

# EVIDENCE BASED PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE PRACTICES



## Special Note:

*This document is based on site visits to the Washington State Juvenile Courts and is meant as a tool to enhance the quality assurance processes that have been implemented and to increase the effectiveness of EBP's for the youth and families we serve.*

*This is not a full description of the programs*

## Increasing Effective Programming Across Washington State

The 1997 Washington State Legislature enacted the Community Juvenile Accountability Act (CJAA) to test the use of "research-based" programs to reduce juvenile offender recidivism. The act required the use of a risk assessment to assign youth to programs that had been scientifically evaluated, known as Evidence Based Programs (EBP's).

The Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators worked with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to develop a new assessment, the Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (WSJCA). An instrument was drafted following a review of the literature and then modified based on feedback from an international team of experts.

The resulting 132 item assessment was implemented in 1999.

In addition to meeting the legislative requirement, the juvenile courts envisioned an assessment that could accomplish the following:

- Determine the youth's level of risk for re-offending as a way to target resources at higher risk youth.
- Identify the risk and protective factors linked to criminal behavior so that rehabilitative efforts could be tailored to address the youth's assessment profile.
- Develop a case management approach focused on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors; and
- Allow probation man-

agers to determine if targeted factors changed as a result of the court's intervention.

The WSJCA is now an integral part of Washington State juvenile court operations. All juvenile courts have implemented the assessment and a statewide quality assurance process has been established by the courts.

Recent efforts have been made to integrate the evidence based programs and the juvenile court's case management assessment process (CMAP), approaches and research. This will allow for outcome evaluation and information about the impact of court programs on the youth and families we serve.

## Similarities in the Theoretical Framework of CMAP and EBP's

While CMAP and each of the EBP's have their own specific aims and goals, there are many underlying similarities. CMAP and the EBP's were all developed under the framework of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT is a short-term (relative to other forms of therapy) intervention that emphasizes the importance that thoughts, rather than external objects and situations, have on feelings and behaviors. CBT emphasizes the ability to change the way we act and feel even if a situation does not change. CMAP and the EBP's all rely on engaging and motivating juveniles. In CMAP much of this is done through motivational interviewing techniques, a semi-directive method of engaging juveniles to change behaviors.

While these similarities have always existed, reminding court staff and treatment providers of them allows for court interventions to transition seamlessly between EBP's and CMAP.

## Effective Case Management Assessment Process (CMAP) Practices

The **Case Management Assessment Process (CMAP)** is outlined in the 40 hour initial training provided to juvenile probation counselors by the juvenile courts. It includes training on the WSJCA risk assessment, motivational interviewing skills, strategies for effective case management and connecting to the evidence based programs.

One goal of CMAP is to match a youth's risk and protective factor profile with an evidence based program to address risk factors. The programs that are currently considered to be evidence based include: Aggression Replacement Training, Coordination of Services, Functional Family Therapy, and Multi-systemic Therapy.

The following are some ideas that have been effective in administering CMAP programs in Washington Juvenile Courts.

### Probation Practices:

- The initial full assessment is completed by the assigned JPC who makes the referral to the EBP based on the youth's needs.
- Once the referral has been made, the EBP provider maintains

contact with the JPC through out the intervention. This allows the opportunity to provide input and to be updated on the youth's re-assessment.

- An assigned mentor or seasoned staff works with new JPCs for their first six months to focus on basic CMAP principles and answer questions on policy and procedure.

### Management Practices:

- Monthly case staffing, for line staff with optional attendance for JPC's, are conducted by either a supervisor and/or quality assurance specialist (QAS).
- CMAP principles are the subject matter for regularly scheduled staff meetings using such ideas as five minute updates, skill of the month,

and brief refreshers by QAS/Trainer.

- Form a book club and assign a book related to CMAP for QAS and/or JPC's to read. Staff are given time to read during work.
- The QAS, annually, either tapes or observes a JPC administering a risk assessment and provides feedback.
- Using CMAP principles and language in interviewing new JPC's and during annual evaluations.
- Conducting motivational interviewing (MI) refreshers which include viewing MI training tapes.
- Management support of CMAP elements.

*"This country's juvenile justice system is in crisis. At the heart of the crisis is our failure to recognize that this system is for the care and treatment of children, not simply the punishment and correction of criminals. If we were to start over and redesign the system with our own children in mind, it would look very different."*

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Justice Bobbe Bridge  
Founding President/CEO  
Center for Children &  
Youth Justice

## Determining EBP Eligibility and Referral from CMAP to EBP

Once the initial WSJCA assessment is completed the JPC reviews the assessment information and determines if the youth meets eligibility criteria for placement in an EBP. Some important steps in the process:

- 1) All eligible youth are screened. This is based on the risk assessment and helps determine the appropriateness for interventions.
- 2) Youth are screened to identify those who do not have impediments to successful completion (e.g. drug and alcohol treatment pending, moving, commitment pending, etc.)
- 3) Youth are further screened to determine those youth who are 'ready, willing and able to participate' using the CMAP

model.

- 4) A "designee" (generally a manager, supervisor, or lead staff) in the court is responsible for maintaining a list of eligible youth and sending them to the appropriate provider.
- 5) The same designee tracks which youth are sent to the providers in assessments.com using administrative reports.
- 6) JPC's, Trainers/Therapists personally inform the youth and parent of the treatment referral.
- 7) Strong communication between the provider, the court designee, and the JPC increases the youth's engagement in the program.
- 8) If the youth is placed on a waiting list, this is communicated to the youth and family.

A time frame for when they may start the intervention is provided.

- 9) Using the CMAP model, it is important to prioritize the sequencing of the evidence based program (EBP) interventions based on youth and family's risk/protective factors. This helps obtain the best results for that youth and/or family.

For example, initially referring a youth to Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and once FFT is nearing completion referring to Washington State Aggression Replacement Training (WSART), etc. Or, if drug treatment is a priority, waiting to make the EBP referral until the youth has moved into phase two of the treatment.

## CJAA Evidence Based Programs supported by the Washington Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) Exhibit 2\*

Program	Risk Level Criteria	Risk Profile Criteria
COS (Coordination of Services)	Low Risk	Pre-Screen: Social History
WSART (Washington State Aggression Replacement Training)	Moderate and High Risk	Aggression Score 1, Domain 10 > 4, Domain 11 >1, Domain 12 > 3
FFT (Functional Family Therapy)	Moderate and High Risk	Family Dysfunction scale of at least 6 points Domain 7B
MST (Multisystemic Therapy)	High Risk	Family Dysfunction scale of at least 8 points Domain 7B

\*From the WSIPP report: *Outcome Evaluation of Washington State's Research Based Programs for Juvenile Offenders*. All programs listed above are at varying levels of implementation and quality assurance.  
(Note: FIT and VOM were not on the original menu of approved programs. Both programs were added as part of Evidence Based Expansion in 2008.)

### Washington State Aggression Replacement Training (WSART)

WSART is a 10 week group training program for youth that provides training in social skills, anger control, and moral reasoning. Youth who participate in the program are moderate to high risk on the juvenile court risk assessment tool. The program is expected to improve the youth's ability to deal with anger provoking situations. It is expected that youth's risk to recidivate will be reduced and that the youth's skills and attitudes will improve.

#### WSART

Once a youth has been determined to be eligible for WSART, the following ideas have assisted in increasing the effectiveness of the WSART program and outcomes.

#### Orientation

The JPC and trainers personally contact the parent and child to invite them to an orientation meeting that is held at a time that is convenient for the parents to attend (usually an evening).

At the orientation:

- The orientation is held specific to a class rather than having one large orientation in counties that conduct multiple classes in multiple locations.
- The Judge, Commissioner, or JCA speaks at the orientation indicating the value of WSART and expectation for youth and parents.
- Food and beverages are provided at the orientation.
- Trainers explain WSART and demonstrate social skills training, and the anger control chain.
- Trainers go over moral reasoning including thinking errors and a moral reasoning problem.
- Trainers instruct parents on ways to help youth while he/she is in the WSART group.

#### Preparation

The physical site should be evaluated to ensure it is conducive to the safe and productive conduct of the class. The site is chosen based on:

- Ease of transportation for the youth
- Adequate size with ease of entrance and exit
- Adequate equipment in the room (e.g. white boards, easels, chairs, tables, etc)

Note: Transportation is often provided for the youth to get to and from WSART group.

Some options include:

- Bus tickets
- Gasoline vouchers
- Door to door transport
- Group pick up from central location

#### Incentives/Snacks

WSART includes an incentive program. Specified behaviors (e.g. perfect attendance, most improved, best actor) result in rewards.

- 1) Trainers provide a mixture of random and fixed ratio rewards that are given throughout the WSART session.
- 2) Youth are consulted so the items chosen as rewards are truly incentives for the youth.

- 3) Rewards are larger and more frequent at the beginning of the session tapering to less frequent rewards as desired behaviors are formed/ established.
- 4) Youth are provided a snack and beverage at the beginning of class. Trainers choose snacks that are valued by youth. (e.g. ethnically desirable snacks).

#### Graduation Celebration

A graduation is conducted at the conclusion of the WSART group. Parents, guardians, probation counselors, significant supportive adults, friends, etc. are invited to attend.

The graduation includes an explanation of what the youth have learned, sometimes demonstrations by the youth, and an awards ceremony with graduation certificates and other awards.

Food and beverages are provided for the graduates and guests. Some jurisdictions serve a dinner or take the graduates to a local restaurant for dinner.

Once a youth graduates from the WSART program, information about their participation is shared with the JPC.

## Effective Evidence Based Programs

### Coordination of Services (COS)

The CJAA is currently in the process of implementing a quality assurance process for the COS program. This will assist Courts in reviewing their current programs and will increase consistency in the delivery of the intervention.

COS is a seminar (usually 12 hours in duration) that provides youth and their families with information about services in the community. Youth who participate are low risk on the juvenile court risk assessment tool. Coordination of Services contains activity sessions that seek to increase the bonding of the youth and their parents. The program expects to inform families about services that may help improve the youth's behavior so further offending behavior does not occur.

### Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

FFT provides youth and their families with an average of twelve sessions of family therapy. Youth who participate are moderate to high risk on the juvenile court risk assessment tool. The therapy is intended to reduce negativity and blaming within the family and to increase the family's hope that change can be accomplished. The therapy focuses on identifying obtainable goals for the family and developing a behavior change program. The therapy also encourages a generalization stage that helps the family find external support for ongoing change. The program expects to improve the family functioning and to change the youth's attitudes and skills.

### Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)

MST is an intensive intervention that focuses on the social ecology of a youth. Youth who participate are high risk on the juvenile court risk assessment tool. Therapists assess the systems that exist within the youth's environment and work with the youth and family using structured and evidence based interventions. MST provides on-call emergency access 24 hours a day and tends to last four to six months. The primary goal of MST is to engage the youth and the family in activities that reduce the youth's risk to recidivate. All elements of the youth and family's community are evaluated and utilized to help support the change process. The therapy focuses on building supports and plans that will assist the family in intervening early in the youth's behavior. The therapist focuses interventions to improve the family functioning and to change the youth's attitudes and skills.

### Family Integrated Transitions (FIT)

FIT integrates the strengths of several existing evidence based interventions - MST, Motivational Interviewing, and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. The intervention is patterned after the MST model with a therapist managing a case load of 4-6 families over a four to six month period. FIT is an intensive intervention that focuses on the social ecology of a youth. Since their clients are dual diagnosed, staff are able to access psychiatric resources (e.g. psychiatrist for medications or evaluation if necessary) to assist on mental health and drug/alcohol issues. Therapists assess the systems that exist within the youth's environment, and leverage the strengths of youth and family to increase resiliency factors (increasing warmth, increasing monitoring, decrease conflict, increase pro social peers, improved academic/vocational functioning etc.). Youth who participate are high risk on the juvenile court risk assessment tool. This model provides on-call emergency access 24 hours a day.



### Victim Offender Mediation (VOM)

VOM is a program in which the offender and the victim agree to a face-to-face meeting with a trained, neutral mediator. The purpose of VOM is to discuss the effects of the crime on the victim and the community and to determine what can be done to make amends. VOM has retributive, rehabilitative, and preventive qualities and emphasizes accountability of the offender. Statewide quality assurance standards are being developed for VOM. **The Washington State Institute for Public Policy is re-evaluating the program's effectiveness.**

## Effective Steps to Implementation of Evidence Based Programs

### *EBP Preparation*

Similar to WSART, the preparation and referral process for EBP's that require direct family participation is a key component in referral to an EBP. The following list includes effective strategies for increasing engagement in the EBP's.

- 1) The JPC reviews the results of the risk assessment and determines the youth's programming needs based on their risk assessment score in Domain 7B. Scores of at least 6 in 7B should be prioritized for FIT and scores of at least 8 in 7B should be prioritized for MST or FFT.
- 2) The JPC contacts the youth and family to inform them of their eligibility for services and assesses the families willingness to participate.
- 3) The JPC communicates with a designee, generally a manager, supervisor or lead staff, to determine availability of space in the intervention.
- 4) The JPC informs the family to expect a call from a provider soon.

Note: Some courts have found that the term "Therapy" is off-putting to some families. Describing the service as a free family program, the intervention has been better received by families.

- 5) Some courts have a flyer in the lobby to provide families with information on the program that can easily be shared at the court hearing or probation meeting.
- 6) One engagement strategy for "difficult to engage families" may be that the therapist 'just happens' to be at the court at the same time the family is there so that an 'im-promptu' meeting may occur.

### *During the EBP Intervention*

Regular scheduled face to face or phone communication between the EBP provider and probation staff has helped to provide cohesion, thereby increasing the successful coordination of care for the juvenile.

During the conversations between the therapist and JPC, mutually assessing the progress on items 7B and other parts of the risk assessment will increase the connection between the EBP and CMAP.

Also during these conversations between the therapist and JPC, if the therapist can provide information about areas that the JPC could address in their next meeting, the engagement rate increases and the family sees the therapist and probation staff as a partnership in helping the youth and family succeed.

### *Completion of the EBP Intervention*

At the completion of the intervention, the therapist provides information to the JPC in the form of a phone call, face to face contact, and/or written summary of progress. A certificate of completion can be provided to the families who have successfully completed the intervention.

Some courts authorize community service hours for successful completion of the intervention.

### *Incentives*

Incentives may be offered to the youth and/or family, to reinforce behavior or to reward hard work.

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## Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are an integral part of the success of CMAP and evidence based programs. The following provides some examples of partnerships that increase program outcomes.

- The WSART program has courts who have developed partnerships with local school districts or other agencies such as The Boys and Girls Club who serve youth on probation. These partnerships generally include the court sponsoring a person or persons from the partnering agency to be trained through our Washington State Aggression Replacement Training of Trainers. The court and the partnering agency each provide a trainer and can place their youth in the class. The agency generally provides the training space and some of the incentives. The court provides incentives and program materials.
- The COS program is based on partnerships with local community agencies. This partnership is unique to each county and provides the foundation of the program. These partnerships are invaluable to a successful program.
- FIT, MST and FFT rely strongly on community partnerships and connections with agencies and programs that can assist in supporting the youth and their families during and/or post intervention.



## Effective Tracking and Communication

Tracking and communication systems provide increased organization. Each EBP requires a somewhat unique system to obtain the best outcomes.

### All EBP's

The trainer/therapist contacts individual JPC's frequently to discuss attendance and performance of youth and family. Following the youth's participation in the EBP the JPC can generalize the skills by using EBP language and principles in communication with youth and their family.

### WSART

WSART attendance, comments and performance is kept on a central drive at the court that all JPC's can access. In WSART, JPC's or trainers provide weekly feedback to the parents of individual youth about the content of WSART classes and progress of their child. This may be via telephone contact, face to face contact, or a WSART weekly newsletter.

### FFT, FIT, MST

Communication is improved when EBP providers send an e-mail to the JPC after each session to inform them that the youth and family attended the session also informing them of a no show, cancellation, etc. Throughout the intervention, communication continues on a regular basis. If a family remains inactive for a period of time, the JPC and EBP provider work together to determine if the case will be closed.

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## CMAP and EBP Training and Education is Important

Providing ongoing training and education about CMAP and the EBP's is an integral part of a successful program.

### Some Helpful Tips:

- Provide an overview of CMAP and the EBP's for the Judges, Commissioners, and/or Attorneys.
- Structure ongoing staffing/education about CMAP, and the EBP's as a topic at staff meetings to address questions, solve problems, and provide updates.
- Include materials from the other EBP's that reinforce the connection between CMAP and the evidence based programs.
- Detention facility staff and specialized probation staff receive training to support youth and use EBP principles when the youth are detained or in specialized detention programs.
- EBP providers should be familiar with the CMAP principles so that they are aware of the risk and protective factors that the JPC is working to impact.
- JPC's who attend training in the EBP's will have an increased awareness of the principles of the evidence based treatment model which increases engagement rates of youth and/or families.
- CMAP, FFT, WSART, and COS Quality Assurance (QA) Administrators are available to provide updated training to courts on topics that can be tailored to the court's individual needs.



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