



Ontario County Youth Court Annual Evaluation Update

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Introduction

This evaluation report includes analyses of existing data sets including: pre- and post Youth Court surveys completed by clients, client assessments completed by trainers at Gaining Awareness Through Education (GATE) and follow-up feedback surveys completed by Youth Court members, e.g. student judges, jurors etc. Of 47 clients who completed Youth Court in 2006, pre- and post-program surveys were completed by 29 (61.0%). Assessments were received for 10 GATE clients. Nearly 46.7% (22/) of Youth Court members returned feedback surveys in 2007.

Youth Court retained the services of Evalumetrics Research to provide technical assistance in completing an outcome evaluation and revising and improving data collection protocols. Return rates for mailed post-surveys remained at about 40%, the same as the previous year. An additional 10% of post-Youth Court surveys were completed by phone interview. Within the limits of available data several measures were analyzed to determine the impact of Youth Court on clients and student members.

Youth Court Clients

Risk and Protective Factors Table 1 shows the change in proportion of clients who agreed with items (statements) from the Risk and Protective Factor Survey (Hawkins and Catalano). The first four items represent the risk factor of “rebelliousness.” The proportion giving risk answers to the first three items, that is agreeing with the statements decreased dramatically. For example, the proportion who admitted they like to see what they can get away with decreased from 20.7% before Youth Court to 4.3% in the post-Youth Court Survey. For the non-risk response to the belief that it is important to think before one acts, 96.5%) agreed in the pre-Youth Court surveys and all students agreed in the post-test. The proportion giving the risk response to items representing “impulsiveness” decreased for “wanting things right away”, “doing things without thinking” and for “switching from activity to activity rather than sticking with one thing at a time.” In regards to the protective factor of “family management and discipline,” the vast majority of clients reported their parents already practiced good management though there were small increases after Youth Court. However, there was an increases in the proportion of students who said their family members insult or yell at one and other and in the proportion who said their families have serious arguments.

There was a significant reduction in the proportion of YC clients who demonstrated rebelliousness and impulsiveness.

Anger Management Table 2 shows responses to items related to anger and anger management. There was an increase in the proportion of clients who said it was okay to express anger (72.4% vs. 95.7%). However, after Youth Court a smaller proportion of clients said they would yell or swear, or withdraw and hold their anger in. A greater proportion said they throw or punch objects. After Youth Court a smaller proportion of clients said that being

After Youth Court clients were more likely to resolve conflict by listening to other’s points or taking a time-out and fewer would continue to

injured frustrated them. However, more said injustice or the behaviors of other people frustrated them. Fewer clients said abuse, bullying alcoholism or dishonesty angered them. A greater proportion defined “abusive” behavior as “any kind of abuse.” While fewer clients considered physical injury as the major kind of abuse, a greater proportion recognized verbal or emotional mistreatment as abuse. The proportion of students who could correctly define assertive communication doubled (27.6% vs. 52.2%) after Youth Court. After Youth Court clients were more likely to resolve conflict by listening to other’s points or taking a time-out. Fewer clients said they would avoid the issue or continue to argue a point.

Antisocial Behavior Table 3 indicates that none of the Youth Court only one client reported being arrested or detained by a police officer in the 12 months since completing Youth Court. In addition, 44.8% of clients had been suspended from school in the 12 months prior to the survey but only 5.6% were suspended in the year following Youth Court..

GATE Trainer Assessment. GATE trainers completed written assessments of clients’ status at time of completion or withdrawal from referral. Table 4 indicates that of the 10 assessments completed during 2007, six (60%) showed improvement in anger management; two (20%) showed improvement in other communication; six (60%) improved in self-awareness areas; four (40%) needed additional services for problem areas and one (10%) did not complete recommended treatment.

Youth Court Members

Feedback surveys were sent to students who had participated as members of Youth Court and had served as judges, prosecutors, defenders, jurors, or in other positions. Twenty two of 99 members (22.2%) returned surveys. Table 5 shows proportion of Youth Court members responding to each item. Among the things members liked best about the training were getting to know other students (54.5%); learning about courts (40.9%) and; the trainers (40.9%). Among the things members disliked were: sessions too long (50.0%); and too didactic (13.6%).

Virtually every member was satisfied with the training as it related to knowledge of criminal justice, enhancing their interest in the law and preparing them for Youth Court roles. More than four out of five (81.8%) found Youth Court staff helpful in preparation while the same number said they were satisfied with the Youth Court experience.

The Youth Court experience had the most positive affect on participation in activities/community (86.4%), self-confidence (78.6%), public speaking (77.3%) and attitude toward adult courts (77.3%).

Table 1
Ontario County Youth Court - 2006-2007
Changes in Reported Attitudes and Behaviors
Pre-Youth Court Compared to One Year Later
Rebelliousness

I do opposite of what people tell me
just to get them mad...

Pre-YC % Agree N=29	Post-YC % Agree N=23
20.7%	4.3%

I ignore the rules to get my way...

31.0%	4.3%
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I like to see how much I can get away with.

20.7%	4.3%
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It is important to think before you act.

96.5%	100.0%
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Impulsiveness

Do you have to have everything right away.

17.2%	4.3%
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I often do things without thinking about what
will happen.

46.1%	0.0%
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Do you switch from one activity to another
rather than sticking to one thing at a time.

31.0%	17.3%
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Table 1 (cont.)

Ontario County Youth Court

**Changes in Reported Attitudes and Behaviors
Pre-Youth Court Compared to One Year Later
Family Management/Discipline**

	Pre-YC % Agree N=29	Post-YC % Agree N=23
My parents ask if I've gotten homework done.	86.2%	95.7%
My parents know if I am getting home late.	93.1%	100.0%
My parents know if you did not come home on time.	93.1%	100.0%
When I am not at home, one of my parents knows where I am and who I am with.	96.5%	100.0%
The rules in my family are clear.	82.8%	100.0%
My family has a clear rules about alcohol and drug use.	96.6%	100.0%
People in my family often insult or yell at one another.	41.4%	47.8%
People in my family have serious arguments.	41.3%	52.2%

Table 2
Ontario County Youth Court
Changes in Reported Attitudes and Behaviors
Pre-Youth Court Compared to One Year Later
Anger Management

Is anger okay to express.

	Pre-YC	Post-YC
	% Agree	% Agree
	N=29	N=23
	72.4%	95.7%

How do you presently express your anger?

Yell, swear, call names.

	24.1%	4.3%
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Throw or punch objects

	6.9%	17.4%
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Physically hurt others

	3.4%	0.0%
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Withdraw, hold anger in

	24.1%	8.7%
--	-------	------

Other

	41.4%	65.2%
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Name little things that frustrate you.

Being injured

	10.3%	8.7%
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Injustice

	27.6%	43.5%
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Other people

	75.9%	52.2%
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Other

	31.0%	34.8%
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Identify issues that make you angry.

Abuse

	17.2%	8.7%
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Bullying

	24.1%	8.7%
--	-------	------

Alcoholism

	10.3%	8.7%
--	-------	------

Dishonesty

	17.2%	8.7%
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Name calling

	6.9%	17.4%
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Other

	58.6%	69.6%
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How do you define abusive behavior

Any kind of abuse

	10.3%	13.0%
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Physical abuse

	75.9%	91.3%
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Verbal/emotional

	41.4%	47.8%
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Other

	6.9%	4.3%
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Table 2 (cont.)

Ontario County Youth Court

**Changes in Reported Attitudes and Behaviors
Pre-Youth Court Compared to One Year Later**

Anger Management

How do you define assertive communication.

- Getting point across without aggression
- Other

	Pre-YC % Agree N=29	Post-YC % Agree N=23
Getting point across without aggression	27.6%	52.2%
Other	48.3%	17.4%

How do you define aggressive communication?

- Yelling
- Cursing/swearing
- Physical abuse
- Other

Yelling	58.6%	87.0%
Cursing/swearing	34.5%	17.4%
Physical abuse	20.7%	47.8%
Other	13.8%	39.1%

How do you resolve conflicts?

- Avoid or ignore the issue
- Continue to argue your point
- Listen carefully to the other person's point
- Take a time-out, then come back
- Hold a grudge
- Other

Avoid or ignore the issue	20.7%	0.0%
Continue to argue your point	24.1%	8.7%
Listen carefully to the other person's point	27.6%	34.8%
Take a time-out, then come back	6.9%	21.7%
Hold a grudge	3.4%	0.0%
Other	13.8%	13.0%

Table 3

Ontario County Youth Court

**Changes in Reported Attitudes and Behaviors
Pre-Youth Court Compared to One Year Later**

Antisocial Behavior

In the past 12 months have been arrested or
detained by a police officer for any reason?

Pre-YC % Yes N=29	Post-YC % Yes N=23
48.3%	5.6%

In the past 12 months were you suspended from
school because of a discipline problem?

44.8%	5.6%
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Table 4
GATE 2007

Number of case reviews 15

Clinical Outcomes

Improved anger management	6	40.0%
Improved Communications	2	13.3%
Improved Self-awareness	6	40.0%
Need more services	4	26.6%
Did not finish	1	6.6%

Table 5
Youth Court
Member Evaluation
2007

N=22

% Yes

Things I liked the best.

Trainers	40.9%
Getting to know other	54.5%
Asking questions	0.0%
Learning about courts	40.9%
Sense of helping	0.0%
Work w/judges/lawyers etc.	18.2%
Anger Management	0.0%
Mock trial	9.1%
Other	18.2%

Things I disliked.

% Yes

Not organized	4.5%
Too long	50.0%
Too didactic	13.6%
Not enough time w/judges/lawyers	0.0%
Lack feedback	0.0%
Not enough practice	0.0%
Lack jury guidance	0.0%
Other	45.5%

How satisfied were you with training sessions in regards to:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Knowledge of criminal justice system	86.4%	13.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Enhancing interest in the law	59.1%	36.4%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Preparing for YC role	81.8%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%

What capacity did you serve.

% Yes

Judge	54.5%
Prosecutor	54.5%
Defender	72.7%
Clerk/bailiff	40.9%
Jury foreperson	81.8%

How helpful was YC staff in preparation

% Yes

Very Helpful	81.8%
Somewhat helpful	13.6%
Not very helpful	0.0%

Table 5 (cont.)
Youth Court
Member Evaluation
2007
N=22

Overall satisfaction with YC

	% Yes
Very satisfied	90.9%
Neutral	9.1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0.0%

How did YC affect the following:

	Not		
	Positive	Affected	Negative
Communication w/parents	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%
Communication w/peers	63.6%	36.4%	0.0%
Academic performance	40.9%	59.1%	2.8%
Participation in activities/community	86.4%	13.6%	0.0%
Selectivity of friends	36.4%	63.6%	0.0%
Decision to be law-abiding	63.6%	36.4%	0.0%
Course selection at school	54.5%	45.5%	0.0%
Ability to resolve conflict	86.4%	13.6%	0.0%
Problem solving skill	81.8%	18.2%	0.0%
Self-confidence	78.6%	21.4%	0.0%
Public speaking ability	77.3%	22.7%	0.0%
Attitude toward police	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%
Attitude toward adult courts	77.3%	22.7%	0.0%
Attitude toward criminal justice	81.8%	18.2%	0.0%