

Positive Outcomes for Youth in Guam’s System of Care and Juvenile Justice System

In 2002, the Guam Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse (DMHSA) received funding from the Center for Mental Health Services to develop and implement I Famagu’on-ta, a system of care for children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral disorders. A system of care is an approach to meeting the needs of children and youth with mental illness that is based on the belief that mental health services should be individualized, accessible and flexible, family driven and youth guided, culturally competent, coordinated among agencies and providers, and community-based. Critical to successful implementation of a systems of care approach is the development of individualized service plans called Wrap Plans and cross agency collaboration to ensure children and families receive the services and supports they need. Five years of evaluation data demonstrates that the children and youth served by I Famagu’on-ta have benefited from the system of care approach. Further analysis of the data suggests that this is especially true for youth involved in Guam’s juvenile justice system. Despite high levels of juvenile justice involvement at intake, youth enrolled in I Famagu’on-ta demonstrated reduced delinquent and illegal behaviors, reduced contact with the juvenile justice system, and improvements in their emotional and behavioral well being after two years.



Mental Health Disorders and Juvenile Justice Involved Youth: The National Perspective

A multi-state study conducted by the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice¹ (NCMHJJ) estimates that approximately 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system meet the criteria for at least one mental health disorder, and over 60% of youth meet criteria for multiple disorders. Substance abuse is often a co-occurring disorder, also affecting approximately 60% of these youth. Of particular concern is that more than a quarter of juvenile justice involved youth experience severe mental health disorders and should be receiving mental health services while involved in the juvenile justice system. Many of these youth are not receiving the treatment they require and without appropriate treatment are likely to become adult offenders.

About this Report²

This report summarizes findings related to youth with emotional and behavioral disorders who received services from I Famagu’on-ta and reported involvement with Guam’s juvenile justice system at intake into the program. This is part of a series of evaluation reports on Guam’s System of Care. ²

¹ Shufelt, J.L. and Cocozza, J.J. (2006). *Youth with Mental Health Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System: Results from a Multi-State Prevalence Study*. Retrieved May 15, 2009, from <http://www.ncmhjj.com>.

² This report reflects data on the cohort of 82 of 111 youth who completed the Delinquency Survey-Revised at intake and reported a previous history of delinquent or illegal behavior. Not every analysis includes data on all 82 youth due to missing or unavailable data.

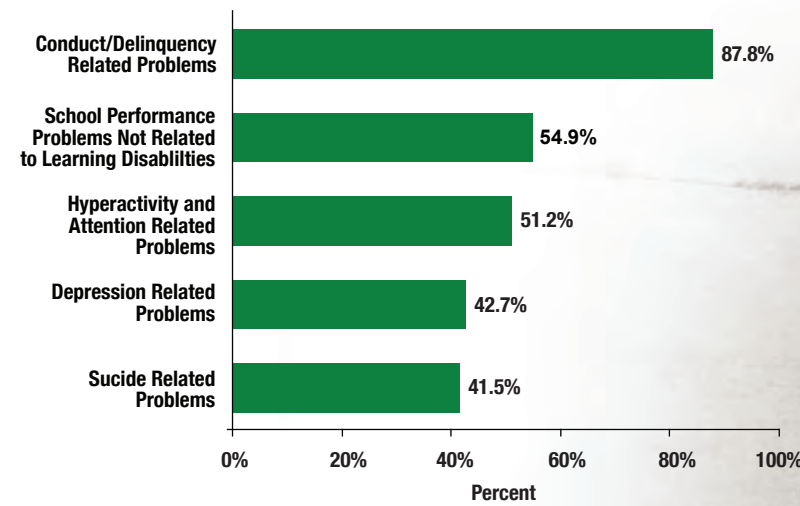
I Famagu’on-ta Youth and the Juvenile Justice System

While local prevalence data is not available on the number of youth with mental illness in Guam’s juvenile justice system, we do know that 74% of youth served by I Famagu’on-ta reported engaging in some type of delinquent or illegal behavior at intake. These 82 youth have at least one DSM-IV, Axis I diagnosis. Seventy-six percent met the criteria for two or more diagnoses. The most frequently reported diagnoses are: Oppositional Defiant Disorder (19%), Mood Disorders (15%), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (13%), Conduct Disorder (10%), and Post Traumatic and Acute Stress Disorder (8%).

Characteristics of Youth with Juvenile Justice Involvement at Intake

- **Average age is 14 years**
- **76% are male**
- **76% percent are Chamorro or Chamorro mix; 15% are Chuukese; 5% are Filipino and 4% are from other cultural/ethnic groups**
- **80% live with their biological families**
- **41% percent come from homes with an annual income of less than \$10,000**
- **Youth experience multiple risk factors:**
 - **25% have witnessed domestic violence**
 - **24% have lived with someone who is depressed**
 - **28% have lived with someone with a substance abuse problem**

Five Most Frequently Reported Problems Experienced by Youth



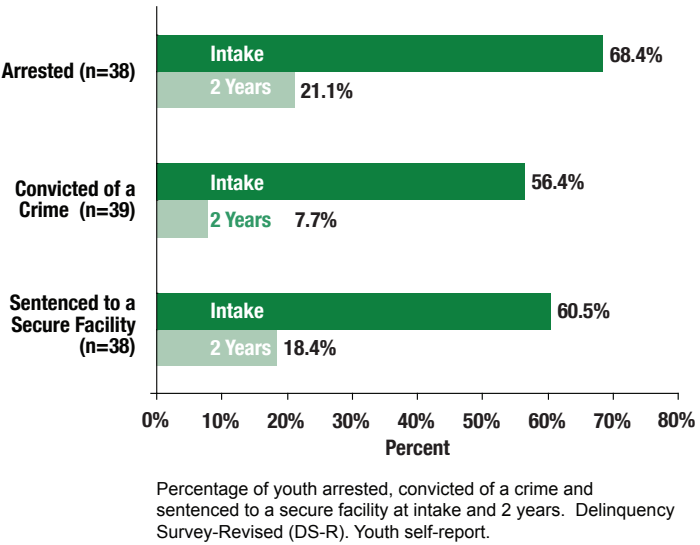
Five most frequently reported youth problems at intake. Enrollment and Demographic Information Form (EDIF). Caregiver report, n = 82.



Youth Show Improvement After Two Years

Arrests, Crime Convictions, and Incarcerations Decrease

In the past 6 months have you been ...

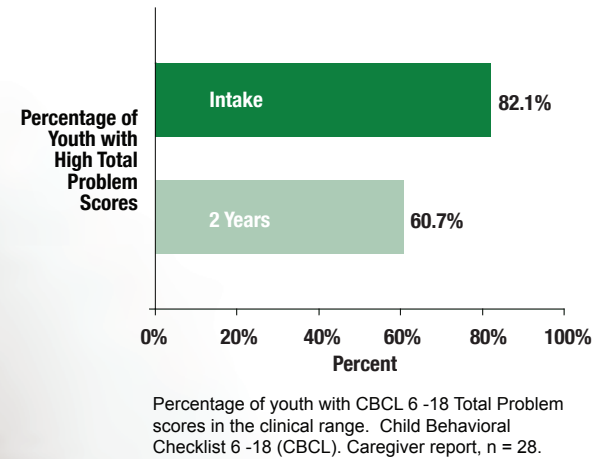


Rates of Delinquent Behaviors and Illegal Activities Decrease

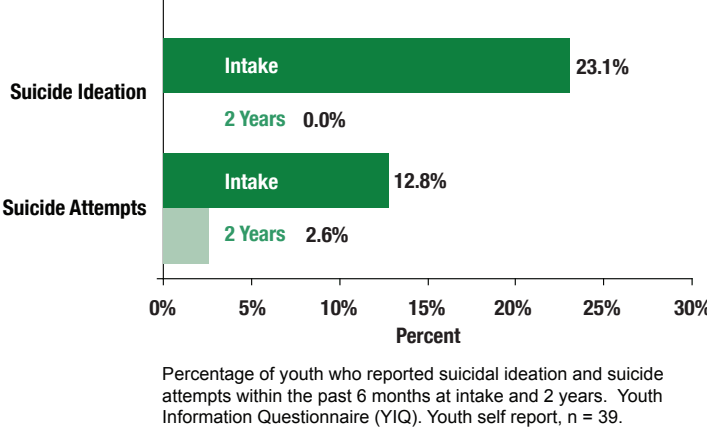
In the past 6 months, have you...	Intake	2 Years
Hit someone or got into a physical fight. (n = 39)	56.4%	43.6%
Been a bully or threatened other people without the use of a weapon. (n = 39)	41.0%	35.9%
Taken something without paying for it. (n = 39)	30.7%	10.2%
Been in trouble with the police for skipping school. (n = 34)	29.4%	11.8%
Been in trouble with the police for running away. (n = 38)	21.1%	15.8%

Percentage of youth who engaged in delinquent behaviors and illegal activities at intake and 2 years. Delinquency Survey-Revised (DS-R). Youth self-report.

Behavioral and Emotional Problems Decrease



Suicide Ideation and Attempts Decrease



Caregivers Experience Less Stress

On a measure of Global Strain (Caregiver Strain Questionnaire), where higher scores indicate greater strain, caregiver Global Strain scores dropped from 9.6 to 6.6 after 2 years.



Agency Partners Speak Out



“Once a family engaged in the services of the I Famagu’on-ta program, the minor’s contacts with the juvenile justice system diminished. I Famagu’on-ta served as a diversion, usually keeping the youth from more serious delinquent acts. As there was less delinquent behavior, the court was able to reduce or end its supervision. It was hoped that freeing the family from time spent meeting court obligations allowed more time for participation in I Famagu’on-ta services.”

Honorable Katherine Maraman, Justice
Supreme Court of Guam



“The program allowed for better treatment placements of children with SED (serious emotional disturbances). Through I Famagu’on-ta, children with special needs were served in appropriate and non-punitive settings instead of inappropriate, juvenile correctional facilities such as DYA. The program facilitated the identification and proper treatment of children with SED and helped to distinguish them and prevent treatment as a typical juvenile delinquent. The program helped to heighten staff awareness and sensitivity towards this target group, resulting in more appropriate referrals for mental health services, better monitoring of cases for referrals, as well as enhancing advocacy for educational opportunities for these children.”

Chris Duenas, Director
Guam Department of Youth Affairs (DYA)



“System of Care has changed the way I operate, the approaches and actions I take. I have no problem delivering consequences, but what system of care has taught me is to measure those consequences against the culpability...Rather than punitive consequences I also order treatment and restitution for kids with mental illness. (For youth with serious emotional and behavioral disorders) I abandon a delinquency focus and shift to a therapeutic approach.”

Honorable Arthur R. Barcinas, Judge
Superior Court of Guam

Guam System of Care

- Evaluation Score Card for Youth
with Juvenile Justice Involvement
- ✓ Fewer youth are being arrested, convicted of crimes, and incarcerated
 - ✓ Youth are engaging in less illegal activities and delinquent behaviors
 - ✓ Youth emotional and behavioral health is improving
 - ✓ Youth are less depressed
 - ✓ Fewer youth are suicidal
 - ✓ Caregivers report less stress

For More Information Contact:

Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI) I Famagu'on-ta Evaluation Project

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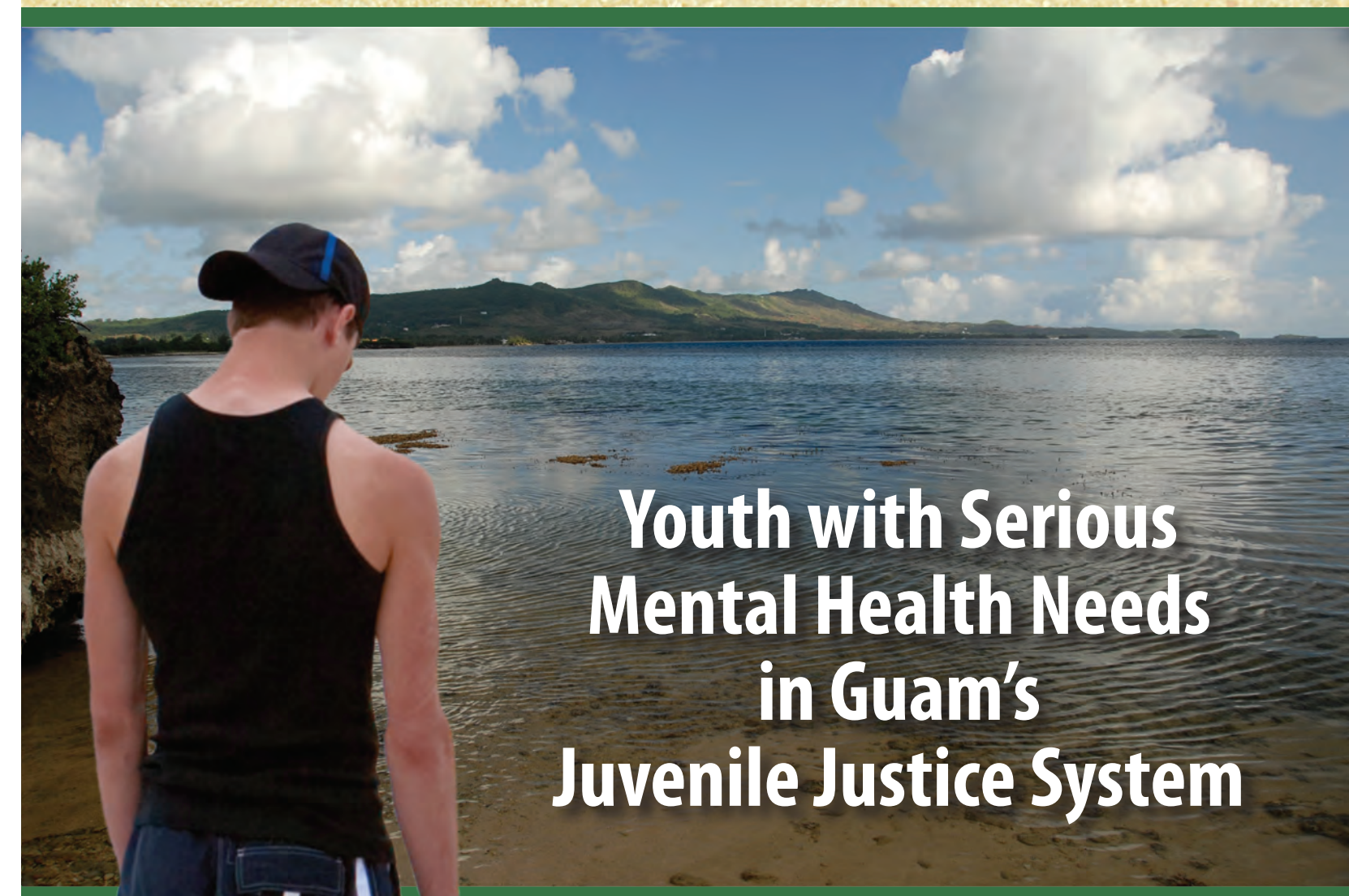


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I FAMAGU'ON-TA (OUR CHILDREN)

Evaluation Report

GUAM SYSTEM OF CARE



Youth with Serious Mental Health Needs in Guam's Juvenile Justice System

August 2009