

**Minutes of the Juvenile Justice Committee of the  
Winona County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council  
July 20, 2023 at noon via Zoom**

**Present:** Rebecca Church, Kalene Engel, Chris Meyer, Kylie Davison, Alyssa Passehl, Teri Henderson, Sally Poepping, Amber Ziegler, Maureen Holte, Renee Rumpca, Danielle Swedberg, Mary Leahy, Becky Brandt

**Juvenile Placement Concerns:** Teri shared her experiences regarding finding placements for juveniles during the past few months. It continues to be very difficult to find placements—if anything, it has gotten worse since our last meeting. As an example, on July 19<sup>th</sup> she had to find a placement for a youth with multiple probation violations who had turned himself in. She called several placements who turned her down because Winona County does not have a contract with them for bed space. She finally found a place in Bemidji, but since Transport was not available to take him, a sheriff's deputy drove 12 hours round trip make the placement.

Teri and Kris use placement as a last resort and work very hard with juveniles to try and come up with intervention options other than placement, so when they recommend placement, it is something that is really necessary. Time in residential placement ranges from 3 months to 18 months. Currently, Teri spends more time looking for placements than actually helping kids. Youth with aggressive behaviors are especially difficult to place and placement facilities can be picky because there is such a demand; thus, they can say no to aggressive children. Many nonsecure placement facilities also operate on a contract basis. The problem has been exacerbated by the closures of facilities and staffing shortages, which don't allow open facilities to operate at their capacity.

The department that funds placements is Human Services. A meeting was scheduled to discuss placements and detention, but Director Sanness was not able to attend that meeting so things were not moved forward. Teri and Alyssa believe contracting a bed, perhaps by joining with other area counties, would provide some immediate relief for the problem.

Rebecca is concerned that placements will continue to rise due to kids who lived through COVID and failed to develop proper coping skills. Sally stated that with the kids that are on waitlists for treatment, it feels like we are treading water, just waiting for those kids to end up on Teri and Kris's caseloads.

Education and services within the community are intervention options that are considered and used. However, in juvenile delinquency cases, the focus is on the child's behavior, so the parents aren't typically ordered to do things. In CHIPS cases, the parents can be ordered to parenting classes, but that is a bit of a gap in our community with only one provider who offers that service. Many times, the training and skills provided to a child/parent are through their therapist, often through caregiver sessions where the therapist directs the training and skills. Children who are involved in Legacies or HCO get training and skills from those programs.

Providing even earlier intervention, focused on younger children, could equip parents and children with skills and education they need to decrease the need for costlier interventions later.

We have many programs and services available in Winona that offer early childhood services, but the challenge is getting the word out to parents and referrals sources about what is available and appropriate for their child. The Navigator Network compiled a list of early intervention programs in the community. County DHS was exploring a “no wrong door” approach to entry into these programs, but it unknown whether that has come to fruition.

After discussion, the group determined that a meeting between DHS, DOC, County and County Attorney leadership would be needed to address short-term and long-term solutions.

**Juvenile Citations/Diversions:** When a juvenile diversion is authorized, Court Administration needs some type of notification that the case is a diversion case, otherwise they will schedule it for an arraignment. Even with diversions, cases sometimes need to be opened to deal with the finds or community work service. Renee will make sure that the diversion letters (letters confirming that a case is in diversion), gets filed into any case file with the citation and police report.

**Restorative Justice:** Kylie plans to reach out to school staff to reopen the lines of communication and see if they can get access to attendance records for truancy purposes. The new superintendent was a former principal and worked well with Restorative Justice in the past, so there is hope that the access issues can be resolved. Judge Leahy would reconsider bring the court back to school if the school would share information. The Restorative Justice Golf Tournament is on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention:** Welcome to Amber Ziegler, the new ASAP Coordinator, who took over for Phil Huerta after he accepted a position as the Regional Prevention Coordinator. Amber interned at ASAP and is excited to make more in-depth connections through the position. The July ASAP Board Meeting was cancelled so everyone can “get their feet on the ground.” In August, ASAP will hold a volunteer appreciation barbeque. Amber is working on revamping ASAP’s youth internship and youth council meetings and looking into partnerships with other organizations. Work on the positive community norms continues.

**Trainings:** Alyssa reported on the recent “Stewards of Children – Darkness to Light” training done by Vanessa Southworth of Livewell Winona. The training was a video-based training delivered through people with lived experience which focuses on how to recognize and react to the signs of sexual abuse and to advocate healthy norms in communities. Sally shared information about upcoming trainings organized through WRAP+, as follows.

July 11 <sup>th</sup> from 9-11 am July 27 <sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm	Government Benefits 101 by Nicole Mourgas of Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services; Joel Kinder	Online
August 10 from 10-noon August 23 from 10-noon	Cultural Humility	In Person at HVMHC
September 5th 9-11 am; taped	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder by Proof Alliance	Online
October 12 <sup>th</sup> from 9 to 11 October 12 <sup>th</sup> from 1 to 3	Poverty Simulation Jen Timm and Ann Vandeberg of Winona State	In Person at Veteran’s Center/Legion on Sarnia Street

Registration for the trainings can be done online through the Community Mental Health Trainings link on the HVMHC.org website. Plans are underway for a training from a member of the Drug Task Force in November.

**Adjourned:** 12:58 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** August 17th at noon