GUIDING THE LA MODEL:
A CASE STUDY AT THREE SITES

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The Purpose of the Case Study

Over the last 30 years, what is now commonly known as the Missouri Model has been developed and implemented by the Missouri Division of Youth Services, a statewide juvenile justice agency. The Missouri Model is largely held as a best practice model of juvenile justice reform, lauded for its philosophy of small group, therapeutic intervention for youth in home-like environments that foster relationships and lasting behavior reform.

This case study was designed to examine and understand the implementation and adaptations of the Missouri Model at three distinctly different locations. It focused on understanding the implementation and adaptation processes other sites had experienced to help inform the process as Los Angeles County continues to reform its juvenile detention practices and philosophies. Most immediately, it is hoped that Los Angeles County can apply the experiences at these other sites in their formation and implementation of the new "LA Model" at what was formerly Camp Vernon Kilpatrick.

It is also important to note that the case study was not undertaken to evaluate or draw judgments about the three case study sites. Rather, the information gathered at the sites is intended to be shared as "lessons learned" by the various sites. Site visits were conducted in Santa Clara, California (one facility), Louisiana (two facilities), and the Washington DC area (one facility). These sites were selected because their implementation has been ongoing for 5 or more years.

The Missouri Model

The Missouri Model represents an expanding movement and innovative approach in juvenile justice: focusing on the treatment and rehabilitation of youth as an alternative to a more traditional corrections approach. Over the last 30 years, the Missouri Model has been developed, implemented and refined by the Missouri Division of Youth Services (MDYS), a statewide juvenile justice agency. However, the model has grown far beyond the state of Missouri – with its adoption and implementation now occurring at numerous sites nationwide. Many of these sites have made adaptations and adjustments to the model to respond to their specific needs and context, including population, geography, and political climate among others. However, their faithfulness – or fidelity – to the fundamental tenets and core elements of the Missouri Model are defining factors in the success or failure of implementation.

Fundamental Tenets

The Missouri Model is based on strong adherence to a set of fundamental tenets – all built upon the foundation of an underlying set of values and beliefs that flow from a humane and relationship-based treatment philosophy. Essential to the Model and philosophy is the commitment to a regional continuum that localizes programming;[1] all efforts are made to serve youth in the least restrictive environment, in their community, rather than detain them and remove them from their known environment.

The treatment philosophy emphasizes youth's capacity to make positive changes in their behavior and their lives while incarcerated in juvenile justice facilities. This model is grounded in the philosophy that youth can change as a result of their participation in an effective therapeutic process and an environment of trust, respect, and safety.[2]

Several practices combine to make the approach of the Missouri Model unique. Most significantly, every single element of the model embodies its rehabilitative approach. It begins with the premise that youth are most successful when they live and operate in small groups of 10-12 peers; this is operationalized by designing physical space that allows young people to live in small, cottage-like facilities located at sites throughout the jurisdiction. This structure keeps young people close to their own homes and communities. The effectiveness of these practices in Missouri and other jurisdictions that have adopted the model are clear and convincing – reduced recidivism, improved educational and employment outcomes, and improved safety.[3]

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[1] Mendel, Richard (2010). *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
[2] Mendel, Richard (2010). *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
[3] Newell, M. & Leap, J (2013) "Reforming the Nation's Largest Juvenile Justice System", http://www.cdfca.org/policy-priorities/juvenile-justice/reforming-the-nations.pdf. This policy brief is a useful source of information in understanding this case study.

Core Elements

The Missouri Model consists of six core elements: [4]

1. Small, non-prison like facilities close to home;

2. Individual care within a group treatment model;

3. Safety through relationships and supervision, not correctional coercion;

4. Building skills for success;

5. Families as partners; and

6. Focus on aftercare.

All of the above core elements, separately and in various combinations, have been part of well-established juvenile justice practice for many years. In its original implementation, the Missouri Model was unique in how it simultaneously applied *all* of these elements on a statewide basis. This system-wide approach is one of the major differences with how other locations have adapted the Missouri Model. Some locations have adapted it on a county-wide basis rather than a statewide basis, or within a specific number of facilities (Santa Clara is an example). When envisioning its application to Los Angeles, it is expected that a model will initially be created and adapted in one facility rather than setting up a statewide – or even countywide – network. Once piloted, it is hoped and projected that the LA Model will then be implemented at all Los Angeles County juvenile camps.

It was critical to understand how these core elements played out in different settings, and how different sites made decisions about what specific adaptations would be of optimum benefit. As a result, a case study of the implementation and adaptation of the Missouri Model at three locations was designed and undertaken. Site visits were conducted at James Ranch in Santa Clara, California, Ware Youth Center and Jetson Center for Youth in Louisiana, and at the Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings in the Washington DC area. At each site, the model has been in use for five or more years. The insights of staff along with research team observations provided a rich demonstration of the Missouri Model – and its adaptations – in action. Most significantly, the information gathered at the three sites is now intended to help guide the development and implementation of the LA Model as part of the Senate Bill 81 (SB 81) funded redesign and rebuild of what was once Camp Vernon Kilpatrick.

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[4] Mendel, Richard (2010). *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Site Visit Methodology

The Los Angeles County SB 81 Camp Kilpatrick Redesign and Replacement Project represents a major investment in and commitment to improving a local juvenile detention facility and program for incarcerated youth using a youth development and violence prevention strategy. Because of this, the implementation of the LA Model at the new Camp Kilpatrick will inspire and inform further reform throughout the county, state, and nation.

Together, The California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment, and The Liberty Hill Foundation commissioned a case study report from UCLA Professor Jorja Leap and her research team at Leap and Associates. The resulting case study is designed to inform policymakers, practitioners, and thought leaders about the need to improve conditions of confinement in youth detention centers as well as describing an effective youth development and reentry strategy, along with its operationalization. Toward this end, three case studies of well-established sites implementing the Missouri Model were conducted. This document offers an account of what the research team observed and learned, including the best practices that emerged from each site's implementation and adaptation of the Missouri Model focusing on both early and long-term results.

Each of the sites selected represent distinct and unique adaptations of the Missouri Model. **Table 1** provides an overview of the three sites comprising this case study. Due to the focus on *adaptation*, the original Missouri site was not selected for the formal case study, although it was visited by the research team.

Jurisdiction	James Ranch Santa Clara County, California	Ware Youth Center (for girls) and Jetson Center for Youth (for boys) Louisiana	Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings Laurel, Maryland
Referred to as	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Primary focus of the site visit	Detention program	Detention programs	Education program
Site visit conducted	September 2013	December 2013	April 2014

Table 1. Summary of Case Study Sites

The research team spent several days at each site, engaging in ethnographic observation of facilities and programs as well as conducting formal structured interviews as well as informal discussions. Interviews were completed at each site with staff at all levels including government appointed administrators, facility chiefs, administrators, supervisors and line staff. Additionally, when and where possible, youth being detained in the facilities were also interviewed informally. These varied research approaches were as global and inclusive as possible and covered four major areas:

1. Broad organizational components of the adoption and adaptation of the Missouri Model;

2. An overview of the political landscape at the time of identified reform;

3. Day-to-day operations from the youth perspective; and

4. Day-to-day operations from the staff perspective, as well as overall staffing and supervision.

All three sites used the Missouri Model as a starting point in their reform, but as implementation moved forward, they made adaptations and adjustments to the model to meet their local needs. As each site worked through the adoption and implementation of the Missouri Model, they consulted with Missouri Youth Services Institute (MYSI). However, it is critical to note that the length and depth of engagement with MYSI consultants and support services varied by site.

For the purpose of this case study, it was important to learn how implementation actually unfolded. The information obtained from the site visits was particularly relevant as a "real-time" guide to how structures, programming, and aftercare may be planned for the LA Model. The overall case study endeavored to understand and present ideas that repeatedly "rose to the top" as the most important themes from what was observed and acquired through interviews and conversations at each location. The benefit of these interviews and the information collected both reflects on the adoption and implementation process from the beginning and, in many cases, tracked the process to current implementation experiences.

Processes, Organizational Aspects and Common Issues

After the three site visits, certain common themes or foundational elements became abundantly clear. The most significant key elements expected to have the broadest impact, are presented in **Figure 1**:
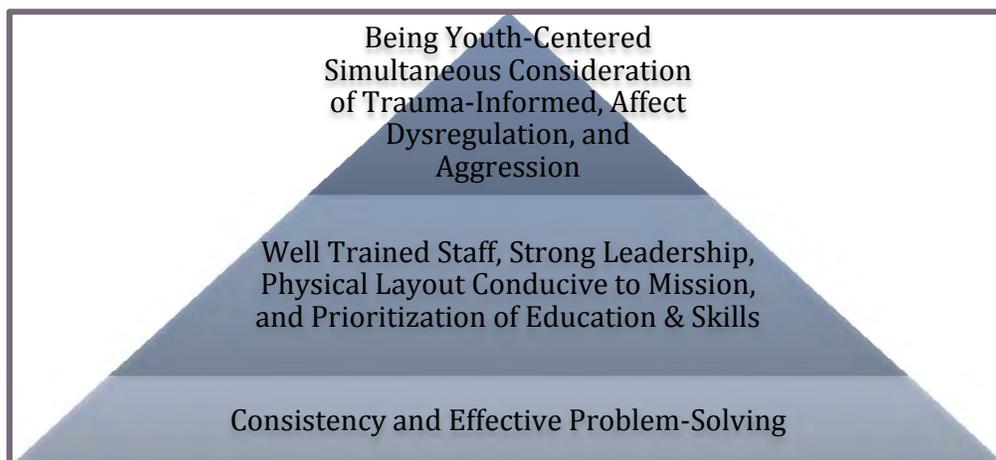
Figure 1. Common Themes and Foundational Elements

The foundation consists of two deceptively simply-stated but difficult processes essential to the smooth operation of a juvenile justice facility: consistency and effective problem-solving. Both must be applied to every level of implementation. The ongoing need and importance of these two processes cannot be overstated. In our case study visits, we saw consistency and problem-solving emerge in how staff approached their work on a day-to-day basis.

The next element is composed of four intersecting organizational factors that emerged as essential to implementation: prioritizing education and skill-building for youth, a physical layout that matches the mission and values, well trained and highly motivated staff, and strong leadership and creative problem-solving. These four organizational aspects are conceptualized to revolve around a youth-centered approach.

The top of the triangle represents the critical and guiding force in implementation – being youth-centered. However, this comes alive by considering and managing three common challenges that many youth in the juvenile justice system experience that they have not learned to manage on their own: trauma, affect dysregulation, and aggression. Emerging research, practice, and case study visits emphasized the consequences of each of these factors through myriad behavior management issues that occurred on a day-to-day basis or behaviors that were absent if managed well. The simultaneous consideration of trauma, affect dysregulation, and aggression represents a significant pathway toward more effectively understanding and managing youth behavior. This approach assumes that

learning occurs on two levels: first, staff must be trained to understand how trauma, affect dysregulation, and aggression manifest themselves in youth's day-to-day behavior. Second, staff then teach youth on an individualized basis how to deal with their own trauma, dysregulation, and aggression. In this way, a youth-centered approach can contribute to maintaining an environment that encourages behavior change and skill-building. By understanding how they have been impacted by trauma, affect dysregulation, and aggression, youth are primed to be more focused and willing to learn rather than combative, resistant, or fearful. A positive learning environment is created and maintained that supports positive change for youth and a safe and more meaningful working environment for staff.

Consistency and Problem-Solving

The two processes of **consistency** and **effective problem-solving** must be applied to every level of operation. The significance of these two processes cannot be stated strongly enough. At each site, these words and themes related to consistency and problem-solving were repeatedly discussed as staff and administrators described how they approached their work on a daily basis.

In total, more than thirty people were intensively interviewed across the three sites. If all of their advice, recommendations, and collective wisdom had to be summed up into one important "take home" for adoption and sustainability of the model – that message would be consistency. This includes, but is by no means limited to:

- How the vision and mission are defined and communicated

- How staff are hired and trained

- How youth are treated by staff on a daily basis

- How to integrate a common approach to all facets of the program including education, supervision, mental health, medical, counseling, case management, and any other programs available to the youth, as well as reentry and aftercare

- How evidence-based practices are selected and implemented.

The second theme repeatedly emphasized by staff at all three sites is the importance of ongoing, fast, and effective problem-solving that occurs from the top down, practiced first – and most significantly – by the key administrator of the program. This administrator must make sure to continuously and simultaneously work collaboratively with both management-level administrative staff as well as with front-line staff – carrying the process through "from the top to the bottom." In this rehabilitative setting, circumstances change on a daily basis due to a wide range of factors from the needs of individual youth and the changing group dynamic as youth enter and leave, to staff-youth interactions and larger organizational issues, including shifts in the political climate. Even five to seven years after implementation, all of the sites indicated how important it was to have an effective

problem-solving and decision-making structure in place to quickly, creatively, and proactively address myriad problems. Rapid, effective problem-solving was also essential in maintaining a safe and secure environment for youth as well as staff. In multiple implicit and explicit ways, the importance of immediate, positive, and effective problem-solving emerged as critical in all day-to-day practice. Given this emphasis, it is important to understand the themes that emerged from steadfast commitment to consistency and problem-solving.

Prioritizing Education and Skill-Building Toward a Successful Future for Youth

All youth in the juvenile justice system will eventually return to the community at some point. Education and skill-building while in custody are among the most important ways youth can be prepared for this reentry. In the words of one administrator from Washington DC, school emerged as, "a high priority – if not the highest priority. During the day we want youth to clearly see how important education is to their overall success." At each of the sites, all programming occurred *around* the school schedule; the school day was sacred, youth attended classes consistently with little to no interruptions in this schedule. Although articulated differently at the three sites, there was an underlying consensus that when youth are pulled out of class for various appointments, they become less motivated to learn, and teachers are less motivated to maintain high quality teaching. Because of this, overt efforts are made to minimize school day interruptions.

Special education is often overlooked in juvenile facilities. However, the site visits revealed that whatever the environment, there was a concerted effort to address the special education needs of youth, provide learning accommodations while also maintaining high quality education. Whatever the students' learning level and experience, staff at the three sites discussed their focus on how the educational needs of youth can be best served. If youth with wide ranging abilities are in the same living unit and in the same classroom, it was important that staff be willing to problem-solve around this.

All three sites were consistent in keeping small groups of youth in the same living unit (also referred to as pods or cottages) and same school cohort throughout the day. This model consistently ensures that youth are living together, going to school together, eating together, and engaging in recreational activities together, all with specific staff dedicated to that particular unit. To varying degrees, staff at each site commented on the complicated nuances of this cohesive model – specifically as related to individual's educational levels. In Washington DC, one administrator explained:

> *It is difficult when the reading level of some students is at the second grade level and others in the same group are reading at the college level. Scholars are not placed in living units based on their reading or academic levels, so the teachers end up with students at various skill levels. This makes individualized teaching more difficult, but all the more important.*

With units of 10-12 youth, classrooms are typically small, allowing for more individualized teaching and learning. Each site handled the role of teachers, teaching assistants, probation staff and others – such as case managers or coaches – differently to accommodate classroom learning, general safety, and overall management needs. Based on observation at all three sites, the model proved challenging for teachers endeavoring to "make it work" in each classroom, but they used a variety of tools and methods – including making the material as practical and relevant to the students as possible. Still, it remained a dilemma as to whether students should be placed in living units based on their educational levels or on other determining factors such as age, behavior, or other unit balance.

This emphasis on education reflected what has been demonstrated in the literature on best practices to enhance youth reentry and reduce recidivism. Poor academic achievement is a well-known contributing factor to subsequent recidivism among youth.[5] Obtaining quality education as a path toward higher education and productive employment is an essential component of giving youth choices upon returning to their community.[6]

Physical Layout that Matches the Mission

The Missouri Model is well known for its small group approach – a methodology that is ideally embodied in its physical setting. The physical layout creates a sense of safety and calmness, rather than reinforcing feelings of stress and anxiety in an institutional environment. Efforts are made to create an environment evocative of a school dormitory rather than a prison.[7]

However, there is the ideal and then there is the reality. Physical layout presented a significant challenge for all of the sites visited due to difficulties encountered in changing the existing architecture of buildings to accommodate the model. At the time of each sites' reform, none had access to funding that compares with the California SB 81 state and county investment available for the rebuild of Camp Kilpatrick. Still, sites found exceedingly creative ways to address their fiscal and architectural challenges. For example, a home-like environment was created in residential units by employing various strategies including the thoughtful choice of furniture as well as its arrangement and set up, how the room is decorated, and the atmosphere the room provides. In this way, sites used aesthetics to help eliminate an institutional feeling. Residential units of 10-12 youth were created, however piecemeal, to adhere to the small-group emphasis of the Missouri Model. In Santa Clara, living spaces were integrated to share sleeping space, incorporating a common area and, when possible, providing adjoining bathrooms. These common areas support positive group dynamics and reinforced youth-staff relationships. Whatever the physical layout, all of the sites worked to reduce design features that might contribute to

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[5] Wiesner, M. & Windle, M. (2004). Assessing covariates of adolescent delinquency trajectories: A latent growth mixture modeling approach. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 33*(5), 431-442.
[6] *Just Learning: The Imperative to Transform Juvenile Justice Systems into Effective Educational Systems.* 2014. The Southern Education Foundation, Atlanta, Georgia.
[7] Mendel, Richard (2010). *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

youth isolation (i.e. locked individual sleeping quarters) or violations of privacy (i.e. large open dorms).

It is important to note that in pods in both Louisiana and Washington DC, some youth were assigned to individual sleeping quarters. However, none were locked or segregated. The existing architecture and physical layout prevented dormitory sleeping arrangements. Yet, exhaustive efforts were made to ensure that youth did not feel isolated or institutionalized. Even when in individual sleeping quarters, youth had the opportunity to decorate their room and unit themes were integrated into the individual rooms. Further, the physical space was small and cohesive as to reinforce the non-institutional atmosphere, preventing isolation or exclusion.

The school environment was also reconfigured, with an eye toward making it both appear and feel like any other school setting rather than a classroom in a lockdown facility. Once again, in settings where buildings could not be altered, intimate touches were added such as posters, and adjusting the physical arrangement of desks to make the setting "youth friendly" and warm.

With an environment that is welcoming and comfortable – as well as trauma-informed – youth begin to feel more physically secure and less threatened. This physical comfort can support the group treatment model which also contributes to youth making positive gains in skill-building and preparation for reentry. However, the physical space also needs to be large enough to separate youth when needed, without disrupting the schedule of other youth in the unit.[8]

Maintain Well Trained, Well-Supervised and Highly Motivated Staff

A great deal was discussed at all three sites about the critical importance of having staff "on board" with the therapeutically-based program. This process to get everyone, at every level, "on board" involves the difficulties encountered in the contrast between the "corrections vs. treatment" philosophies. Rather than focusing on this outdated dichotomy, successfully engaged and committed staff merged the spheres of safety and rehabilitation. This trauma-informed approach creates and contributes to a safe, secure environment that is also conducive to skill-building, reflection, and positive behavior change – for the youth and the staff. To achieve this trauma-informed approach that focuses on safety and rehabilitation, interviews at all three sites revealed that this includes, but is not limited to:

- Hiring staff willing to do the job as intended;
- Bringing staff at all levels into adoption and implementation of the program *from the beginning*;

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[8] Zelechoski, A. D., Sharma, R., Becerra, K., Miguel, J. L., DeMarco, M., & Spinazzola, J. (2013). Traumatized youth in residential treatment settings: Prevalence, clinical presentation, treatment, and policy implications. *Journal of Family Violence, 28,* 639-652.

- Gaining and maintaining staff "buy-in" at all levels (front-line staff, supervisory staff, management) and in all domains (in all departments and divisions);

- Acknowledging that full implementation will require an ongoing training process across all levels of staff and does not "go away" in the first months or even years of the program;

- Thoughtful and consistent use of evidence-based programs and strategies.

Strong Leadership and Creative Problem-Solving

Exchanges at all three sites revealed that it was not enough to simply have strong leadership in place; such leadership must be sustained "for the long haul." Individuals at each site described the need for continued executive guidance to "keep the program going." It was not enough to have a visionary leader at the beginning of implementation – ongoing direction was a requirement as the model progressed. Strong and creative leadership was needed in many domains from the director of the facility itself to individuals overseeing a variety of departments including: education, special education, mental health, counseling, vocational skills, and aftercare and reentry.

Furthermore, it was important to conduct cross-staff/cross-department supervision; interdepartmental supervision further infused the program mission and values consistently.

Throughout the site visits, individuals shared many thoughts about effective leadership practices. One supervisor in Santa Clara offered this insightful summary:

> *You really need ongoing mission-driven supervision on a day-to-day basis – everyone from youth to staff have to be reinforced to follow the rules in the same way. It's also good with staff that may slip up to follow up with them about what it means to be mission-driven and youth-centered. You've got to be able to solve problems quickly – and at every level – from an aide to an assistant director.*

In addition, staff at each site discussed the importance of collaboration between individuals and organizations. Such collaboration included community-based organizations leading recreation and enrichment programs, volunteers serving as mentors, and other external partnerships advancing the therapeutic underpinnings of the

LEADING STAFF

Strong leadership works hand-in-hand with maintaining highly motivated, well trained and well supervised staff. Key elements that can only happen when there is a bridge between strong supervision and highly motivated staff included:

- Having a clear vision that is genuinely implemented by staff at all levels, as well as verbally and internally adopted by youth;

- Connecting a clear mission and vision to every aspect of daily operations as a reason why things are done, as a clear link to individual goals for youth, and with clear links to individual goals;

- The importance of an ongoing ability to problem-solve across administrative and management levels.

program and educational model. These collaborations and ongoing stakeholder commitment were central to supporting organizational change.[9]   Individuals who commented on the importance of these collaborations frequently described how youth who would be returning to their communities would rely on the same or similar organizations – the introductions to people, programs, and agencies could translate to the community setting once a young person was released and returned home. The importance of efforts and the involvement of stakeholders on an ongoing basis proved to be a dynamic part of the Missouri Model at all case study sites.

Being Youth-Centered in Philosophy and Practice

Being youth-centered is the core around which all program components must revolve; this is the emphasis critical to the Missouri Model – without it, the methodology would not exist. This singular focus on youth – who they are and what they need – requires rethinking virtually all procedures and programs in new and innovative ways.   Interviews and observations at all three sites yielded several examples that illustrate the youth-centered approach including:

- Making individual youth needs the center of all decision-making.

- Designating the social-emotional needs of youth as the top priority and placing all other implementation factors and decisions as a second – but still meaningful – priority.

- Strongly linking the youth's emotional and physical safety with the mission, vision, and all program operations. Basically, respectful treatment of all youth at all times and in all circumstances is standard operating procedure and not a privilege.

- An emphasis on youth safety that encompasses both emotional safety of youth and physical safety. In essence, safety reflects a "trauma-informed approach".

If youth feel safe, their behavior is more likely to be pro-social and they are less likely to act out. Improved behavior increases safety for other youth and staff, contributing to the positive environment needed for all other aspects of the program to successfully occur.

Figure 2.
Key Elements of Proposed Model

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[9] Isett, K. R., Bryan, T. K. & Wright, B. E. (2011). *Harnessing the Capacity for Change.* Models for Change: System Reform in Juvenile Justice. MacArthur Foundation.

As the research team interviewed staff and later analyzed data, it was clear that four intersecting organizational components proved essential to implementation: (1) well trained, well-supervised, and highly motivated staff; (2) strong leadership and creative problem solving; (3) physical layout that matches the mission and values; and (4) prioritizing education and skill-building for youth. These components reflect the "heart" of the Missouri Model approach.

Along with being youth-centered, these four components interact and support an effective and meaningful therapeutic rehabilitation program.

STAFF ROLES IN ADDRESSING TRAUMA

Well trained staff is an essential component in a trauma-informed approach. Essential principles across residential settings for traumatized youth include the following:[1]

- Train staff at all levels to provide consistent support to youth.
- Provide all staff with comprehensive training and technical assistance in trauma-informed services.
- Directly involve all staff in the facility to model safe, healthy, and appropriate relationships.
- Create safety in therapeutic relationships to help youth explore self-regulation and interpersonal security.
- Offer choices and opportunities for youth to participate in problem-solving to increase their self-control and de-escalate potentially volatile situations.
- Provide predictable structures and routines because youth with complex trauma symptoms often don't do well with unfamiliar or new situations.

[1]Zelechoski, A. D., Sharma, R., Becerra, K., Miguel, J. L., DeMarco, M., & Spinazzola, J. (2013). Traumatized youth in residential treatment settings: Prevalence, clinical presentation, treatment, and policy implications. *Journal of Family Violence, 28,* 639-652.

Understanding and Working with Trauma, Affect Dysregulation and Aggression

Most youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system have experienced trauma. They may deny their exposure, misinterpret its meaning, or, most significantly, may – understandably – be unable to control the cascade of their emotions or their aggression. Understanding the impact and implications of such trauma requires learning on two levels: first, staff must be trained to understand how trauma and its related problems manifest themselves in youth's day-to-day behavior. Second, staff must then

teach youth – on an individualized basis – how to deal with their own trauma, dysregulation, and aggression. When youth understand how they have personally been affected by trauma, they are primed to be more focused and willing to learn rather than combative, resistant, or fearful. When both staff and youth understand the roles of trauma, dysregulation, and aggression, a positive learning environment is created and maintained that supports positive change for youth and a more meaningful working environment for staff.

Implementation at the Three Sites

Each of the sites noted that they began with the Missouri Model but made adaptations to meet their specific implementation needs; these were accompanied by adjustments that were critical to fit within the culture of their sites. It is useful to note how the six fundamental core elements of the Missouri Model played out at each site. The experiences of each site should be considered while planning for and implementing the new LA Model.

Upon reviewing implementation at each site, please note that the site visit to Washington DC focused exclusively on the educational facility, not the comprehensive services at the site.

Core Element 1: Small, Non-Prison like Facilities

Table 2. General Approach of 3 Sites to Missouri Model Core Element 1.

Missouri Model Core Element 1	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Small, non-prison like facilities	One county facility following model with some elements being expanded through staff training to other facilities within county	Statewide network of small facilities	One facility

Other key elements:
36-50 bed secure facilities, in a regional continuum that goes from least restrictive to most restrictive, including community care/day treatment, group homes, moderately secure facilities, and secure facilities;
Non-institutional environment consisting of dorm rooms with 10-12 beds that are decorated with a warm homelike feel; youth dress in their own clothes; dorm is part of a room with a shared living room; walls are decorated; pets are permitted; atmosphere is hospitable and social.

The first core element emphasizes the significance of developing a network of small non-prison like facilities. While Santa Clara implemented the model on a county-wide basis, it currently only involves one facility. Similarly, Washington DC had only one facility. Louisiana implemented the model on a statewide basis and has multiple small facilities throughout the state.

For this reason, Louisiana stood out among the different sites: it was the only location visited with implementation in more than one setting. Louisiana's current Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) consists of 11 regional field services offices, four secure facilities for males, and one secure facility for females. In Santa Clara, the model was adopted on a countywide

basis as a result of the Chief of Probation looking for a more effective, research-based model for youth.

Despite the variation between the sites, it was consistent in all three locations that an institutional atmosphere was successfully replaced with a non-prison like feeling, small but secure in every way possible.

Given the jurisdictional differences between the three sites, the application of a network is understandably varied. However, the environment and climate of the facilities themselves speaks to the non-prison like atmosphere. In both Santa Clara and the Jetson Center for Youth in Louisiana, the facilities were converted from traditional corrections layouts to become home-like environments.

In Santa Clara, a large open dorm built to accommodate more than 100 youth all living together has been cordoned off into small living spaces to create up to eight pods of up to approximately 12 youth each. The open dorm was first converted into pods simply by hanging sheets to create individual units. Hanging sheets were soon replaced by faux walls (similar to tall office cubicles) to more permanently establish separate spaces for each unit. These pods each center around a shared living space consisting of over-stuffed couches, a television and an administrative desk, six sets of bunk beds and multiple armoires where the youth keep personal belongings. Having to "make due" with the existing architecture, the youth still use the large bathroom and shower facilities, but extra care has been given to make the space as private and personal as possible.

In Louisiana, the Jetson Center for Youth (for boys) converted a cell-based lockdown facility from the late 1800s to satisfy the non-prison like environment. In one particular unit, cells were converted into individual bedrooms where each young man could paint and decorate his room. The area that used to be the hallway between cells has been transformed into a community space with couches and recreational activities – this is the shared living space where classes, group, and any number of other activities take place. In contrast, the Ware Youth Center (for girls) was built with the new model in mind so living units are built as separate buildings for each group of 10-12 girls. Each unit has separate bedrooms for up to three girls (bedroom doors do not lock from the inside or the outside), a central living space with couches and decorated walls, a communal laundry room, and private bathroom space.

In Louisiana, a staff person explained how important it is that youth be able to personalize their own space, adding his thoughts about plans for a new location currently being built.

> *It's really important, as another part of the model [that] youth should be able to personalize their own space. Of course we had to make do with what we have and try to make the best of it. We're building a new facility that we talked about earlier closer to the central part of the state. And the design of those dorms, kids will not have their own rooms but there will be a measure of privacy. I think there's gonna be a half wall maybe 3 or 4 feet high around their sleeping space with some cabinetry for clothing.*

And it's still going to be open, but it's going to be private enough where they can personalize it. You know really it's important, I think it lends something to their treatment.

It is important to note that 12-foot tall security fencing and other overwhelming prison-like features surround both Santa Clara and Jetson Center for youth. However, immediately after passing through the gates, the atmosphere is transformed. In contrast, the Ware Youth Center does not have any externally visible security measures to keep people in or out of the property.

Core Element 2: Individual Care within a Group Treatment Model

Table 3. General Approach of 3 Sites to Missouri Model Core Element 2.

Missouri Model Core Element 2	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Emphasis on individual care within a group treatment model with the same 10-12 youth interacting	Yes	Yes	Yes

Other key elements:
10-12 youth in treatment team together; eat, sleep, go to school and get treatment together in an open group; level system used; self-exploration via daily group treatment;
Individualized case management with youth assigned to a single staff service coordinator;
Service coordinator does risk/needs assessment, visits monthly, and is involved in decisions for family and pre-release, with dedicated staff mentors;
Indeterminate sentencing.

All three sites included this component in their models and considered small group structure critical. As a result of their experience in small group living, youth developed a sense of connection and "family"; many of the young people believed their small group was critical to their success. Youth liked the intimacy of traveling in their group, with one commenting, "It's more like home" and another youth adding, "It made me feel normal to be part of a group of peers, guys whose lives are similar to mine on the inside and on the outs."

Another essential component of the small group's operational success is consistent staffing and consistent staffing schedules.[10] This uniformity allowed staff members to work with

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[10] Each site implemented staffing differently; hiring processes varied and scheduling was site specific.

the same group of youth to minimize unexpected behavior problems. In these interactions, the same small group strategy worked so that youth could influence one another in "holding it together" or "not making trouble." A Santa Clara administrator explained that,

> *Peers teach each other. It will actually be a gang member who, as a new gang member comes in, he'll say if they're from the same neighborhood, we don't do that here, we check all of that here, and he'll say don't worry, we have nothing to prove here. Do you want to get back to your family? Then you check all of that at the door. It's the kids who tell each other that.*

This does not mean that behavior problems do not occur, but this strategy reduces both the likelihood and frequency of such problems.

In all three sites, staff discussed being very familiar with the needs and behaviors of the 10-12 youth in their group or "pod", so they are able to anticipate and address problems on an individualized basis – specific to the individuals in the group as well as the group as a whole. This also reinforced the sense of a home-like atmosphere.

Staff operates in response to the clear expectation that youth will be engaged in some type of activity during all waking hours. It is not always easy to keep youth on the schedule, particularly after school. But as one individual observed:

> *...But unlike our kids at home, the kids here have to go to group. They go directly into group. And when we first started doing that, you know there was a little resistance... they didn't want to do it because they want to wind down, so, we have to explain to the staff.... Okay, do you have kids at home? Yeah. What do your kids do when they get home? They turn on the TV. We want them to do their homework, but they turn on the TV. Well, our kids can't do that. They're expected to go to group.*

Keeping the youth in their small groups means rotating activities by dorms so youth do not engage in activities with other dorms during the normal schedule of the day. According to one staff member:

> *So, they come back and they start their groups. And some schedules vary because while some kids may be at groups, some dorms may be on recreation.... So, about 4:30pm they'll start moving again to the dining hall for dinner. They'll eat dinner, go back to the dorms and sometimes there are late groups depending on the case manager's schedules. Their group may occur when they return from the dining hall, because case managers have 2 late nights a week and they leave at 6pm.*

Another staff member added:

> *The staff are always expected to have the kids engaged…if there's two staff in the dorm then one can always participate in games with the youth, as long as there's two staff, which is the goal to have two.*

The above schedule demonstrates how staff working with the same group of youth can minimize unexpected behavior problems by ensuring that youth interact only with the members of their dorm group. It also demonstrates the importance of having meaningful and engaging programs and activities for the youth to ensure that all of their time is filled with intentional activity. Again, this doesn't mean that behavior problems don't happen, but it does reduce the likelihood of problems.

Core Element 3: Safety through Relationships and Supervision, Not Coercion

Table 4. General Approach of 3 Sites to Missouri Model Core Element 3.

Missouri Model Core Element 3	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Emphasis on safety through relationships and supervision, not coercion	Yes, through staff and peer role modeling	Yes, through staff and peer role modeling	Not the focus of the site visit

Other key elements:
Constant staff supervision;
Supportive peer relationships;
Youth receive structure, counseling, direction and support, not punishment;
Staff maintain order through constant and attentive supervision;
Few locked doors; isolation never used as punishment; no pepper spray, hog-ties, restraints or strip searches;
Safety maintained through supervision and relationships: intensive supervision by staff; create an environment of trust and respect;
3 safety ingredients: high-caliber staff, active around-the-clock supervision, and minimize fear, maximize trust and create respect; restraints only used in a crisis by trained staff.

The relational aspect of the Missouri Model is predicated on youth safety. This core element was observed and explored in Santa Clara and Louisiana, but was not part of the site visit in Washington DC. At both sites, safety was maintained through intensive and caring supervision by staff and supportive peer relationships. It was also critical that youth receive structure, counseling, direction and support, not punishment and certainly no punitive consequences.

The same staff members work with the same 10-12 youth, enabling them to get to know each youth and individualize their approach. At the same time, youth get to know staff and build a relationship with them. A Louisiana staff person explains it this way:

> *Each dorm will have…the direct care staff. Each dorm will have a group leader and a case manager or social worker so, that would be that dorm unit… for that same group to work that dorm over and over for consistency. That really is the most critical position when you use this model. That person oversees the dorm, they are responsible for insuring that the daily routine is realized and carried out. They set the tone, they set the expectations. They are to ensure that the treatment model is implemented, as it should be. They are the ones who give positive reinforcement and rewards as well as consequences to the kids and the staff. And they really are the go to person. If you do not have a strong group leader, the model in that dorm will not work. You will not have good outcomes or success with those kids at all.*

In Louisiana, staff use supervision techniques and build relationships with youth that emphasize a therapeutic verses a correctional approach. The purpose is the same – to maintain safety and security in the setting.   During an interview, a staff member offered their perspective:

> *Everybody within the agency that works with youth now have to wear many hats. They all have to be therapy-minded. Especially your group leader needs to be able to lead and direct groups. But just the mindset within all of it, everyone…has to be more therapy minded. One of the things that's just a small statement if you make when you look at the difference… between a corrections model and a therapeutic model…in the adult system some youths may never go home. In a juvenile system, everyone's going home. These are our children so it's better for us to treat them good to where they can be productive citizens. Because they're all going home and they all belong to us, to each of us, so you need to shift and wear different hats. You can't just be strictly, I guess, corrections.*

One Santa Clara administrator explained, "The same staff get to work with the same 10-12 youth every day, so that staff can truly get to know the youth and individualize their approach, but also so youth can get to know staff and build a relationship with them." In Louisiana, another administrator clarified, "the youth themselves have to change their expectations about how they should be treated by staff." He described how youth are encouraged to use the available grievance process and how to advocate on their own behalf. The administrator went on to discuss how important it is to teach youth how to take pride in their surroundings and how – with girls and boys alike – their past histories of trauma and abuse can be healed with such a meaningful relational approach.

In these facilities, there were virtually no locked doors and isolation was *never* used as a punishment. Cruel procedures involving pepper spray, hogties, restraints or strip searches

were forbidden. Ultimately, individuals in Santa Clara and Louisiana agreed on three key safety "ingredients": (1) high-caliber staff who provide active, around-the-clock supervision; (2) minimizing fear, maximizing trust and creating respect; and (3) restraints only used in a crisis by trained staff.

Core Element 4: Building Skills for Success

Table 5. General Approach of 3 Sites to Missouri Model Core Element 4.

Missouri Model Core Element 4	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Helping youth develop skills to improve success after release	Yes, through staff role modeling, education and vocational programs	Yes, through staff role modeling, and education programs	Yes, through education program

Other key elements:
Help youth develop academic, pre-vocational, and communication skills to improve success after release, as well as insights into the roots of their behavior; help youth learn new social competence and problem-solving skills.
Support success after release by fostering self-awareness and communication skills, pursuing academic progress, and providing an opportunity for hands-on learning.

This core element was implemented in slightly different ways at each of the three site visit locations. In Santa Clara and Louisiana youth were helped to develop skills through staff role modeling, education and vocational programs. In Washington DC, the education program served as the crucial vehicle that provided youth with help and support in learning new skills and working toward their continued improvement after release.

In Louisiana, the educational component is embedded within the detention facilities with the exception of special education, which is run by the Department of Education. The responsibility and authority for education is all part of the juvenile justice system. In contrast, the Santa Clara County Office of Education runs the schools in a multi-disciplinary environment. Classrooms are onsite at each location, as is typical in juvenile justice settings. In Washington DC, a separate foundation runs the school but works collaboratively with the probation department who staff the secure facility that is located on the same campus as the school.[11] While the settings and administrative structures differ by site, the commitment to education, skill building and success upon reentry was a theme that held across all three sites.

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[11] The New Beginnings Youth Development Center is the school on-site at the secure detention facility. The school is located in one building on the same quad with the housing facilities, separated by a large field of grass. The school is run by the See Forever Foundation and is a Maya Angelou Academy. The housing units are separate buildings surrounding the quad area. The youth live a very short distance from where they attend to school.

Core Element 5: Families as Partners

Table 5. General Approach of 3 Sites to Missouri Model Core Element 5.

Missouri Model Core Element 5	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Family involvement while youth is incarcerated	Family incorporated into assessment, level system and aftercare planning	Some but limited	Some but limited

Other key elements:
Family is involved as partners and allies in treatment and aftercare including immediate outreach, ongoing consultation, family therapy, and being a partner in release planning.

This element was probably the least well integrated into each of the site models. All three sites were supportive of family involvement; however, there were numerous obstacles to fulfilling this goal. There were practical barriers such as parents often having employment conflicts or difficulties obtaining transportation to the site. Beyond these factors, what posed the greatest challenge were the emotional barriers that parents experienced and staff encountered. Parents were frequently unable – often as a result of their own problems or traumas – to be involved. Their lack of willingness must be understood in terms of the poverty and violence they have experienced or continue to experience, accompanied by trauma exposure in their own lives. Still, whether environmental or psychological, these difficulties all point to ongoing challenges as the model is adapted in diverse settings with varied geography. It is clear that an appreciation for the family dynamics and ongoing efforts at outreach and support warrant attention in any implementation effort.

Family involvement and the regional network concept go hand-in-hand in the Missouri Model. With a regional network of smaller facilities, the chances of being able to place youth closer to their neighborhood increases. Ideally this is supposed to support a greater amount of family involvement. But in real-life implementation, the regional concept remains challenging, particularly in Louisiana, largely due to the geography of the state. An administrator discussed a new facility being built in the rural center of the state, away from the other locations; this new site is intended to increase family involvement for those families who are currently far away from where their child is placed:

> *We're building a campus in closer to the central part of the state. What we're doing, what the vision is, is to have small campuses around the state. A regional concept so kids can remain close to their families. Of course, a lot of the long term success of the kids in part will largely be due to family involvement, family engagement, family participating, family support…so we can keep those family dynamics connected while*

they're engaged in treatment. Hopefully, we believe the model supports that the kids will have long-term success, and that recidivism will be impacted significantly.

Families are involved in the initial assessment process in Santa Clara, and are included in the multi-disciplinary team meeting. An enthusiastic administration explained:

The multi-disciplinary team meeting that takes place at the very beginning is within 30 days that a youth arrives to the ranch here. The youth and his family sat down with the counselor that he's assigned to, the probation officer, the mental health provider, the county office of education, and I think drug and alcohol provider. All of those folks will come in and they will utilize that JAIS instrument – the outputs from the JAIS and they'll also have their assessments that they've done, whether that be educational or mental health or what have you, and they'll talk about that with the family and the youth and they will devise a treatment plan.

In Santa Clara, family involvement is viewed as integral to the youth progressing through the various levels of treatment and rehabilitation. There is a strong emphasis on preparing youth to return home for family visits. Weekend passes to visit family represent one mechanism of getting ready for reentry and aftercare. Another key aspect of family involvement consists of assessing whether family interaction is actually appropriate for all youth. In Santa Clara, there is a strong effort against adopting a "one-strategy-fits-all" in relation to youth and family interaction. One staff member clarified the process:

We try to build off of the strengths [the kids] have and also making sure that the family is a vital part of the treatment process. You can't just treat the child, you've got to go back to the family and what can we do to repair that relationship or maybe it's not the best for the child to go back to that family. Maybe we need to find another place for that child to go to.

In Washington DC, the school is committed to family engagement as well. The school hosts regular Back to School nights where the families and occasionally friends of the youth can come to the campus to meet the youth's teacher and classroom support, to see what the students are doing in school, and to learn about the student's academic standing. This engagement in the school and classroom is a continued reminder to families that they are integral to their child's educational success.

Core Element 6: Focus on Aftercare

Table 7. General Approach of 3 Sites to Missouri Model Core Element 6.

Missouri Model Core Element 6	Santa Clara	Louisiana	Washington DC
Aftercare planning, monitoring, and mentoring	Instituting a designated probation officer to work with youth throughout their sentence	Dedicated probation officer continues to work with youth	One assigned staff person to follow-up with youth after they leave

Other key elements:
After planning, monitoring, and mentoring includes pre-release planning, continued custody if needed, and monitoring and mentoring.

Each site possessed its own version of an aftercare component. In turn, the degree to which the aftercare component was fully implemented varied by site as well. Santa Clara used a designated probation officer whose sole task was to work with youth throughout their detention to plan for their return home and their reentry into the community. In turn, Louisiana has a dedicated probation officer who continues to work with youth both while in and once they leave the juvenile justice facility. Finally, in Washington DC one staff person is assigned to follow-up with youth after they leave.

In Louisiana, there was extensive discussion of how important it was to assign youth to one probation officer for the duration of their time on probation. The theme of consistency was carried out into the community, allowing the probation officer to be familiar with each youth and his or her needs throughout their time on probation.

Similarly, Santa Clara had a strong focus on aftercare planning, emphasizing that this was internal as well as external and not just an afterthought. There, a clear need for emphasis on reentry emerged after the National Council on Crime and Delinquency analyzed operations at the facility. Subsequently, a model of wrap-around services was developed to address reentry needs. A Santa Clara administrator explained, "Our old system of handing youth off from one probation officer to another just wasn't working." With a grant from OJJDP, this is now in the process of being changed, enabling youth to have the same probation officer from the time they enter the facility until they leave. Reentry planning in Santa Clara begins at the initial assessment and treatment planning process. In addition, at the time of the site visits and interviews, Santa Clara was planning for probation officers to be co-located at the secure facility. Finally, staff emphasized the importance of parental buy-in during the aftercare process. This was viewed as a key indicator of potential for success for the young person.

Advice from the Sites: Considerations for Implementation of the LA Model

Across all three sites, there was tremendous enthusiasm for and dedication to the Missouri Model. However, repeatedly the research team was told, "We had to tweak this for our jurisdiction," and "It's a great model but we had to make it our own." This is the task that now confronts Los Angeles. In developing the LA Model, the lessons learned from other sites that have "already been through it" and strategies to be considered "sooner rather than later" will help to contribute to effective adaptation and meaningful outcomes for youth and staff. In addition, in order to undertake the successful creation and implementation of the LA Model, both the cultural and operational shift underway within the Probation Department must be fully realized. Given this reality, it is particularly useful to examine what other sites have embarked upon – and ultimately experienced – in order to facilitate adoption of the Missouri-based approach locally.

Rewriting Job Descriptions and Conducting Intensive Training that Emphasizes the Treatment Role of Staff

The success of the model begins with staff. Job descriptions must be rewritten to align with and better reflect the philosophy of the new model. The interviewing process to identify the right staff for the new model is different than the interview process that has previously existed. The new process must clearly emphasize the key treatment role that staff plays rather than the previously emphasized corrections role. While there is a place for the traditional responsibilities of direct care staff, the job now goes far beyond that traditional approach. This change is emphasized in the job description and the interviewing process.

Rewriting the job description and conducting interviews differently is only the first step. After this, training is vital to the success of the model's implementation and sustainability. The initial instructional approach described in Louisiana consisted of intensive classroom training combined with on-the-job training for newly hired line staff. The schedule during training rotates between specific days spent in the classroom, and complementary days spent in on-the-job training, so newly hired staff can apply what they are learning in class sessions to the "real world" on the unit. An onsite training coordinator organizes and conducts the trainings and also spends a significant amount of time monitoring the units, so she is well versed in actual practice. New trainees are paid for time spent attending all classroom sessions and on-the-job training.

Another innovative practice in Louisiana consists of cross-role education: the strategy of training probation officers, juvenile justice facility staff and youth counselors all together. This assures continuity of the model across staff in different roles with different responsibilities. As a result, youth are more likely to encounter consistency with the same responses and treatment from staff in a facility environment and from their field probation officer. It was clear that collectively training staff in different positions, with different responsibilities at the same time can be used as an effective tool to ensure consistent implementation of the model across different parts of the service continuum. Building upon this, field staff (the probation officers) in Louisiana actually become informal instructors themselves – sharing the model with other professionals within the criminal

justice system continuum and educating them about its operation. Most notably, this "education by dissemination" includes probation officers "training" judges. It is a true cultural shift to imagine judges learning from probation officers – finding out about innovations engendered by the Missouri Model – but this is exactly what the research team discovered in Louisiana.

The training coordinator in Louisiana described extensive changes in the training curriculum content. "It's completely different than it used to be," he enthused. Content now goes far beyond an overview of departmental policies and procedures. Instead, encompassing a more substantive focus on treating youth with different program approaches according to their individual needs. Issues surrounding trauma, mental health and worker self-care also comprise critical parts of the core-training curriculum.

In addition to the extensive training new hires receive, ongoing training and refreshers for existing staff is essential. In short, no matter how long someone has been employed within the department, continual training is critical. Training for experienced staff can range from general refresher courses to certification in newly adopted evidence-based practices. Existing staff must stay current with the expectations and adjustments that are taking place. Further, training sessions often provide an opportunity for experienced staff to reflect and contribute their insight as to how implementation is actually going – discussing what is working and providing tips and pointers to their colleagues. In addition, training sessions can be a useful place for staff to discuss the cultural changes they are experiencing. Training is a critical component of continuing to ensure the staff is highly motivated and well prepared.

Ensuring Staff and Administrators at All Levels Embrace and Continue to Embrace the Core Values and Beliefs of the Model

Each of the three sites described how staffing and staff training could pose ongoing challenges; sites have found that not all staff embraces the shift to the new model. Administrators at each site expressed the opportunity to use this challenge as an opportunity to promote the core values and beliefs of the model. A Louisiana administrator described their process:

> *We've been very purposeful in how we've tried to develop and manage our staff and bring them on board, so we have a lot of new staff. I would say… roughly 75 or 80 percent of our staff are new, meaning they weren't here when the reform started several years ago…. And so we've gotten a lot better in bringing in the right people, [now we] look at a different applicant pool…. We really look for employees who are treatment oriented, who have a treatment background. We have really put forth a lot of effort over the last year, year and a half, to bring in candidates who have degrees and who have degrees in criminal justice, social services, or related field that has made a huge difference. And in just the last 3 years, all of our outcomes, every piece of data that we look at has just improved tremendously. We probably made more progress in the past two to three years than we have made in the entire ten years.*

As recommended by the Missouri Model, all three sites have been intentional in overhauling and redefining staff protocols, procedures and expectations beginning with the point of hire. These changes consist of a different emphasis on desired staff qualifications including degree and philosophical requirements. Beyond the point of initial hiring, staff promotions offer a strategic opportunity to reinforce staff support and implementation of the new treatment model. In short, at all three sites, every effort is made to hire or promote the right person for the job; job placement and promotion are no longer solely based on seniority.

Throughout site visits, there was clear and emphatic acknowledgement of how difficult it can be for existing staff when the core values change within an organization. Staff from all sites who were interviewed emphasized how gradual changes were made. Additionally, in their view, ample time was allowed for staff to embrace the changes before there were direct consequences built into hiring and promotion. In Santa Clara, a staff member offered, "We had a couple of years to get used this – change didn't happen overnight. That made it easier."

Operationalizing the Core Values in All Aspects of Day-to-Day Operations:
Including Facilities, Staffing, Treatment Approach and Organizational Structure

The director in Louisiana explained how the core values are maintained within the organizational structure. He emphasized the importance of strong leadership that embraces the model at the highest level, but also the need for consistent messaging that starts at the top and becomes part of every aspect of daily practice. He added, "Attention to values doesn't go away. It's got to be continually emphasized, starting from the top leadership, down to day-to-day practice, in the trenches."

Staff involvement and their ongoing assessment of individual youth throughout each young person's stay is critical to operationalizing core values. Interaction among staff regarding decisions about the adjustment of a youth's level was one example of how staff could "buy into" the model. For example, at one site, there was considerable discussion of how, why, and when secure confinement is used as opposed to less secure, community-based placement. Allowing staff to weigh in on these decisions supports staff accountability for adhering to the stated procedures.

The pattern of staffing is another important aspect of maintaining fidelity to the Missouri Model. At all three sites, the same staff were assigned to the same dorms or pods. As a result, staff consistently worked with the same group of youth. Each site arranged their shifts somewhat differently, but in essence, three daily shifts of 5 to 6 people – including supervisors – were assigned to each unit; this enhanced consistency within the units. It also allowed staff to be familiar with the individualized needs of the youth and to build relationships with each member of the unit. Equally as important, it allowed staff to build good working relationships with one another, further reinforcing the sense of community that is a hallmark of the model.

***Maintaining Vigilance over "Internal Drift": Hiring, Training, Accountability
Procedures and Transparency***

Along with issues surrounding implementation, the sustainability of the Missouri Model was a constant concern. There was a need for vigilance and ongoing reinforcement of fidelity to the model. At one of the sites, a staff member described several processes used to monitor accountability and fidelity to the model on a regular basis:

> *We have a lot of checks and balances, we have a lot of audit tools and processes. I guess one of the most significant things is each facility has a training coordinator. This is our coordinator and their primary responsibility on a daily basis is to go from dorm to dorm throughout the campus ensuring that the hallmarks and everything in the model are actually being implemented and there is model fidelity.*

This describes a multifaceted approach used to avoid "program drift". An assigned training coordinator monitors the facility environment on a daily basis, coaching staff in real time. This real time feedback contributes to supervision being viewed more as a support mechanism and less as a punitive process. The training coordinator then shares the results in a senior team meeting for information and any further action. There is constant feedback on all staff performance and immediate attention to challenges when they arise.

Summary

Recommendations for adapting and implementing the Missouri Model must emphasize relinquishing the traditional correctional values of punishment and embracing a relational therapeutic model. It is critical not only to move toward, but to genuinely understand, accept and implement a model based on compassion, treatment and accountability, exemplifying the mission of maintaining a youth-centered facility focused on young people's capacity to change. It is equally critical to have leaders – at all levels – who support the mission and who are committed to consistent and meaningful implementation. Beyond the lessons learned and advice from the three sites, there are several key steps to consider when drawing upon the Missouri Model[12] in the creation and realization of the LA Model:

- Implementation of a group-focused treatment process;

- Maintaining safety through reliance on a strong relationship-based approach to staff supervision of youth rather than using coercive methods;

- Rewriting job descriptions adjusting expectations and conducting ongoing intensive training that emphasizes the treatment role of staff;

- Integrating all elements of the program into one unified treatment process – including education, therapy, and programming related to residential/housing;

- Implementing individualized intensive case management with each youth assigned a case manager to track his or her progress and advocate for the youth throughout their treatment process;

- Consider closing large-scale probation facilities and replacing them with a network of small, regional treatment facilities that reflect a continuum of treatment and supervision;

- Including aftercare as part of the rehabilitative process from the first point of contact with youth.

Once implemented, sustaining a therapeutically-based rehabilitative model requires a different set of tasks. These include:[13]

- Ensuring staff and administrators at all levels embrace the core values and beliefs of the model;

- Operationalizing the core values in all aspects of day-to-day operations including the facilities, their staffing, the treatment approach, and the organizational structure;

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[12] Mendel, Richard (2010). *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, page 51.
[13] Mendel, Richard (2010). *The Missouri Model: Reinventing the Practice of Rehabilitating Youth.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, pages 51-52.

- Maintaining vigilance over "internal drift" through hiring, training, accountability procedures, and transparency;
- Maintaining external support from key constituencies in appropriate political venues (city, county, or state level government, courts, and communities).

In summary, based on site visits to Santa Clara, Louisiana and Washington DC – three locations with well-established programs that each adapted the Missouri Model to meet their specific needs – implementation of the new Los Angeles Model must include:

- A youth-centered approach that uses skill-building and trauma informed strategies to address trauma, emotional self-regulation, and aggression;
- Strong organizational leadership that is capable of creative problem-solving to implement and sustain the model;
- Consistency and effective problem-solving;
- Highly trained and motivated staff who receive ongoing supervision and support;
- Prioritizing education and skill-building toward a successful future for youth;
- Creating a physical layout and environment that matches and supports the mission and vision of the program.

Current research suggests that helping youth is less about choosing one specific evidence-based practice over another, but more about consistent implementation of a well thought out and well supervised program that is implemented with wide reaching fidelity. With youth, interventions that address conflicts, deficits in social skills and external pressures while building on personal strengths, have also been found to be important.[14]

The case study of these three sites offers a dramatic illustration of the truth of these research findings. What was observed, documented and above all experienced in Santa Clara, Louisiana and Washington DC will be invaluable to help Los Angeles County benefit from lessons already learned at other sites that have successfully implemented reform. The key points presented here serve as a guide to the road ahead. However, it is critical to note that their implementation in other sites represents both the strength and the limit of their application. The challenge now is to use these cases and to also trust the extensive creativity and compassion in Los Angeles to implement a model that will change the lives of youth, the safety of communities and the culture of probation in a meaningful and sustained way.

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[14] Palmer, T., VanVoorhis, P., Taxman, F. S. & MacKenzie, D. L. (2012). Insights from Ted Palmer: Experimental criminology in a different era. The academy of experimental criminology 2011 Joan McCord prize lecture. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 8,* 103-115.