



Conceptualizing Juvenile Justice Reform: Integrating Public Health, Social-Ecological, and Restorative Justice Models

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Goals

- To achieve a clear understanding of what the terms **public health**, **social-ecological model**, and **restorative justice** mean to aid in developing a theory of change for RED and greater JJPOC efforts
 - Aim: to better understand what these practices mean for each of the constituent groups that are a part of the process
 - Aim: to come to a consensus definition for each of the three terms
- To discuss how to **integrate** these three theoretical models
 - Aim: to determine how the integration of these theoretical models can and do impact practices and can lead to a more comprehensive and effective approach to JJ reform in Connecticut

Goal 1:
Coming to Consensus

Public Health

- Conceptualizes youth entry into JJ system as culmination of risks, failure of prevention, and lack of community-based alternatives
- Youth offending has implications for individual, community, and society health
- Goal of prevention is to reduce new occurrences of targeted problem (i.e., offending) to promote greater community health
 - Youth at risk for JJ involvement often exposed to multiple ACEs and further progression into JJ system can perpetuate trauma



Public Health Model

- Prevention & intervention through lens of three-tier model:
 - Universal – reducing occurrence of new “cases” of offending
 - Selective—targets identified youth at-risk for justice involvement
 - Indicated—targets youth requiring individualized and often intensive intervention

Indicated

High-risk individuals

- Youth in contact with the JJ system:
 - Detained
 - Arrested
 - Diverted
 - Probation
 - Incarceration
 - Post-Release

Selective

Subgroups with risk factors

- Behavioral/emotional disorders
 - School problems
 - Family disruption
 - Poverty

Universal

The entire population

- Community-based prevention programs
 - School-based mental health enhancement programs
 - PSA campaigns

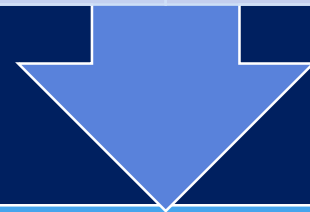
Let's Discuss

Public Health – Strengths & Weaknesses

Public health conceptualization views current approaches to JJ as lacking because they often only provide *indicated* interventions (i.e., targets youth who have already offended)

Model views intervention as necessary at each level—universal, selective, and indicated, recognizing that contact with the JJ system can be traumatic

This approach would prioritize society level interventions that work to target risk factors associated with justice-involvement



Criticisms of PH approach

How to respond to community/society/political need to “punish” youth, if PH focus is on prevention & diversion?

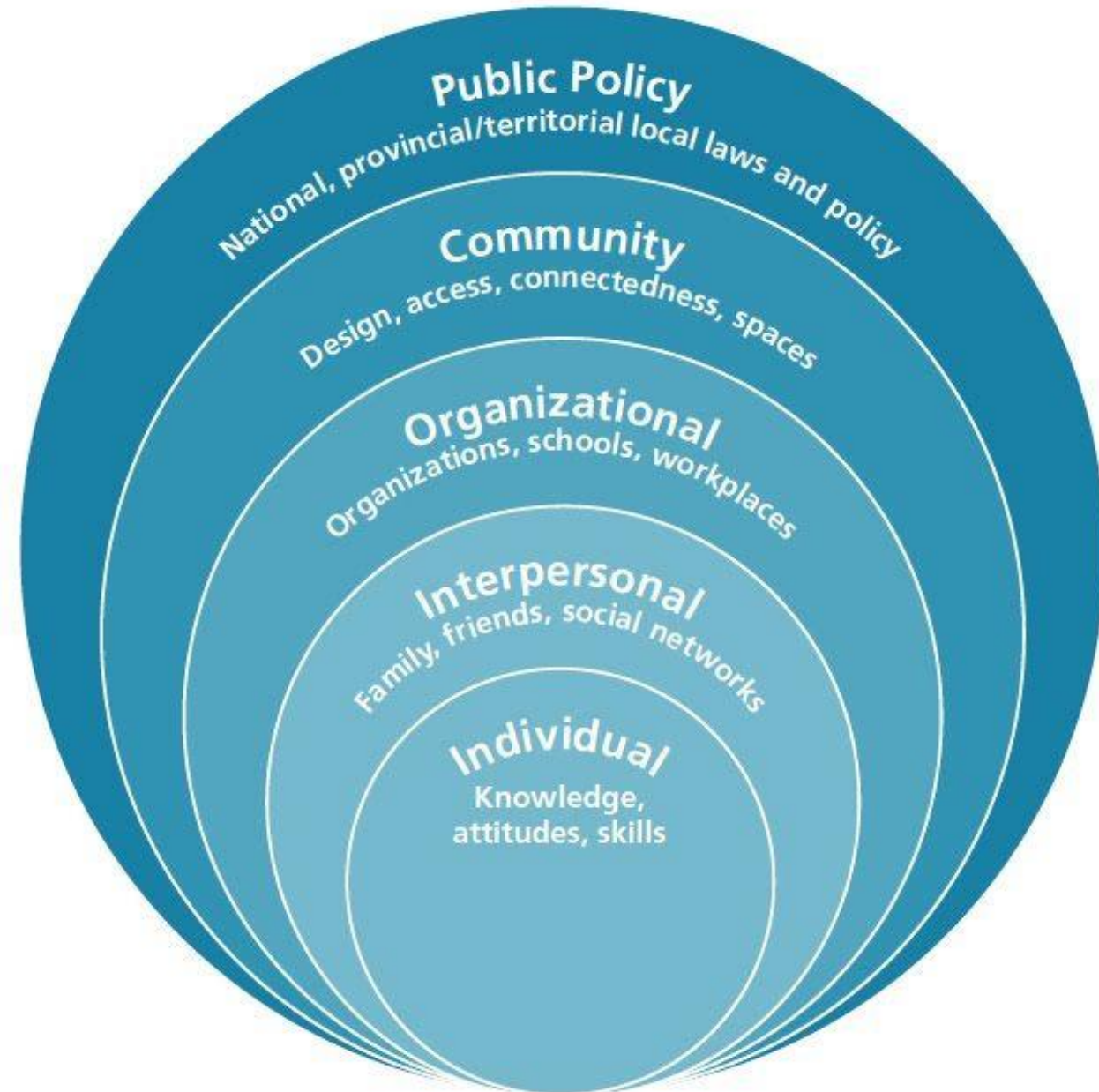
How will those who have been harmed by youth offending (i.e., victim, community) be made whole?

Will prevention focus mean resources are diverted away from indicated youth (i.e., those with highest needs?)

Additional Limitations?

Social Ecological Model

- Youth are shaped by multiple levels of influence, operating concurrently, and youth simultaneously influence his/her environment
 - Bidirectional process
- Views youth offending through lens of interactions and relationship in which offending takes place
- Identity development plays key role in shaping youth's actions/behaviors. Relationships/social processes can support or impede positive identity development





Social-Ecological Model

- Prevention viewed as multi-system effort to provide alternative interventions focused on strengthening and supporting families, schools, and communities in which youth exist
- Interventions focus on positive development of youth, building relationships and strengthening youths' competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring

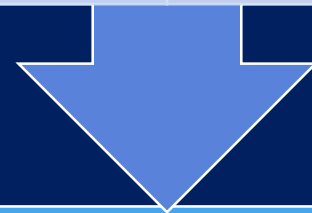
Let's Discuss

SEM – Strengths & Weaknesses

SEM conceptualization views current JJ practices as overly focused on youth's problems, deficits and disorders and often ignores social, situational and systemic factors in youth's life

SEM conceptualizes youth offending through lens of youth's interactions and relationships and focuses on youth's strengths to promote positive youth development

Prevention focuses on multisystem efforts to provide interventions focused on strengthening families, schools, and communities in which youth exists



Criticisms of SEM Approach

Are systems equipped and able to provide multisystemic interventions?

How will youth be held accountable for their actions within this framework?

Additional Limitations?

Restorative Justice

Community-based approaches focusing on accountability, public safety, and community healing (i.e., restoration of damaged relationships)

Prioritizes bringing together victims, offenders, and community stakeholders to discuss how offense has affected all parties and collaboratively develop modes of redress

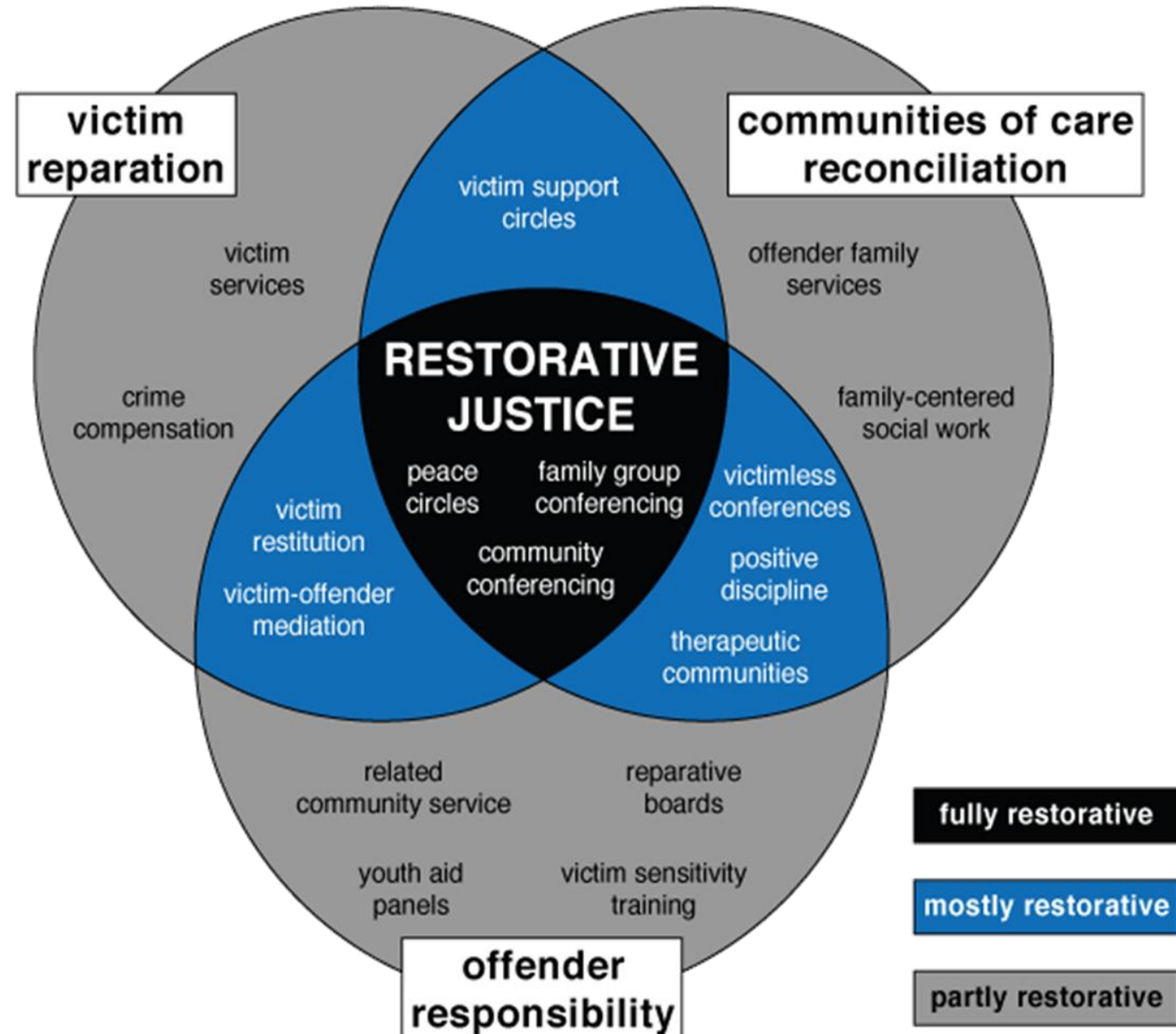
Community plays an important role in building capacities within youth and developing community resources, reducing delinquency and promoting public safety



Restorative Justice Model

- Restorative Practices
 - Focus on youth repairing relationship with the community and restoring (i.e., making whole) those who have been harmed by youth's action
 - Accomplished via community service, restitution, reparative sentencing
- Balanced Practices
 - Focus on building youth's social competencies as method to reduce delinquency and promote community safety
- Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ)
 - Focus on promotion of public safety through addressing needs of victims/community, while holding youth accountable and helps to build competencies to help youth develop as productive citizen (OJJDP model)

Types and Degrees of Restorative Justice Practice



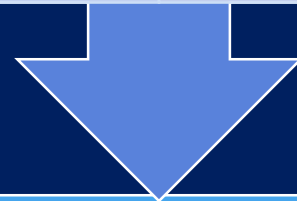
Let's Discuss

Restorative Justice – Strengths & Weaknesses

RJ views current approaches to justice as focused on identifying harm as transgressions against state and focus on punishment. Victims and stakeholders are not often given opportunities to understand offense nor are included in determining outcomes

RJ model conceptualizes youth offending as a breach or breakdown in relationships between youth and youth's community that must be restored for healing to take effect

RJ operates in varied ways across the US, but focus on accountability promotes social competencies among youth and greater satisfaction for victims and stakeholders



Criticisms of RJ Approach

With variation across jurisdictions, are RJ policies applied equitably?

Is restorative justice “enough” to hold youth accountable, if youth can avoid formal legal process via this practice?

Additional Limitations?

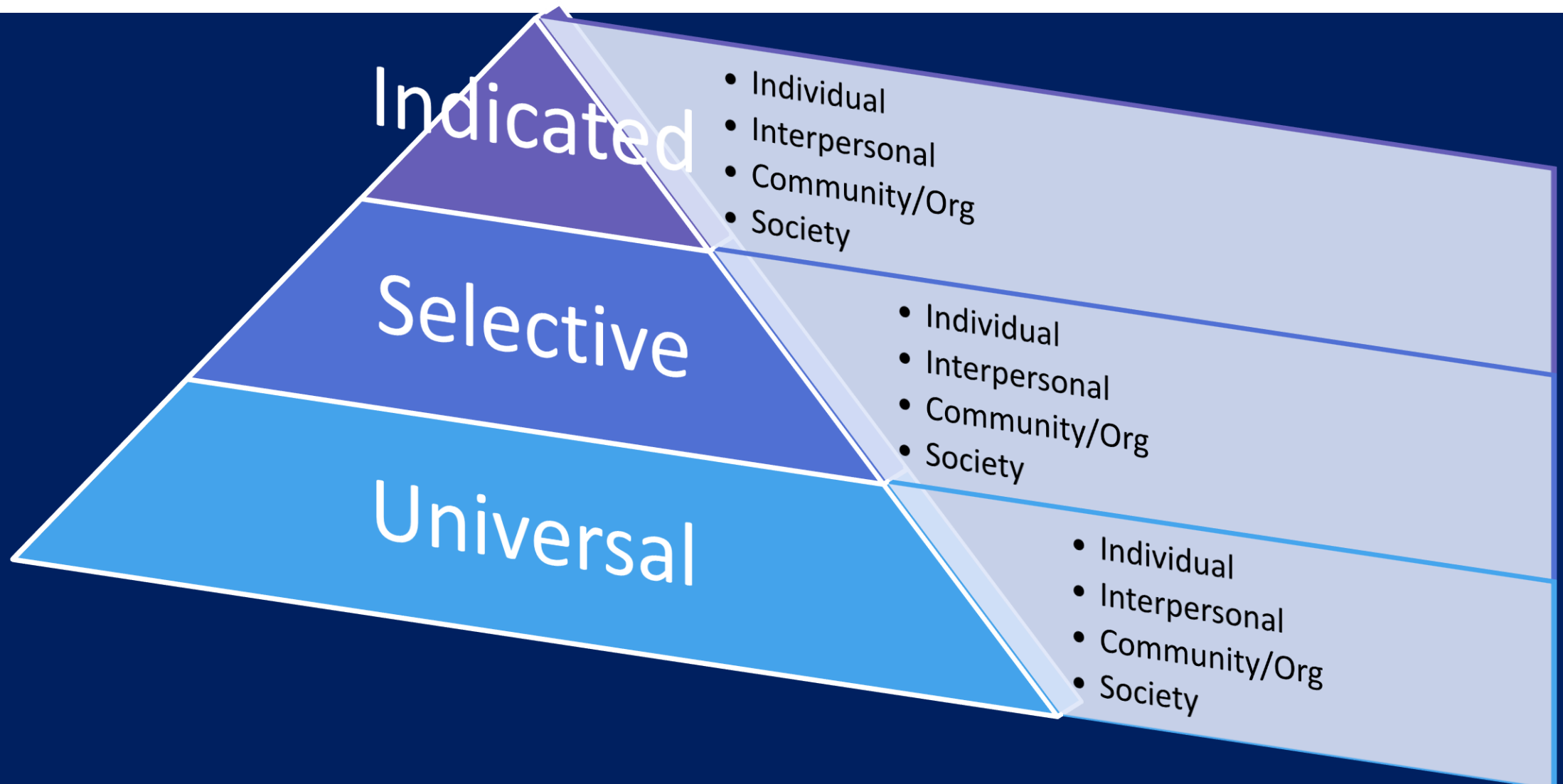
Goal 2: Integrating the Models

Integrated Model

Layers the three approaches to target youth at all stages in justice involvement (i.e., youth without involvement, youth at-risk, and youth currently involved) and proposes that interventions must simultaneously target all domains/systems with which youth interact and which act upon youth

Views youth offending as a public health issue that affects all facets of society and proposes that interventions must focus on making all parties—community, family, victim, and offender—whole

Integrated Model



Example:
Car Thefts in
Connecticut



Integrated Approach to JJ Intervention

Universal

- Society – PSAs re: methods to reduce theft
- Community – individual responsibility to reduce opportunities
- Interpersonal – national conversations/dinner table talks with kids
- Individual – “we are our community’s keeper”

Selective

- Society – Campaigns targeted to specific communities
- Community – provision of alternatives to engage youth in prosocial activities
- Interpersonal – Familial responsibility to monitor activities & promote understanding of community relationship
- Individual – youth understand how these offenses impact all in their community

Indicated

- Society – providing resources to offset youth’s needs
- Community – JJ stakeholders asking what youth need
- Interpersonal – parents communicating impact to youth
- Individual – youth engage in RJ process with victims, family, and JJ stakeholders

Feedback

Questions to Consider

- How might this approach inform our RED work and recommendations?
- Can this approach be utilized across JJPOC strategies?
- Are there other areas to consider in developing an integrated model of JJ prevention work?





Stakeholder Perspectives

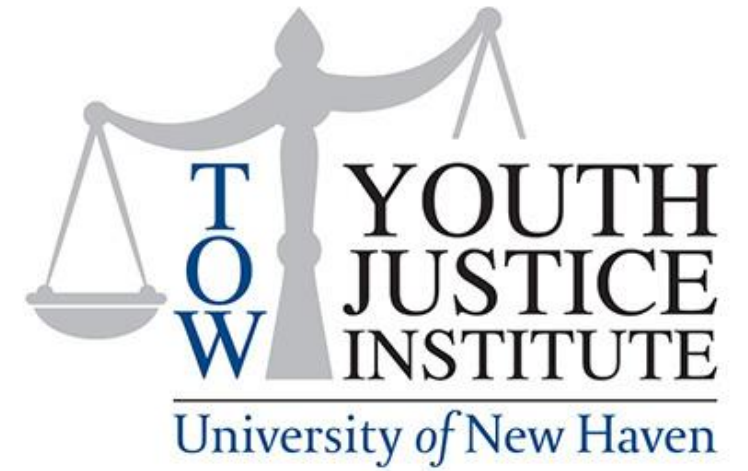
- Challenges to implementing or utilizing this?
- Concerns from stakeholders?
- Other questions we should ask?



Next Steps

- What should we focus our next steps on?

Thank You!



- Questions?

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