

# EXPLORING THE ROLE OF CASE MANAGEMENT WITHIN GRYD PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES

GRYD case managers and Community Intervention Workers (CIWs) play a critical role in supporting successful outcomes for youth, young adults, and families participating in GRYD Prevention and GRYD Intervention Family Case Management (FCM) Services.

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## GRYD RESEARCH & EVALUATION BRIEF NO. 4

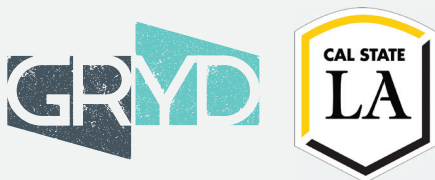
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### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The GRYD Research Brief Series highlights the accomplishments of the GRYD Office and its community partners as they implement the GRYD Comprehensive Strategy.<sup>1</sup> The current research brief examines the impact of GRYD provider staff relationships on young people and families participating in GRYD Prevention and GRYD Intervention Family Case Management (FCM) Services. Using interviews with participants, we learn more about the nature of these relationships and discover the significant role these relationships play in participants' success.

**ANNE C. TREMBLAY, JD**

GRYD DIRECTOR



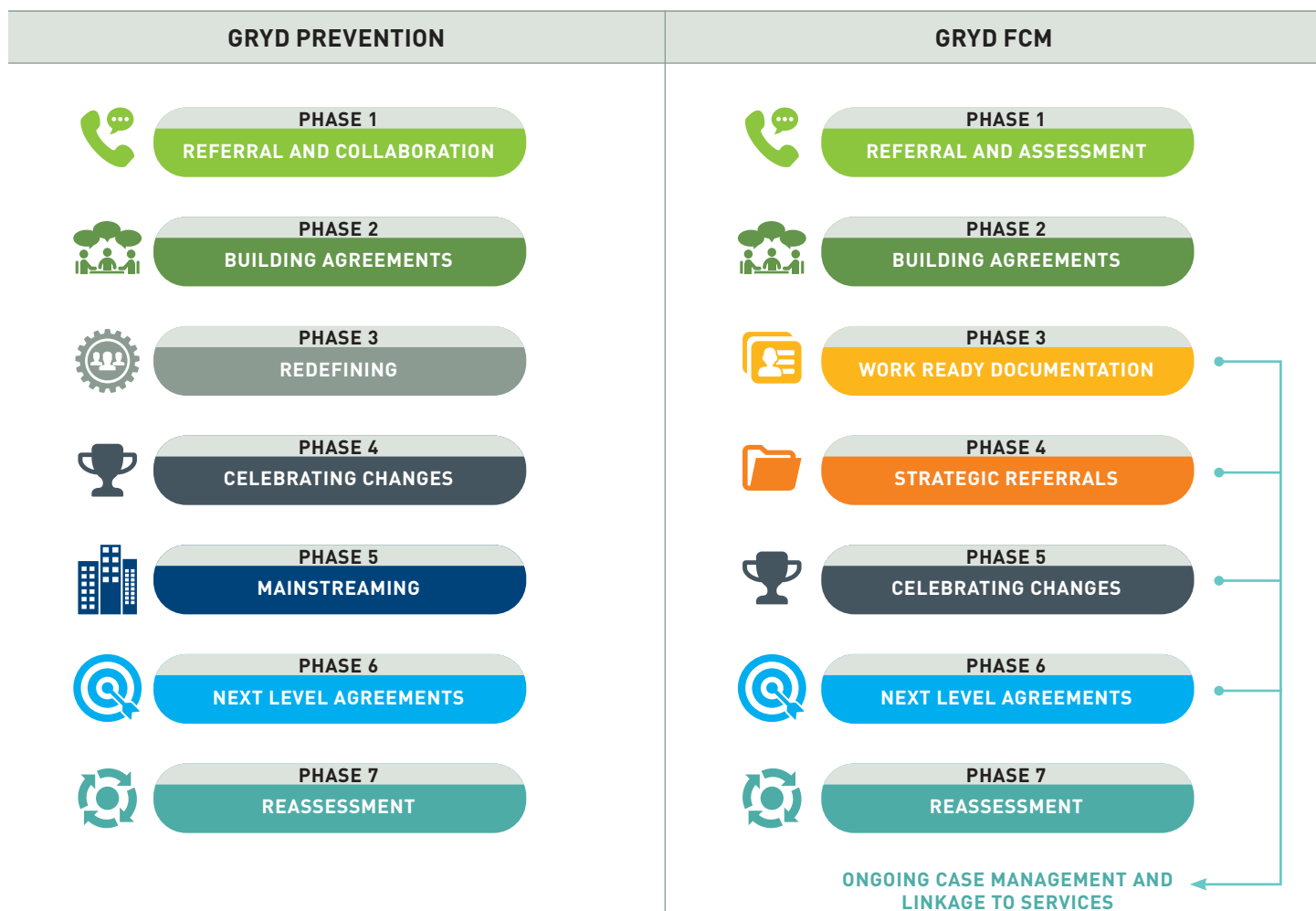
Gang prevention and intervention services represent two pillars of the GRYD Comprehensive Strategy and are available to youth and young adults who live or who have a significant presence (e.g., attend school) in the area served by GRYD providers. GRYD Prevention services are available for youth who are between 10 and 15 years old and who are at an increased risk of joining a gang. These services work toward reducing gang-joining by supporting and increasing youth and family resiliency. GRYD Intervention Family Case Management (FCM) services are provided to youth and young adults who are between the ages of 14 and 25 and who are

gang-involved. GRYD FCM services focus on reducing gang embeddedness by supporting and increasing resiliency among participants and their families.<sup>2</sup>

Although the target population for these programs differs, both programs operate using a similar structure. Youth and young adults who are referred to GRYD services must complete an intake assessment. For GRYD Prevention, youth complete the Youth Services Eligibility Tool (YSET) and must score above a threshold of risk to participate in GRYD services. Referrals for GRYD FCM services also complete an assessment tool, the Social Embeddedness Tool (SET), but eligibility to participate in services is not based on a score but rather on their overall need for services. Eligible youth and young adults participate in a six-month program broken down into six service phases, shown in Figure 1, which commence following completion of the referral and intake process.

An important component for both GRYD Prevention and FCM services is the connection of participants and their families to a GRYD case manager and for FCM participants, a GRYD Community Intervention Worker (CIW). GRYD case managers work closely with participants, navigating them through GRYD's programming stages and supporting their development as an individual, as part of a family unit, and as a positive force in the community. They work with participants and their families to create strength-based genograms and identify strategies to address problem behaviors, which often includes making connections to community resources and services; coordinating care; navigating systems; and addressing basic needs such as housing or transportation. CIWs are recognized in the community for their knowledge of and ability to influence gang relationships in the community. CIWs work closely with GRYD FCM case managers and are

Figure 1. GRYD Prevention and FCM structure of services



responsible for the outreach and engagement of young people prior to participation in services (i.e., recruitment). Once enrolled, CIWs play a critical role in mentoring and coaching participants and their families.

Findings from previous evaluation reports for GRYD Prevention and FCM services show positive outcomes. For GRYD Prevention, participant risk levels using YSET scores were compared over time for 1,620 participants between 2011 and 2016.<sup>3</sup> Of the original 1,620 participants eligible at the beginning of the services, 57.5% were no longer eligible after six months of services, and all YSET risk scales scores decreased, with the greatest decrease in antisocial tendencies (-70.8%) and the smallest for family gang influence (-25.2%). Similarly, GRYD FCM services were evaluated by comparing initial and re-test Social Embeddedness Tool (SET) data collected from 101 participants between 2012 and 2016.<sup>4</sup> Results of pre/post comparisons showed statistically significant decreases

in participation in non-violent and violent crime, and gang activities, time spent with gang, and emotional attachment to the gang for those receiving GRYD services.

Promising findings for both GRYD Prevention and FCM services raise the question of “how” GRYD services positively impact participants and their families. The purpose of this Research Brief is to explore this question using interviews with program participants and their families to better understand the role GRYD case managers and CIWs play in supporting successful outcomes.

## A BRIEF REVIEW OF GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Gangs and gang violence have existed in the U.S. throughout most of its history,<sup>5</sup> appearing first in the Northeast (New York) and then in the Midwest (Chicago) and West Coast (Los Angeles). As gang activity spread, programs designed

to prevent and reduce gang violence developed. Initially, programs emphasized prevention techniques to stop at-risk youth from joining gangs, such as engaging in community organization, providing alternative activity opportunities, and focusing on services for children early in life to reduce risk factors.<sup>6</sup> Notable prevention programs contributed to our current knowledge of how prevention fits within a gang reduction strategy. Critical lessons were learned, for example, from prevention programs such as the Midcity Project,<sup>7</sup> the Ladino Hills Project,<sup>8</sup> and the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.).<sup>9,10</sup> provided important insight into “what works.” Research findings showed that “the most promising prevention programs reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors in multiple contexts, including family, school and community.”<sup>11</sup> Additionally, successful prevention programs strengthen protective factors such as youth coping skills, prosocial behavior and peers, commitment to school, parental monitoring and family cohesiveness.<sup>12,13</sup> In sum, prevention services should be holistic and comprehensive.

Prevention programs were later accompanied by the development of programs to intervene in and interrupt gang activity, particularly violent crime. Many early intervention programs were designed to reduce young people's involvement in the gang by providing job opportunities at the individual level and conducting peace talks and implementing ‘gang free’ zones at the community level. Recent evaluations indicate that effective intervention programs include a focus on and on job training, violence interruption at the community level, and the provision of wraparound services at the individual level. Well-known examples of intervention programs include the Chicago Community Action Program<sup>14</sup> and the Crisis Intervention Services Project (CRISP),<sup>15</sup> both of which led to Spergel's Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Program.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, Spergel's work led to the development of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model which connects five strategies: community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression and organizational change and development.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the growing literature on gang prevention and intervention programs, few studies have focused on the impact of case management in delivering programs with these intentions.<sup>18,19</sup> According to the Case Management Society of America, case management is defined as:

*A collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's and family's comprehensive health needs through communication and available resources to promote patient safety, quality of care, and cost-effective outcomes.<sup>20</sup>*

Case management is considered an essential component in providing both prevention and intervention services.<sup>20-23</sup> Organizations such as the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC),<sup>24</sup> Cure Violence (CV),<sup>25</sup> and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)<sup>26</sup> provide implementation guides detailing case management as an essential component of gang reduction programs. Although program effectiveness arguably depends on the ability of case managers to earn credibility and trust,<sup>27-29</sup> evaluation of case management services and the role it plays in gang reduction programs remains undeveloped.<sup>30,31</sup> This study addresses this gap by exploring how GRYD case managers and Community Intervention Workers (CIWs) impact the experiences of youth/young people and their families participating in GRYD Prevention and Intervention Family Case Management services.

## RESEARCH METHODS

To examine the experiences of participants and their families, interviews with GRYD Prevention and Intervention Family Case Management (FCM) Program participants and families were completed. Data were collected, reviewed, and analyzed using narrative research techniques and was approved by the University of California, Los Angeles Institutional Review Board (IRB).<sup>32</sup> Participants and their families were interviewed separately two to three times over the course of one year of program enrollment between July 2017 and September 2018. Interviews were conducted with 86 GRYD Prevention and FCM participants for a total of 190 interviews during all rounds of data collection.<sup>33</sup>

Each GRYD Prevention and FCM Provider recommended one client and their family to participate in qualitative interviews. For the GRYD agencies that participated in the research, there was a 100% response rate.<sup>34</sup> There were 22 Prevention participants; 9 were Latinx females, 8 were Latinx males, 3 were African American females and 2 were African American males. For the Latinx clients, 6 had both

parents participate in interviews. The remainder had their mother or grandmother participate in interviews, for the African American clients, 3 had both parents participate in interviews, the remainder had their mother or grandmother participate in interviews. In turn, there were 21 FCM participants; 5 were Latinx females, 8 were Latinx males, 6 were African American males, 1 was an African American female and 1 was a Filipino male. For the Latinx clients, 4 had both parents participate in interviews, the remainder had their mother or grandmother participate in interviews. For the African American clients 3 had both parents participate in interviews and along with the Filipino client, the remainder had their mother or grandmother participate in interviews.

Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and subjected to an intensive process of data analysis. Data analysis comprised of a three-stage coding procedure. Hand rather than coding software was used because of the sensitivity and nuances characteristic of the data collected. In order to guard against interviewer bias in the research process, the coding was conducted by two independent coders who did not participate in any of the interviews. In addition, the coders were not aware of the overall study design or goals. Instead, the coders were given specific information regarding the coding process. The coders began their work with the process of open coding. Open coding allows the individual coder to develop categories of information. At this point, the two coders met together and compared their categories of information to ensure alignment and to eliminate any errors in the data or in participant and family accounts. The categories of information were then subjected to axial coding. Axial coding allows the coders to build the ideas into a narrative that connects the categories of information. Finally, the connections identified within the categories of information were subjected to selective coding to identify the crosscutting themes reported in this study.

## RESULTS

Analysis of interviews with GRYD Prevention and Intervention Family Case Management (FCM) participants produced six themes demonstrating how relationships with GRYD case managers and Community Intervention Workers (CIWs) contributed to the overall success of participants and their families. Each of these themes is discussed below.

### GRYD CASE MANAGERS AND CIWS PROVIDE CRITICAL SUPPORT

Participants consistently identified their relationship with GRYD case managers as the main reason for their satisfaction with GRYD services. GRYD Prevention participants described how these relationships were integral to their support network, explaining how they depended on their GRYD case manager who was “there for me when I feel I have no one else to talk to.” Similarly, GRYD FCM participants consistently identified their GRYD case manager and CIW as integral to their support network; both were deeply trusted by youth. As two participants explained:

*I can call [my case manager] whenever I want, but he usually stops by like once a week. We have one on ones, we talk about really whatever he can do for me like helping me get a job. My case manager was helping out all the homies.*

*Between my case manager and CIW they are a team and I always talk to one or the other when something is happening, even if I don't want to talk they somehow get me to talk. I don't know how, but I always tell them what's going on!*

Additionally, GRYD FCM participants who were involved with the justice system consistently described their GRYD case managers and CIWs as providing critical support through court hearings, integral to building relationships with probation officers, and helping to navigate the reentry process after exiting probation. One parent described the significance of the GRYD case manager:

*My son was accused of grand theft auto and he has a court case, they gave him community service because the letters that his case manager gave him really helped. He was identified as gang active and he is not, so the letters his case manager sent allowed him to not be put on a gang injunction. She takes him to court, sends letters on his behalf, she gives him tokens to make sure he can complete his community service and probation. His CIW talks to him almost every day and was right there supporting him too.*



### GRYD CASE MANAGERS AND CIWS FACILITATE BETTER FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Initial interviews with both GRYD FCM and Prevention participants and families focused primarily on their lack of communication as well as miscommunication with one another as a major problem. This theme—and the discussion of improvements in family communication—persisted throughout subsequent interviews. GRYD Prevention participants described how improved family dynamics and greater emotional closeness emerged once family communication improved. According to one GRYD Prevention participant:

*My whole family was affected by the GRYD program. All of our communication changed, not just mine. Like my mom's way of talking to us changed and so did my dad[']s, they communicate more now and I see them going about issues differently with my younger sister too.*

Over time, family members delineated how program impact extended beyond the participating youth to the family as a whole. Families involved in both GRYD Prevention and FCM services emphasized the accessibility of the GRYD case managers and how they played a critical role in the family's support network.

*I'm a full-time mom. I go to their school, I take them places, I pick them up—everything. It took another person for me to see new ways [of] managing our family. I told our case manager; her advice made a big impact towards me.*

For GRYD FCM participants, families also noted the importance of partnership between the CIWs and GRYD case managers:

*She is more than a case manager she is his mentor. The CIW is his mentor too—they work together to help my son. Kids like my son who have been rebellious really need someone who will understand them, and our case manager and CIW do that. If one of them can't find him they call me, they are always on top of it!*

These narratives were mirrored in other family interviews in which individuals discussed the ways in which GRYD case managers maintained strong communication with family members and actively involved the parent or guardian in services. Throughout interviews, families recalled how neither GRYD case managers nor CIWs were judgmental and repeatedly described how both were “there” for the youth as well as the family member.

GRYD FCM participants described how family case management sessions were viewed as opportunities to learn communication skills to put into practice at home. Participants reported, “We wait to until everybody calms down and then we get back to regular” and “I’m doing better, being productive and less yelling, [which] makes them [parents] happier so I guess there is less conflict with my family.”

GRYD Prevention families also described how GRYD case managers actively provided opportunities to develop new parenting skills through both group sessions and one-on-one family case management. According to parents, the family group sessions not only allowed them to develop parenting skills, but they also increased their awareness of barriers their child faced:

*They [GRYD] have given us workshops, for the parents. They also teach us about other dangers like gangs and how to make sure your kids don't join gangs.*

*I thought I was all by myself but going to GRYD and seeing parents and grandparents who have the same kind of issues I was like okay, here I am starting over with four kids and they were a big help for me. They had parent support groups every Thursday.*

GRYD FCM family members had similar responses, describing how GRYD case managers supported their efforts to play a stronger role in the youth's life. Case management and involvement in parenting classes better equipped families to support their children. One parent recounted:



*To be honest there has been such a huge positive change since we started here [GRYD Provider]. I have become more knowledgeable about parenting skills through the parenting program with case managers. My son lost two of his friends in high school and I didn't know what kind of effect that had on my son and how to support him until I started coming to the parenting classes.*

Family members described themselves as getting more involved in their children's lives and more effectively co-parenting as a result of what they learned through GRYD services. One mother explained,

*I am the one who supports the kids the most. His dad did not like to be a part of GRYD things. He didn't like to go to the meetings and stuff like that, but now he goes to GRYD meetings and he likes to be more engaged.*

Improved communication with youth was one of the greatest benefits of the program for the majority of parents. This improved communication consistently translated to increasing familial closeness and improved dynamics. Youth developed their distinct communication skillsets while family members grew more aware of their own modes of communication:

*Talking at a level that they can understand helps get issues resolved. Before she [my daughter] used to argue with her siblings, but now she calls me in to get involved when her and her sisters fight. Communication is the main thing in our family that changed, like I said, I would jump to conclusions. Talking it out to get [issues] resolved, not just jumping to conclusions and cursing has helped me a lot.*

Similarly, GRYD FCM families provided insight into this reciprocal process: increased family communication led to improved family dynamics. Family members described experiencing an elevated openness in communication. For example, one parent described how their child's "ability to confide in me has changed a lot." Openness and trust grew, as one mother explained:

*I play every role. I make sure I am aware of what he is doing and how he is doing. He's graduating in the summer and that will be a big accomplishment.*

*He used to hide stuff from me and we are very open now about a lot of stuff in his life.*

Many GRYD FCM participants had a lack of positive role models whether at home or in the community; this deficit was particularly prominent among male participants. GRYD FCM addressed this need as one mother described her son's CIW and GRYD case manager both as "male role models who give him time and talk to him man to man that helps." Another mother noted, "Sometimes it's hard because I'm a single parent and a woman raising all boys. It's important for him to have people like his CIW, who are positive adult male role models."

### **GRYD CASE MANAGERS AND CIWS HELPED PARTICIPANTS DEVELOP POSITIVE COPING BEHAVIORS**

During initial interviews, participants discussed how previous traumas had resulted in negative behaviors (e.g., anger) and expressed a strong desire to learn coping mechanisms that would lead to new, more positive behaviors. In subsequent interviews with both GRYD Prevention and FCM participants, it was evident that the pragmatic, real-life application of services provided participants with the tools to substantively alter their negative feelings and behaviors. Youth learned adaptive coping skills to improve conduct, attitude, and most significantly anger. Participants described how GRYD case managers helped them learn to calm down by engaging in a constructive activity (e.g., writing, painting, or drawing) and by using different techniques to decrease anger. Whether it was practicing calming tactics or effective communication, GRYD case managers facilitated the use of adaptive coping mechanisms to improve behavior and decrease anger.

Several GRYD Prevention participants described problems they had experienced at school and past traumas resulting from community violence. These youth described how GRYD case managers and CIWs equipped them with useful coping skills:

*I went through a lot in school—I felt like no one liked me. My case manager really helped me with understanding how I felt and how to stay calm and look at the problem. And also, I also felt afraid a lot—I was afraid I might get shot. My case manager helped me with my fear and how to take time and feel safe. I learned a lot.*

*You know—I had seen a lot. Two of my best friends were shot. I was mad all the time. But my CIW and my case manager helped with that. They helped me to feel sad and if I could talk about my feelings—deal with my feelings—I'd get stronger too.*

There were differences in the types of trauma and negative experiences participants encountered. Prevention participants in particular were impacted by bullying. GRYD case managers helped participants develop new mechanisms for dealing with bullies. One youth recalled:

*I punched a 7th grader and I fractured his nose. He was harassing me and my friend. The GRYD program helped me with my anger issues when that happened and how to react to bullies and not be the bully.*

Most participants articulated how they reacted to bullying by acting out with aggressive behavior at home or in other settings. GRYD case managers built relationships with young participants, gained their confidence and ultimately helped them develop new behaviors.

GRYD Prevention and FCM participants, as well as their families, described how program emphasis on learning to communicate about both positive and negative experiences also affected them positively. The majority of participants receiving GRYD FCM Services reported feeling less anger and talking openly about both positive and negative experiences over time. One GRYD FCM participant observed:

*Before I used to have an attitude towards everybody. It's changed because you meet new people, mostly people like my case manager. We talk about the negatives and the positives. We just try to see what is causing my anger.*

Similarly, GRYD Prevention participants described an increase in self-confidence, sense of responsibility, and willingness to communicate about positive and negative events. In one participant's words,

*Mainly they've shown me to just talk to someone. We are human, we need to express ourselves and our feelings and not have a ball of emotion inside of us that is going to break us.*

Family members who participated alongside GRYD Prevention participants credited case management services with increases in prosocial behaviors among participating youth, including the ability to take responsibility. Most parents or guardians cited examples of how youth effectively coped with aggressive behavior and were able to communicate anger. One grandparent described how in



the past, her granddaughter struggled, "when she doesn't talk about issues, she gets aggressive and she gets angry very easily with people at school." In a subsequent interview, when asked about noticeable changes the same grandparent recognized the GRYD case manager's efforts: "GRYD helped her to learn to talk and if you can't talk to your mother you can talk to your case manager."

GRYD FCM participants attributed their increased self-awareness and emotional openness to learning better communication through their relationship with GRYD case managers and CIWs. Additionally, participants were able to connect emotions to their subsequent negative behaviors. One GRYD FCM participant observed,

*My reaction is not always the best, but I notice it more so at a certain point I am aware of what makes me angry at certain stuff. I've been working on some of that here.*

### GRYD CASE MANAGERS AND CIW CONTRIBUTED TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Participants identified educational engagement and academic success as challenges and notable areas for improvement. A majority of participants attributed their academic improvement to their GRYD case manager's involvement in their school to foster much needed educational support. The CIWs and GRYD case managers also fulfilled roles as advocates and served as critical champions when many participants and their parents were struggling in school settings. As one GRYD Prevention participant described, "I went from thinking I might not graduate high school at all when I started the program, in middle school. Now I am on track to graduate early."

Participants correlated academic successes with the combination of GRYD's academic services and their GRYD case manager's consistent encouragement:

*My grades started going up. They went up because of the program, they offered me tutoring and supported me to do better in school. The way my case manager talks to me they tell me that I have something going for me in life, so it motivates me.*

GRYD FCM participants also emphasized how GRYD case managers played a significant role in their educational trajectory, either enabling them to re-enroll in the school previously attended or finding an alternative educational program. Interviews highlighted how GRYD Prevention and FCM providers offered tutoring, homework groups and assistance with finding alternative schools offering GED programs, all of which emphasized education as a priority. As one participant stated,

*I'm trying to get back into school. I was going to school in Highland Park where [my case manager] helped me enroll.*

GRYD FCM participants described how GRYD case managers set no limits in exploring opportunities and actively engaging in educational planning, with one youth explaining,

*I'm looking into college, I talk about it with my case manager and CIW about finishing [high school] and college.*

Throughout interviews, family members' responses reinforced the significance of GRYD case managers in the lives of their children. Specifically, families who participated in GRYD Prevention services recognized academic improvement in participants and attributed this success to GRYD case managers, who visited youth at their schools to help monitor performance and behavior. One grandmother recalled that:

*When my granddaughter got to middle school, she started failing. GRYD started checking her report cards and between her and the case manager they came up with the schedule and tutoring. GRYD talked to some of her teachers at the school and our case manager had a connection with the school so, the teachers knew they could call the case manager and he would*

*go up there and that helped out a lot. Had they not been involved she would not have walked across that stage and graduated.*

Families involved in GRYD FCM services also described academic improvements and attributed these successes to the efforts of both GRYD case managers and CIWs. The following quote, from a parent, describes the benefits of the holistic, "team" approach:

*I am surprised by the tolerance and patience they have for the youth because that's what our kids need the most. They don't get that kind of support in school. They just suspend them and expel them. Here they helped him study and helped him learn. Not only did his case manager and CIW help him graduate high school but they helped him deal with grief of the death of two of his friends—one from gun violence and one from suicide.*

### **GRYD CASE MANAGERS AND CIWS HELP STRENGTHEN EMPLOYMENT SKILLS FOR GRYD FCM PARTICIPANTS**

While improvements in life skills, behavior, and communication were reported equally by all participants, employment skills were developed specifically by GRYD FCM participants. The majority of GRYD FCM participants identified employment as a priority, and ultimately attributed their success in attaining this goal to participation in GRYD job development services. Younger participants expressed appreciation for learning and strengthening their employment skills through writing resumes and practicing interviewing.

*It's [GRYD's] actually teaching me something I am going to need later in life; like learning how to talk to professionals, how to interview, how to make a resume. I'm not learning that anywhere else.*

These participants also applied and practiced their newly acquired job skills at summer jobs through GRYD's Summer Night Lights (SNL) Program. Older GRYD FCM participants (e.g., 20 to 25-year-olds), on the other hand, were more focused on finding stable, full-time employment for a living wage. One 25-year-old participant reported:

*Well I finally have me a stable job as security guard, they [case manager and staff] paid for my guard card. My case manager helped me. They always send me job leads.*



## PARTICIPATION IN GRYD PREVENTION AND FCM SERVICES IMPACTED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During the interview data analysis, another important theme arose surrounding engagement, but it was not directly to the GRYD case manager and CIW role in services. This development can best be viewed as a byproduct of the relationships and skills developed, by participants and their families. Importantly, both groups reported that GRYD services provided them with the skills to avoid potentially negative risk-taking behavior and engage in prosocial activities within their communities. However, the ways in which this occurred differed across GRYD Prevention and FCM participants.

GRYD Prevention participants became involved in community groups and extracurricular activities as a direct result of their participation in the GRYD program. The prosocial activities, group sessions, and community events offered by GRYD providers deepened the community participation of participants and their families. As one participant explained, "I'm more involved and open to new things. Because of GRYD, I joined the drill team." Increased engagement continued after program completion. Six months after "graduating" from GRYD services, one youth reported:

*We participate more. I became more involved because of GRYD, before I wouldn't want to go anywhere. Now I go to Community Coalition's Freedom Schools program. I found out about Community Coalition through my grandma. Since I finished GRYD, I started going there now.*

Another parent described how her daughter "really has this passion of helping the homeless" and "with [the GRYD Provider] they are teaching her about things they can do as community members to help those issues."

Participants' families described how they also built and expanded new relationships, becoming more actively involved in the community as an outgrowth of their participation in GRYD Prevention services. A small group of parents already engaged in their community viewed GRYD as providing a new opportunity to expand their efforts at neighborhood organizing. For those not previously engaged in their community, participating in GRYD Prevention services opened up new connections for them. One parent stated:

*Ever since GRYD it has gotten a lot better, I speak with my neighbors. I speak with almost all my neighbors. Because of GRYD I try to get some of the other neighborhood kids into the program.*

In contrast to GRYD Prevention participants and their families, very few GRYD FCM participants became involved in community-based activities outside of the FCM GRYD Program. GRYD FCM was the only extracurricular outside of school and work for most participants. "We participate in our community through the GRYD program, but other than that we don't really participate in our community," one participant explained.

Interviews captured the nuances and complexities inherent in GRYD FCM participants' relationships with their community. While GRYD FCM services helped participants build new skills to cope with past behavior or gang involvement, a key part of their strategy to avoid criminal activity or other trouble was to distance themselves from former peer networks and community involvement more generally. Participants also expressed wariness about appearing in the community:

*They ask, 'where are you from?' or others know where I'm from, and that's why I want to move, where no one knows me. I mean I'll come and visit once in a while or when I get older, but right now it's too much. Sometimes, yeah, I feel unsafe. I don't walk on the street like going to the store.*

*Honestly, I have not really been hanging out with nobody. Everybody in the community knows at least someone who is gang related, like a friend or family member. It's very common. I do got friends who are gang related. I got friends who are not gang related. It's the reality out here.*



It appears from these remarks that a lack of community engagement can be attributed, at least in part, to GRYD FCM participants' uncertainty and apprehension surrounding what they might encounter if they venture into their community. It is important to note this may also result from a reaction to previous trauma faced in the community that causes individuals to withdraw from engagement. One FCM participant explained:

*I care about my community, I grew up here but I also don't want to get back into any bad influences. I hope later on I can get involved, maybe in organizing.*

Another echoed these sentiments as he observed:

*Y'know there's temptation and I want to avoid going backwards. I've seen too much. For now, I stick to the GRYD program to stay straight.*

## SUMMARY

The findings from interviews with GRYD Prevention and Intervention Family Case Management (FCM) participants and their families highlight at least three important findings.

**Relationship between program participants and GRYD case managers and Community Intervention Workers (CIW's) (FCM only) play an instrumental role in the development and success of participants and their families in GRYD services.** They simultaneously act as support systems, navigators, and teachers for participants and their families. The multidimensional role GRYD case managers and CIWs play is nuanced and individualized but operates within the context of structured programming.

**Family-centered services are critical to supporting transformation for the participant and those closest to him/her.** In the process of supporting the individual transformation of youth/young adults, families themselves were transformed through better communication and the fortification of familial relationships.

**Successful community-based gang reduction initiatives should include mentoring, family involvement, skill-building and opportunities for prosocial involvement.**<sup>35-37</sup>

Testimonials from participants and their families highlighted the important role these factors played in their overall success and development. Their experiences underscore the importance of what services are delivered and how those services are delivered and by whom.

## MOVING FORWARD

The experiences of participants in GRYD Prevention and FCM services stress the importance of case management in the delivery of services and inform the development of a case management model for the delivery of gang prevention and intervention services. In particular, the results of this study indicate that a GRYD case management model should consist of the following:

1. Deliver services using a family-centered approach and equipping providers with the knowledge and resources to help families meet their basic needs.
2. Focus on building, encouraging, and supporting self-efficacy among participants and their families using creative ways to build new peer support networks and to provide opportunities to positively engage in the community.
3. Integrate trauma-informed practices to address the traumas experienced by participants and their families and the impact of those traumatic experiences on behavior and overall wellness.
4. Use program data to regularly review how services are delivered and their impact in order to continuously improve services for participants and their families.
5. Provide on-going professional development and self-care opportunities for case managers and intervention workers so they are able deliver programming using best practices and they are able to support program participants from a place of wellness and strength.

Hearing about program experiences from the perspective of GRYD Prevention and FCM participants and their families provides significant insight into how GRYD programming contributes to the overall success of participants and their families. Although there is a science to delivering effective services, there is also an art to establishing meaningful relationships that are the necessary conduits for change. Well-trained and well-supported case managers and intervention workers arguably embody both the science and art of delivering effective programming. In fact, they may be the "secret sauce" necessary to help youth, families and communities thrive and live healthy, peaceful lives.

### SUGGESTED CITATION

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32. All members of the qualitative research team, including those not involved directly in this project, were required to complete mandated online training sponsored by the UCLA Institutional Review Board (UCLA IRB) to recognize and guard against implicit bias.
33. Round one resulted in 22 participant and 22 family interviews for prevention and 21 participant and 22 family interviews for FCM. Round two resulted in 19 participant and 19 family interviews for Prevention and 15 participant and 15 family interviews for FCM, out of the 23 GRYD zones. Round three interviews were terminated early due to reaching saturation in the research, but the qualitative team completed 14 parent and participant interviews for Prevention and four participant and three family interviews for FCM.
34. One prevention provider did not participate and two FCM providers did not participate.
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