



Crossover Youth

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Abstract

Crossover youth is a term used for youth under supervision within both the child welfare system and juvenile justice system. This is also referred to as ”dually involved youth.” Cross-agency communication is lacking for these youth while research shows many youth receive services from both systems. Research shows that crossover youth have longer stays in detention facilities, high rates of recidivism, and poorer long-term outcomes in multiple areas of life (e.g., education and mental health). When referring to crossover youth, intersectionality (e.g., gender and race)—the interconnectedness of social demographics that overlap to form oppression—helps in understanding this dual-system involvement. Additionally, this poster provides policy suggestions for reducing dual-system involvement as well as evidence-based practices for youth who must remain involved in both systems.

Intersectionality

Gender & Sexuality

- Boys are overresponded in the juvenile justice system compared to girls, but girls are more likely to have dual system contact (Dierkhising et al., 2023).
- Around 20% of youth run away from home each year; however, this number is higher for those in the welfare system, especially for girls (Sarri et al., 2016).
- LGBT youth are three times more likely than their non-LGBT peers to be involved in the welfare system and disproportionality involved in the juvenile justice system (Brown, 2023).

Race

- African American youths are overrepresented among crossover youth (Kolivoski et al., 2017).
- In one study, African American youth comprised 10% of the population but 63% of the total crossover cases (Kolivoski et al., 2017).
- In another study, African American and Hispanic youth made up more than 90% of those dual-involved (Lee & Villagrana, 2015).

Class

- Research consistently finds poverty as a systemic issue impacting child welfare involvement (Akuoko-Barfi et al., 2021).
- The relationship between maltreatment and delinquency is correlated to childhood poverty (Cancian et al., 2013).
- Studies consistently find that poor youth of color are more likely to be involved as crossover youth (Sirois, 2023).

Negative Outcomes

Stigma

- In one study, public defenders said crossover youth were “lazy, lead mismanaged lived, and hail from dysfunctional households” (Lara-Millán & Gonzalez Van Cleve, 2016, p. 60).
- Crossover youth are likely to be stigmatized due to their situations in both systems (Good et al., 2023).

Mental Health

- Older children in the welfare system experience repeated trauma and instability which can lead to frequent court appearances (Sarri et al., 2016).
- Crossover youth are more likely than those not involved in both systems, to have a mental disorder (Modrowski et al., 2023).

Education

- Poor academic performance precedes dual system-involved youth and continues due to repeated exposure (Lee & Villagrana, 2015).
- Dual-system youth are more likely to have decreased educational attainment than youth not involved in both systems (Modrowski et al., 2023).

Recidivism

- Research suggests crossover youth have higher recidivism rates than youth involved in just the juvenile justice system (Hirsch et al., 2018).
- Crossover youth are more likely to return to the juvenile justice system and proceed further (e.g., into incarceration) (Herz et al., 2010).



Policy Suggestions

Georgetown Model

- Uses Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) which partners mental health professionals with people who care for youth (Hunter et al., 2016).
- ECMHC is uniquely tailored to each kid and has expanded to schools, foster care, and homeless shelters to help as many youths as possible (Hunter et al., 2016).

Boys Town

- Boys Town was founded as an orphanage for boys with various issues providing them with education and service to help them succeed in the future (Boystown.org).
- The goal of Boys Town is to “create an environment for youth who cannot safely stay at home to ensure they receive the education and preparation they need to grow into successful futures” (Boystown.org).

Future Policies

- Future policies should combine both the Georgetown Model and Boys Town by offering a safe space for youth in need and providing each youth with an individualized plan for success.

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