

JUNE 2015



TAY System of Care Bureau Newsletter

JUVENILE JUSTICE MENTAL HEALTH AND THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT FULLY SATISFY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

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On October 31, 2008, the County of Los Angeles entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding the Los Angeles Probation Camps with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), and on December 31, 2014, the County came into full compliance with all terms and conditions of the MOA. DOJ was no longer responsible for monitoring the Probation Camps. During the intervening six years, the Juvenile Justice Mental Health and Probation staff assigned to the camps have worked extremely hard to bring the MOA to conclusion and have succeeded in creating a more therapeutic and rehabilitative culture within each Probation Camp.



At the beginning of the MOA, DMH had very few staff with a single clinician sometimes covering more than one camp. Today, all camps have full mental health staffing seven days per week, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. Probation officers and DMH clinicians co-facilitate evidence-based interventions, including Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and adapted Dialectical Behavior Therapy. DMH clinicians facilitate evidence-based co-occurring disorder groups for the majority of youth in camp, and also use Seeking Safety to address substance abuse and trauma.

The MOA outlined 41 provisions which needed to be brought into substantial compliance, and once in compliance, were monitored for a full year. The MOA was monitored by a team of subject matter experts in the fields of psychiatry, mental health, safety, juvenile justice programs and juvenile detention practices, and a team of attorneys from the DOJ. An Implementation Plan was developed along with policies and procedures for each provision, in addition to quality assurance auditing tools, in order to demonstrate compliance with the terms and conditions of the MOA.

Of the 41 provisions, 12 specifically related to mental health care, including screening, assessment, training and supervision, evaluations and treatment, treatment planning, implementation of treatment planning, counseling services, monitoring of psychotropic medications and recordkeeping. There were a number of other provisions which required close collaboration with the Probation Department, including assessment and management of suicidal youth; care for self-harming youth; Probation staff understanding of mental health and developmental disabilities; and rehabilitation and behavior management.

Toward the end of the MOA, an additional provision was added, which required "increased access to community alternatives." This provision outlined a number of deliverables outside of the Probation facilities. These deliverables included: minimizing juvenile hall and camp confinement; a focus on community re-entry; community based alternatives to incarceration; use of data by an external partnership to evaluate systemic outcomes for youth and quality assurance to monitor all of the above. All terms in this provision also needed to be satisfied in order for the DOJ MOA to terminate.

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WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE



“A sophisticated behavior management system was implemented, which allowed for youth to earn an early release from camp.” -

Karen Streich, PhD

Major strides were made to address this final provision, including multi-disciplinary team (MDTs) meetings for all youth, including initial, as needed, and transitional meetings prior to the youth’s release. Field based Probation officers, who would be receiving the case upon release from camp participated, in the MDTs and visited youth face to face in camp prior to release. A sophisticated behavior management system was implemented, which allowed for youth to earn an early release from camp.

In order to satisfy the DOJ MOA, quality assurance auditing needed to be wrapped around every aspect of the work performed by DMH clinicians and Probation staff, in order to demonstrate the monumental changes which had occurred. Today, youth entering the Los Angeles County Probation Camps have an opportunity to be surrounded by supportive services while they are in camp, and receive a warm hand off back to their communities and families. The watchful eye of the DOJ is gone.

Source: “Monitoring Reports for the MOA between the United States and the County of Los Angeles Regarding the Los Angeles County Probation Department Camps.”
Source: Karen Streich

**Staff Feature: Mary Romero, LCSW
Program Manager III - TAY Division**



“I loved the ability to connect and engage with people, especially children.” -

Mary Romero,
LCSW

What interested you in the mental health field? I think I have always been interested in what makes people tick. By that I mean, why people do the things that they do and how they become who they become. I think I have always been fascinated by this. I loved the ability to connect and engage with people, especially children. I come from a family who all chose to work with children in some capacity, either

in a profession or volunteer capacity. I think as mental health professionals, we have the ability to positively affect children’s lives and help them to move in a positive direction. I think from the time I was in high school, I knew I wanted to work with children. This led me to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Child Development (from California State University, Northridge). My intension was to continue on to graduate school to become an Educational Therapist so that I could work with children and adolescents with learning disabilities. While I was looking for the right graduate program, a good friend and colleague talked me into applying for the School of Social Welfare at UCLA, and the rest is history. It was a perfect fit. I LOVED my graduate program because it incorporated all of my interests (mental health, education, social welfare, and the role culture plays in explaining behavior) into one program. I can’t see myself working in any other field. This field has been very good to me, and after 20 years of working in mental health in various capacities, I still love what I do and look forward to coming to work every day.

What is your role in the program?

I am the new Program Manager III for the Transition Age Youth Division. I am responsible for providing program oversight and administrative direction for all of the TAY Division programs including Full Service Partnership (FSP), Field Capable Clinical Services (FCCS), the Enhanced Emergency Shelter Program (EESP), the Drop-In Centers, Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI) Programs, Transitional Housing/Independent Living Programs (THP/ILP), Center for Assessment and Prevention of Prodromal States Program (CAPP) and Juvenile Justice Aftercare Services (JJTAS) Program. I also oversee the contracts for all of the DMH contracted agencies that provide services under these programs.

“My best decompression is always a good comedy or listening to a good stand-up comedian. By the time you get done laughing, you forget what you were so tense about. I also love to spend quality time with family.” -

Mary Romero,
LCSW

What goals would you like to accomplish?

I would like to expand outreach efforts and continue to increase the number of Transition Age Youth (TAY) receiving services. I really believe that this is a unique and complicated age group, but many of them are struggling just trying to survive. Many of our TAY are creative, bright, resilient young people. However, they are facing serious social, economic, cultural, and psychological issues that go far beyond what many in my generation had to face. I think outreach and engagement is crucial with this population and part of that is making sure that they know where to find the services. The other part is making sure that the services provided are of the highest quality. I see my primary goal as ensuring that the highest quality of service delivery continues and that we as a Division continue to develop innovative and age appropriate ways to reach out and engage with our youth. I think it is important to maintain a strong safety net of mental health services in every community so that these youth feel respected, supported and cared for.

What do you do to de-stress or decompress?

I think laughter is really the best de-stressor ever. In this line of work, we deal with such serious and emotional issues. Over time, it can really get to you if you let it. I have always managed to find humor in things when I need to. My best decompression is always a good comedy or listening to a good stand-up comedian. By the time you get done laughing, you forget what you were so tense about. I also love to spend quality time with family. I don't mind giving 100% to my career when I am at work, but I am a firm believer that self-care requires balance between work and home. It's important not to neglect our own families. Spending time with the ones you love (family and close friends) can be a great source of decompression.

Where else have you worked in the field?

I worked in a variety of areas in the field of social services including private, non-profit organizations, as well as city and county government. I have also provided clinical services for clients ages birth through geriatrics. I started my career in law enforcement as a jailor and dispatcher (for 10 years). I loved it because it allowed me to work full time, make a great living and pursue my undergraduate degree during my free time. After getting accepted into graduate school, I left the police department to begin a new chapter in my career.

I worked in a number of clinical positions for non-profit organizations both in Los Angeles County and Washington State until 2006, when I finally decided to apply for Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Looking back, each position in my career seemed to provide an opportunity to build on existing skills while developing new skills creating, thus creating new opportunities.

Prior to my promotion to the TAY Division, I was the Mental Health Program Head for Central Juvenile Hall which was an amazing opportunity. To say I loved my job is an understatement. I had the pleasure of working with a really amazing team and for that I will always be grateful. I think it prepared me for my current position.



LACDMH Presents 2015 TAY Conference



On Monday, May 18, 2015, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) hosted its third Transition Age Youth (TAY) Conference at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles. The all-day conference provides participants with the latest information and resources to deliver mental health services and supports to TAY who are experiencing emotional, behavioral and/or co-occurring substance use challenges. The conference reached full capacity with 300 people in attendance.

The day began with a welcome and introductions from TAY Mental Health Clinical Program Manager Mary Romero, LCSW; TAY Deputy Director Terri Boykins, LCSW; and LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, DSW.

“When we exclude people, we harm them,” explained Dr. Southard. “Our hope in our work with TAY is to find ways to get our youth included in the fabric of our community, so they know they are valuable and they have gifts to give.”

Dr. Southard was followed by the inspirational morning keynote speaker, Enrique Legaspi. Afterward, success stories were shared by a group of TAY panelists, facilitated by TAY Navigator Chevy Cheung, LCSW. The second morning keynote speaker, Suzana Flores, PsyD, then spoke to the audience about the effect of Facebook and social media.



Conference participants later attended workshops covering a variety of topics, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, co-occurring substance use - synthetics, housing and employment strategies, peer-to-peer engagement and advocacy, social media, immigration and unaccompanied minors, juvenile justice, and depression and substance use in runaway and homeless youth.

The remainder of the day finished up with a poetry presentation by Get Lit - Words Ignite, and a presentation from the afternoon keynote speaker, Jennifer Lingenfelter, PsyD.



Marvin J. Southard, DSW
Director
Los Angeles County Department of
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TRANSITION AGE YOUTH SYSTEM OF CARE LEADERSHIP

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Announcements

Suicide Prevention

The Partners in Suicide Prevention (PSP) Team for Children, Transition Age Youth (TAY), Adults, and Older Adults is funded by the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA). This program is designed to increase public awareness of suicide and reduce stigma associated with seeking mental health and substance abuse services.

Trainings have been provided in an array of settings including: Los Angeles County departments, colleges, shelters, faith based communities, community mental health agencies and direct service providers. Our goal is to average 16 trainings per month.

For additional information or trainings, please contact Karon Austin, LCSW, TAY Division, at 213-351-7788 or William Barreto, MPA, TAY Division, at 213-351-7797.

Anti-Stigma and Discrimination

The Countywide Anti-Stigma and Discrimination (ASD) Team is a Prevention and Early Intervention Program. Its mission is to increase public awareness, social acceptance, and inclusion of people with mental health challenges. ASD outreach activities include presentations, group sessions with dialogue, and activities to encourage access to mental health services.

TAY Mobile Resource Library

The mobile library provides information regarding mental health, housing resources, health services, crisis counseling, alcohol and drug counseling, GED preparation, social skills training, job readiness and job placement services. The mobile library can be set up in directly operated and community agencies on a rotating basis.

For additional information on ASD trainings and the mobile library please contact Doralee Bridges, TAY Division, at 213-351-5225.

Resources

Website: www.dmh.lacounty.gov

TAY Division Email Address
taydivision@dmh.lacounty.gov

DMH Access Hotline
1-800-854-7771

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

