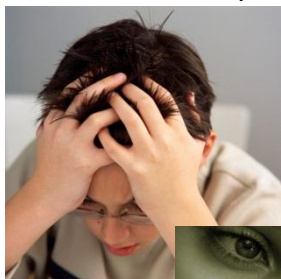


Data on Youth Service Needs in Louisiana

Stephen Phillippi, PhD, LCSW & Debra DePrato, MD

A variety of surveys, studies, and data from newly-introduced screening and assessment tools have helped to paint a clearer picture of the various needs and risks present among Louisiana’s youth at various points in the continuum, ranging from those who might qualify for prevention or early juvenile intervention to those who are subsequently detained or committed to custody. Ultimately, this type of information can help identify service gaps and guide planning for future interventions. Below are some examples of data that has been collected:

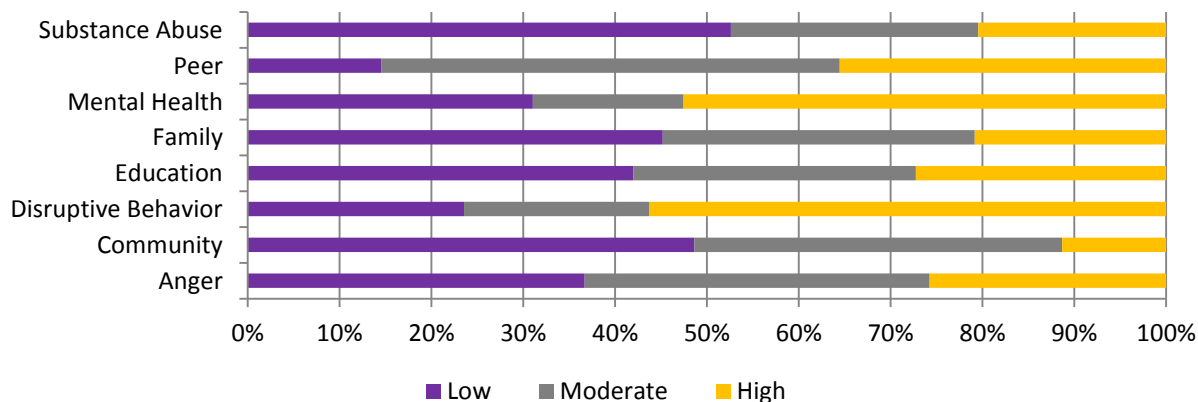
- Prevention and early intervention:** The 2009 TeenScreen, which screened a large sample of middle school youth in Northern Louisiana, found that almost 20% of youth were at risk for a mental health problem. Importantly, it captured information about what problems this group of young people was experiencing in middle school, noting that 10% reported alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use; 20% reported bullying; 32% reported family violence, and 49% reported anger management. Separately, the 2010 Caring Communities Youth Survey, which analyzes trends in key indicators of delinquency risk for youth in Louisiana schools, has shown that although rates for most key indicators of delinquency and antisocial behavior remain above national averages, they have remained stable over the course of four years. Finally, data from a small sample of youth who completed the MAYSI-2 screening, as part of the informal FINS process in central Louisiana indicated that the proportion of young people were most often flagged for anger, suicide ideation, and thought disturbance.



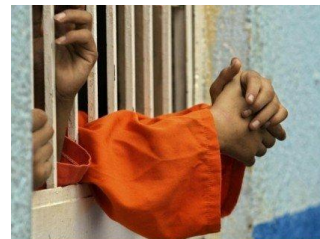
- Adjudicated delinquents and probation:** Since the statewide adoption of the SAVRY in 2010, the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice and local area probation departments have more data on the specific risk and protective factors associated with delinquent behavior. Preliminary SAVRY data suggest that disruptive behavior, mental health, and peer affiliation needs tended to be the highest rated concern from youth on probation.



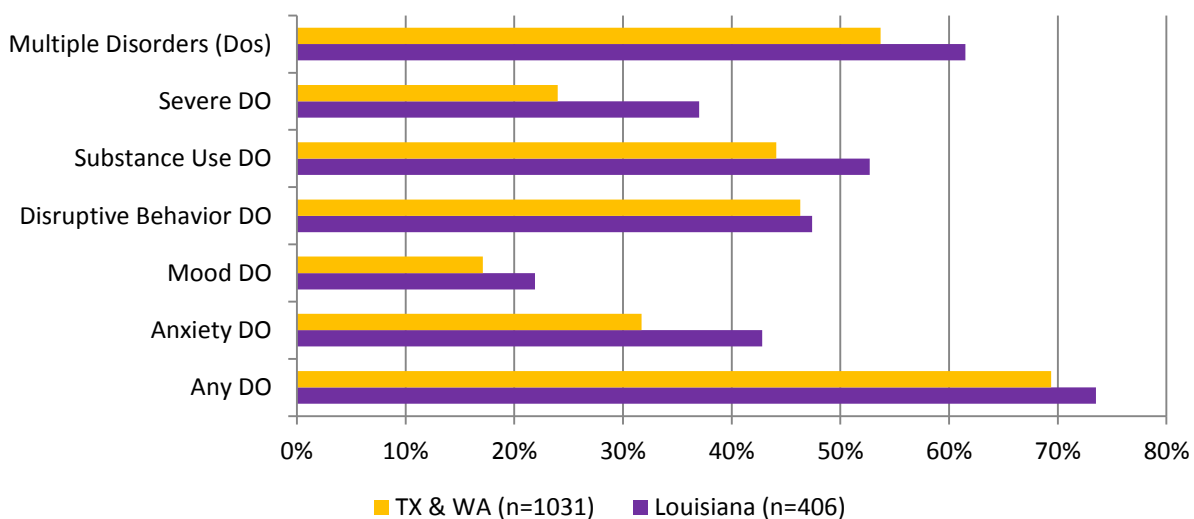
Statewide SAVRY- Needs Summary of Youth Referred to Probation, 2011 (N=1,134)



- Youth in detention and secure facilities:** Results of a study of detained and incarcerated youth showed that youth in Louisiana had higher rates of mental health disorders compared to other states, demonstrating higher rates of anxiety, mood (e.g. depression), substance use, and more severe, debilitating mental health disorders, as illustrated in the graph below. Note, the fact that these are diagnosable mental illnesses, particularly the severe disorder category (e.g. Bipolar disorder, Major Depression, etc.), it is expected that these youth will have limited functioning in their day-to-day personal, social, and educational activities. This level of diagnosed mental illness requires skilled, research driven psychological care which is often offered in conjunction with prescription drug treatment. These youth benefit most from psychiatric treatment, not incarceration, to address their mental health needs.



Mental Health Needs of Detained or Incarcerated Youth (NCMHJJ- Shufelt & Coccozza, 2006)



For more information download the entire report, “Sustaining Juvenile Justice System Reform: A Report to the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Implementation Commission,” at <http://publichealth.lsuhsu.edu/iphj/sustainingreform.html>