

DID YOU KNOW?

UNDERSTANDING THE CROSSOVER CONUNDRUM

Crossover is an issue experienced by systems-involved youth nationwide.

Although there is currently no known national statistic, **studies conducted across various geographic regions demonstrate that crossover is by no means rare.** For instance, the prevalence of crossover among youth involved in the justice and child welfare systems ranged from 45% in Cook Co., IL up to 70% in New York City. (Herz & Dierkhising, 2019).

Dual-systems youth have survived adverse life experiences.

These young people have histories of physical and sexual abuse and neglect, and those who are subject to such abuse during adolescence have a higher chance of engaging in delinquent behavior (Herz et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2015; Irvine & Canfield, 2016).

Crossover youth often have less-than-promising encounters with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Dually involved youth tend to have longer stays in the child welfare system than their child welfare-only involved peers (Herz et al., 2019), which increases their chances of recidivism in the justice system (Halemba & Siegel, 2011). This population also experiences higher rates of out-of-home child welfare placements, such as congregate care (Herz et al., 2019).

Crossover Youth

Youth who experience maltreatment and engage in delinquent activity – regardless of whether or not they have formal involvement in either system

Dual-systems Youth

A subset of Crossover Youth who are referred for an investigation and/or have formal involvement with both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Crossover youth have a high likelihood of coming from families with mental health and substance use histories (Lee & Villagrana, 2015). In fact, dual-systems youth themselves experience increased levels of substance use, mental health challenges, and suicidal ideation compared to their peers (Dierkhising et al., 2018; Herz et al., 2018).

Although fewer than half of crossover youth are charged with violent offenses, they are detained at higher rates than their non-child welfare involved peers. They are also less likely to be considered for Immediate Intervention Programs (i.e. diversion) and more likely to undergo out-of-home placements post-disposition often due to preconceived ideas (Halemba et al., 2004; Herz et al., 2019).

Although unique in their own right, many crossover youth share common characteristics.

These young people have a higher likelihood of being female than justice-only involved youth (Herz et al., 2019; Sickmund, Sladky, & Kang, 2017).

African Americans are highly over-represented in the crossover population. In fact, some studies have found that they double in rate compared to their already disproportionate representation in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems (Herz et al., 2019; Sickmund et al., 2017).

Twenty percent of the overall crossover population identifies as LGBTQ+, with roughly 40% of female crossover youth identifying as such. This subpopulation is more than 2x as likely to be removed from their homes as their heteronormative peers and are 7x more likely to be placed in foster or congregate care (Herz et al., 2019; Irvine & Canfield, 2017).

Crossover youth are more likely to struggle in school due to learning and behavioral challenges and school mobility, thus increasing their likelihood of school drop-out (Herz et al., 2019; Leone & Weinberg, 2012).

COLLABORATING ON CROSSOVER

What is Kansas doing to address crossover in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems?

In October 2019, Kansas began working with Georgetown University's Center for Youth Justice (CYJ) to implement the **Crossover Youth Practice Model**. This is a multi-system and multi-agency collaboration at the state level used to identify and ameliorate barriers to addressing crossover in Kansas.

The Office of Judicial Administration, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, and the Kansas Department of Corrections are jointly and collaboratively working alongside representatives from the mental health and substance abuse field, education, courts, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, foster care contractors, and others to identify solutions for youth and families affected by this issue. The collaborative will develop data sharing agreements at the state and local levels, as well as identify pilot sites to begin this important work.

In what ways will the Crossover Youth Practice Model address challenges surrounding crossover?

INFORMATION SHARING BETWEEN AGENCIES WILL IMPROVE SO CROSSOVER YOUTH ARE MORE EASILY IDENTIFIED.

- **Crossover youth often fall through the cracks of our systems.** In order to prevent youth from ending up even further in either system, it's vital to share information to promote knowledge among direct care staff at the case level. Information sharing protocols can facilitate the exchange of assessment and historical data that is pertinent to identifying services most appropriate for young people and their families.
- **Not only is it important to share what we know on a case level, but we also want to collect and share information on an aggregate level** to increase our knowledge about how crossover youth are interacting with our systems. This level of information sharing can tell us how the systems are functioning, the volume of youth crossing between systems, the dominant pathways that those youth are traveling, and what their experiences are with the agencies that are serving them.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN AGENCIES WILL GROW TO BE EXPECTED AND DEPENDABLE.

- **It's not enough to just exchange information; we need to synthesize what we know into practice.** By improving collaborative efforts between agencies (i.e., DOC, DCF, education, behavioral health, etc.), a wider array of services can be identified to support young people. Additionally, this tactic helps break down communication barriers that often lead to misconceptions about what other agencies are doing in their work with youth and their families.

AREAS IN OUR COMMUNITIES WHERE THE VOLUME OF SYSTEMS-ENCOUNTERS IS HIGH WILL BE IDENTIFIED.

To learn more about crossover youth and the crossover efforts in Kansas, contact the Crossover Coordinators leading the work across the state:

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