

## Aftercare/Reentry

Aftercare can be defined as reintegrative services that prepare out-of-home placed juveniles for reentry into the community by establishing the necessary collaboration with the community and its resources to ensure the delivery of prescribed services and supervision (Altschuler and Armstrong 2001).

Some 100,000 juvenile offenders each year leave out-of-home placements and must reintegrate back into the community while overcoming obstacles that threaten a successful and effective reentry process (Barton 2006). Though there is no national recidivism rate for juveniles, state studies have shown that rearrest rates for youth within 1 year of release from an institution average 55 percent, while reincarceration and reconfinement rates during the same timeframe average 24 percent (Snyder and Sickmund 2006). There is a definite need to provide systematic aftercare services that are designed to address reentry issues, including reoffending, that may affect a juvenile offender's reintegration back into society (Mears and Travis 2004; Altschuler 2008).

The term *aftercare*, however, is somewhat of a misnomer because the process does not simply begin after an offender is released. A comprehensive aftercare process typically begins after sentencing and continues through incarceration and into the period of release back to the community. Aftercare requires the creation of a seamless set of systems across formal and informal social control networks as well as the creation of a continuum of community services to prevent the recurrence of antisocial behavior. It can also involve public-private partnerships to expand the overall capacity of youth services.

There are two key components to the aftercare concept that distinguish it from the traditional handling of juvenile offenders. First, youthful offenders must receive services and supervision. Second, juvenile offenders must receive intensive intervention while they are incarcerated, during their transition to the community, and when they are under community supervision. This component of the aftercare model redefines the concept of reintegrative services to include not only an examination of what takes place after release but also of what takes place before release into the community.

### Theoretical Foundation

With the goal of better preparing youths for their return to the community, a comprehensive aftercare model integrates two distinct fields of criminological research: intervention research and community restraint research.

Intervention strategies in an aftercare model concentrate on changing individual behavior and thereby preventing further delinquency. Despite early skepticism regarding intervention programs, literature reviews and meta-analyses over the past 2 decades demonstrate that intervention programs can be effective in reducing delinquency (Lipsey 2000, 1992; Andrews et al. 1990).

Community restraint, by contrast, refers to the amount of surveillance and control over offenders while they are enrolled in the community. Some specific examples of community

restraint are employment verification, intensive supervision, electronic monitoring, house arrest, residential halfway houses, urine testing for use of illegal substances, and simple contact with parole officers or other correctional personnel. Theoretically, increasing these surveillance tactics “over offenders in the community will prevent criminal activities by reducing both their capacity and their opportunity to commit crimes,” according to Sherman and colleagues (1997), who add, “it is expected that the punitive nature of the sanctions will act as specific deterrence to reduce the offender’s future criminal activity.”

## Outcome Evidence

The overall research on the effectiveness of juvenile aftercare programs is sparse. Lipsey and Cullen (2007), while accumulating studies to perform a meta-analysis on the effects of interventions with juvenile offenders, found 509 eligible studies for their review. Of those, only 25 studies (4.9 percent) looked at the effects of aftercare interventions (Howell 2009).

The research on the combination of community surveillance and treatment shows promise. For example, Land and colleagues (1990) examined the North Carolina Court Counselors Intensive Protective Supervision Project (IPSP), where juvenile offenders (mostly status offenders) were provided with both surveillance and treatment. Using a random assignment research design, the results indicated that youths with no prior offenses had fewer new delinquent offenses than control group youths had (that is, no treatment and no surveillance), but the IPSP youths with prior delinquent offenses had more delinquent offenses during the study period. In another study, Sontheimer and Goodstein (1993) examined an intensive aftercare program for serious juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania where the experimental group was also provided with both community restraint and services. Using a random assignment research design, the evaluation found that, when compared with the control group (again, no treatment and no surveillance), the experimental group had significantly fewer re-arrests and their mean number of re-arrests was fewer.

In a review of six comprehensive aftercare programs that prepare juveniles for reentry into the community, Gies (2003) found that aftercare is a promising program concept designed to minimize recidivism among youths released from out-of-home placement. The research found limited evidence that suggests a positive influence of aftercare on participant youth. For instance, the Thomas O’Farrell Youth Center (TOYC) program revealed promising results (Krisberg 1992). Using a pretest–posttest design, the researchers found that of the first 56 TOYC graduates the majority (55 percent) had no further court referrals in the year following release (11.6 months), for a recidivism rate of 45 percent.

The Florida Environmental Institute (FEI) has also demonstrated positive success in three studies. The first study (Weaver 1989), a 3-year follow-up of 21 FEI graduates, found that only one third of the sample was convicted of new crimes during this period. Another assessment of the FEI model was conducted in 1992 by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS). This study compared the outcomes from seven residential programs for high-risk offenders, including 11 from the FEI program. It revealed impressive results. Compared with a 47 percent to 73 percent range from the other six programs, only 36 percent of the FEI participants were referred again to the juvenile court. Moreover, none of the 11 FEI youths were readjudicated or recommitted to the DHRS during the follow-up period, while the readjudication rates in the other facilities ranged from 20 percent to 50 percent (Howell 1998).

More recently, a similar study by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice found comparable results.

These findings, while encouraging, must be viewed with extreme caution because of the small sample sizes and the lack of control groups. Nevertheless, the recidivism rates compare favorably with a baseline recidivism rate for serious juvenile offenders released from prison, which is estimated to be 80 percent (Langdon and Levin 2002).

Recent evaluations of aftercare programming have not yielded as promising results as earlier program evaluations. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention sponsored a 5-year, multisite implementation of the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP), which was a major initiative in aftercare programming designed to effectively intervene and reduce recidivism rates among high-risk, incarcerated juvenile offenders after institutional release (Mears and Travis 2004). The IAP model proposed that “effective intervention requires not only intensive supervision and services after institutional release, but also a focus on reintegration during incarceration and a highly structure and gradual transition between institutionalization and aftercare” (Wiebush et al. 2005, p. i). IAP required youth to receive continuous case management, beginning with assessment and transition planning during incarceration, building a partnership between juvenile justice professional and community service providers, careful management of transition programming, and a gradual substitution of community control for correctional control upon release (Barton 2006).

The program evaluation used an experimental design and primarily concentrated on the effects of IAP on recidivism rates. The outcomes results, however, showed that IAP did not significantly affect recidivism. There may be several reasons for a lack of significant differences between youths who went through IAP and youths in the control group. Two of the sites had issues with small sample sizes. In another site, the control group received traditional services that were comparable with the services received by youths in IAP, which may account for no-differences findings between the groups (Wiebush et al. 2005).

A few years after the evaluation of IAP, the Boys & Girls Club of America (BGCA) began evaluation of Targeted Reentry (TR), an initiative developed by BGCA that provided aftercare services to juvenile offenders. The TR initiative combined the IAP model with the BGCA’s cultural emphasis on promoting positive youth development (Barton 2006). The BGCA provided recreational and other programming to youths inside the correctional facilities, and connected youths to local BGCAs in the community to provide continuity and a positive youth development framework. However, a program evaluation of TR found similar results to the IAP evaluation; recidivism rates were not significantly different between the group who received TR and the control group, although recidivism rates were not as high in jurisdictions that implemented TR compared with jurisdictions that implemented IAP (Barton, Jarjoura, and Rosay 2008). The study of TR suffered from some of the same methodological weakness of the IAP study.

The IAP and TR evaluation reports demonstrate that providing aftercare services to youths returning from institutional placement is a complex process and cannot be implemented indiscriminately in communities without careful consideration of the most appropriate and

effective method to provide the necessary services to youths while they are incarcerated, nor without continuing to provide these services and supervision after youths are released.

## References

- Altschuler, David M, and Troy L Armstrong. 2001. "Reintegrating High-Risk Juvenile Offenders Into Communities: Experiences and Prospects." *Corrections Management Quarterly* 5 (1):79-95.
- Altschuler, David M. 2008. "Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Youth Offenders: Are Residential and Community Aftercare Colliding Worlds and What Can Be Done About It?" *Justice Policy Journal* 8(1).
- Andrews, Donald A., Ivan Zinger, Robert D. Hoge, James Bonta, Paul Gendreau, and Francis T. Cullen. 1990. "Does Correctional Treatment Work? A Clinically Relevant and Psychologically Informed Meta-Analysis." *Criminology* 28 (3):369-404.
- Barton, William H. 2006. "Incorporating the Strengths Perspective Into Intensive Juvenile Aftercare." *Western Criminology Review* 7 (2):48-61.
- Barton, William H., G. Roger Jarjoura, and André B. Rosay. 2008. *Evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Targeted Reentry Initiative: Final Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Gies, Steve V. 2003. *Aftercare*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Howell, James C. 1998. *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Howell, James C. 2009. *Preventing and Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Framework (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.
- Krisberg, Barry A. 1992. *Excellence in Adolescent Care: The Thomas O'Farrell Youth Center*. edited by N. C. o. C. a. Delinquency. San Francisco, Calif.
- Land, Kenneth C., Patricia L. McCall, and Jay R. Williams. 1990. "Something That Works in Juvenile Justice: An Evaluation of the North Carolina Court Counselors' Intensive Protective Supervision Randomized Experimental Project, 1987-89." *Evaluation Review* 14 (6):574-606.
- Langdon, P.A., and D.J. Levin. 2002. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Lipsey, Mark W. 2000. "What 500 Intervention Studies Show About the Effects of Intervention on the Recidivism of Juvenile Offenders." In *Annual Conference on Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation*. Washington, D.C.
- Lipsey, Mark W., ed. 1992. "Juvenile Delinquency Treatment: A Meta-Analytic Inquiry Into the Variability of Effects." T. D. Cook, H. Cooper, D. S. Cordray, H. Hartmann, L. V. Hedges, R. J. Light, T. A. Louis and F. Mosteller (eds.). *Meta-Analysis for Explanation: A Casebook*. New York, N.Y.: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lipsey, Mark W., and Francis T. Cullen. 2007. "The Effectiveness of Correctional Rehabilitation: A Review of Systematic Reviews." *The Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 3:297-320.
- Mears, Daniel P., and Jeremy Travis. 2004. *The Dimensions, Pathways, and Consequences of Youth Reentry*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Sherman, Lawrence W., Denise C. Gottfredson, Doris Layton MacKenzie, John E. Eck, Peter Reuter, and Shawn D. Bushway. 1997. *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't*,

- What's Promising*. Report to the U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- Snyder, Howard N., and Melissa Sickmund. 2006. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Sontheimer, Henry, and Lynne Goodstein. 1993. Evaluation of Juvenile Intensive Aftercare Probation: Aftercare Versus System Response Effects. *Justice Quarterly* 10(2):197-227.
- Weaver, R. 1989. "The Last Chance Ranch: the Florida Environmental Institute Program for Chronic and Violent Juvenile Offenders." In *Programs for Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders*, edited by Center for the Study of Youth Policy. Ann Arbor, Mich.
- Wiebush, Richard G., Dennis Wagner, Betsie McNulty, Yanqing Wang, and Thao N. Le. 2005. *Implementation and Outcome Evaluation of the Intensive After Program: Final Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Last Updated: October 2010.

Suggested Reference: Development Services Group, Inc. 2010. "Aftercare/Reentry." Literature Review. Washington, DC.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/Aftercare.pdf>

Prepared by Development Services Group, Inc., under Contract #2010-MU-FX-K001.