WSCCR SOC Meeting

Washington State Center for Court Research
December 10, 2021

Introduction to Data for Justice

The Need for Equal Justice

- Today's need for equal justice arises from a combination of deliberate discrimination, marginalization, unequal justice system operations, and a profound lack of attention, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness

- Marginalized populations are also those more likely to be involved with court operations related to language access, pretrial, therapeutic interventions, local sanctions and community supervision; these programs would also benefit from greater information availability and active management

How to Respond?

- Steps to improve equal administration of justice will also improve the effectiveness of court programs and courts' accessibility

- Remedies must be systematic, comprehensive, and permanent, transitioning from innovation to accepted routine practice

- Remedies cannot be assumed to work; they must be tracked and adapted as needed

Data for Justice Components

- Data development to fill gaps and make data accessible

- Data for case-level decisions, for court management, for communities, for policy

- Professional development: education, training, and technical assistance for judges, administrators, supervisors, and line staff on why and how to use data to inform decisions

- Implement learning organization practices

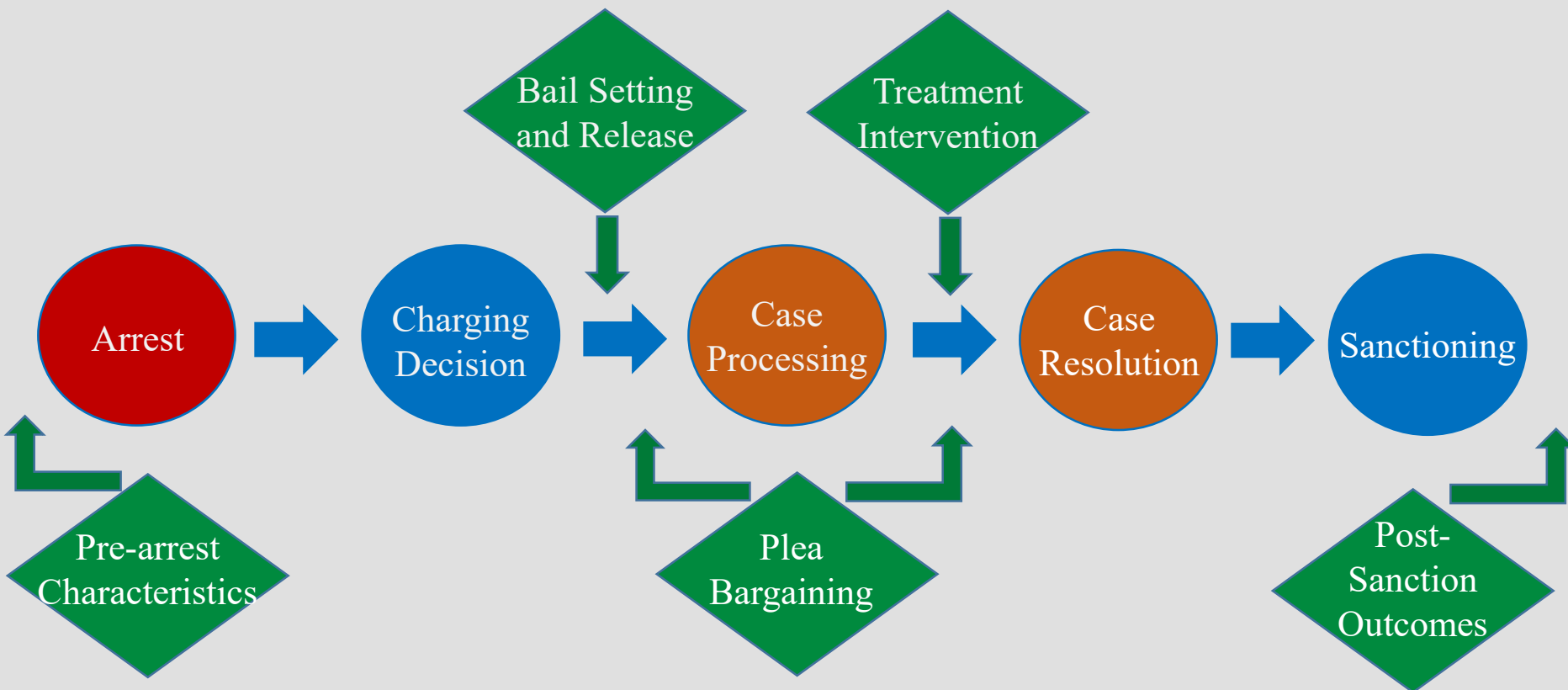- Learn from the experiences of the court-involved

Expected Data for Justice Results

- For individuals
- For communities
- For court professionals
- For the justice system

Data for Justice: Where We are Now

Data Gaps Example

Courts' Data Use Capacity

- Do you have experience using data?

  - With comparing outcomes across groups?

  - With assessing program effectiveness?

  - Can you describe differences in column percentages across rows of a table?

  - Do you know where untested **ass**umptions about data and analysis will **always** bite you?

  - Do you have confidence in presenting data to inform choices that affect people's lives? Even when you are presenting to your judges?

  - Are you prepared to answer when asked about the source, validity, and meaning of your data-based statements?

Organizational Climate

- Why measure organizational climate in juvenile justice?

- In juvenile justice settings, organizational climate has been shown to be related to:

  - Staff turnover intent (Matz et al., 2012)

  - Staff use of best practices (Farrell et al., 2011)

  - Youth recidivism (Schubert et al., 2012)

How do we measure Organizational climate in juvenile justice settings?

Juvenile courts are assessed every three years as part of our statewide Environmental Assessment (EA) process. One portion of the EA is devoted to organizational climate.

How do we measure Organizational climate in juvenile justice settings?

Staff (probation and detention)

- Office climate ("Employees always feel free to ask questions and express concerns in the office")

- Cynicism ("I've pretty much given up trying to make suggestions for improvement around here")

- Leadership ("My supervisor takes time to listen carefully to and discuss people's concerns")

- Safety ("I generally feel safe at work")

How do we measure Organizational climate in juvenile justice settings?

Youth (detention)

- Safety ("I feel safe when a staff member is present")

- Relationships ("Staff will keep working with a kid who is struggling")

- Fairness ("Staff are consistent when enforcing the rules")

How is this information used?

"To implement a more inclusive and open communication process between JPCs and management, a facilitator was hired. She met with each group first, and in early March 2021 both groups came together for a facilitated meeting. The management team agreed to listen more, open meetings with a more relaxed and positive vibe, and create a more informal setting. This has been implemented in All Staff meetings and unit meetings to allow staff to express concerns and ask questions."

-response from one court following the EA results (low organizational climate scores)

Presentation: LFO Data Development, Analysis and Impact

Presentation: Need for Data in Pretrial

Presentation: Family Treatment Court and Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Programs: Application of Learning Organization Practices

Presentation: Juvenile Courts as Learning Organizations

Getting to Data for Justice

Data Equity → Equitable Justice

- Data design, collection, and use can reinforce stereotypes, reinforce racial bias and undermine social justice.

- Data Equity

  - Means to consider equity in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination

  - Underscores marginalized communities

  - Raises issues of data sovereignty and democratization of data

- Applied Data Equity can

  - Help us be aware of opportunities for improvement

  - Support both top-down and bottom-up change.

Implementing Data for Justice

- Desirable traits for implementation process
  - Clear communication
  - High feasibility
  - Includes court staff, other justice professionals, stakeholder groups, lived expertise
  - Ongoing education and training
  - Uses existing structures
  - Comprehensive
  - Implemented in stages
  - Adaptable
  - Accountable

Data for Justice Action Steps

- Articulate vision and mission
- Inclusively set priorities and plan
- Secure support from the legislature
- Make data accessible to courts and public
- Foster a culture of curiosity in courts
- Raise courts' human capacity for decision making
- Attend to lived expertise
- Link data across system components
- Review and adapt

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