Although youths were less likely than their parents to believe that the YDT process could help them handle things better at home, they were likelier to believe they could better manage school-related matters because of the YDT process. Both the youths and parents believed that the youth could better manage matters in the community.

The self-study revealed that some diversion staff have concerns about certain panelists holding more traditional views, and some may feel that the Youth Diversion Team process should be tougher on the youth. Additionally, some panelists may believe that all issues must be addressed rather than just focusing on why the youth was referred initially. This supports a hypothesis from the evaluation, suggesting that case management and wraparound services may be mistaken for restorative diversionary approaches. These concerns are also supported by the results of a web-based survey, which shows that most panel members neither agree nor disagree on the positive impact of the YDT program on youths' development. The suggestion is for the CYSA to investigate panel members' concerns further.

On the other hand, the web-based survey indicates generally positive agreement among panel members that the YDT program focuses on accountability, ownership, community, relationships, and youth development—although it must be noted that some diversion staff believe that there is little difference between the YDT diversion model and the JRB diversion model when asked about these program qualities.

The web-based survey also showed that panel members who completed in-house orientation or onboarding training generally perceive the YDT process as beneficial to youth. Additionally, panel members who completed the RJ 101 and 201 training generally believe that the YDT diversion model positively impacts youths' lives more than the former JRB model and that youths and their families are more engaged.

4. What are the concerns of referring agencies regarding the YDT program?

The opinions of the 11 referring agencies that responded to the web-based survey are nearly evenly split on whether the YDT model positively impacts youths' development more than the old JRB model. Six responses strongly agree (n = 2) or agree (n = 4). The other

respondents either strongly disagree (n = 2), don't know (n = 2), or are neutral (n = 1). However, trauma-informed restorative justice training may be beneficial. When controlling for having completed the RJ 101 and 201 training, responses from 3 of the 11 referring agencies each agreed that the YDT program positively impacts youth development.

While the referring agencies generally reported having a good understanding of how the JRB/YDT process works, the self-study responses from the pilot sites present a different view. They note that some referring agencies do not comprehend the trauma-informed restorative justice YDT process. This lack of understanding can lead to confusion for families when they approach the Youth Diversion Team for intake, resulting in the diversion team staff needing to spend more time answering questions and explaining the process during intake or before panel meetings for new cases. However, except the juvenile court, police departments and schools recognize their need for additional training that allows them to understand better 1) the eligibility criteria for making referrals to the JRB/Youth Diversion Team, (2) the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process, and (3) the trauma-informed restorative justice process.

5. What are the utilization-enabling and disabling factors at each site?

These factors could be confusion or lack of understanding, the need for improvement, additional training, and adaptation to the panel meeting and circle process. These factors may have occurred at any point in the YDT process. The most important results of these findings will be presented next.

Panel Members

The pilot sites are striving to create inclusive and diverse panels and are making progress in improving the utilization of panel members in the YDT program. They seek panel members who can positively interact with youth and their families during vulnerable times and provide them with a positive, supportive, and nurturing attitude. Several sites actively seek panel members representing the community and can offer unique perspectives when creating agreements. However, the self-study revealed concerns about the Department of Children and Families' representation at some meetings, causing tension among families. Scheduling conflicts among youths, families, and panel members may affect the consistency of panel meetings, and disagreement among panel members about the purpose of the Youth Diversion Team model can slow down the process. Finally, panel member buy-in of the process and a lack of training may interfere with the restorative outcomes the YDT process attempts to achieve.

Youths and Families

Unlike the former JRB model, the self-study showed that pilot sites are receptive to inviting family members, friends, mentors, therapists, or neighbors to create a more supportive and safer atmosphere for the youth. However, no supportive members were with the youth and family during the panel meeting and circle process observations.

There is concern that youths and families may not understand restorative diversion model programming. Regarding the restorative model, some diversion staff share concerns that young people and their families may struggle to understand the process as an accountability model without the presumption of innocence. Some families don't understand that opting for the YDT process means their children will take responsibility for their actions. Others believe their child did nothing wrong and should not be referred to the program. The diversion staff worry about the responsible youth's ability to acknowledge their actions and willingness to address the harm caused. These concerns may be addressed through better youth and family awareness programming.

Referring Agencies

The self-study provides some evidence that the pilot sites struggle with inappropriate referrals or receive youths and families who present with a referral and lack sufficient understanding of the Youth Diversion Team process. To help correct the referral process, the sites establish working relationships with the referring agencies that may improve the referral process. Examples of the efforts made to ensure consistency in the process include strengthening relationships, regularly scheduled meetings, providing referral criteria training, providing scripts to ensure parents receive the same information regardless of referral source, and addressing inappropriate referrals on a case-by-case basis.

Victims

Victims' utilization (i.e., involvement) of diversion programming is currently limited at most pilot sites. The findings from the self-study indicate that one of the primary challenges for the pilot sites is engaging with victims. The staff and panel members involved in diversion programs tend to be cautious when it comes to victim awareness and involvement and are more inclined to take a protective approach rather than a proactive one toward victim awareness and engagement. Their hesitations are outlined as follows:

- Uncertainty in including victims without causing further harm, including diversion staff perceptions of uncertainty among panel members.
- Depending on the situation, including victims may negatively impact the collaborative process and may not always be clinically appropriate, given the youth's situation.
- It may be clinically inappropriate for the victim, especially for charges such as assaults, theft, and marijuana-related offenses.
- Engagement strategies may create an unsafe environment, and there is a possibility of victims being forced to relive traumatic moments or reacting negatively.
- Interactions between young people can be difficult, even when the guardians approve. This is especially true if there is still tension between the parties or the timing is inappropriate. It also includes not knowing how to handle situations that get out of hand and dealing with liability issues.

For the diversion staff, victim engagement is determined on a case-by-case basis. For example,

- A victim statement is perceived to be more effective than direct face-to-face interaction. One site explained that they obtained a victim statement and shared victim requests at the panel meeting and circle process.
- Engaging with the victim is location-specific. One site indicated that engagement is more beneficial when the incident occurs at school rather than in the community.
- The victim must be interested in the diversion process; otherwise, the restorative purpose of the meeting can be impacted.

Given their concerns, diversion staff are interested in developing strategies for engaging victims in the diversion process.

Limited Impact Analysis

The limited impact evaluation was conducted to provide insight into whether the YDT program is progressing toward meeting its outcome objectives, given its short history. Along with the process evaluation, these findings will help the CYSA improve the program to ensure it is being implemented correctly. The following summarizes the findings related to the evaluation questions concerning the limited impact evaluation.

1. How is the program evolving to achieve its intended outcome goal to address incidents that may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension?

Feedback from the web-based survey of stakeholders to demonstrate impact shows that their perceptions indicate the YDT process is progressing positively. It has the potential to achieve its primary goals for each referred youth, which include addressing the incident that may have led to or may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension and establishing community connections that prevent future arrests.

Key stakeholders, such as referring agencies, panel members, and the youth and their families, generally have positive perceptions of the YDT program. These perceptions are discussed next. To better understand the pilot sites' concerns regarding underlying factors and how the processes might be improved, please refer to the process evaluation for each section (i.e., Implementation, Awareness, Utilization).

Unfortunately, due to the limited involvement of victims in the YDT program, there is no data that supports their perceptions.

2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders, such as referred youth and their families, victims, and referring agencies, regarding the necessary changes to establish community connections that prevent future arrests?

The answers to this question are summarized according to the stakeholders' perceptions of the YDT program in the following order: Perceptions of Impact Among the Referring Agencies, Perceptions of Impact Among the Panel Members, Perceptions Among the YDT Diversion Program Staff, and Perceptions Among the Youth and Parents.

Perceptions of Impact Among the Referring Agencies. Once an incident occurs, the referring agency is the initial point of contact with the youth. The 11 referring agency responses were almost evenly split when asked whether the *Youth Diversion Team model positively impacts youths' development more than the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) model*. Two strongly agreed, four agreed, two strongly disagreed, two did not know, and one was neutral about this perception.

Perceptions of Impact Among the Panel Members. The panel members engage with youths and their families during the panel meeting and circle process, which takes place after the Youth Diversion Team staff completes the intake process. The six pilot sites

recruited 26 of 53 panel members (49%) to complete the web-based survey. Two respondents had not attended any opening or closing panel meetings or circle process; therefore, their results are excluded from the summary, resulting in a useable sample size of 24 (45%). Of these 24 panel members, their characteristics are as follows:

- **Length of Service:** Five members have less than one year of service, eight have served between one and three years, and 11 have served for three or more years, with collective experience in child development, adolescent behavior, family dynamics, youth development, and juvenile laws and procedures. All professional areas were represented, but not all sites had a representative professional sample.
- **Attendance at Panel Meetings:** Eleven respondents always participate in the Youth Diversion Team process by attending the panel/team opening and closing meetings and circle processes, and 13 can usually attend the opening or closing panel/team meetings and circle processes but not both.
- **Involvement at Panel Meetings:** Twenty-three respondents strongly agreed (n = 12) or agreed (n = 11) that they are actively engaged during the Youth Diversion Team panel meeting and circle process, specifically in helping youth develop ideas to repair the harm they have caused. One respondent strongly disagreed with this statement.

Of these 24 panel members, their perceptions of the YDT are as follows:

- Most panel members strongly agreed (n = 10) or agreed (n = 12) that they were *overall satisfied with the Youth Diversion Team process*. Two respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.
- The panel members mostly had a positive view of the statement: "*Unlike the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) diversion model, the new restorative Youth Diversion Team diversion model focuses on accountability and ownership and emphasizes community, relationships, and the youth's development.*" Six members strongly agreed, and 11 agreed. Five members rated this statement as neither agree nor disagree, one as disagree, and one as don't know.

Table 7 presents all panel members' perceptions of the YDT program compared to those participating in the CYSA RJ 101 and 201. These trainings appear to leave panel members with stronger perceptions of some aspects of the YDT program. Panel members who completed in the RJ 101 and 201 training generally believed (1) the YDT diversion model impacts youths' lives more positively than the former JRB model and (2) that the youth and their families are more engaged in the process.

Based on their self-studies, the pilot sites want autonomy to adapt the YDT program process to their specific needs to serve their youth effectively. They aim to use custom programming, methods, and language that they believe will be most effective. The web-based panel member survey results may validate their concerns by combining in-house

training and onboarding processes with the knowledge gained from the CYSA RJ 101 and 201 training. The RJ 101 and 201 training can improve panel members' perceptions of the positive impact of the new YDT program on youths' development and their perceptions of youth and family engagement in the process. Combining in-house training and onboarding with the CYSA training may further enhance panel members' perceptions that youth are better prepared to identify the harm they caused, develop a plan to address it, and take responsibility for their actions. It is suggested that the CYSA further study this concept.

Table 7: Panel Member Perceptions of the Youth Diversion Team Process		
Statement	Overall Responses (n = 24)	Attended RJ 101 & RJ 201 Training (n = 8)
I believe the new Youth Diversion Team model impacts youths' development more positively than the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) model.	3.1 (1.3)	3.4 (.7)
I believe the youth and their family are more engaged in the Youth Diversion Team process than in the JRB model the organization formerly used where I volunteer.	2.6 (1.4)	3.0 (1.4)
The Youth Diversion Team's restorative questions help youth identify the harm they caused and develop a plan to repair it.	4.1 (.8)	3.8 (.7)
The Youth Diversion Team restorative process helps youth learn to take accountability for their actions.	4.2 (.7)	3.1 (1.4)

Perceptions Among the YDT Diversion Program Staff. The diversion team staff is heavily involved with youth and their families, from the initial referral to the closure of the case. The self-study assessed the staff perceptions at the pilot sites. Five out of six pilot sites strongly agreed or agreed with two statements: (1) *"The staff at this organization believes that the Youth Diversion Team diversion model has a more positive impact on the development of young people than the old Juvenile Review Board model"* and (2) *"The staff at this organization is more interested in using the Youth Diversion Team model that their organization formerly used."* One site strongly disagreed and did not elaborate.

Perceptions Among the Youth and Parents. The greatest impact of the YDT process is on the youths and their families themselves. Tables 8 and 9 present the distribution of scores and the impact results for the youths and parents. The larger the standard deviation, the greater the score variance, as perceptions are more widely spread. While the reasons are unknown, it must also be noted that two parent and two youth respondents were more

likely to rate questions as “Don’t Know,” Strongly Disagree,” or “Disagree.” These perceptions influenced the variance at two different pilot sites.

Parents Perceptions

- Most parents believed the help their child received was beneficial ($n = 24, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 1.2$) and were also in agreement that the plan [their] child/family received was just right for [them] ($n = 25, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 1.2$).
- During the Youth Diversion Team process, most parents felt supported ($n = 24, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 1.2$) and were treated with respect ($n = 26, \bar{x} = 4.8, SD = .8$), which likely led to a greater degree of trust between the parents and the Youth Diversion Team ($n = 24, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 1.2$).

Youths’ Perceptions

- Most Youths ($n = 17, \bar{x} = 4.2, SD = .8$) strongly agreed or agreed that the Youth Diversion Team understood their story and helped them understand their actions instead of blaming or judging them ($n = 18, \bar{x} = 4.5, SD = .8$). Most agreed the team also asked them questions that helped them understand the harm they caused ($n = 18, \bar{x} = 4.0, SD = 1.0$).

Youths’ and Parents’ Perceptions About Writing the Agreement

- All youths ($n = 22, \bar{x} = 4.7, SD = .5$) and most parents ($n = 24, \bar{x} = 4.2, SD = 1.4$) felt they had a say in developing the Agreement.

Youths’ and Parents’ Combined Perceptions

- Most parents strongly agreed or agreed ($n = 23, \bar{x} = 4.1, SD = 1.4$) that the Youth Diversion Team process exceeded their expectations. The youths mostly strongly agreed or agreed ($n = 18, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 1.1$) that their experience with the Youth Diversion Team process was better than they originally thought.
- Most youths ($n = 21, \bar{x} = 4.5, SD = .9$) and parents ($n = 24, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 1.2$) strongly agreed or agreed they were heard during the process.
- Most youths strongly agreed or agreed that the YDT process helped them learn to be accountable for their actions ($n = 20, \bar{x} = 4.4, SD = .7$) and perceive themselves as better off due to the YDT process ($n = 18, \bar{x} = 4.3, SD = 0.8$). Most parents strongly agreed or agreed that their child improved due to the Youth Diversion Team process ($n = 23, \bar{x} = 4.1, SD = 1.2$).
- The youths are less likely to strongly agree or agree ($n = 10, \bar{x} = 3.7, SD = 1.5$) than their parents ($n = 21, \bar{x} = 4.1, SD = 1.0$) to believe that the YDT process can help them handle things better at home.
- Youths ($n = 20, \bar{x} = 4.4, SD = 0.7$), compared to their parents' lower perceptions ($n = 19, \bar{x} = 3.9, SD = 1.0$), are more likely to strongly agree or agree they can better manage school-related matters due to the Youth Diversion Team process.

- The average scores of the youths ($n = 17$, $\bar{x} = 4.1$, $SD = 1.2$) and parents ($n = 20$, $\bar{x} = 4.0$, $SD = 1.0$) indicate a shared belief that the youth can better manage matters in the community, either strongly agreeing or agreeing to the statement.

Table 8: Average Scores and Distribution for Impact Analysis (Youth Survey)		
	Distribution	Average (SD)
I am better off because of the Youth Diversion Team process.	Neutral – 4 Agree – 7 Strongly Agree – 11	4.3 (.8)
The Youth Diversion Team process helped me learn how to be accountable for my actions.	Neutral – 3 Agree – 10 Strongly Agree – 10	4.4 (.7)
I can handle things at home better because of the Youth Diversion Team process.	Don't Know – 2 Disagree – 2 Neutral – 3 Agree – 7 Strongly Agree – 3	3.7 (1.5)
I can handle things at school better because of the Youth Diversion Team process.	Neutral – 2 Agree – 10 Strongly Agree - 10	4.4 (.7)
I can handle things in my neighborhood and community better because of the Youth Diversion Team process.	Don't Know – 1 Neutral – 3 Agree – 6 Strongly Agree – 11	4.1 (1.2)
During the process, I felt heard by the members of the Youth Diversion Team.	Don't Know – 1 Agree – 8 Strongly Agree - 13	4.5 (.9)
The Youth Diversion Team helped me understand my actions instead of blaming or judging me.	Neutral – 4 Agree – 4 Strongly Agree - 14	4.5 (.8)
I feel like the Youth Diversion Team understood my story.	Neutral – 5 Agree – 7 Strongly Agree - 10	4.2 (.8)
The Youth Diversion Team's questions helped me understand the harm I caused.	Don't Know – 1 Disagree – 1 Neutral – 2 Agree – 10 Strongly Agree - 8	4.0 (1)

I had a say in developing the agreement plan about what I needed to do to make things right.	Agree – 7 Strongly Agree - 15	4.7 (.5)
Overall, my experience with the Youth Diversion Team process is better than I originally thought.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Neutral – 2 Agree – 4 Strongly Agree – 14	4.3 (1.1)

Table 9: Average Scores and Distribution for Impact Analysis (Parent Survey)		
	Distribution	Average (SD)
The Youth Diversion Team process exceeded my expectations.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 2 Neutral – 1 Agree – 9 Strongly Agree – 14	4.1 (1.4)
The help my child received was beneficial.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Neutral – 1 Agree – 8 Strongly Agree – 16	4.3 (1.2)
The agreement plan my child/family received was just right for us.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Agree – 10 Strongly Agree – 15	4.3 (1.2)
I have seen improvement in my child due to the Youth Diversion Team process.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Neutral – 2 Agree – 11 Strongly Agree – 12	4.1 (1.2)
My child can handle problems at home better due to the Youth Diversion Team process.	Strongly Disagree – 1 Neutral – 5 Agree – 9 Strongly Agree – 12	4.1 (1.0)
Due to the Youth Diversion Team process, my child is doing better in school.	Strongly Disagree – 1 Disagree – 1 Neutral – 6 Agree – 10 Strongly Agree – 9	3.9 (1.0)
My child can handle things in our neighborhood and community better because of the Youth Diversion Team Process.	Strongly Disagree – 1 Disagree – 1 Neutral – 5 Agree – 10 Strongly Agree – 10	4.0 (1.0)

I felt heard by the members of the Youth Diversion Team during the process.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Agree – 9 Strongly Agree – 15	4.3 (1.2)
I was involved in developing the agreement plan for my child/family.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 2 Neutral – 1 Agree – 7 Strongly Agree – 16	4.2 (1.4)
The Youth Diversion Team supported me and my family no matter what.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Neutral – 1 Agree – 7 Strongly Agree – 17	4.3 (1.2)
The Youth Diversion Team treated me and my family with respect.	Strongly Disagree – 1 Agree – 9 Strongly Agree – 17	4.8 (.8)
I trust members of the Youth Diversion Team.	Don't Know – 1 Strongly Disagree – 1 Neutral – 1 Agree – 8 Strongly Agree – 16	4.3 (1.2)

Part V – Summary and Conclusions

Restorative justice diversion programs are more effective at meeting the psychosocial needs of young people and preventing future crime compared to traditional diversionary programs that often result in punitive outcomes, fail to reduce recidivism, and can leave a long-lasting negative impact on a young person's life. Restorative diversionary programs help young individuals accept responsibility and take accountability for their behavior while also working to repair the harm caused to the victim(s) and the broader community. By integrating trauma-informed approaches, these programs may also address youths' behavioral health needs and contribute to public safety by reducing youth involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The CYSA acknowledges that young people may make mistakes and commit minor offenses, often due to unmet needs and past or ongoing trauma. Further, it recognizes that a trauma-informed restorative approach using restorative justice principles can help youth take responsibility, make amends, and minimize the long-term consequences of their behavior. Therefore, YSBs implementing trauma-informed restorative diversion programs must ensure high program quality from implementation and throughout the program's duration. In this context, process evaluations of youth programs can serve as one means of assisting diversion program staff with their efforts to provide programming that achieves quality and tangible results.

The main goal of this evaluation was to assess how effectively YSBs implemented a trauma-informed restorative justice diversion program. Thus, the evaluation aimed to determine if process evaluation information could directly and significantly impact trauma-informed restorative programming. Another aim was to gather initial data on the program's impact to see if it could effectively address incidents that might lead to arrest, expulsion, or suspension and build community connections to prevent future offenses. It was anticipated that staff at the YSBs implementing the YDT program would benefit from participating in the evaluation design process through the Utility Standards methodology.

Based on these evaluation findings, it's recommended that the CYSA devise a plan to task the pilot sites with creating a program improvement plan. By utilizing their feedback about their program experiences, as presented in this report, and implementing changes based on their input, YSB YDT participants in the program would not only feel empowered by their involvement in making these changes but also become more engaged in program planning that improves their efforts. Then, one year after the initial data collection, the pilot sites should be surveyed again to see if their improvement objectives were met.

Process evaluations are crucial to program implementation as they aim to understand the connection between interventions and their context. This helps explain why interventions succeed or fail and whether they can be applied to different settings. All subsequent evaluation processes should be designed along with program implementation, met with refined process evaluation techniques and psychometric analysis of impact evaluation surveys from this

evaluation study, and diversion program staff should be trained in basic program evaluation methods.

In conclusion, the YDT diversion program is making real and positive differences in the experiences of responsible youths, although there are concerns about fidelity. These concerns can be addressed through enhanced resource investments and evaluation processes for continuous monitoring. Organizations looking to develop a YDT program or transition from a JRB diversion process should consider adopting this information processing approach to evaluate and improve the program at their centers.

Part VI – Study Limitations

The evaluation provided an analysis and insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the Youth Diversion Team program's structure and delivery. While the evaluation results offer valuable feedback that can be used to make necessary adjustments and improvements to the program, it is important to be mindful of the evaluation's limitations, as they may impact the generalizability of the results.

This small descriptive study was conducted at six pilot sites. The program was evaluated at a seventh site, but staffing limitations severely hindered that site's efforts. All data is self-reported, and there is no experimental design due to the nature in which the program was implemented and evolved since its inception. Nevertheless, it can provide valuable material for policymakers and program administrators.

This evaluation study should be seen as just the beginning. The limitation here is common. Process evaluations are often underutilized and poorly reported. These evaluations often lack comprehensive reporting on key components such as program fidelity, stakeholder utilization tracking, stakeholder satisfaction, and training assessment. This can lead to mixed or modest results in terms of program outcomes, and if a program is implemented poorly or only moderately well, its goals are unlikely to be achieved, or the results will be less significant. Utilizing and reporting on a process evaluation for the Youth Diversion Team diversion program has great potential for improvement.

Recommendation: Enhancing comprehensive reporting on the YDT program's key components can strengthen the validity and applicability of evaluation results. Implementing an ongoing evaluation process using the results of this evaluation and making revisions to the process as necessary for improvement is recommended. This will help study the YDT program's long-term outcomes and allow the CYSA to make significant strides in optimizing the impact of its YDT process.

The qualitative data in this study is limited. This affects the evidence supporting the identified themes (e.g., victim engagement, referrals, referring agency, panel member training, the conflation of diversion models, and concise and consistent messaging). There were only six participating pilot sites. For a concern to become a theme, it had to be identified at least by two pilot sites. Other themes may have arisen due to more participating youth service bureaus running JRBs. Conversely, fewer pilot sites may have dampened certain concerns identified in this evaluation.

This evaluation design could not rely on random assignment. Thus, the comparability of qualitative and quantitative data in this evaluation study is uncertain. One concern is the pilot sites were not randomly chosen. Even if the sites could have been randomly chosen, comparing the new YDT diversion model and the former JRB diversion model would have been impossible due to the statewide trauma-informed restorative justice training. This training was completed

by many diversion personnel, panel members, and other stakeholders since its inception in 2020.

Quasi-experimental designs aim to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between inputs and outputs. This limitation restricts the ability to apply the findings across all pilot sites and directly compare the Youth Diversion Team diversion model with the Juvenile Review Board diversion model. A quasi-experimental design would have allowed for a better understanding of the processes and reasons behind the success of the Youth Diversion Team diversion program compared to the previous JRB diversion model.

Effective process evaluations should be planned and conducted alongside the program's development and implementation. There is difficulty in addressing the process and limited impact outcomes due to constraints in data collection timing because the implementation and evaluation processes were not implemented concurrently. This evaluation began more than six months after implementing the YDT program and was designed to meet reporting requirements. Several data collection timing issues and weaknesses occurred from the beginning, including a lack of fidelity tracking, insufficient case tracking, and inadequate satisfaction tracking among stakeholders, all of which may lead to inadequate documentation in the self-study. This could result in uncertain generalizability of qualitative and quantitative data and challenges in effectively explaining unanticipated outcomes.

All data were self-reported. Potential weaknesses may stem from biases introduced by stakeholders, especially in the self-study, that result in data interpretation challenges. Effectively addressing these limitations requires careful planning and a systematic approach, including developing measurements and ensuring the quality assurance of the evaluation process. To correct this, the evaluator created an evaluator's query. The evaluator's query addressed concerns about missing data, incomplete answers, and ambiguities. Evaluation timeline constraints limited the opportunity for one-on-one interviews with the pilot sites.

Web-based survey methods did not randomly select the youths, parents, panel members, or referring agencies. The pilot site staff selected the recipients of the survey link to complete the survey.

Web-based surveys were created for this evaluation study. It is recommended that future evaluations include a psychometric assessment of the web-based data collection instruments included in this evaluation study, specifically completing a factor analysis evaluating the validity of the web-based youth and parent surveys, which may measure the impact of specific satisfaction and outcome variables related to reducing reoffending behaviors among youths.

Based on these limitations, this evaluation does provide evidence to help us understand how stakeholders utilize the YDT program, the processes that pilot site staff used to promote the program, and the fidelity to implementing the YDT diversion model. Despite the limitations of the web-based surveys, the evaluators were able to assess the satisfaction of youths and

parents and the evidence of program usefulness among diversion staff, panel members, and referring agencies. Overall, despite these limitations, the results of this evaluation are positive.

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Appendix A: Pilot Site Self-Study

CONNECTICUT YOUTH SERVICES ASSOCIATION Youth Diversion Team Self-Study Questionnaire

Survey Instructions

Please read the informed consent form on the next page. The informed consent will describe the purpose of this self-study, your rights, and who to contact for more information about participating.

You will have two weeks or ten business days to complete the self-study. The survey will be distributed on or before Monday, March 11, 2024. More time can be provided upon request, although we ask that you consider that the CYSA is working on a tight timeframe to meet funding and other stakeholder deadlines. In most cases, completing the self-study cannot extend beyond March 25, 2024.

Rick Cain, a member of the evaluation team, will support your organization in completing the self-study through coaching. He can be reached via email at richardcain.phd@gmail.com or telephone at [REDACTED]. You may ask Rick questions about this self-study. Rick can assist your staff in discovering and raising awareness to support your self-study based on the CYSA YDT diversion model program goals and objectives while recognizing your organization's unique needs. He can assist in keeping you on track by clarifying the concepts being asked of you and identifying and overcoming hurdles during the process.

You will answer questions directly in this Word document shared via Microsoft OneDrive. OneDrive has good file-sharing and collaboration features, allowing co-authoring by multiple individuals in your organization and allowing the evaluator to respond and provide guidance to comments and questions.

You will provide your answers directly in this document. We ask that you respond to every question rather than leaving a field blank. Instructions have been provided about how to answer questions. This ensures we know you saw the question even if you did not have an answer. If you cannot answer a question or do not want to, Rick will provide options for you and help reduce the need to follow up if something appears to be overlooked.

Informed Consent For Project Evaluation
Connecticut Youth Services Association
Youth Diversion Team Pilot Program

Purpose and Background

We are conducting a process and limited impact evaluation study for the Connecticut Youth Services Association's (CYSA) Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice Youth Diversion Team (YDT) diversion program. Diversion programs redirect youth who commit minor law violations through programming, support, and supervision.

The CYSA acknowledges that many of the offenses and behaviors exhibited by referred youth have their roots in past or current trauma. Programs that utilize a trauma-informed restorative justice approach are the best way to address the harm caused by responsible youth who have committed minor law violations. These programs can be an alternative to referring these youth to the juvenile court or another agency, which may result in punitive sanctions like arrest, expulsion, or suspension. Such sanctions may also lead to negative long-term consequences. By contrast, trauma-informed restorative justice diversion approaches are collaborative and inclusive and encourage accountability. They help build understanding, promote healing, and lead to positive outcomes for all involved.

The process evaluation outcome component aims to analyze and learn from seven youth service organizations that piloted the YDT diversion program. Your organization's data will allow the CYSA to gain insight into four key areas. These include (1) the implementation fidelity and strengths and weaknesses of your organization's program delivery, (2) whether the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual was clear enough for the implementation process, (3) whether staff and members of the diversion team received adequate CYSA-provided training, and (4) how your organization promoted awareness and utilization of the program to stakeholders such as referred youth, their families, victims, and referring agencies.

The limited impact evaluation component aims to determine how well the project reaches its intended goals and how well short-term changes have been achieved. While ten months (i.e., June 2023 to April 2024) is not adequate to assess long-term outcomes, a limited impact evaluation assessing closed cases and those nearing closure will allow the CYSA to demonstrate the program's effectiveness to stakeholders about (1) how the program is evolving to achieve its intended outcome goal to address incidents that may lead to an arrest, expulsion, or suspension and (2) the perceptions of key stakeholders, such as referred youth and their families, victims, and referring agencies, regarding the necessary changes to establish community connections that prevent future arrests.

Your assistance will help to ensure the YDT program's sustainability. Your perspective will help us evaluate, suggest changes, and make recommendations to strengthen the efforts to improve the YDT outcomes during and as we advance with the initiative. The results from this study will be shared in-house in a report and used to teach others.

Procedures

We want to learn about your experiences while implementing the Youth Diversion Team diversion model. You will be asked to complete a self-study questionnaire that will take approximately 5 to 6 hours, although it will vary between individual organizations. The self-study is not intended to be one individual's perspective about the YDT program but rather a *collaborative* process with ownership by the entire YDT staff.

The evaluator will support your organization in completing the self-study through coaching. Coaching can assist YDT staff in discovering and raising awareness to support your YDT evolution based on the CYSA YDT diversion model program goals and objectives while recognizing variations between organizations. The coach can also assist in keeping you on track by clarifying concepts being asked and identifying and overcoming hurdles during the process.

You will answer questions directly in a Word document shared via Microsoft OneDrive. OneDrive has good file-sharing and collaboration features, allowing co-authoring by multiple individuals in your organization and allowing the evaluator to respond and provide guidance to comments and questions – all in real-time. Further, any additional documentation (e.g., flow charts, checklists, scripts used during panel meetings) can be added to the document for review by the evaluator.

In addition to completing the self-study, staff involved in the YDT program will identify additional stakeholders to complete an anonymous web-based questionnaire they will complete independently. Using your initiative and materials developed by the evaluator to explain the evaluation, you will contact the responsible parent or guardian, youth, victims (when appropriate), panel members, and referring agencies and request their participation to complete an anonymous survey. After receiving a verbal commitment to participation, the staff person will email the web-based survey link to the address provided by the stakeholder. The survey will include informed consent, contact information about the evaluator, and the contact person from the YSB who handled their diversion case. Questions about the evaluation methodology and process will be directed to the evaluator, and questions about the diversion process will be directed to the YSB staff member.

Risks

We do not anticipate any risks associated with participating in the study. If any question asked makes you uncomfortable, you are always free to decline to answer or to discontinue participation at any time.

Benefits

Participating in this study will allow you to add your ideas and opinions to recommendations around making the Youth Diversion Team a sustainable diversion model for your organization and future organizations desiring the opportunity to implement the program.

Confidentiality

The researchers for this study will protect the confidentiality of whatever you share with them, and no identifying information will be released to anyone. Your organization will only be identified with written approval. The answers you provide directly in the Word document shared via Microsoft OneDrive will only have a link between the person(s) identified in your organization and the evaluators. This link will not be shared with anyone within or outside your organization unless you choose to do so. However, all persons ***within your organization*** who have permission to receive the Microsoft OneDrive link can see all other responses from individuals participating in this self-study from your organization.

The evaluator will identify the seven organizations during data collection and analysis and issue a final report summarizing the results. In that report, the evaluator will broadly identify findings and technical assistance needs, not specific organizations. This report will be shared with the CYSA for internal use, with your organization, and with funding stakeholders. This report will not be broadly distributed or published.

Any improvements to the YDT diversion model program considered from your participation may be used in initiatives, such as to improve the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual, create an implementation guide for organizations wanting to implement similar YDT diversion programs, improve CYSA-provided training, and share methodology about how your and similar organizations can implement a protocol to evaluate future trauma-informed restorative justice diversion models.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Participation is Voluntary

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw from it at any time without consequences or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding your rights or concerns as a participant in this study, please get in touch with one of the two evaluators: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

Abbreviations and Terms and Definitions

Please refer to the following terms and definitions as you complete this self-study.

Abbreviations

CYSA – Connecticut Youth Services Association

JRB – Refers to the Juvenile Review Board diversion model your organization formerly used

TIRJ – Trauma-informed Restorative Justice

YDT – Youth Diversion Team or the diversion model your organization is pilot testing

Definitions

Awareness: Ensures that all relevant parties know about the TIRJ YDT program. This includes how the program is presented to referred youth, their families, referring agencies, panel members, victims, and the general public. The level of awareness about the YDT program can affect how the program is utilized.

Disabling Factors: Disabling factors (e.g., limitations, challenges, barriers) that fail to support or actively hinder work or discourage or undermine the program.

Enabling Factors: Enabling factors that make your work possible or directly support it, such as funding, training, or help from a person (e.g., administration) or group (e.g., CYSA, a diversion team from a different agency).

Implementation: Focuses on action after the needs and priorities are identified and established. These needs and priorities were identified and established in the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams*. Program implementation is about making programs work, and high-quality implementation plays a significant part in bringing about effective outcomes. If a program is implemented poorly or moderately well, its goals are unlikely to be achieved, or the results will be less significant.

Utilization: The number of young people referred to the TIRJ YDT program actively participating during a specific period. How well other stakeholders know about the YDT program model can affect utilization rates. These rates provide insight into the program's effectiveness and whether it benefits the youth involved. It's a key metric that the CYSA can use to evaluate the program's effectiveness (i.e., outcomes).

Part II: Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice Training (pp. 3 – 9)

As part of the education and training process to redirect the former JRB process to become more trauma-informed and restorative, CYSA developed and provided resources to help with the implementation process, such as introductory and advanced webinars in trauma-informed restorative justice and the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* that highlighted key components of trauma-informed restorative justice. This section asks you how effective these resources are in your efforts to implement the Youth Diversion Team program and the need for additional training.

1. Indicate how much you agree with the following statements listed below.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Agree, 4 – Strongly Agree If you choose not to respond, enter 9. You can also elaborate on any statement in the box containing the statement.</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>The staff at this organization believes the Youth Diversion Team diversion model impacts youths’ development more positively than the JRB model our organization formerly used. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The staff of this organization is more interested in using a Youth Diversion Team diversion model than the JRB diversion model our organization formerly used. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The CYSA's TIRJ resources (training and manual) helped our organization to better understand the difference between retributive justice and restorative justice (see table on page 7 in the manual). (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>We were able to adopt most of the TIRJ protocols and procedures of the YDT program immediately. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Individual members of your board are receptive to the TIRJ diversion model compared to the JRB diversion model your organization formerly used. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The <i>CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams</i> manual helped us implement key components of trauma-informed restorative justice concepts. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>A restorative diversion model focuses on accountability and ownership but also centers on community, relationships, and the youth’s development, compared to the JRB diversion model your organization formerly used. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

2. Please provide the number of current staff members in your organization who have completed the following CYSA training. Do not include individuals who completed the training but left during the implementation process. If you choose not to respond, please enter X.

Training	Number of Current Staff Completing this Training
Restorative Justice 101	
Restorative Justice 201	
Restorative Justice Advanced	
Victim Engagement (one day training)	

3. Please rate the usefulness of each training session in implementing the YDT diversion program. You may base your response on the collective perceptions of all staff involved, even if they left your organization during the implementation. If you choose not to respond, enter X.

Training	Usefulness Rating 1 – Not Useful 2 – Adequate 3 – Very Useful
Restorative Justice 101	
Restorative Justice 201	
Restorative Justice Advanced	
Victim Engagement (one day training)	

4. **Restorative Justice 101 Objectives:** How would you rate your organization’s need for additional training to implement the RJ 101 objectives further? If you choose not to respond, enter X.

Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No Additional Training 2 – A Refresher 3 – Need for Extensive Training 9 – Choose not to respond.	Enter the number below. ↓
Deconstructing the juvenile justice system (i.e., why and how it is often harmful) and how we replicate many of its elements in our diversion processes.	
Examining how restorative justice speaks to the failures of our retributive justice system and allows us to operate in a way consistent with research about how the developing minds of young people work.	

Exploring how trauma interrupts development and impacts children's behavior.	
Providing a deeper understanding of restorative justice and how it differs from our traditional systems while still getting the outcomes we want.	

5. **Restorative Justice 201 Objectives:** How would you rate your organization's need for additional training to implement the RJ 201 objectives further? If you choose not to respond, enter 9.

Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No Additional Training 2 – A Refresher 3 – Need for Extensive Training 9 – Choose not to respond.	Enter the number below. ↓
Learning and experiencing specific communication skills, the use of the circle process, and how these practices interact with the adolescent brain.	
Learning how to run diversion meetings using the circle process, the restorative questions, and the 4-quadrant agreement plan.	
Learning to apply specific trauma-informed restorative strategies to diversion work.	

6. **Restorative Justice Advanced Objectives:** How would you rate your organization's need for additional training to further implement the Restorative Justice Advanced objectives? If you choose not to respond, enter X.

Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No Additional Training 2 – A Refresher 3 – Need for Extensive Training 9 – Choose not to respond.	Enter the number below. ↓
Examine current practices to discover opportunities for the shift from the punitive approach to justice to a restorative mindset that allows us to avoid creating additional trauma.	
Deepen the participants' experience of being in a circle and explore ways to incorporate a circle into their YDT panel meeting and circle process.	
Explore how trauma impacts children's lives so they can hold youth accountable without doing further harm.	
Expand restorative practice skills from using questions to listening and speaking with empathy.	
Explore contract writing and action plans to repair harm.	
Deepen their ability to live out the principles of trauma-informed restorative practices.	

7. **Victim Engagement Training Objectives:** How would you rate your organization’s need for additional training to implement the Victim Engagement training objectives further? If you choose not to respond, enter X.

Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No Additional Training, 2 – A Refresher, 3 – Need for Extensive Training	Enter the number below. ↓
Methods to engage with victims in the YDT process in meaningful ways.	
Learn about the impacts of crimes on victims and their families.	
Learn ways of including the victim's voice within the diversion process.	

8. Excluding the TIRJ training provided by CYSA, briefly describe any other training your CURRENT staff has undergone in trauma-informed restorative approaches. This could include college courses, seminars, conferences, or workshops that have helped your organization in your YDT diversion work. If your staff has not received additional training or education, please state "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

9. Please describe your organization's strategies to increase AWARENESS for youth and their families, victims, referring agencies, and the general public about the trauma-informed restorative justice aspects of the YDT program. These strategies could include materials on your website, printed materials, in-person or virtual presentations, conversations with referred youth and their families, potential new panel members, and other methods your organization uses to promote awareness. Please provide a brief explanation of each method. If you did nothing to increase awareness, state "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

10. Describe any concerns or **disabling** factors in the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual that have resulted in **challenges** when implementing the YDT program. Such concerns may relate to the manual's usefulness, readability or clarity, organization, or structure. You may list additional concerns. If there were no disabling factors, please state "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

11. Describe any concerns, challenges, or disabling factors your organization has faced while implementing the YDT program. This information could be useful to improve your process and guide others who plan to implement the YDT diversion model. Your concerns may be related to issues like staff turnover, teamwork, productivity, limited internal financial resources, process management to ensure that your team is following the best process for completing the YDT work, satisfaction from youth and their families, the inability to be creative with the YDT diversion program, personal challenges experienced by youth and their families such as housing, food, and limited financial needs. Please list any concerns that hinder the successful implementation of the YDT program. If there were no disabling factors, please state “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

12. Describe any successes your organization has experienced while implementing the YDT program. Examples of successes might include a shared vision for success from all members within your organization, a culture of trust and psychological safety to implement the YDT program, effective planning and execution, strategies for measuring success and continued improvement, a process that balances exploration and execution of the YDT program, such as the freedom to be creative and explore while maintaining fidelity to the YDT program, and a shared sense of ownership over the outcomes of the YDT program. You may list any successes you experienced that supported the implementation of the YDT program. If there were no successes, please state “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

13. Is there any additional information you would like to add about training or resources you need to implement the Youth Diversion Team program? If there is nothing to add, please state “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part III: Standards of Professionalism (pp. 10 – 15)

The CYSA has developed Standards of Professionalism for YDT members. The primary objective of these standards is to ensure that the actions of those involved in the YDT, including staff and panel members, are conducted with the utmost professionalism based on universal elements required for this type of work. When answering the questions in this section, consider the following three elements to assess how your YDT program utilizes the professional standards, as they may help align the work performed on the YDT program with the standards.

- **Creating Clarity:** Defining expected behaviors to ensure that the staff and panel members involved in the YDT program understand their roles and responsibilities creates clarity and helps everyone see these behaviors as part of their work.
- **Creating Alignment:** Outlining which behaviors are relevant to the YDT goals and priorities and demonstrating how they can be applied in day-to-day tasks can help create alignment and ensure everyone is on the same page and working towards the same objectives.
- **Creating Accountability:** Translating core values into core competencies is essential to helping individuals responsible for demonstrating value-based behaviors. This can help create accountability and reinforce the significance of core values.

<p>Review the Professional Standards on pages 10 to 15 in the manual. Place the number in the box that best represents your answer to the statement below.</p> <p>1 – Not in place. 2 – Working to put in place 3 – Partially in place 4 – Fully in place 9 – Choose not to respond</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
To what extent has your organization used the Professional Standards?	
To what extent has your organization used the standards in any training, orientation, or onboarding activities for <u>staff</u> involved in the YDT program?	
To what extent has your organization used the standards in any training, orientation, or onboarding activities for <u>panel members</u> involved in the YDT program?	

<p>Place the number in the box that best represents your answer to the statement.</p> <p>1 – Not sure 2 – No Difference 3 – Little Difference 4 – Some Difference 5 – A Significant Difference 9 – Choose not to respond</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
How has the use of professional standards impacted the YDT program as compared to the JRB diversion model previously employed by your organization? (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	

<p>Place the number in the box that best represents your answer to the statements about needing training.</p> <p>1 – No training needed 2 – Training needed 9 – Choose not to respond</p> <p>Then, please elaborate. The box will expand as you type. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>More or clearer guidance on how to use the Professional Standards. (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Support for specific roles (e.g., staff, administration, panel members). (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Hold workshops or face-to-face events to talk through the Professional Standards. (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)</p>	

Part IV: Composition of the Youth Diversion Team Membership (pp. 16 – 17)

One of the features of the Youth Diversion Team model that sets it apart from other programs designed to assist youth and families, and one of the reasons for its success, is that each Youth Diversion Team program is unique to the community it serves. YDT panel membership aims to create a cohesive group of knowledgeable and passionate professionals and community members who can work together to address the needs of the youth, families, and the community. The panel’s makeup should represent the community it serves. Strong emphasis should be placed on recruiting volunteers who can relate to and connect with diverse youth.

1. Board Size and Rotation

Enter the number in the box to the right of the statement.	Enter the number below. ↓
How many TOTAL panel members are currently serving on your YDT?	
How many panel members does your organization typically have present at a single panel meeting?	

2. Typically, YDTs consist of members who should include a cross-section of community volunteers with collective experience in child development, adolescent behavior, family dynamics, youth development, and juvenile laws and procedures. Place the number of members in the box to the right to show the professional and community diversity that your diversion team represents. You may add additional representation in the blank rows.

	Enter the number below. ↓		Enter the number below. ↓
Youth Service Bureau Staff		Community Providers	
Department of Children and Families Staff		Community members that do not represent a professional capacity.	
Law Enforcement		School Personnel	
Juvenile Probation			

3. Does your organization have any of the following concerns?

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No Concern 2 – A Moderate Concern 3 – A Major Concern If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>Does your organization have concerns about panel members who attend the case opening meeting and circle process, yet do not attend the case closing meeting? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Has your organization experienced concerns in ensuring that your YDT represents your community’s uniqueness regarding race, ethnicity, languages spoken, and culture? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Has your organization experienced concerns in ensuring that your diversion panel represents a cross-section of community volunteers with collective experience in child development, adolescent behavior, family dynamics, youth development, and juvenile laws and procedures? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

4. Pages 16 and 17 of the *CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams* manual describe the **Composition of the Youth Diversion Team Membership**. When you began using the new YDT diversion model, describe any improvements, developments, or changes **you have made** to your YDT panel membership compared to the panel membership in the former JRB diversion model your organization previously used. For example, perhaps you changed your YDT panel regarding race, ethnicity, languages spoken, and culture or included panel members directly connected with the youth (e.g., a school counselor). If you did not need to make changes, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

5. If you still recognize the need to change your YDT panel membership, briefly describe any improvements **you anticipate needing to make** to your YDT membership panel (e.g., race, ethnicity, languages spoken, and culture). If your organization’s YDT panel is representative, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

6. Briefly describe any disabling factors (e.g., limitations, challenges, barriers) you have experienced with developing or modifying your YDT panel membership. If you did not have any, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

7. If your YDT is going well, we would also like to hear about that. Briefly describe any successes you have experienced with it and how you made that happen. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

8. Currently, no Connecticut law mandates how a diversion program must be established and operated; therefore, each community can develop and run its program to meet its needs, including the ability to amend the program as the community’s needs change.

a. Please describe any individual town rules or government requirements for your organization’s Youth Diversion Team structure. If there are no requirements, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

b. How have you developed and amended your Youth Diversion Team program based on town rules or government requirements? If there are no developments or changes, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

9. Panel members must be fully aware of and understand the eligibility criteria, function, and purpose of the Youth Diversion Team and their obligations. Please describe your organization's strategies to increase AWARENESS of the trauma-informed and restorative justice aspects of the YDT program to new or prospective panel members. For instance, do you invite new panel members to take RJ 101 and RJ 201 training webinars or ask them to participate in orientation or onboarding activities for new members? If your organization is not doing any activities, please write "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part V: Referral & Eligibility Requirements for Diversion (pp. 18 – 19)

This section pertains to the Youth Diversion Team referral eligibility criteria for responsible youth. The referring agency will initially determine to the best of their abilities if a case is eligible or appropriate for diversion to the Youth Diversion Team. It is critical for referring agencies to fully understand eligibility criteria and the function and purpose of the Youth Diversion Team to ensure that all appropriate referrals are made.

1. Describe your organization’s methods for increasing the referring agency’s AWARENESS of the Youth Diversion Team process to ensure appropriate referrals. If your organization is not doing any activities, please write "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

2. Does your organization have any of the following concerns? Please elaborate in the box below, which will automatically expand as you type your response.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond.</p> <p>If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
Have you received referrals from a referring agency that did not fully understand the trauma-informed restorative justice foundation of the YDT? (You can elaborate here.)	
Have there been instances when your organization contacted a responsible youth and their family after the referral and they did not understand the Youth Diversion Team process as previously described to them? (You can elaborate here.)	
Has your organization received referrals that have been inappropriate based on the elements to establish eligibility, such as residency, referral source, level of offense, and prior history of the youth. (You can elaborate here.)	
Has your organization refused to accept a case(s) because of a lack of ability, resources, or experience within your organization? (You can elaborate here.)	

Part VI: The Intake Process (pp. 20 – 24)

The primary focus of the intake process is to prepare responsible youth to take accountability for their actions and allow the Youth Diversion Team staff to gather the necessary information, including screenings/assessments.

1. Please enter the total number of referrals below and indicate how many families accepted or rejected the YDT option. Also, indicate the number of referrals that did not respond to attempted communication. Please be sure that the total number of referrals equals the number of families accepting, rejecting, and not responding to communication.

	Enter the number below. ↓
a. How many total referrals has your organization received since beginning the YDT program until the date you are completing this self-study questionnaire?	
Based on your <u>initial</u> contact to explain the Youth Diversion Team option:	
b. How many of the families <u>accepted</u> the option?	
c. How many of the families <u>rejected</u> the option?	
d. How many families <u>did not respond</u> to attempted communication?	

2. Regarding the initial contact with the responsible youth and their family: Once your organization receives a notice about the referral, describe the method(s) your organization uses to contact the family (e.g., telephone call, letter, email, etc.). If there is a method that tends to be more effective for your organization, please describe why. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

3. During that initial contact, describe how your organization creates AWARENESS to inform the family about the YDT process. If your organization uses a basic script, checklist, or other processes to screen and inform families about the YDT process, please explain it here. You do not need to provide a copy. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

4. During the initial contact, for those who accepted or rejected the option, youth and their families may have had questions and concerns about the YDT program. Please elaborate using examples of questions and concerns the youth and their family had about the TIRJ process, if any. If there aren't any, write "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

5. Answer yes or no to any concerns about the **intake** process. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well. **When applicable, please specify whether the concern is from the YDT staff, the youth and their family, or the panel members. Even though the YDT staff facilitates the intake process, you may have experienced these concerns being shared among the YDT staff, the youth and their family, and the panel members.**

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond.</p> <p>If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write "none."</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>Does the YDT staff have concerns about how to thoroughly explain the YDT diversion process to the youth, their families, and victims (if appropriate). (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns regarding the amount of time the case will be open and completing the recommendations within that time frame that are agreed upon by both the family and the YDT? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns relating to understanding that the YDT program is an accountability model with no presumption of innocence? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about the responsible youth's acknowledgment to take full</p>	

responsibility for their actions and exploring possible ways to identify the harm, who has been harmed, and what might need to happen to make things right? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does the staff have concerns about properly presenting and reviewing the restorative questions with the youth and family? (You can elaborate here.)	
Are there concerns among the youth and family's understanding and acceptance that the youth must accept the responsibility that their actions have caused harm? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about the youth and family's acceptance that if an agreement cannot be reached, the case may be sent back to the referring agency? (You can elaborate here.)	
Are the youth and their family concerned that certain rights that would be available if the matter was referred to the court would not be available with the YDT option, such as having an attorney present? (You can elaborate here.)	
The DYT staff have concerns about administering any screening and assessment tools and interpreting the results? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about reviewing and sending home a copy of the restorative questions with the youth and family? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about confidentiality? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does the YDT staff has concerns about fully explaining and executing all appropriate intake forms and releases. (You can elaborate here.)	
Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about problems relating to setting the YDT date or adhering to the meeting date. (You can elaborate here.)	

<p>Does the YDT staff and panel members have concerns about how to fully explain how the circle process works during the YDT meeting. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does the youth and their family have concerns regarding the youth and family acknowledgement and acceptance that they should be present for the entire YDT meeting at the date and time the meeting is scheduled? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about allowing the responsible youth to bring a supporter to the YDT panel meeting and circle process that sees them in a positive light, such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle, coach, scout leader, clergy member? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about requesting that the youth and family give a copy of the restorative questions to supporters they are inviting to the panel meeting and circle process? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does the YDT staff have concerns about reviewing the Responsible Youth Questionnaire (Appendix B in the manual) with the responsible youth and feeling confident that they understood the questions? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does the YDT staff have concerns about providing the Trust/Relationship ice breaker prompts/questions to the youth so they can choose two, and explaining that these prompts are provided during the YDT panel meeting and circle process that everyone will answer (see pp. 26 – 27)? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does the YDT staff have concerns about identifying and contacting possible victims, explaining the YDT diversion model, and inviting them into the process? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does either the staff, the youth and their family, or panel members have concerns about encouraging the family to invite any other workers (e.g., other</p>	

case managers working with the youth and family) to the intake meeting or speak to the case manager before the meeting? <i>(You can elaborate here.)</i>	
Does the YDT staff, the youth and their family, and panel members have concerns about any preliminary discussions about possible recommendations before the panel meeting and circle process happens, even though decisions are not made until the YDT panel meeting and circle process when everyone present has had an opportunity to provide input into the process and final recommendations? <i>(You can elaborate here.)</i>	

6. Describe any additional training staff responsible for the YDT program needs about the intake process. If no additional training is needed, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

7. Please describe how your organization creates AWARENESS for victims by explaining the YDT diversion model and inviting them into the process. For example, do you have a prepared script, information on your website, or other methods to inform them of the process? If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

8. Describe any successes you experienced or are currently experiencing regarding the YDT intake process. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

9. Have you developed checklists that guide your organization through the intake process? If so, please describe or include a copy. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

10. Are there any additional concerns you would like to provide about the intake process? If there are no recommendations, write "none." If there are needs, please explain.

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part VII: The Youth Diversion Team Meeting (pp. 25 – 31)

A YDT meeting is a collaborative, relational process in which people attempt to accomplish a change to benefit the common good.

1. In the box below, indicate the average time of a typical panel meeting and circle process.

Average meeting time?	
-----------------------	--

2. Answer no or yes to the statements below about the meeting environment. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”	Enter the number below. ↓
Is the meeting located in a safe, confidential, and professional location? (You can elaborate here.)	
Is the meeting location neutral, non-threatening, easily accessible, and familiar to families? (You can elaborate here.)	
Is the meeting room inside the location private, from a visual and sound perspective, during the meeting? (You can elaborate here.)	
Is there space that allows for some level of confidentiality and has a private space for families to wait before the meeting? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does the meeting space allow for the room chairs to be set up in a circle? (You can elaborate here.)	
Is there a separate space for different families to wait if meetings are scheduled adjacent to one another on the same day? (You can elaborate here.)	

Is it possible to create a circle without obstructions, like tables or desks? (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	
Does the YDT use a talking piece? A talking piece is an object passed from one person to the next to indicate whose turn it is to talk. (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	
Does the YDT use a centerpiece in the center of the circle? A centerpiece represents the center of the community, reminds us of our collective nature, and provides a place for participants to rest their eyes. (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	
Does the YDT provide hospitality to all who attend a panel meeting and circle process, such as snacks or water, tissues, and fidget tools? (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	
Does the YDT prepare and use a seating chart for the YDT panel meeting and circle process? (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	

2. Answer no or yes to the statements below about administrative duties regarding the panel meeting and circle process. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p><i>Before</i> the YDT panel meeting, the case manager or designee is able to provide the panel members with a basic understanding of the offense, as well as the background of the youth and their family. (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)</p>	
<p>Any conflicts of interest with the youth and family are identified and resolved <i>before</i> the panel meeting and circle process. <i>If a conflict of interest was presented during a panel meeting, please explain one or two examples of a situation and how it was handled.</i></p>	

Any additional factual information relevant to the case presented by a YDT member is presented before the panel meeting and circle process. (<i>You can elaborate here.</i>)	
Were there any instances in which additional information was presented during a panel meeting and circle process that was not presented before the panel meeting and circle process? <i>Please explain one or two examples of a situation and how it was handled here.</i>	

3. When conducting the YDT panel meeting and circle process, sometimes the meetings go as planned, and sometimes they do not. Describe any processes (e.g., checklists, flow charts) that help ensure a panel meeting and circle process proceeds as planned. If there is nothing to elaborate on, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

4. Briefly describe any extenuating factors that have shortened or extended the panel meeting and circle process time. For example, what factors facilitate the process happening as scheduled? What factors have hindered the process from happening as scheduled? If there is nothing to elaborate on, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

5. Describe concerns about the victim being present at the meeting, presenting a victim’s statement (if any), and victim input during the panel meeting and circle process. If there were none, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

6. If you have concerns about the three sets of predetermined questions for the panel meeting and circle process (see page 28 in the manual), answer no or yes. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>Has your organization experienced any problems or concerns with the Trust/Relationship questions? <i>(You can elaborate here.)</i></p>	
<p>Has your organization experienced and problems or concerns with the Restorative questions? <i>(You can elaborate here.)</i></p>	
<p>Has your organization experienced and problems or concerns with the Agreement questions? <i>(You can elaborate here.)</i></p>	

7. While the meeting script is recommended and not prescriptive, we want to ensure they are trauma-informed and restorative. Answer no or yes about the **meeting script**. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well. **If you amended the meeting script, DO NOT include a copy with this self-study. We aim to ensure the script is trauma-informed and restorative, so we may ask for a copy to review.**

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>We use the meeting script exactly how it is presented in the <i>CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams</i>. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

We have amended the meeting script from how it is presented in the <i>CYSA Standard Protocols and Procedures for Youth Diversion Teams</i> . (You can elaborate here.)	
Is there a need for training in how to make the script or other materials at your organization trauma-informed and restorative? (You can elaborate here.)	

8. Answer no or yes about **writing the agreement**. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
Is the agreement always written during the meeting and finalized before adjourning? If no, please explain.	
Do you use the template for the Agreement Prompt Questions shown on page 30 and in Appendix E of the manual?	
When the agreement is finalized, is a copy always given to the family? If not, please explain any factors that inhibit doing so.	

9. Answer no or yes about **generating ideas for repairing the harm**. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>Do you use the template for the Agreement Prompt Questions shown on page 30 and in Appendix E of the manual? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Does your team use a brainstorming approach to generating ideas for repairing the harm? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Are all stakeholders present at the panel meeting and circle process (e.g., youth, family, panel members, YDT staff, and others present) invited to share their ideas and thoughts for repairing the harm? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

10. Answer no or yes about your team’s activities **after** the initial Youth Diversion Team meeting and circle process. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>Does your team follow up with the youth and their families after the meeting and circle process to ensure they comply with the agreement's conditions? (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

Does your team follow up with the youth and their family after the meeting and circle process to offer assistance to access the recommended services or complete the tasks listed in their agreement? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does your team follow up with the youth and their family after the meeting and circle process to monitor the youth’s school attendance, discipline, and academic performance? (You can elaborate here.)	
Does your team follow up with the youth and their family after the meeting and circle process to monitor the youth’s conduct in the community. (You can elaborate here.)	
Does your team follow up with the youth and their family after the meeting and circle process to follow-up with other service providers and supports engaged with the family or others named in the agreement. (You can elaborate here.)	
Does your team follow up with the youth and their family after the meeting and circle process to acknowledge the youth and family’s progress, support the youth and family however possible, and continue to encourage them. (You can elaborate here.)	

11. Sometimes, a YDT realizes a problem or concern *after* the initial Youth Diversion Team meeting and circle process, such as when the youth and family need additional assistance after writing the original agreement or the time needed to complete the agreement needs to be extended. Other concerns may be that the youth and family are at risk for failure to comply, which could result in the matter being referred back to the referring agency for possible referral to the court, or there is a need to close a case early due to a new violation of the law, lack of follow-through in complying with the agreement, or other special circumstances (i.e., family illness, relocation, etc.). In the box below, elaborate (using one or two examples) on any concerns or problems your organization may have experienced and how the situation was handled. If your organization has not experienced any problems or concerns, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part VIII: Case Closing (pp. 32 -33)

All cases must have a case-closing meeting. Whether a case is completed successfully or unsuccessfully, the youth and family should be brought back before the Youth Diversion Team board to discuss the outcome whenever possible (especially in the case of successful completion). Some circumstances resulting in an unsuccessful case closing may prohibit the youth and family from returning for the meeting.

1. Answer no or yes about successfully closed cases. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>The youth and their family were invited back before the YDT to discuss the successful outcome. <i>Please elaborate on factors that enabled and disabled the youth and their family to be present for a case closure meeting.</i></p>	
<p>The YDT acknowledges the success of the youth and family (if present at the meeting) and offers to provide ongoing support to them. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The YDT offers continued support to repair of any relationships the youth and family have with the police, school, or anyone else who may have been harmed as a result of the behavior/incident that brought them to the YDT. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The youth and family completed an anonymous questionnaire indicating their experiences with the YDT and how it may have impacted their family. <i>You may be asked to provide anonymous copies of the completed questionnaire to the evaluator.</i></p>	
<p>The YDT discussed the youth and family’s strengths that led to successful completion and encouraged them to continue with the helpful activities. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

2. In the space below, summarize a story of a case that closed successfully. What factors contributed to making this case a successful one? If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

3. Answer no or yes about unsuccessful cases. Then, elaborate on any concerns, such as enabling and disabling factors, points of confusion and a lack of understanding, a need for improvement, additional training, or adaptation to the panel meeting or circle process. You may communicate other concerns as well.

Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”	Enter the number below. ↓
The youth and their family were invited back before the YDT to discuss the unsuccessful outcome. <i>Please elaborate on factors that enabled and disabled the youth and their family to be present for a case closure meeting.</i>	
The YDT discussed with the youth and their family (if present at the meeting) why the outcome was unsuccessful and any opportunities or ideas to prevent this situation for similar cases. (You can elaborate here.)	
The YDT discussed the reason for an unsuccessful result with the youth and their family (if present at the meeting) and possible actions they may expect to see moving forward. (You can elaborate here.)	
It was explained with the youth and their family (if present at the meeting) that while the diversion was ineffective, the YDT members and YSB could provide support or assistance outside the YDT process. (You can elaborate here.)	
The YDT offers continued support to repair of any relationships the youth and family have with the police, school, or anyone else who may have	

<p>been harmed as a result of the behavior/incident that brought them to the YDT. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The youth and family completed an anonymous questionnaire indicating their experiences with the YDT and how it may have impacted their family. <i>You may be asked to provide anonymous copies of the completed questionnaires to the evaluator.</i></p>	
<p>The case information, as provided by the referring agency, was returned to the referring agency with a note indicating the case was unsuccessful and the reasons why. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

4. In the space below, summarize a story of a case that closed unsuccessfully. What factors contributed to making this case unsuccessful? If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part IX: Confidentiality (p. 34)

To maintain confidentiality and ensure the integrity of the YDT process, all information, documents, records, and files obtained or created while handling a YDT case should be kept strictly confidential and available for use by the YDT in handling cases. Answer the following statements that best represent your YDT process.

<p>Enter your answer to the right of the statement using the following scale: 1 – No 2 – Yes 9 – Choose not to respond. If you elaborate, the box containing the statement will expand as you type your response. If you choose not to elaborate, write “none.”</p>	<p>Enter the number below. ↓</p>
<p>Every member of the Youth Diversion Team signs a confidentiality statement at the time of their appointment. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Every member of the Youth Diversion Team signs a confidentiality statement at the beginning of each year served. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Each Youth Diversion Team member signs a confidentiality statement at the beginning of each meeting. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Any individual observing a Youth Diversion Team meeting signs a confidentiality statement at the beginning of each meeting. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Explain the requirements of YDT staff present at a YDT meeting regarding signing a confidentiality statement. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>The case manager verbally presents the case to the Youth Diversion Team members with the information in the “packet” rather than distributing it in hard copy. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	
<p>Any hard copies of the case materials distributed to Youth Diversion Team members before or at a meeting are collected at the meeting’s conclusion. (You can elaborate here.)</p>	

Our organization electronically sends confidential information to Youth Diversion Team members. (You can elaborate here.)	
Case files are kept securely in a location with limited, controlled access. (You can elaborate here.)	

Part X: Data Collection (p .35)

Data collection is necessary to determine the effectiveness of the Youth Diversion Team process and to continue funding Youth Diversion Team programs. The Connecticut Youth Services Association, in conjunction with the State Department of Children and Families, has developed easy-to-use data collection forms to record relevant information about the Youth Diversion Team process. The State Department of Children & Families requires all Youth Service Bureaus with Youth Diversion Teams to gather specific data on Youth Diversion Team cases through a data collection tool and submit completed Youth Diversion Team questionnaires (given at case closing for youth and parent/guardian).

Describe your organization’s data collection processes. **Please refer by name to any relevant forms used to collect data.** This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part XI: Organization Assessment

This part of the evaluation initiative aims to enhance our understanding of the YDT program implementation by identifying organizational factors that can enable and disable the process, such as administrative support, agency stability, a shared vision, and interagency links to implement a program effectively.

1. **Administration:** Strong administrative support is crucial for the success of a YDT program. Decisions regarding program adoption are typically made at the administrative level, and decisions about program implementation are usually made at lower organizational levels, such as by program coordinators or case managers. However, your organization may do things differently. Briefly describe the administrative structure and responsibilities of your organization's YDT program staff positions. Individual names are not necessary. You may also respond with "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

2. **Agency Stability:** Lack of stability in agency staffing, such as a high staff turnover rate, can significantly impact the quality of YDT implementation. However, even if a program experiences staff turnover, it does not necessarily result in program failure. Briefly describe any factors related to staff turnover and the length of time staff members have been in their positions since implementing the YDT program. You may also respond with "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

3. **Shared Vision:** Having everyone involved in the program share the same vision of the program's goals and objectives is important, but sometimes, the emotional and psychological reactions to a program may be based on ideological conflicts or competing philosophies. Describe how your organization encourages a shared vision and philosophy of the YDT program within your organization. How have you handled situations with others who do not share a similar philosophy? You may also respond with "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

4. **Interagency Links:** Collaboration with larger systems and sharing knowledge improves program outcomes. How does your organization cultivate relationships with other organizations participating in the YDT program, such as other Youth Service Bureaus operating the YDT program and referring agencies? You may also respond with "none."

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

5. **Support and Motivation:** The support, motivation, and commitment of the implementing staff are critical for the survival of any program. The success of a program depends on the individuals who execute it with high morale, effective communication, and a sense of ownership. If any problems arise, the staff should be able to identify the areas that need improvement and seek technical assistance to overcome the challenges. For example, regular meetings can be scheduled to promote communication, provide support among the implementers, and address any obstacles. (1) What support and technical assistance has your organization utilized when problems arose? (2) Explain briefly how your organization fosters support and motivation for implementing the YDT program. You may also respond with “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

6. **Adequate Administrative Time:** The lack of time to administer the YDT program (not a panel meeting and circle process) can become one of the most serious difficulties, often resulting in frustration and dissatisfaction. Describe any concerns about time limitations in implementing and administering the YDT program. You may also respond with “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

7. **Adequate Time at a Panel Meeting and Circle Process:** The lack of time to conduct a panel meeting and circle process can also become one of the most serious difficulties, often resulting in frustration and dissatisfaction. Describe any concerns about time limitations in conducting a YDT panel meeting and circle process. You may also respond with “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

8. **Training and Technical Assistance:** Implementation fidelity determines how well the program is implemented compared to the original design. Describe any training and technical assistance needs you currently have or foresee that would assist in implementing the YDT program with the greatest fidelity. You may also respond with “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Part XII: Open Comments

Is there anything else that you would like to share? Please use this last section to provide additional comments, thoughts, concerns, suggestions, successes, or anything else about the Youth Diversion Team diversion model or process. You may also respond with “none.”

This box will automatically expand as you type your response.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Web-Based Surveys

Parent Informed Consent and Survey (Reading Grade Level – 7)

Parent Informed Consent

- The Connecticut Youth Services Association is sponsoring a study to review the Youth Diversion Team process. The study will assess the process, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and ensure the best outcomes for the families and communities we serve.
- We value your participation in the parent survey and your agreement to have your child complete a separate survey. You and your child will each receive a \$25 electronic gift card for your participation.
- The JRB/Youth Diversion Team that handled your case emailed you an internet link, which brought you to this website where you can complete the survey.
- You and your child must provide your email address to receive the gift card.
- Upon completion of the survey, *only* your email address will be provided to the JRB/Youth Diversion Team that handled your case for distribution of the gift card. Your answers to the survey will not be shared and will be kept confidential.
- The answers you provide on the survey will only be reported in group form and never for an individual.
- If you have any questions, please get in touch with one of the two evaluators from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

Parent Survey Questions

Unless specified, the statements on the parent surveys are answered and coded using a scale from:

- 0 – Don't Know
- 1—Strongly Disagree
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4—Agree
- 5—Strongly Agree

1. Overall, I am satisfied with the Youth Diversion Team process.
2. The Youth Diversion Team process exceeded my expectations.
3. I felt heard by the members of the Youth Diversion Team during the process.
4. I was involved in developing the agreement plan for my child/family.
5. The Youth Diversion Team supported me and my family no matter what.
6. The agreement plan my child/family received was just right for us.
7. My child and family could meet with the Youth Diversion Team when it was convenient for us for the larger team meeting and circle process.

8. My child and family could meet with the Youth Diversion Team staff for the intake meeting when convenient for me and my family.
9. The help my child received was beneficial.
10. The Youth Diversion Team treated me and my family with respect.
11. The Youth Diversion Team staff helped me understand fully how the Youth Diversion Team process works.
12. I trust members of the Youth Diversion Team.
13. I have seen improvement in my child due to the Youth Diversion Team process.
14. My child can handle problems at home better due to the Youth Diversion Team process.
15. Due to the Youth Diversion Team process, my child is doing better in school.
16. My child can handle things in our neighborhood and community better because of the Youth Diversion Team Process.

17. Please indicate the JRB/Youth Diversion Team that handled your case. [Select Choice]
 - Bridgeport JRB/Youth Diversion Team with the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP)
 - Hartford JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Naugatuck Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Norwich Youth, Family, and Recreation Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Waterbury Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Wethersfield Social, Youth & Senior Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team

18. If you have suggestions for improving the Youth Diversion Team process or other comments, please use the space below. [Open Ended]

Youth Assent and Survey (Reading Grade Level – 7)

Youth Assent (Informed Consent)

- You're invited to complete a survey evaluating the Youth Diversion Team program to improve it for other youth and their families.
- Your parent or legal guardian agreed to allow you to complete this survey, and you must also agree to complete it.
- You will receive a \$25 electronic gift card to appreciate your time and answers.
- You must provide your email address to receive the gift card. If you do not have an email, you may use your parents.
- When you finish the survey, the evaluators will only send your email address to the JRB/Youth Diversion Team that handled your case to email you the gift card, but not your answers to the survey.

Youth Survey Questions

Unless specified, the statements on the youth surveys are answered and coded using a scale from:

- 0 – Don't Know
- 1—Strongly Disagree
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4—Agree
- 5—Strongly Agree

1. Overall, my experience with the Youth Diversion Team process is better than I originally thought.
2. During the process, I felt heard by the members of the Youth Diversion Team.
3. The Youth Diversion Team helped me understand my actions instead of blaming or judging me.
4. I feel like the Youth Diversion Team understood my story.
5. The Youth Diversion Team staff helped me understand how the process worked.
6. The Youth Diversion Team's questions helped me understand the harm I caused.
7. I had a say in developing the agreement plan about what I needed to do to make things right.
8. The Youth Diversion Team process helped me learn how to be accountable for my actions.
9. I am better off because of the Youth Diversion Team process.
10. I can handle things at home better because of the Youth Diversion Team process.
11. I can handle things at school better because of the Youth Diversion Team process.
12. I can handle things in my neighborhood and community better because of the Youth Diversion Team Process.

13. Please indicate the JRB/Youth Diversion Team that handled your case. [Select Choice]
- Bridgeport JRB/Youth Diversion Team with the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP)
 - Hartford JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Naugatuck Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Norwich Youth, Family, and Recreation Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Waterbury Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Wethersfield Social, Youth & Senior Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
14. Please share the best part of your experience with the Youth Diversion Team process in the space below. [Open Ended]
15. In the space below, please share your thoughts on how we might improve the Youth Diversion Team process. [Open Ended]

Victim Engagement Survey Questions (Reading Grade Level – 7)

Victim Informed Consent

- We want to make the Youth Diversion Team process as helpful as possible to the families and the community we serve. To improve the process, the Connecticut Youth Services Association is sponsoring a study to understand its strengths, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the best outcomes.
- We value your participation in our survey. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. We do not require any information that could identify you, and data will only be reported in group form and never for an individual. We only seek honest answers to our questions.
- Your cooperation is highly appreciated. Completing this survey will take about ten minutes.
- If you have any questions, please get in touch with one of the two evaluators from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

Victim Survey Questions

Unless specified, the statements on the victim survey are answered and coded using a scale from:

- 0 – Don't Know or Not Applicable
- 1—Strongly Disagree
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4—Agree
- 5—Strongly Agree

1. Please indicate the JRB/Youth Diversion Team that handled your case. [Select Choice]
 - Bridgeport JRB/Youth Diversion Team with the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP)
 - Hartford JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Naugatuck Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Norwich Youth, Family, and Recreation Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Waterbury Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Wethersfield Social, Youth & Senior Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
2. The Youth Diversion Team staff kept me well informed.
3. The Youth Diversion Team staff cared about me and my situation.
4. I was allowed to share how the youth who engaged in the behavior affected me.
5. My needs were heard and met.
6. The restitution I received was appropriate.
7. The youth who engaged in the behavior took responsibility for their actions.
8. I was satisfied with how the Youth Diversion Team handled the case.

9. I was satisfied with the outcome.
10. I felt comfortable and supported during the Youth Diversion Team process.

The following question is answered by selecting all that apply.

11. How did you share your views and participate?
 - I met with the Youth Diversion Team, the youth who engaged in the behavior, and a staff member from the Youth Diversion Team.
 - I met in person with a staff member from the Youth Diversion Team (the youth who engaged in the behavior was not there).
 - I met with a staff member from the Youth Diversion Team and the youth who engaged in the behavior.
 - I only spoke with a Youth Diversion Team staff member (I did not meet in person).
 - I gave a written statement.
 - I chose not to participate or provide information.
 - I was never contacted about participating in the process.

The following questions are answered as open-ended.

12. What would have made you feel more comfortable participating in the Youth Diversion Team process? [Open Ended]
13. If you have suggestions for improving the Youth Diversion Team process or other comments, please use the space below. [Open Ended]

Panel Members Survey Questions

Panel Member Informed Consent

We want to make the Youth Diversion Team process as helpful as possible to the families and the community we serve. To improve the process, the Connecticut Youth Services Association is sponsoring a study to understand its strengths, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the best outcomes.

We value your participation in our survey to help improve the Youth Diversion Team process. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. We do not require any information that could identify you, and data will only be reported in group form and never for an individual. We only seek honest answers to our questions.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated. Completing this survey will take about five minutes.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with one of the two evaluators from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

Panel Member Survey Questions

Unless specified, the statements on the panel member survey are answered and coded using a scale from:

- 0 – Don't Know or Not Applicable
- 1—Strongly Disagree
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4—Agree
- 5—Strongly Agree

1. Please indicate the JRB/Youth Diversion Team on which you serve: [Select Choice]
 - Bridgeport JRB/Youth Diversion Team with the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP)
 - Hartford JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Naugatuck Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Norwich Youth, Family, and Recreation Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Waterbury Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Wethersfield Social, Youth & Senior Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
2. How long have you volunteered for this Juvenile Review Board or Youth Diversion Team panel with this organization?
 - Less than 1 year
 - More than 1 year to less than 3 years
 - Greater than 3 years

3. Please identify your representation on the Youth Diversion Team panel. (Please select only your primary role)
 - A community provider representing a professional capacity (e.g., Clergy, Health Care Provider, Social Worker)
 - Department of Children and Families Staff
 - I am a community member who does not represent a professional capacity
 - Law Enforcement
 - School Personnel (e.g., Educator, School Social Worker, other school staff)
 - Juvenile Court or Probation
 - Other (Please specify)
4. Please indicate your level of participation on the Youth Diversion Team panel meeting and circle process.
 - I fully participate in the Youth Diversion Team process by attending the panel/team opening AND closing meetings and circle processes.
 - I attend the opening OR closing panel/team meetings and circle processes, but not both.
 - I HAVE NOT attended any Youth Diversion Team process panel/team meeting opening and closing meetings and circle processes.
5. I am actively engaged during the Youth Diversion Team panel meeting and circle process, specifically in helping youth develop ideas to repair the harm they have caused.
6. Overall, I am satisfied with the Youth Diversion Team process.
7. The Youth Diversion Team staff helped me understand how the Youth Diversion Team process works.
8. Unlike the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) diversion model, the new restorative Youth Diversion Team diversion model focuses on accountability and ownership but also centers on community, relationships, and the youth's development.
9. I believe the new Youth Diversion Team model impacts youths' development more positively than the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) model.
10. I believe the youth and their family are more engaged in the Youth Diversion Team process than in the JRB model the organization formerly used where I volunteer.
11. The Youth Diversion Team's restorative questions help youth identify the harm they caused and develop a plan to repair it.
12. The Youth Diversion Team restorative process helps youth learn to take accountability for their actions.

As part of the education and training process to redirect the former JRB process to become more trauma-informed and restorative, the Connecticut Youth Services Association developed and provided introductory webinars in trauma-informed restorative justice (i.e., RJ 101, RJ 201).

13. My training helped me understand the Youth Diversion Team process better.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- I don't know or have not attended any trainings.

14. Regarding the RJ 101 training the Connecticut Youth Services Association provided:

- Not Useful
- Adequate
- Very Useful
- I am aware of it but have not attended the training
- I am not aware of the training

15. Regarding the RJ 201 training the Connecticut Youth Services Association provided:

- Not Useful
- Adequate
- Very Useful
- I am aware of it but have not attended the training
- I am not aware of the training

16. Would you like to learn about training and other ways to enhance your involvement in the Youth Diversion Team process?

- No
- Yes

The following question is answered as open-ended.

17. If you have suggestions for improving the Youth Diversion Team process or other comments, please use the space below. [Open Ended]

Referring Agency Questions

Referring Agency Informed Consent

We want to make the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process as helpful as possible to the families and the community we serve. To improve the process, the Connecticut Youth Services Association is sponsoring a study to understand its strengths, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the best outcomes.

This survey asks questions that might improve your involvement in the JRB/Youth Diversion Process. You only need to complete one survey representing the collective needs of you and others in your organization involved in making referrals to the JRB/Youth Diversion Team.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated. Completing this survey will take five minutes.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with one of the two evaluators from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

Referring Agency Survey Questions

1. From which type of agency do staff refer to the Youth Diversion Team/Juvenile Review Board (JRB)?
 - A police department
 - The juvenile court
 - A school
 - Other (Please specify)

2. To which of the following organizations does your agency make referrals:
 - Bridgeport JRB Youth Diversion Team with the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP)
 - Hartford JRB/Youth Diversion Team with The Village for Families and Children
 - Naugatuck Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Norwich Youth, Family, and Recreation Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - New Haven JRB/Youth Diversion Team with the Urban Community Alliance
 - Waterbury Youth Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Wethersfield Social, Youth & Senior Services JRB/Youth Diversion Team
 - Other (Please specify)

The following two statements on the panel member survey are answered and coded using a scale from:

- 0 – Don't Know
- 1—Strongly Disagree
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4—Agree
- 5—Strongly Agree

3. I believe the new Youth Diversion Team model impacts youths' development more positively than the old Juvenile Review Board (JRB) model.
4. The staff at this agency responsible for making referrals, including myself, have an adequate understanding of how the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process works.

As part of the education and training process to redirect the former JRB process to become more trauma-informed and restorative, the Connecticut Youth Services Association developed and provided introductory webinars in trauma-informed restorative justice (i.e., RJ 101, RJ 201).

5. How useful has the RJ 101 training, provided by the Connecticut Youth Services Association, been in supporting your work to make referrals to the JRB/Youth Diversion Team?
 - Not Useful
 - Adequate
 - Very Useful
 - I am aware of it but have not attended the training
 - I am not aware of the training
6. How useful has the RJ 201 training, provided by the Connecticut Youth Services Association, been in supporting your work to make referrals to the JRB/Youth Diversion Team?
 - Not Useful
 - Adequate
 - Very Useful
 - I am aware of it but have not attended the training
 - I am not aware of the training
7. Including yourself, does staff at our agency need training, education, or information in any of the following? (Check all that apply)
 - Eligibility criteria for the JRB/Youth Diversion Team (e.g., residency requirements, level of offense, prior history of the youth)
 - A better understanding of the JRB/Youth Diversion Team process
 - Trauma-informed Restorative Justice

8. In the space below, please describe any additional training, education, or information that you would find useful.
9. Please enter your name and telephone number below if you want someone from the JRB/Youth Diversion Team to contact you about your training needs.
10. If you have suggestions for improving the Youth Diversion Team process or other comments, please use the space below. [Open Ended]

Appendix C: YDT Panel Meeting and Circle Process Observations

Informed Consent For Panel Members At Panel Meeting *Connecticut Youth Services Association Youth Diversion Team Meeting and Circle Process Evaluation*

Background

The Youth Diversion Team process provides an alternative to the juvenile justice system for ~~children and youths~~ and their families when a ~~child or~~ youth has committed minor law violations or is experiencing a crisis or conflict in the community, school, or home. The process offers support, programming, and case management to help navigate these challenges. The Youth Diversion Team includes professionals and community members who believe that diversion is a more appropriate solution. They believe that everyone makes mistakes, and being accountable for those mistakes can happen here instead of in the courtroom.

Purpose

The Connecticut Youth Services Association is conducting an evaluation study of the Youth Diversion Team program to see what we are doing well, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the optimal benefit to the children and youth we serve.

You are here today as a member of the Youth Diversion Team. This form requests permission from you for an evaluation team member from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC, to observe today's meeting process.

Please note that no individual, including you, is being evaluated. The observation is only to evaluate how the meeting is being conducted. As the meeting is being observed, the evaluator will be looking at the following:

- How the meeting room was organized.
- If a meeting script was followed.
- If everyone had an opportunity to introduce themselves.
- If everyone in the room had an equal opportunity to speak.
- If the process used to reach an agreement was followed as recommended.
- If panel members clarified that support does not end with today's meeting.

Risks

We do not anticipate any risks to you in allowing this meeting to be observed.

Benefits

Your permission to have an evaluator observe the panel meeting allows us to identify areas for improvement in the Youth Diversion Team process.

Confidentiality

If you participate, your privacy will be protected. We will not use your name in any report or publication.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding your rights or concerns as a participant in this study, please contact one of the two evaluators from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

**Parent/Legal Guardian Informed Consent
And Child Assent For Project Evaluation**
*Connecticut Youth Services Association
Youth Diversion Team Meeting and Circle Process Evaluation*

Background

The Youth Diversion Team process provides an alternative to the juvenile justice system for youth and their families when they have committed minor law violations or are experiencing a crisis or conflict in the community, school, or home. The process offers support, programming, and case management to help navigate these challenges. The Youth Diversion Team includes professionals and community members who believe that diversion is a more appropriate solution. They believe that everyone makes mistakes, and being accountable for those mistakes can happen here instead of in the courtroom.

Purpose

The Connecticut Youth Services Association is conducting an evaluation study of the Youth Diversion Team program to see what we are doing well, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the optimal benefit to the youth we serve.

As you know, you and your child are here today because of an arrest or arrestable behavior. This form requests permission from you for an evaluation team member from **Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC**, to observe today's meeting process.

Please note that no individual, including you and your child, is being evaluated. The observation is only to observe how the meeting is being conducted. As the meeting is being observed, the evaluator will be looking at the following:

- How the meeting room was organized.
- If a meeting script was followed.
- If everyone had an opportunity to introduce themselves.
- If everyone in the room had an equal opportunity to speak.
- If the process used to reach an agreement was followed as recommended.
- If panel members clarified that support does not end with today's meeting.

Risks

We do not anticipate any risks to you and your child in allowing this meeting to be observed.

Benefits

Your permission to have an evaluator observe the panel meeting allows us to identify areas for improvement in the Youth Diversion Team process.

Confidentiality

If you participate, your and your child’s privacy will be protected. This signed informed consent form will remain part of and secured in the Youth Diversion Team's case file. We will not use your, the child’s, or the youth’s name in any report or publication.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding your rights or concerns as a participant in this study, please get in touch with one of the two evaluators from Joe Brummer Consulting, LLC: Rick Cain at [REDACTED] or Joe Brummer at [REDACTED].

Parental Consent

Before deciding, please read this form or have it read to you and ask questions about anything unclear. Your consent is completely voluntary and can be revoked by you at any time during the panel meeting without any negative consequences. **If you consent now, you can change your mind later, and the panel meeting will continue as planned without the evaluator present. It is entirely your choice. Additionally, your child can choose not to participate in the evaluation study when asked.**

Signature of Parent/Legally Authorized Guardian

Date

Printed Name of Parent/Legally Authorized Guardian

Date

Witness (Case Manager) Signature

Date

Child Assent

A member of the Youth Diversion Team and my parent/legal guardian explained that someone would observe how this meeting is conducted.

I was also told the following:

- The meeting is being observed to help determine if it can be improved to benefit other youth and their families.
- Individual people, including you, are not being evaluated in this meeting.
- No harm will come to you in allowing this meeting to be observed.
- Your agreement to have someone observe this meeting is voluntary.
- If you give permission now and later change your mind, the evaluator will leave, and the meeting will continue as planned without the evaluator present.

Your parent or legal guardian must agree to allow this meeting to be observed, and you must also allow it to be observed. If you choose to participate, please sign your name below.

_____ *Child's Name*

_____ *Date*

_____ *Witness (Case Manager) Signature*

_____ *Date*

YOUTH DIVERSION TEAM PANEL MEETING AND OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Connecticut Youth Services Association

Date: _____ YDT: _____
 Number of volunteers and staff present, not counting RY and Family _____
 Facilitator _____

Informed Consent:

The parent/legal guardian and child/youth signed the Parent Informed Consent And Child Assent For Project Evaluation? If no, this meeting cannot be observed for the evaluation.	Yes No
Did each panel member sign the Informed Consent For Panel Members At Panel Meeting? If not, this meeting cannot be observed for evaluation purposes.	Yes No

1 – Not in place				
2 – Working to put into place				
3 – Partially in place				
4 – Fully in place				
Diversion Meeting				
Meeting was physically in circle with no table or obstructions				
The circle process began with an opening traditional or regulating activity				
Everyone introduced themselves				
A centerpiece was used (optional)				
A talking piece was used (optional)				
The meeting followed the script in the manual				
The meeting followed a similar script				
The facilitator used ice breaker questions chosen by the RY				
The script followed the restorative questions				
The victim was included in the process (if applicable)				
If victim was included, they were given opportunity to choose when they speak				
The RY had a supporter with them beyond their family/guardian				
The RY was provided the opportunity to take full responsibility for their actions				
Everyone present was given an equal opportunity to speak				
Agreement Process				
The 4 Quadrant Agreement Format was utilized				
The RY and their family, and panel members remained present for the agreement process				

The agreement reached by the group addressed the needs of the victim (if applicable)				
The agreement reached made amends to the community				
The agreement reached allowed the youth to fully understand their impact				
The agreement reached allowed the RY to make plans to not have this happen again				
The agreement reached utilized the RY's strengths				
CLOSING				
The circle concluded with a closing round				
Panel members clarified that support does not end with today's meeting				
COMMENTS				