

LOUISIANA MfC BRIEF

Service Matrix: Linking Results of Screening & Assessment with Appropriate Services

DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Models for Change project’s efforts have culminated in a significant movement across the state towards the adoption of evidence-based screening, assessment and treatment policies and practices. While this movement is in many ways still in its infancy, it has already resulted in the implementation of a number of concrete changes that will improve the lives of youth and their families within Louisiana, as well as the community and the juvenile justice system. The implementation of evidence-based screening and assessment practices is just one of a number of the concrete improvements; however, to stop at simply screening or assessing the needs and/or risk of youth, would fall short of the goal. The ideal outcome of proper screening and assessment is linking the needs of youth with proper services. For that reason, the *Service Referral Matrix* was created.

Service referral matrices have been implemented at variety of decision points in the juvenile justice system including FINS, District Attorney diversion, local & state probation, and post-adjudication/pre-disposition with a number of evidence-based instruments like the JIFF, SAVRY, and MAYSI-II. In general these service matrices help categorize services according to a low, moderate, or high risk/need findings within each applicable domain. Commonly, these domains include aggression, mental health problems, substance abuse, family issues, school/educational needs, peer risk, etc. As the severity of one’s overall level of risk for re-offending or severity of their specific need increases, the matrices reflect an increased intensity of services that would be appropriate for referral. Thus the matrices should be used to identify proper services based on the individual youth’s risk/need factors. This proper matching between risk/needs and services has been shown to be critical in reducing re-offending and likewise improving public safety (Vieira et al., 2009).

EXAMPLE	Anger/Aggression	Mental Health	Family Issues	School/Education
LOW Risk/Need	<i>Low Risk indicates low probability of future risk, violence and/or delinquent behavior. Enhance protective factors by actively recognizing strengths and strategically building upon pre-existing strengths. Remember, increased exposure to the juvenile justice system increases risk of low risk juveniles.</i>			
MODERATE Risk/Need	Community-based cognitive-behavioral skills interventions	Community-based family and individual evidence-based practices	Community-based evidence-based practices (e.g. FFT, BSFT)	School level interventions and plans (e.g. SBLC, IEP, etc.)
HIGH Risk/Need	Intensive community or residential options	Intensive community pr residential options	Intensive family intervention services (e.g. MST, MDFT, etc)	Intensive in-school options and/or alternative educational placements

TARGET AUDIENCE

Matrices are meant for front line workers and their supervisors to assist formulating and following agreed referral decisions that support their screening and assessment practices. These tools can also benefit agency management and quality assurance systems in tracking trends in proper referral and gaps in the local service delivery system.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The tool is available at <http://publichealth.lsuhscc.edu/iph/default.html> or by contacting sphil2@lsuhscc.edu.