

THE GRYD & PROBATION JUVENILE REENTRY PROGRAM EVALUATION

Produced by the City of Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office (GRYD) Research and Evaluation Team

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GRYD RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The City of Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office (GRYD) oversees the Los Angeles GRYD Comprehensive Strategy which involves the provision of prevention services, gang intervention services, violence interruption activities, and involvement in proactive peace-making activities (The Los Angeles Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development, 2016). GRYD is committed to evaluating these programs and currently contracts with California State University, Los Angeles to oversee all research and evaluation activities related to GRYD.

Denise Herz, Ph.D., in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics oversees and directs the GRYD Research and Evaluation Team, which includes:

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Collectively, team partners work to evaluate the GRYD comprehensive strategy using both qualitative and quantitative data. A key goal of this work is to not only assess the impact of GRYD services overall but also to create a research to practice feedback loop for the GRYD Office and its contracted providers in order to continuously improve GRYD services.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) launched the Second Chance Act grant to provide funding for state or local-level juvenile justice agencies to develop and implement effective strategies to address the challenges of juvenile reentry from correctional placements back into the community. The City of Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office (GRYD) received a Second Chance Act award in 2013 to design and implement a juvenile reentry process for gang-involved youth, but program development did not occur until mid-2014. GRYD worked closely with the Los Angeles County Probation Department to launch the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program in November 2014 to serve gang-involved youth exiting Probation Camps. This report summarizes the evaluation findings for youth referred to the program between November 2014 and December 2015.

AN OVERVIEW OF JUVENILE REENTRY RESEARCH

The experience of reentry presents considerable challenges for incarcerated youth who are returning to their families, peer networks, and communities after months of being detained in a juvenile correctional facility. Gang-involved youth, in particular, are at greater risk of returning to their gangs after release (Abrams, Shannon, & Sangalang, 2008).

Given the challenges facing youth reentering the community, research underscores the need for systematic, integrated, and coordinated responses to juvenile reentry. Delivery of such programs, however, can be challenging. Nationwide, several evaluations highlight promising reentry/aftercare programs across jurisdictions (e.g., the Intensive Aftercare

Program, the Thomas O'Farrell Youth Center, and others); however, their effectiveness has been mixed due to program design and implementation (see Altschuler, Armstrong, & MacKenzie, 1999; Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005). In particular, research findings highlight two critical components to success: an emphasis on family engagement and a coordinated approach to aftercare.

Family Engagement. Family engagement is one of the core principles of reducing recidivism and other outcomes (Seigle, Walsh, & Weber, 2014), but opportunities to increase connections with family as well as other supporting adults are somewhat limited. The lack of family participation is a significant barrier to a successful reentry in the community (see for example, Maryland Aftercare Program and Michigan Nokomis Challenge Program), especially when youth come from and return to disadvantaged communities with limited resources, have difficulties with school enrollment, possess mental health and behavioral health needs, and struggle with strained family relationships.

A recent study conducted on Probation youth underscores this point. Herz and colleagues (2015) found that families of these youth had a history of poverty, substance abuse, and criminal justice involvement. While incarcerated, the youth had little family engagement, and although they had access to services while in camp, the access to services dropped when they returned to the community. A successful reentry requires a mobilization of community resources that serves the needs of youth as well as their families who may need economic assistance and/or support services prior to the youth's return home.

A Coordinated Approach. An effective coordinated approach to aftercare requires at least three factors: (1) the development of reentry case plans based on youth strengths and needs while the youth is incarcerated; (2) coordination between facility staff, supervising probation officers and service providers to ensure the youth and families are connected to

appropriate services in the community; and (3) formal organizational procedures and policies that clearly identify a process for interagency case management and the roles and responsibilities for all partners in the reentry process (Altschuler et al., 1999).

CURRENT APPROACH

GRYD currently oversees the implementation of a Comprehensive Strategy for the City of Los Angeles (see Cespedes and Herz, 2011 for a more detailed description of this Strategy). One component of the Strategy is gang intervention programming. The approach to gang intervention is to increase pro-social connections for gang-involved young adults through a family-based case management model.

Using this intervention model, the GRYD Office partnered with the Los Angeles County Probation Department to adapt its model to serve gang-involved youth and their families who are in the process of exiting out of Probation camps. Specifically, GRYD worked directly with two primary Probation units responsible for providing aftercare supervision: The Camp Community Transition Program (CCTP) and the Intensive Gang Unit Supervision Program (IGSP). Deputy Probation Officers in these units are responsible for supervising the juvenile aftercare plan for youth once they return to the community. As part of this responsibility, they may refer the youth who could benefit from GRYD services.

Probation officers from these two units, in turn, worked with GRYD contractors, Homeboy Industries and Soledad Enrichment Action (SEA), to provide supervision and services to program participants. Both Homeboy Industries and SEA have demonstrated knowledge and experience in working with high risk populations for many years.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the effectiveness of the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program in improving outcomes for gang-involved reentry youth and their families. This study contributes to the ongoing discussions around the coordination and integration of family-based services prior to youth camp release. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program, and Chapter 3 presents the results of the program evaluation. Chapters 4 and 5 offer qualitative reflections from the youth, parents, agency staff, and Deputy Probation Officers. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a conclusion and recommendations for further development of the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program.

Homeboy Industries provides hope, training, and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women allowing them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community. Each year over 10,000 former gang members from across Los Angeles come through Homeboy Industries' doors in an effort to make a positive change. They are welcomed into a community of mutual kinship, love, and a wide variety of services ranging from tattoo removal to anger management and parenting classes. Full-time employment is offered for more than 200 men and women at a time through an 18-month program that helps them re-identify who they are in the world, offers job training so they can move on from Homeboy Industries and become contributing members of the community - knowing they count!

Soledad Enrichment Action Inc. (SEA) is a non-profit organization, founded in 1972 by mothers in East Los Angeles who had lost their sons to gang violence. From these humble beginnings, SEA has since grown to become the leading provider of services to high-risk individuals, families, and gang-affected communities within Southern California. SEA combines individually-tailored high school educational services with a diverse array of wrap-around and support services. SEA's holistic approach empowers individuals to learn to access social services, become better parents, complete a high school education, gain employment and live productive self-determined lives. SEA works with its clients by helping them evaluate where they are, helping them see their potential, and helping them create a path towards achievement.

CHAPTER 2

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In Los Angeles County, youth placed in Probation camp placement can remain in camp 5 to 7 months, 7 to 9 months, or longer depending on the discretion of Probation. During this period, the youth is supervised by the Primary Deputy Probation Officer (Primary DPO) who is housed at the camp location. For the purpose of reentry and aftercare planning, the Probation youth is also assigned a Secondary DPO to coordinate aftercare services in preparation for the youth's release back into the community (NOTE: It is this DPO that is referenced throughout the report). The two primary Probation units assigned to aftercare are the Camp Community Transition Program (CCTP) and the Intensive Gang Unit Supervision (IGSP). CCTP is the primary unit for aftercare services whereas IGSP primarily serves youth who require a higher level of gang supervision, and their operation is paired with a mobile gang deputy that provides additional supervision and support.

Throughout the course of the program, the role of the GRYD Office is to facilitate the referral process and provide contractual oversight of the reentry agencies. To this end, the GRYD staff and contractors work primarily with the Secondary DPOs from the CCTP and IGSP Probation units. The designated GRYD Regional Program Coordinator (RPC) is responsible for program management including but not limited to: monthly reentry agency site visits, model fidelity trainings, technical assistance, and ongoing communication with the Probation Department. Once referred and accepted as a program participant, the GRYD contracted agencies (Homeboy Industries and SEA) are the primary point of contact for Probation DPOs.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

To be referred to the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program, the DPO must refer

their Probation clients based on suspected gang involvement and designated zip codes.

Eligibility for GRYD requires the youth to:

- be between ages 14 and 21 years' old at the time of the referral;
- have a significant presence in a designated zip code inside a GRYD Zone¹;
- be suspected of gang involvement by the DPO *and* be identified as a tagger, member, or affiliate of a gang or crew by the reentry agency; and
- have a 90 days projected juvenile camp release or be released no more than 30 days from camp (i.e., youth may receive pre-release and/or post-release services).

Once a referral form is received, the designated GRYD RPC assigns the referral to a reentry agency within five business days. The reentry agency has two weeks to contact the youth and family² to determine eligibility and assess interest in services. If the youth and family agree to services, the reentry team works with the clients to prepare for community reentry. It is important to note this is a voluntary program; therefore, Probation youth and families are not mandated to participate by the court.

THE PROGRAM MODEL

Case management services are delivered within cycles comprised of seven phases. In Phase 1, pre-release services are focused on:

- assisting the families with their needs and preparing them for the youth's release from camp;
- communicating with the DPO to coordinate services for the youth in the community; and
- visiting the youth in camp to develop a relationship.

¹ GRYD Zones are conceptualized as gang activity "hot zones."

² Family is defined by the client.

Phase 2 to Phase 7 are focused on post-release programming while the youth and family are in the community. Phase 2 is a critical component of the program. It marks the first month that the youth is released from camp. During this time, the DPO must meet with the youth 24-72 hours after release for a post-release orientation, enroll the youth into school within 48 hours, and conduct a home visit. These activities are coordinated with the reentry agencies whenever possible.

With the exception of Phase 1, which may last up to 90 days, each phase is intended to last roughly a month. Each phase involves the following requirements at minimum:

- two in-person meetings with the client at least 30 minutes in length;
- one family meeting at least 30 minutes in length; and,
- one team meeting involving the DPO and Site Navigator (if applicable) at least 20 minutes in length.

During programming, reentry agencies will work with the clients to develop strength-based genograms, connect clients to pro-social activities, refer and/or provide services, and monitor the client's Probation conditions if issues arise. The goal of the program is to transfer the youth's attachment from gangs to positive activities. Specifically, a primary goal of the program is to decrease the youth's gang identity, his/her involvement in violence and recidivism (See Figure 2.1).

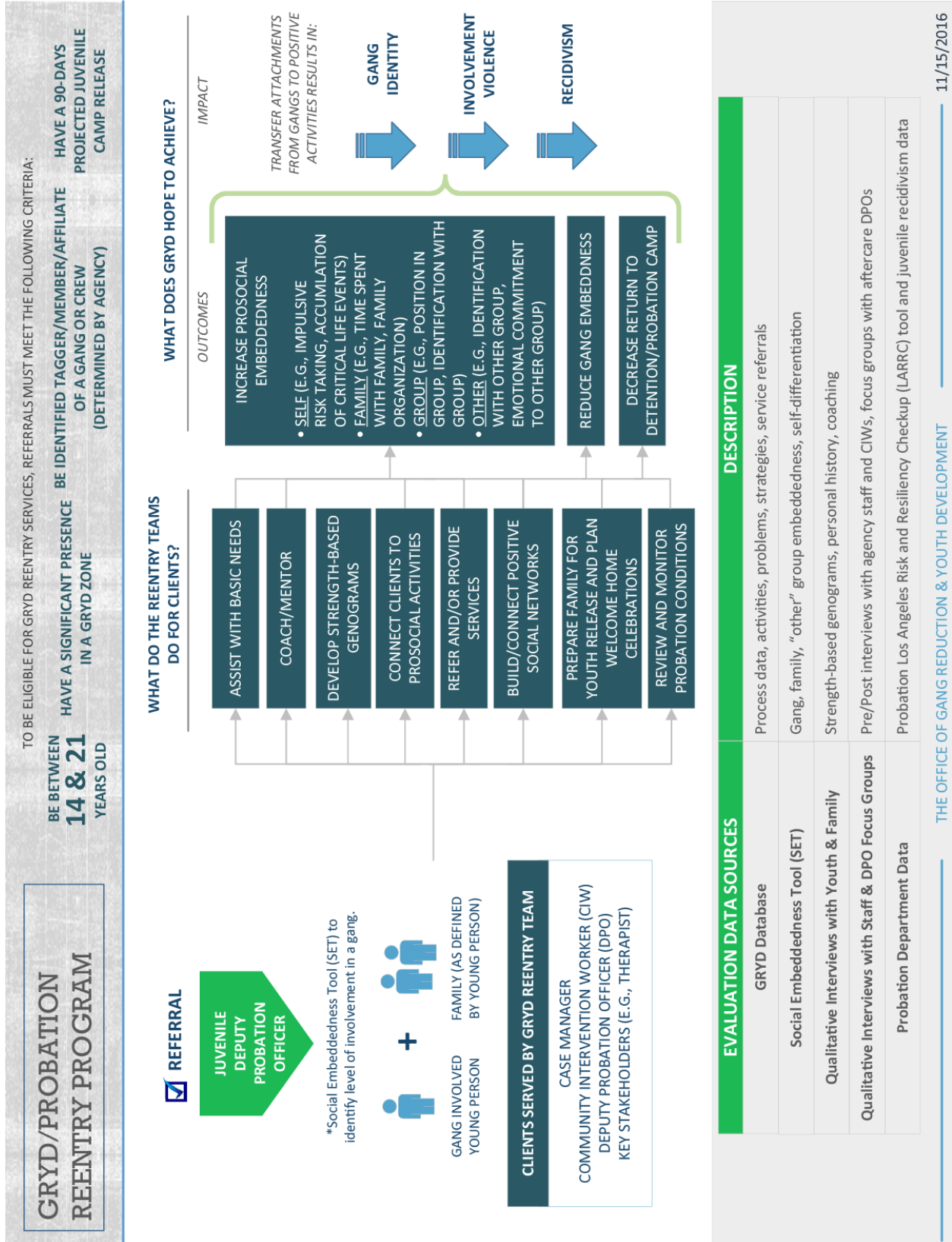
PROGRAM HISTORY TIMELINE

Program implementation began in November 2014. There were multiple staff turnovers within the program, which may be an important contextual factor to consider when reviewing the evaluation results. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the changes experienced by the program.

TABLE 2.1. The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program History

DATE	EVENT
2014	
November	The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program launched with one case manager per reentry agency. Only Homeboy Industries had a Site Navigator included in their service delivery. Program oversight was led by the GRYD Office's grant manager and the GRYD Regional Program Coordinator (RPC).
Mid-December	SEA's Case Manager left the organization.
2015	
February	SEA hired two new Case Managers.
April	The GRYD Office's grant manager who oversaw the program resigned.
June	The GRYD RPC resigned. In the same month, a newly hired GRYD RPC was hired to oversee the program. Homeboy Industries hired an additional case manager.
August	Homeboy Industries' Case Manager resigned.
September	Two of SEA's Case Managers resigned from the organization.
November	SEA hired two new Case Managers and brought on a new Program Supervisor to oversee the program.
2016	
June	OJJDP grant period ends at the end of the month, the GRYD Office continues to fund the program through city funds.

FIGURE 2.1. Program Logic Model



DATA SOURCES

Several data sources were used to evaluate the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program using all referrals and program participants between November 2014 and December 2015. The overarching research questions framing the current evaluation included:

- Who participated in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program and what services did they receive?
- What were six month outcomes for program participants?
- What were the experiences of youth and families who participated in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program?
- What were the experiences of those involved in delivering the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program (i.e., GRYD agencies and probation officers)?

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer these questions. Figure 2.2 provides a visual depiction of the timeline for data collection as it relates to program implementation. Additionally, a description of each data source is described below.

GRYD ETO Database: Data were captured for all referrals and client participation in the GRYD Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database during November 2014 and December 2015. All GRYD contractors are required to input data on all clients regularly and consistently into this database. Data included referral information (e.g., basic demographics) and ongoing data collection for services received, activities with clients, problems and strengths identification, and program outcomes for clients who reached reassessment approximately 4-5 months into services.

Probation Data: The Los Angeles Probation Department provided data related to sustained petitions as well as data from their risk assessment tool (the Los Angeles Risk and

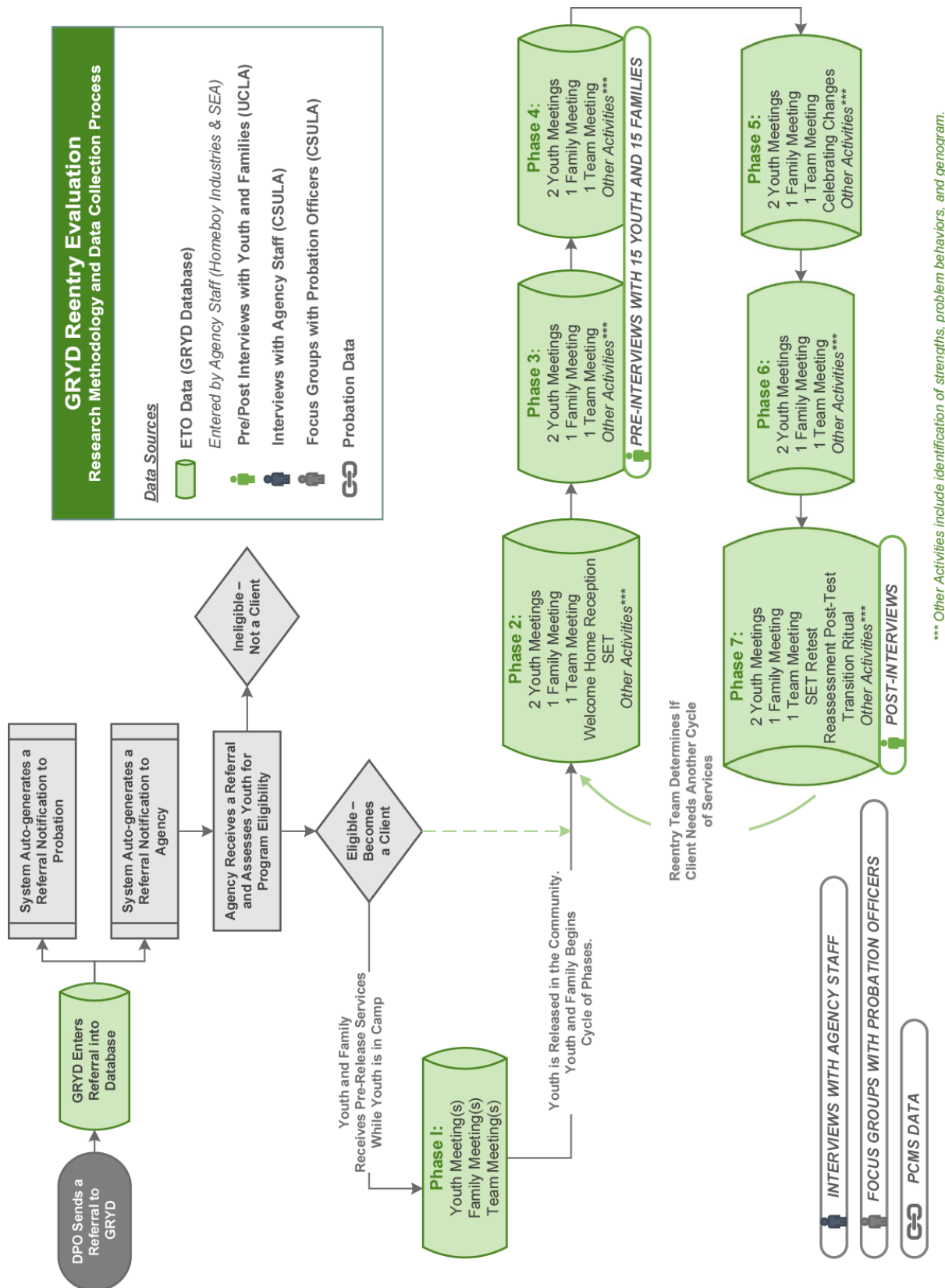
Resiliency Tool known as the LARRC) for all referrals during this time period.

Interviews with Youth and Families: Pre- and post- interviews with youth and families captured their experiences with the program by research partners from the University of California, Los Angeles. Youth and families were interviewed separately about their experiences with the program. Pre-interviews began one or two months after youth was released from camp (Phase 2-3), and post-release interviews occurred at four to five months after release (Phase 6-7). A total of 54 interviews were conducted with youth and families—see Chapter 4 for a more detailed breakdown of participants and their characteristics.

Interviews with Reentry Agency Staff: Homeboy Industries and SEA agency staff were invited to participate in an interview regarding their experiences with training, effectiveness of the reentry model, and collaboration with Probation. Interviews were conducted 3-4 months after the program launched, and newly hired staff members were interviewed 3-4 months after they began serving clients in the program. A total of 12 agency staff members were interviewed—see Chapter 5 for a more detailed breakdown of these participants and their characteristics.

Focus Groups with Deputy Probation Officers: All Deputy Probation Officers who participated in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program were invited to attend a focus group about their experiences with training, the effectiveness of the program, and collaboration with reentry agencies. A total of 20 Probation staff members participated in three focus groups held around 3-4 months after the program launched—the results are presented in Chapter 5.

FIGURE 2.2. Data Collection Flowchart



CHAPTER 3

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

This chapter of the report marks the beginning of the evaluation findings. In this chapter, the process and outcome data for the program are reported using GRYD ETO data and Probation data to answer the following questions:

- Who was referred to the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program?
- What services did program clients receive?
- What were the outcomes for program clients?

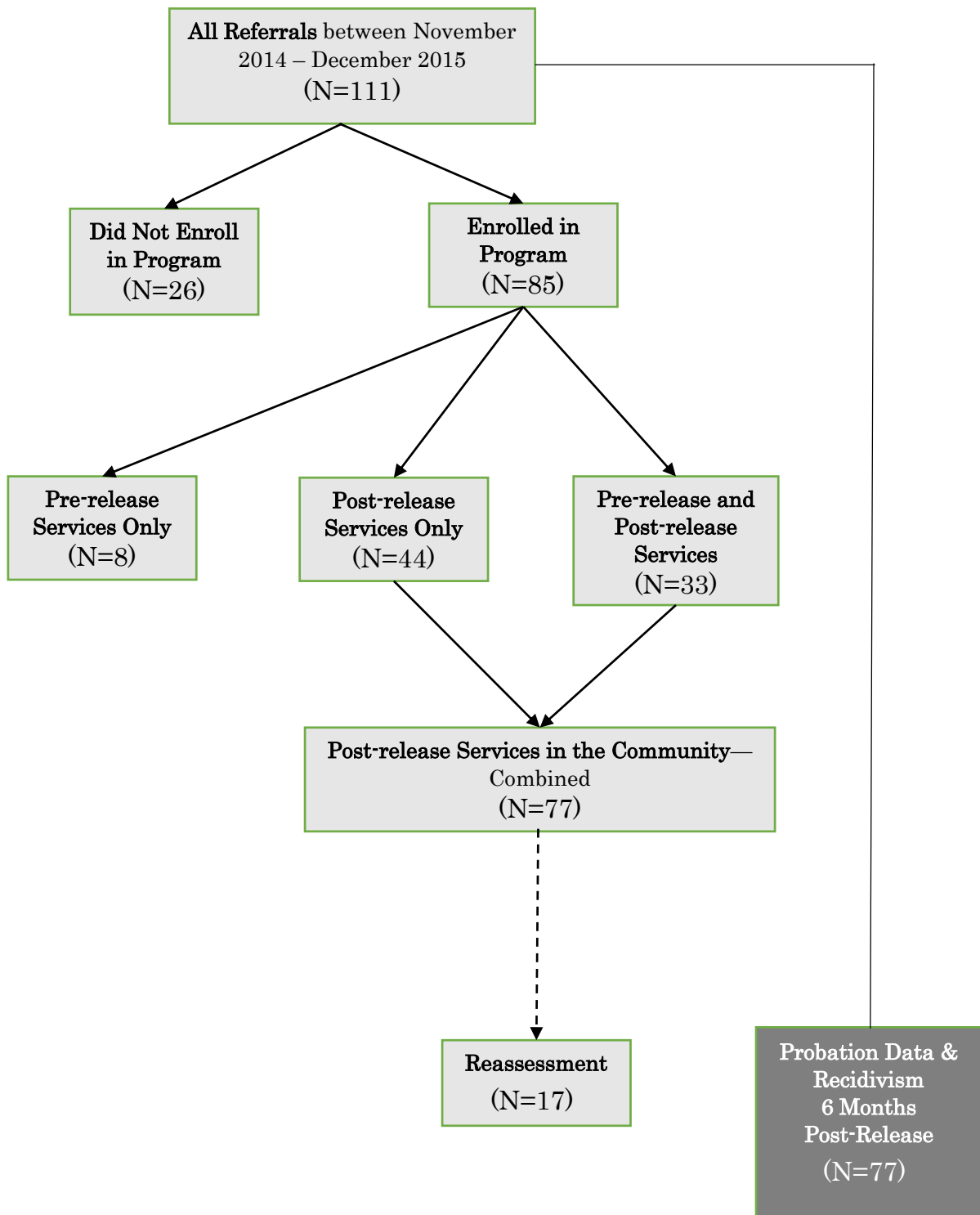
As mentioned earlier, evaluation findings were based on data collected on all program referrals between November 2014 and the end of December 2015. During this period, Probation submitted a total of 111 referrals to the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program (see Figure 3.1 for a depiction of all referrals).³

Of these referrals, 85 youth enrolled in the program and 26 did not. Of the 85 youth who enrolled, eight participated in pre-release services only. Since these youth did not participate in the core aspects of the programming post-release, they are combined with youth who did not enroll for the analysis of outcomes.

Of the remaining enrolled youth, 33 (39%) participated in services both before and after they were released, and 44 (52%) participated in services only after their release back into the community; thus, a total of 77 youth participated at some length in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program. Of these 77 youth, 17 youth completed six months of programming and were reassessed by the GRYD reentry agencies.

³ A total of 139 referrals were made during this time; however, 28 referrals were excluded for analysis due to the following reasons: referral was pending follow up by the agency (11 referrals), youth was not considered a reentry youth³ (15 referrals), and duplicate referrals were made for the same camp exit (2 referrals). With these exclusions, the total number of referrals available for analysis was 111.

FIGURE 3.1. All Referrals Between November 2014 and December 2015



WHO WAS REFERRED TO THE GRYD AND PROBATION JUVENILE REENTRY PROGRAM?

Probation's Camp Community Transition Program (CCTP) was involved in the early program development from the beginning and the Probation's Intensive Gang Supervision Program (IGSP) joined later in the program implementation. As expected, the majority of the referrals were referred from CCTP (N=103, 93%) and a smaller portion of the referrals was referred from the IGSP (N=8, 7%). At the time of the program referral, the DPO used the projected release date as the indicator for eligibility to the program. In Table 3.1 below, the analysis shows the time of the DPO referral in relation to the projected release and the actual release date. Using the projected release date, 63% of the referrals⁴ were made while the youth was in camp, and 41% of the referrals were made 90 days prior to camp release. Post-release referrals accounted for 38% of the referrals (referrals made on the day the youth was released from camp or within 30 days of release). This pattern is similar for the actual release date; however, post-release referrals accounted for 46% of the referrals, which is likely due to early camp release.

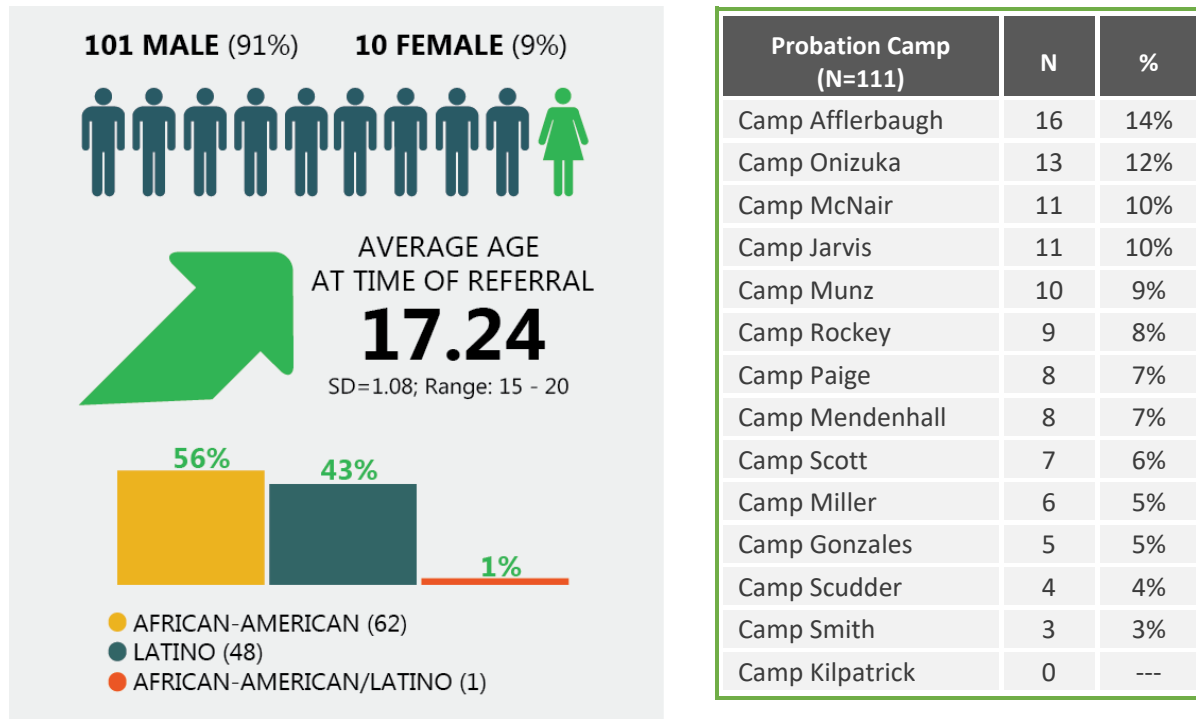
TABLE 3.1. Timing of DPO Referral

	All Referrals (N=111)			
	Projected Release		Actual Release	
	N	%	N	%
Pre-Release Referrals				
Early referrals (90+ days prior to release)	24	22%	17	15%
Between 61 – 90 days prior to release	20	18%	20	18%
Between 31 – 60 days prior to release	25	23%	23	21%
Post-Release Referrals				
Within 30 days of release	20	18%	27	24%
At release or post-release referral	22	20%	24	22%

As illustrated on the next page in Figure 3.2, at the time of the DPO referral, the majority of the youth referred to the program were male (N=101, 91%) and were between the ages of 15 and 20 with an average age of 17. The racial/ethnic breakdown was similar, but greater African-American (56%) youth than Latino (43%) youth. Although referrals came from all Probation camps across the county, referrals were more likely to come from Camp Afflerbaugh, Camp Onizuka, and Camp McNair (see Table 3.2).

⁴ Some referrals were made 90+ days prior to the youth's camp release, and these referrals were processed early.

FIGURE 3.2 and TABLE 3.2. Referral Demographics for All Referrals



PROCESSING REFERRALS AND AGENCY ASSIGNMENT

Once a referral was submitted by email, the GRYD Office has five business days to review the referral form and assign the referral to a reentry agency to follow up with the youth and family to determine program interest. In Table 3.3, 45% of the referrals were processed within 7 days. A quarter (25%) of these referrals were processed between 8 to 14 days, and almost one-third (30%) were processed after two weeks.

TABLE 3.3. GRYD Processing Referral Timeline

	All Referrals (N=111)	
	N	%
Within 7 days	50	45%
8 days to 14 days	28	25%
15 days to 30 days	19	17%
30+ days	14	13%

For the most part, referrals were assigned to a reentry agency based on geographic location of the youth's living situation. However, assignment to a reentry agency could also be based on the youth's presence in the GRYD Zone where the reentry agency served (i.e., how often the youth were in the area). Specifically, Homeboy Industries served the Cypress Park/Northeast GRYD Zone, and SEA served the 77th ll and Florence Graham/77th GRYD Zones. If youth resided in the Watts area, agency assignment was assigned at the discretion of the GRYD Office.

According to the findings presented in Table 3.4, Homeboy Industries followed up with 41 referrals (37% of all referrals) during the study period, and these are largely referrals connected to the Cypress Park/Northeast GRYD Zone (73%). SEA followed up with 70 referrals (63% of all referrals) during the study period, and these referrals are mostly connected to the Florence-Graham/77th (43%) and 77th II GRYD Zones (33%). This is not surprising because SEA, by contract, covered a larger geographic area.

TABLE 3.4. Reentry Agency Assignment by GRYD Zone

	All Referrals (N=111)	
	N	%
Homeboy Industries (N=41)		
Cypress Park/Northeast	30	73%
Watts	11	27%
SEA (N=70)		
77 th II	23	33%
Florence-Graham/77 th	30	43%
Watts	17	24%

Table 3.5 shows the outcome of all referrals and distribution by reentry agency during this period. As mentioned earlier, youth and families are not mandated by the Probation Department to enroll in services, but slightly more than three-quarters of all referrals (N=85, 77%), agreed to participate in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program. One-fifth (23%) of these referrals did not result in a program enrollment. Reasons offered for refusals to participate included: unable to reach youth/family (N=16, 62%), refused contact (N=6, 23%), or ineligible because referral did not meet initial criteria for program eligibility (N=4, 15%). In general, SEA was two times less likely to enroll a youth compared to Homeboy Industries (29% and 15%, respectively).

On the other hand, 30% of the referrals agreed to services while in camp and continued when they entered the community, and 40% only enrolled after they were in the community. Homeboy Industries were more likely to provide the full model of services (i.e., pre-release and post-release services, 44%) whereas SEA was more likely to serve clients in the community (i.e., post-release only, 44%).

TABLE 3.5. Program Referral Outcomes

	All Referrals (N=111)		Homeboy Industries (N=41)		SEA (N=70)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Did Not Enroll in Services	26	23%	6	15%	20	29%
Pre-release Services Only	8	7%	4	10%	4	6%
Post-release Services Only	44	40%	13	32%	31	44%
Pre-release and Post-release Services	33	30%	18	44%	15	21%

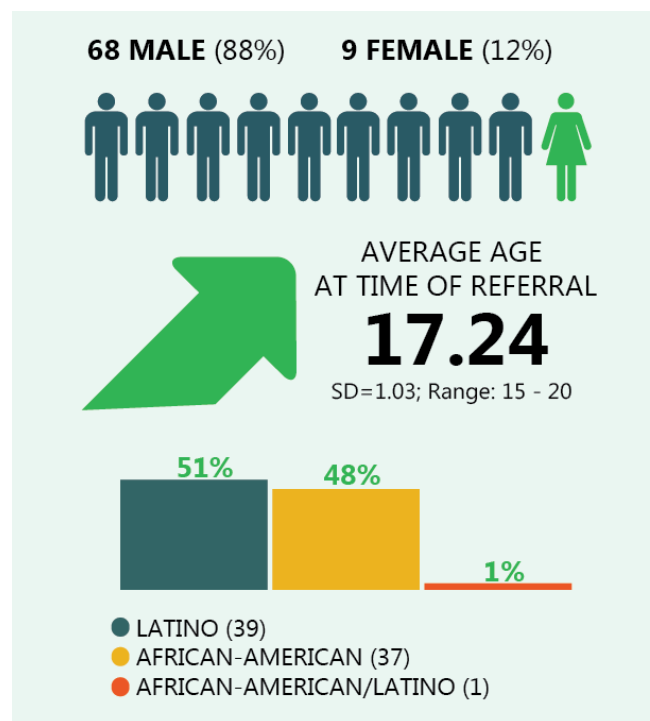
PROGRAM CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS

This section examines 77 referrals that resulted in a client enrollment in the program. Clients are defined as youth and families who received both pre- and post-release services or post-release services only. Youth who received pre-release services only were excluded from analysis in this section because their involvement in the program was very limited. Overall, the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program had an enrollment rate of 69%.

Client Demographics

Program clients were majority male (88%), and clients ranged from 15 to 20 years old with an average age of 17 (see Figure 3.3). The racial/ethnic breakdown was nearly equal, with 51% Latino clients and 48% African-American clients. Clients' racial/ethnic background differed across agencies. Homeboy Industries served more Latino clients (68% vs 39%), and SEA served more African-American clients (61% and 29%), as expected due to the demographics of their assigned service areas.

FIGURE 3.3. Client Demographics

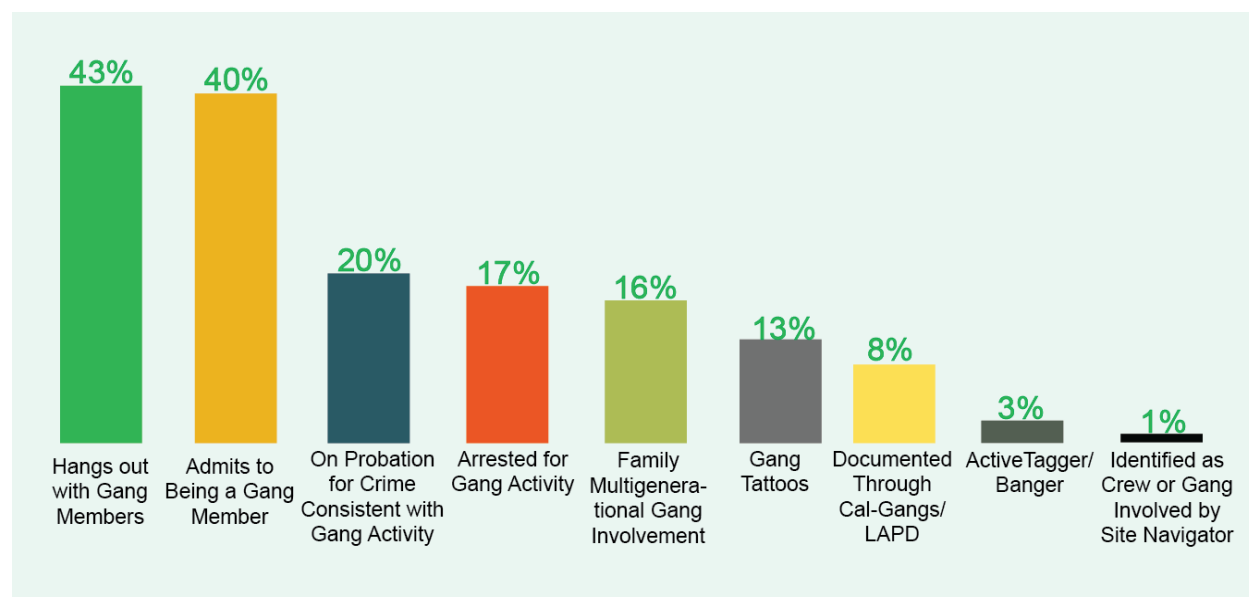


Gang Involvement

As part of the intake and assessment process, agencies asked youth several questions related to gang membership, including their perceived position in a gang. Figure 3.4 and Table 3.6 show the client characteristics related to gang involvement as indicated by the reentry agency and/or client. Clients may have one or more of these characteristics so percentages do not sum to 100%. Additionally, 9 clients (12%) did not report any indication of gang membership at all based on these characteristics. For those with indicated gang involvement, the top three characteristics are: clients hang out with identified gang members in the gang areas (N=33, 43%); client admits to being in a gang (N=31, 40%); and client is on probation or parole for a crime consistent with gang activity (N=15, 20%).

Overall, 46% of clients reported only one gang related characteristic; 36% reported two or three characteristics, and 7% reported four or more characteristics.

FIGURE 3.4. Characteristics Related to Gang Involvement



In Table 3.6, the distribution of gang-related characteristics, however, varies across agency and may be a reflection of different cultural norms in the different service areas. SEA clients appear to have higher rates of characteristics identified when compared to Homeboy Industries' clients. For example, 57% of SEA clients reported hanging out with identified gang members when compared to only 23% of Homeboy Industries' clients.

TABLE 3.6. Characteristics Related to Gang Involvement by All Clients and Reentry Agency

	All Clients (N=77)		Homeboy Industries (N=31)		SEA (N=46)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hangs out with identified gang members in gang areas	33	43%	7	23%	26	57%
Admits to being a gang member	31	40%	11	36%	20	44%
On probation or parole for crime consistent with gang activity	15	20%	6	19%	9	20%
Has been arrested for gang activity	13	17%	8	26%	5	11%
Family has multigenerational gang involvement	12	16%	6	19%	6	13%
Has gang tattoos	10	13%	2	7%	8	17%
Is identified as a gang member as documented through CAL-GANGS or an LAPD Gang Unit Officer	6	8%	1	3%	5	11%
Is an active "tagger-banger"	2	3%	1	3%	1	2%
Identified as Crew or Gang-involved by Site Navigator	1	1%	1	3%	0	---

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% due to multiple responses.

When asked about their perceived position in the gang, one-third (33%) identified as an affiliate of the gang, followed by member (31%). Approximately one-fifth (21%), indicated they had no position in the gang. Across agencies, program clients with Homeboy Industries reported higher levels of membership (52%) than SEA (17%) as shown in Table 3.7.

TABLE 3.7. Position in the Gang

	All Clients (N=77)		Homeboy Industries (N=31)		SEA (N=46)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Affiliate, not member	25	33%	11	36%	14	30%
Just member	24	31%	16	52%	8	17%
No position	16	21%	0	---	16	35%
Not in gang	10	13%	4	13%	6	13%
Not leader, but a top person	2	3%	0	---	2	4%
A leader	0	---	0	---	0	---

Other Client Characteristics

Baseline data of the clients' characteristics during the first month of camp release were collected. The characteristics below were based on self-reported data from the youth, family, or reentry agency perspective at the time of assessment in Phase 2 (see Appendix A for the descriptive statistics).

- Slightly more than half (55%) of the clients were living at home with one biological parent only, followed by home with both biological parents (17%).
- Just under one-fifth (17%) of these clients had a history or current involvement with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- Upon leaving camp, about a quarter (24%) of the clients had either a high school diploma or GED. Similarly, a quarter (25%) of clients also had an IEP.
- Only one-third (32%) of these clients self-reported that they were experiencing any mental health problems.
- Half (50%) of these clients self-reported alcohol and/or drug use. The top three types of drugs were: marijuana (N=28, 74%), alcohol (N=6, 16%) and methamphetamine (N=4, 11%).

REASON FOR CAMP ENTRY

Using the Probation data provided, the arrest data provided insight to the type of arrest that led the clients to camp. As shown in Table 3.8 on the next page, almost two-thirds (61%) of the arrests were related to a new charge followed by a warrant (22%) or a court/777 violation (17%). For clients arrested for a new charge (N=65), the most serious charge was coded into three categories: violent charges (64%), property charges (30%), and other charges (6%).

TABLE 3.8. Arrest That Led Clients to Camp

	All Clients (N=77)	
	N	%
New Charge	47	61%
Warrant	17	22%
Court/777 Violation	13	17%
<u>New Charge: Most Serious Charge (N=47)</u>		
Violent	30	64%
Property	14	30%
Other	3	6%

LARRC DATA

The Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Check-Up (LARRC) is a tool administered to all Los Angeles County Probation youth every six months or when circumstances change. Its purpose is to assess the level of risk for recidivism, to identify criminogenic factors that contribute to recidivism risk, and inform case planning. The LARRC is administered prior to a Camp Community Placement order to ensure that only the moderate and high-risk youth are detained. However, a few youth may be sent to camp if the nature of the offense may indicate the need for a higher level of supervision.

To date, the most available Los Angeles County Probation data that provides a baseline for camp exits is The Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study report. Herz and colleagues (2015) used a random sample of 250 youth exiting Probation camps in 2011. Table 3.9 shows a comparison of the LARRC risk level between the two studies. This current report represents data from Probation camp exits between 2014 and 2015 for referred youth who are suspected of gang involvement.

At the time of camp release, the results showed that three-quarters (75%) of the clients in this study were in the high-risk level while a quarter (25%) were at the moderate level. As expected, gang-involved youth had a higher LARRC risk level compared to those who are not gang-involved (i.e., 75% vs. 69%); in other words, youth with higher level of risk for recidivism would require more intensive supervision and interventions.

TABLE 3.9. LARRC Risk Level at Time of Camp Release

	The Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study (Herz et al., 2015)		The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program: All Clients	
	2011 Camp Exits, (N=250)		2014-15 Camp Exits, (N=77)	
	N	%	N	%
High	172	69%	58	75%
Moderate	71	28%	19	25%
Low	7	3%	0	---

The LARRC has also identified a set of criminogenic factors associated with the risk of recidivism as seen in Table 3.10 below. Based on the responses on the LARRC tool, a score is generated for each subscale in order to guide the development of a case plan. A higher score indicates a higher level of risk. When comparing the camp youth between the two studies, the camp clients from the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program had the greatest difference in scores related to delinquent behavior, delinquent affiliation, and delinquent orientation. This pattern is reversed for the subscale related to family interactions and academic engagement, where the referrals in this program do slightly better than the 2011 cohort.

TABLE 3.10. LARRC Risk Level at Time of Camp Release

	The Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study (Herz et al., 2015)	The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program: All Clients	Difference in Scores
	2011 Camp Exits, (N=250)	2014-15 Camp Exits, (N=77)	
Total Risk Score	29.48	30.97	
<i>NOTE:</i> Total Risk Score is a composite measure based on the following risk score thresholds: Low Risk=0-14; Moderate Risk=15-26; and High Risk=27-46. These thresholds are for male youth – the threshold varies by 1-2 points for females.			
LARRC Subscales	Mean (SD)		
Delinquent Behavior Subscale (Range: 0-14)	9.39 (SD=3.07)	9.87 (SD=2.89)	0.48
Delinquent Affiliations Subscale (Range: 0-12)	6.91 (SD=2.03)	7.35 (SD=1.74)	0.44
Delinquent Orientation Subscale (Range: 0-8)	5.59 (SD=1.74)	6.13 (SD=1.76)	0.54
Substance Abuse Subscale (Range: 0-12)	7.59 (SD=3.09)	7.62 (SD=2.81)	0.03
Family Interactions Subscale (Range: 0-16)	12.20 (SD=4.28)	11.92 (SD=3.91)	-0.28
Interpersonal Skills Subscale (Range: 0-8)	8.58 (SD=3.44)	8.75 (SD=2.91)	0.17
Social Isolation Subscale (Range: 0-8)	3.90 (SD=1.38)	4.01 (SD=1.46)	0.11
Academic Engagement Subscale (Range: 0-12)	7.36 (SD=2.88)	7.12 (SD=2.89)	-0.24
Self-Regulation Subscale (Range: 0-16)	11.38 (SD=3.50)	11.74 (SD=3.84)	0.36

WHAT SERVICES DID PROGRAM CLIENTS RECEIVE?

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

By August 2016, a total of 2,279 activities were logged into the GRYD ETO database for the 77 clients. In programming, clients were expected to receive a dosage of two individual meetings, one family meeting, and one team meeting with the DPO and Site Navigator (if applicable). These activities represented all the work that the agencies did, or have done on behalf of their clients, as well as successful and unsuccessful attempts at contact (e.g., left a voicemail).

Table 3.11 shows all activities by Cycle and Phase. Cycle 1 (approximately 6-9 months of services) had a total of 2,066 activities. In Phase 1, the client was in camp and a total of 110 activities were

logged by the reentry agencies. Once the client was released to the community, a total of 776 activities were logged by the agencies in Phase 2. The percentage of activities increased dramatically from 5% pre-release to 38% post-release.

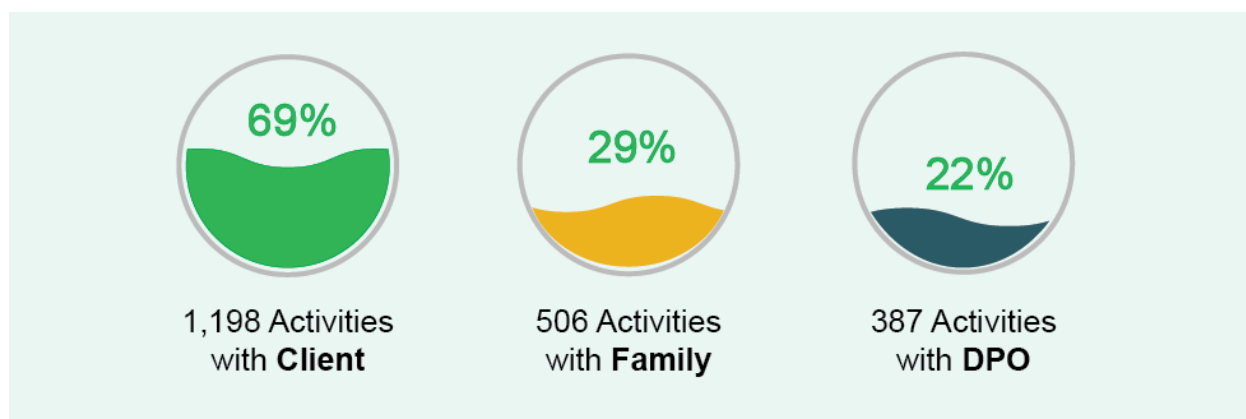
TABLE 3.11. Total Activities by Cycle

	Activities by Cycle (N=2,279)	
	N	%
Cycle 1 (N=2,066)		
Phase 1 (Pre-release)	110	5%
Phase 2 (In the community)	776	38%
Phase 3	378	18%
Phase 4	261	13%
Phase 5	192	9%
Phase 6	219	11%
Phase 7	130	6%
Cycle 2 (N=180)		
Phase 2	61	34%
Phase 3	35	19%
Phase 4	23	13%
Phase 5	20	11%
Phase 6	19	11%
Phase 7	22	12%
Cycle 3 (N=33)		
Phase 2	6	18%
Phase 3	8	24%
Phase 4	4	12%
Phase 5	8	24%
Phase 6	5	15%
Phase 7	2	6%

Note: One client may have multiple activities represented in this table.

Out of 2,279 activities, 1,735 activities (76%) involved a direct contact with the client, family, and/or DPO. A percentage of activities by individual type is shown in Figure 3.5 on the next page.

FIGURE 3.5. Total Activities with Direct Contact By Individual



Furthermore, in Table 3.12, the top three most frequently logged activities were: Individual Meeting (30%), Checking up on Client/Family (19%), Family Meeting (16%), and closely followed by Team Meeting (15%).

TABLE 3.12. Activities with Direct Contact with Client, Family, and/or DPO

	Activities with Direct Contact (N=1,735)	
	N	%
Individual Meeting	513	30%
Checking Up on Client/Family	329	19%
Family Meeting	281	16%
Team Meeting	257	15%
Event/Activity/Field Trip	60	3%
Initial Meeting	56	3%
Other Activity	46	3%
Provided Transportation for Client	45	3%
Advocacy for Client at School	26	2%
Advocacy for Client with Probation/Parole Officer	19	1%
Advocacy for Client at Criminal/Delinquency Court	17	1%
Internal Connections to Employment	17	1%
Referral to Service Provider	16	1%
Internal Substance Abuse Support Groups	12	1%
Facilitating Services for Client	11	1%
Referral Follow-up	8	1%
Welcome Home	8	1%
Internal Life Skills Classes	5	---

Advocacy for Client at Dependency Court	3	---
Tattoo Services	3	---
Celebration Activity	2	---
Advocacy-Other	1	---

Family meetings were a critical part of programming. A total of 35 family meetings took place during the pre-release service phase. Family meetings during pre-release focused on the family needs and prepared the family for the youth's release home. Below are two examples of what reentry agencies did during a family meeting:

- During a home visit, the Homeboy Industries Case Manager saw that the home condition was in ruins and the mother reported being embarrassed that she was getting evicted. The agency sought the family legal representation and won the case.
- SEA Case Manager discovered that the mother had health problems. In talking to the mother, the SEA Case Manager learned that the daughter could use various service referrals for support.

In the 35 family meetings, the top family members who attended these meetings were the biological mother (86%), sibling (23%), biological father and grandparent (9%). Note: During this phase, all the family meetings took place without the youth present.

PROBLEM BEHAVIORS IDENTIFIED AND SERVICE REFERRALS

The identification of problem behaviors is an ongoing task that starts in Phase 2. Reentry agencies work with each client, family, and team to identify the problems and needs of the client, similar to a case plan. Out of 77 clients, 55 clients (75%) had a total of 149⁵ problem behaviors logged in the database. The number of problems per client ranged between 0 problems identified to 7 problems identified. Table 3.13 below shows this distribution.

TABLE 3.13. Number of Problems Identified

	All Clients (N=77)	
	N	%
0 Problems Identified	22	29%
1 Problem Identified	6	8%
2 Problems Identified	23	30%
3 Problems Identified	16	21%
4 Problems Identified	4	5%
5 Problems Identified	4	5%
6 Problems Identified	1	1%
7 Problems Identified	1	1%

In 149 problem behaviors logged for the 55 clients, the top three problems identified were related to: employment (24%), education (16%), and work readiness documentation (14%). This is followed

⁵ One entry was excluded due to its description was not related to a problem behavior.

closely by problems related to family dynamics (13%) and substance use (11%), as shown in Table 3.14.

TABLE 3.14. Type of Problems Identified

	Problems Logged for 55 Clients (N=149)	
	N	%
Employment	35	24%
Education	24	16%
Work Readiness Documentation	21	14%
Family Dynamics	20	13%
Substance Use	17	11%
Other	13	9%
Financial Needs/Housing	10	7%
Delinquent Affiliations	7	5%
Mental Health	2	1%

To address problem behaviors, the team developed one or multiple strategies for each problem behavior. In essence, these strategies should align with the Deputy Probation Officer's juvenile aftercare case plan for the client. One example of a strategy could involve internal or external service referrals for the client. In this program, service referrals were organized into two service tiers. Tier 1 services are targeted at the client's immediate needs or goals. Tier 2 services are mid- to long-term goals. For 40 clients, a total of 88 strategies were logged and 81 of these strategies involved a service referral.

In Table 3.15, most service referrals were related to: employment (30%), education (17%), and work documentation (12%). Although not shown in the table below, the majority of the referrals were made in-house or internally to the reentry agencies' mental health, substance use, and employment services (Homeboy Industries—57%, and SEA—12%). The remaining referrals were made directly to schools (17%), public and county departments (11%), and other community-based services (3%).

TABLE 3.15. Service Referrals Type for All Clients

	Service Referrals for 40 Clients (N=81)	
	N	%
Employment	24	30%
Education	14	17%
Work Documentation (e.g. Obtaining ID)	10	12%
Substance Abuse	8	10%
Mental Health	7	9%
Mentorship	7	9%
Life Skills	4	5%

Shelter/Housing	4	5%
Legal Services	2	3%
Tattoo Removal	1	1%

PROGRAM RETENTION

Clients may exit services during programming for many reasons. These reasons were coded into three categories:

- **Services in Progress:** Client is still receiving services as of August 2016.
- **Successful Exit:** Client graduated from the program successfully. No significant problem behaviors were identified that required the client and family to continue in services.
- **Unsuccessful Exit:** Client exited services unsuccessfully due to client's refusal to participate, decision to drop out, long-term non-attendance, court ordered placement, or because services were not appropriate.

As of August 2016, less than one-tenth (8%) of these clients are still receiving services. However, under one-fifth (16%) of clients had a successful program completion, and three-quarters (77%) of the clients had an unsuccessful exit (see Table 3.16).

TABLE 3.16. Type of Program Exit for All Clients

	All Clients (N=77)	
	N	%
Services in Progress	6	8%
Successful Exit	12	16%
Unsuccessful Exit	59	77%

WHAT WERE THE OUTCOMES FOR PROGRAM CLIENTS?

REASSESSMENT MEASURES

Reassessment measures are self-reported information collected at the time of enrollment in services and then again in Phase 7 (approximately 5-6 months after enrollment). Reassessment measures are intended to look at the progress of the client in services with the input of the client, family, DPO, and the reentry agency. Through this process, the team decides whether the youth and family should continue in services (complete another cycle) or graduate from services. However, not all clients remain in programming long enough to reach reassessment. Some clients may withdraw from services, receive a court-ordered out-of-home placement, or discontinue services for other reasons.

Out of 77 program clients in the community, 17 youth (22%) reached reassessment in Cycle 1. The majority of clients who reached reassessment were from Homeboy Industries (N=13, 76%) and the rest were from SEA (N=4, 24%). Please note: This is a small sample of clients so results should be interpreted cautiously. Descriptive data can be found in Appendix B.

- **Living Situation**: Between initial client meeting and time of reassessment, there were minimal movements in the client's living situation. By reassessment, slightly more than half of these clients (53%) lived at home with one biological parent only. One client moved to live with his/her boyfriend/girlfriend and two clients lived with non-relatives.
- **School Enrollment/Plan**: Almost all of the clients (94%) at the time of the initial client meeting are in need of a high school program. By reassessment, the percentage remained similar (82%), but one client enrolled in a community college and another client was not in an educational program.
- **School Attendance**: At the time of the initial client meeting (i.e., youth's release from camp), the majority (77%) of the clients was not enrolled in school or was in the process of school enrollment. By the time of reassessment, more than two-thirds (71%) of the clients were enrolled and regularly attending an educational program.
- **School Performance**: During this period, the clients' grades in school improved. Clients who had "Poor" or "Very Poor" grades (48%) at the time of the initial client meeting improved to "Good" or "OK" (76%).
- **High School Diploma/GED**: There are no changes in the clients' educational attainment with the exception of one client who received a job-training certificate.
- **Employment**: By the time of reassessment, clients' employment drastically jumped from 6% to 65%. Half of these clients (N=6, 55%) were directly employed part-time or full-time by Homeboy Industries.
- **Mental Health**: Almost two-thirds (65%) of clients had no mental health problems between the initial client meeting and the time of reassessment. The remaining clients' conditions did not change (N=3, 18%), improved (N=2, 12%) or worsened (6%). Additionally, the percentage of clients receiving mental health treatment remained the same over time (24%).
- **Substance Use**: Just under half (47%) of the clients reported having no substance abuse issues at reassessment. About one-quarter (24%) of clients indicated their use of substances had decreased, and about a third (29%) reported it had stayed the same. Participation in substance abuse treatment increased from 6% to 18% by the time of reassessment.
- **Pro-social Developmental Activity**: At the initial client meeting, the clients are not likely to travel for a pro-social developmental activity due to being detained in camp (94%). However, at reassessment, more than three-quarters (82%) of the clients traveled outside a three-mile radius to engage in a pro-social developmental activity.
- **Identification and Work Documentation**: By the time of reassessment, the percentage of clients who had obtained work documents, including Social Security cards, driver's licenses, California IDs, and other picture IDs increased from 6% to 59% (see Table 3.17).

TABLE 3.17. Work Documentation by Reassessment

	Initial Client Meeting (N=17)		Cycle 1 Reassessment (N=17)		Level of Change
	N	%	N	%	
Birth Certificate*	16	94%	15	88%	-6%
Social Security Card	15	88%	16	94%	+6%
California Driver's License	0	---	3	18%	+18%
California Picture ID	5	29%	15	88%	+59%
Other Picture ID	2	12%	6	35%	+23%
Residency Card	0	---	0	---	---

Selective Services Registration	0	---	0	---	---
None of the above/No ID*	1	6%	0	---	---

*Note: A decrease in work documents is likely due to a data entry error.

JUVENILE RECIDIVISM

To describe the youth's delinquency profile, Probation data⁶ were requested for all referrals submitted during November 2014 and December 2015 in order to track juvenile recidivism for this program. During this period, 111 referrals were submitted to the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program. As noted previously the demographics of these 111 referrals were:

- Majority male (91%);
- Almost equal in African-American and Latino distribution but slightly higher rates of African-Americans (56%); and,
- On average, 17 years old at the time of the referral and between the ages of 15 and 20 years of age.

Recidivism in this study was defined as any new subsequent sustained arrest or violation (i.e., charges were adjudicated in court and found to be true) within 6 months of the youth's camp release. Table 3.18 displays the recidivism rates for youth who did not enroll (includes those who only received pre-release services); youth who participated while in camp and then in the community; and youth who participated only in the community. These groups provide an inherent comparison, but to provide an additional comparison point, recidivism rates from the 2011 Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study (Herz et al., 2015) are provided as well.

As shown in Table 3.18, the sustained arrest rate for a sample of camp exits (not limited to gang-involved youth) was 14%. In the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program, referrals that did not result in a program enrollment had a sustained arrest rate of 21%, which is similar to clients who only participated in the program post-release. However, the most notable difference is the clients who participated in continuous services pre-release and post-release. The recidivism rate for this group is 12% and clients in this group also had no sustained 777 violations during this period.

TABLE 3.18. Juvenile Recidivism 6 Months After Camp Exit

	The Los Angeles County Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study (Herz et al., 2015)		The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program November 2014-December 2015					
	2011 Camp Exits, (N=250)		Did Not Participate (N=34)		Pre- and Post-Release Participation (N=33)		Post-Release Participation (N=44)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sustained Charge	35	14%	7	21%	4	12%	10	23%
Sustained 777	17	7%	1	3%	0	---	3	7%

⁶ We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Sandy Woods at the Probation Department for taking the time to compile these data.

CHAPTER 4

YOUTH AND FAMILY PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAMMING

The qualitative component of GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program evaluation draws upon a case study approach to augment the quantitative data and its analysis for several reasons. Case studies provide a holistic understanding of a broader issue through a detailed contextual analysis of real-life scenarios. As part of this approach, case studies allow a researcher to move beyond the quantitative results to understand the behavioral conditions through the perspective of the participants. Social science research suggests that case studies provide an appropriate framework for an in-depth exploration of complex social behaviors, specifically in relation to sociology, education, and community-based problems, including violence, poverty, unemployment, and drug addiction. Michael Quinn Patton (2012) provides the following explanation and support:

- Case studies...become particularly useful when intended users need to understand a problem, situation, or program in great depth, and they can identify cases rich in needed information— “rich” in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon of interest...case studies are context specific (p. 302).

In this way, the case study approach can be effectively employed to help understand broad questions given complex circumstances, a research challenge which characterizes the evaluation of the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry effort.

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

The case study presented in this chapter establishes a baseline to understand the impact of cross-agency, collaborative programming for gang-involved youth reentering the community after incarceration. The qualitative data used for this case study were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews focused on individual narratives that produced key themes and the cultural context within which youth and families experienced the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program.

With permission from interview subjects, the evaluation team recorded all interviews. These recorded interviews were then transcribed and the transcripts were analyzed using an open coding process. To develop preliminary themes, members of the evaluation team listened to a random sampling of interviews and created a comprehensive list of over 225 line items. To ensure the list of themes was all-encompassing, all interviews were played back twice and coded based on this complete list. Using codes developed from the open coding process, the second coding process created more highly refined key themes focused on the following time periods: pre-Camp, GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program experiences during and after Camp, and the future. This coding process provided the evaluation team with the qualitative context for the tables and charts presented below, while the data triangulation helped to ensure internal validity. To qualify as a final theme to be explicated in detail, over 40% of the individuals interviewed had to have discussed key ideas or phrases pertaining to the overall theme.

Study participants were recruited based strictly on their participation in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program. Each participant had the option to complete two interviews – a “pre” and a “post” interview. The pre-interview was conducted as soon as possible upon release and enrollment in the program (within one month) and the post-interview was conducted after the completion of their first “cycle” of GRYD programming, roughly three – five months after the initial visit. Roughly

80% of those contacted completed one interview; transportation difficulties, scheduling complications, or lack of communication resulted in several cancellations that ultimately were not rescheduled.⁷ All interviews were conducted in person and participants received a gift card for their participation. Interviews were predominantly conducted in English, though when there were communication barriers, interviewers agreed to conduct the interviews in Spanish.

Researchers completed 54 interviews with formerly incarcerated youth and their families who had participated in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program. Across the entire study time frame, the research team interviewed 27 unique youth and 16 families.⁸ Total interviews by agency can be found on Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1. Total Qualitative Interviews with Youth and Family

	Youth (Client)		Family	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
Homeboy Industries	10	9	5	3
SEA	12	4	8	3
Total	22	13	13	6

Youth participants ranged in age from 16 – 19, with an average age of 17.5. Consistent with the current demographics of LA County Probation Camps, youth participants were 89% were male and 11% female, see Appendix C for a visual depiction of youth demographics.

- Four youth, or 15% of participants, were parents, with all four participants having one child. An additional three youth were expecting their first child at the time of their pre-interview. Combined, seven youth, or 26% of participants are or will be parents.
- Over 90% of participants (26) were completing, or had completed high school or earned a GED. During the pre-interview, one participant was currently enrolled in technical school, though promisingly, during the post interviews, several others were enrolled as well.
- Seventy percent of youth interviewees (19 youth) only completed one camp stay, while 15% of participants had been to camp at least twice. The majority of our sample spent six to ten months in camp, though an additional four youth spent a combined two years in camp.
- Additionally, 81% of participants (21) were not involved in any other programming aside from the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program. The six youth involved in other programming were currently participating in wraparound and drug court.

Family participants ranged in age from 30 – 50+, with the majority of participants (69%) between the ages of 40 – 49 years old, see Appendix D for a visual depiction of family demographics. Participants were 88% female (mothers) and 12% male (fathers) – a reversal in gender breakdown as compared to the youth. This is perhaps not surprising, given the high likelihood for youth in the juvenile justice system to be raised in a female household. Correspondingly, nine interviewees (82%) indicated that they are raising/raised their children as a single parent. In terms of overall family size, four interviewees (25%) had only three immediate family members, while an additional three

⁷ The evaluation team originally anticipated that all participants would complete two interviews, though logistics proved complicated and this was not the case. When possible, two interviews were completed; otherwise, the pre and post interviewees represent different samples. This explains the lack of pre vs. post analysis and the difference in the total number of *interviews* and *individuals*.

⁸ Graphs below reflect these totals unless noted otherwise.

interviewees (19%) had eight or more members in their household. This diversity in family size/structure is an important finding.

Researchers were interested in understanding the array of services that these interviewees may/may not be receiving. System-involvement provides insight into the economic and socio/cultural realities of these families, including the following:

- Three parents (19%) had received wraparound services, MediCal, and food stamps.
- Five parents (31%) indicated that their family has received mental health/counseling services in the past, with employment, substance abuse, and educational services as the second most prominent services accessed (25%).
- Three parents (19%) indicated that they currently have other family members (children) serving time in prison, jail, and camp/placement.

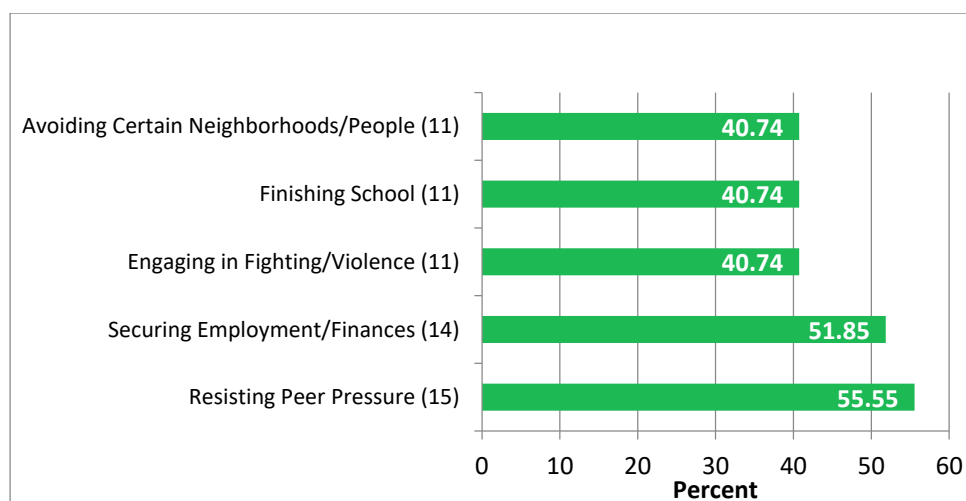
YOUTH AND FAMILY INTERVIEWS FINDINGS

The interviews conducted for this study yielded accounts of youth experiences in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program and their lives as emerging adults. The interviewees were open and willing to talk at length about the reasons and actions that led to their placement in camp (see results in Appendix E for youth experiences prior to camp entry), their experiences during camp (see results in Appendix F for youth experiences in camp), after camp with the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program (transition), and their hopes for the future. For ease of analysis, presentation, comprehension, and to reduce repetition, the graphs below only portray findings from the *27 individual youth*, though a discussion of important family feedback was included where appropriate.

REENTERING THE COMMUNITY AND THE ROLE OF REENTRY SERVICES

As shown in Figure 4.1, as youth prepared to transition out of camp, the two predominant concerns were resisting peer pressure (55%) and economic struggles (52%). These challenges were followed by 40% of the sample, 11 youth, expressing concern about: engaging in violence, completing school, and avoiding certain neighborhoods/people. Though not depicted graphically, those youth who had children were also concerned about their ability to properly care/provide for their child.

FIGURE 4.1. Concerns and Challenges Post-Camp Release



For most of the youth interviewed, 6 months, which comprised the duration of the first GRYD cycle of services, is the longest period of time they have ever gone without getting into trouble or recidivating. In order to ensure their continued success, the youth report that they are working to *avoid certain neighborhoods, gang involvement, and drugs/alcohol*. Importantly, youth replaced previous “connections” with more pro-social support networks, including parents, siblings, friends, HBI/SEA personnel, and staff from programs they had been involved in previously. Several youth discussed this transition – avoiding their former lifestyle – including drugs and violence, friends, and neighborhood,

“ Like, it’s kind of a struggle sometimes when I see my old friends. I still see some of them, I tell them hi, talk real fast. And like, they’re still in their old habits. I mean, I don’t judge them, because they’re my old friends, they’re always gonna be my friends. Like it’s just a struggle sometimes when I get that temptation. I won’t lie to anybody, I do miss everything from before, but I really won’t go back because I got my number one priority, which is to take care of my daughter. So I can’t just up and go and leave and do what I used to do. ”

“ What I thought might be hard for me was to stop hanging out with the same group of people because I grew up with them. I sat down and tried my best, and so far I’ve been doing good. I don’t talk to nobody that I used to talk to. I keep to myself now...when I was in Camp, I was thinking, ‘dang, this is gonna be hard.’ But when I got out of camp, it wasn’t that hard. I just stayed to myself. Focused on school and work, and now, I’m just like, ‘I could get used to this.’ I just cut off my friends that I was associating with before Camp. I don’t want to be caught back up in the same things I was doing before I went to jail. ”

“ The biggest problem I’m still facing is temptation... going back to the hood, you know? That’s it. Cause I’m still in the area. Cause I wanna go everyday, but I hold myself back, cause I know the moment I go... I ain’t coming back this time. I’m doin’ good now, you know? My focus is on my daughter, my girlfriend, and staying on the right track. I’m meeting a lotta new people. It’s a whole new crowd. I met people at Pasadena City College. ”

A few youth spoke very honestly about their lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. One young man explained how his lack of self-esteem could potentially hinder his motivation and progress:

“ I guess it’s myself, in my head. The way I think. I’m trying to do everything that I can, and I’m doing it, but I guess there’s that self-doubt. Like, there’s doubt you know? I should feel confident in myself, because I am doing good, and I could stay doing good. But I guess sometimes I get lazy. I get lazy and I don’t really wanna do it...like, I wanna go back to the old ways cause its easier, but in the long run, its gonna affect me...bad. I guess that’s an area I can work on, my self-confidence. ”

Some youth may receive pre-release services from camp. As part of this, youth with guidance from their case managers, began preparing a case plan that would help to address these challenges. One young man spoke candidly about his experience in camp, which had more meaning for him because he was introduced to the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program early on. He explained:

“ I guess it just made me really think about my life. It was also kinda like a break from all the drama I was going through. You know? The lifestyle I lived and stuff. Camp helped – learning about GRYD – it made me really reflect on my life. So that’s what I kinda liked about it. ”
If I woulda never went to camp, I think I woulda still been doing everything I was doing before.

Many of these youth, as well as their parents, noticed a profound change in their attitude, motivation, and desire to do well upon release. Upon return to the community from camp, youth reported differences in the home, changes amongst siblings and friends, as well as in people’s perceptions of them. Most significantly, prior to release, many of the youth reflected on how they hoped their lives would change. Two youth shared:

“ Everything changed so quickly. Like, you know, one minute, you’re being transported in handcuffs, and the next – it’s all over. When you go with your parents, you feel weird. You’re able to walk freely outside. ”
My niece didn’t remember me. People gonna talk. But mostly, people talked to me differently – and I talked to them differently. Nicer.

“ Honestly, I don’t talk to a lot of the same friends I used to, like three years ago... I have at least three good friends I still talk to. We’ve messed up together, we’ve been locked up together, and now we’ve graduated together, we’re getting better, together. During that period of time [when I was locked up] I realized a lot of people that said they were gonna be there...well, they were not there. ”

Once home, parents reported being more involved in their children’s lives. Parents did their best to keep the youth on track – whether helping with transportation to/from work and school or checking in with the youth’s case manager or DPO. Families worked hard to be a supportive – rather than destructive – force in the life of their child. Relationships between child and parent improved markedly and parents were able to reflect on the change they saw in their children:

“ He was more mellow – more humble. I seen a big change in him. ”
“ He changed a lot, maybe because ... before he don’t care about nothing but now he’s listening to us more. This is a real improvement. ”

“ I believe she is finally understanding that you can’t be a follower. Once you get older you understand the definition of loyalty and friendship, and she’s getting there. I see a change in her friends. They are a better influence. ”

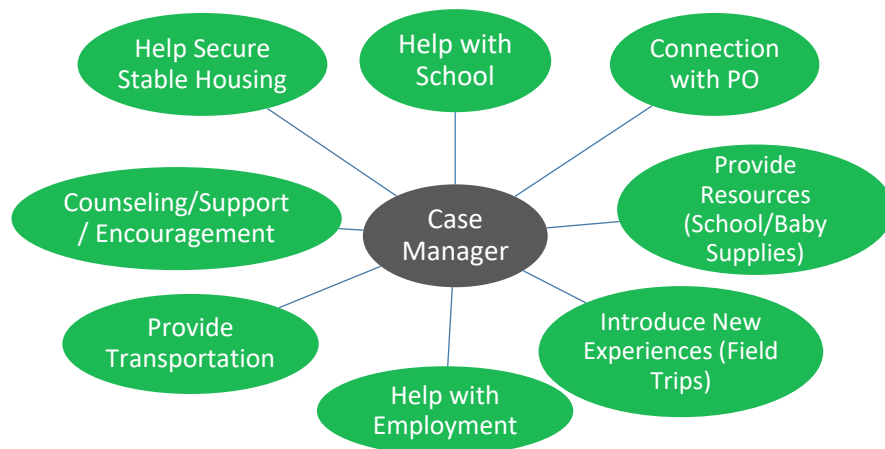
One of the mothers also explained how her daughter's time in Camp and participation in GRYD changed their relationship for the better,

“ We have an outstanding relationship with one another now. Was it different before? Prior to going to camp? YES! She was more standoffish, she was sheltered, she'd start lying. But she's taken anger management. She took it at camp and she also, from my understanding, took it at Homeboy Industries. Let's see... anger management, codependency, she took a lot of classes for teens. ”

THE ROLE OF CASE MANAGERS

As evidenced by the improved relationships depicted above, the GRYD case manager played an integral role in the youth's transition, sustained family involvement, and achievement of youth's goals. This connection to a structured/established community-based organization and a supportive adult, were integral to the programs – and more importantly, the youth's success. Case managers rewarded youth for their successes, provided necessary supplies for school and pregnant/parenting teens, as well as emotional support. The Figure 4.2 below depicts the many roles of the case manager:

FIGURE 4.2. Reentry Case Manager Roles



Three youth spoke candidly about how important their case manager was to them,

“ She's [HBI case manager] a big part of my support system. She really supports me and helps me...I came here the week after I got out. And I met her...she helped me out, she helped me get into college by introducing me to the – the one who runs the college program they have here. GRYD provides like diapers and wipes and stuff, so she helped me talk to someone about that. And so, like, just being here, and a part of the GRYD program, it actually has helped me like start get on my feet. ”

“ [SEA] really wanted me to do better from Camp. They come, they really help us if we needed clothes, school supplies, a job. They get you on the right track, set you up with daycare. Pretty much, they walk with you through what you need –all you gotta do is follow through. So it’s a big help because you don’t have to go from place to place tryna find one specific thing, because at [at SEA] they have everything. GRYD was referred to me through the MDT meeting. They helped with transportation when I was going to high school. He helped me get my I.D. He took me to get my social [security card]. Everything — he was getting all my paperwork...work permit. ”

“ It’s straight. With her, I feel like it’s a whole lot of support. And I don’t know how to take it sometimes because I never had it...because I don’t really know what’s genuine and what’s not...I mean, the opportunity is here to change. And all the different programs they got here [HBI] help. ”

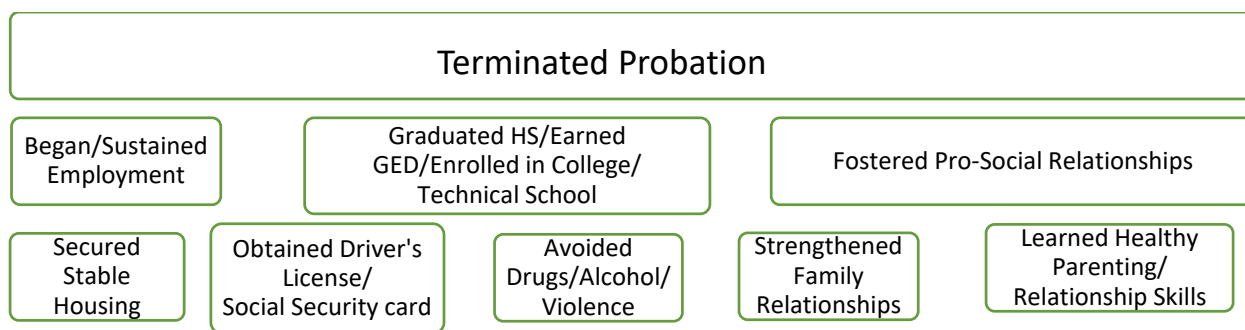
In addition to improved family communication and relationships and connection to their case manager, interviewees also suggested that the relationships with their DPO improved as a result of their participation in GRYD. The inter-agency collaboration between LA County Probation and the reentry agencies was instrumental. Case Managers continually provided DPO’s with updates on the youth progress and ensured that youth were present for court and helped to ensure that the home situation was suitable. The Case Manager was undeniably integral in facilitating this improved relationship. One parent spoke candidly about this:

“ Since he’s been out this time and connected with SEA, he’s had a wonderful relationship with his PO. His PO comes by, makes sure he’s at school, if he’s not here, even if he has to go in, he takes him to school. The first week when [my son] got out I already had him in school. This PO goes over and beyond what a PO do... They need to have more like him because he went and found him a good school. You can see the warmth, he’s heartfelt. He is very real. Even when my son was in camp he was coming by making sure everything was good for him to be released. He talks with SEA’s case managers and that helps too, everyone knows what’s going on. It helps my son – and me – to have this support. ”

YOUTH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a true testament to their satisfaction with the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program and their valuing the support of their case managers, nearly all of the youth and families that were interviewed voluntarily entered into a second 6-month phase of GRYD services. Families were appreciative of the dedication of the case managers and the resulting success of their child. Youth and their parents determined that it was important to continue fostering the relationship with their case managers and reported that they need the continued stability that came from enrollment in educational programs and commitment to their internship/employment. At the completion of their first 6-month cycle, both HBI and SEA had youth who successfully (see Figure 4.3):

FIGURE 4.3. Youth Accomplishments



Given these successes, it is evident why both youth and families saw value in extending services. The case managers instilled hope in the youth – that they could not only successfully reintegrate, but could lead productive lives as responsible and productive adults. Through the program, youth found a more supportive and pro-social group of friends that enabled them to deal effectively with pressure from old friends who were still gang-involved. For the first time in many of their lives, these youth truly believed that they could not only succeed in terms of their education and employment, but were confident that they would not recidivate.

Terminating probation was one of the most important accomplishments for the youth. Youth were confident that they could stay committed to “good behavior” and would remain committed to some of the rules of Probation. One young man spoke candidly about terminating Probation. He admitted that he struggled with the new freedom:

“ I feel like [terminating] makes it harder. I’m so used to having someone on my back or having that thought in the back of my head like ‘alright, I got a P.O. I have someone, I gotta report to.’ And now, it’s not just like I can do anything I want. I mean, I feel like I have more freedom, but I also have more chances to mess up. But – I mean, I’m keeping myself on a good route. I’m not tryna go back to jail. I know I could stay out of trouble. Everyday there’s temptation, but.... so far, so good. I’m here now [HBI] and not back in jail or nothing. ”

Securing employment was another important accomplishment. For many youth, this was their first legal job. Many youth were happy to not only be able to help their parents through financial strife, but to be able to support their own children. On securing her first job, one young woman shared:

“ I work at Smart and Final. Everybody love me. I- I caught on quick. I know everything around the store. And I just like workin’. I’m happy to work! I feel good cause I don’t have to ask my mom for money I’m doing it on my own. I’m working for it, so I feel good. ”

For new parents, the responsibility of caring for their child became a priority. This was connected, of course, to establishing healthier relationships with the mother/father of their baby. Parenting classes and couples counseling helped them come to this conclusion. On changing his behavior after the birth of his daughter, one client stated:

“

Once I found out my girlfriend was pregnant, I said, ‘Man, I need to go back to school and get my stuff together.’ From there, I started doing good. I guess where my life was before my daughter was born, then once my daughter was born, it is eye opening. So it made me think, I can’t keep continuing doing the things I was doing before. And jeopardizing the ability to be in her life. So it was a big turning point in my life, because I love that little girl to death. That’s my little girl, you know? She motivates me to do better – for her – and for me. I want to be able to support her.

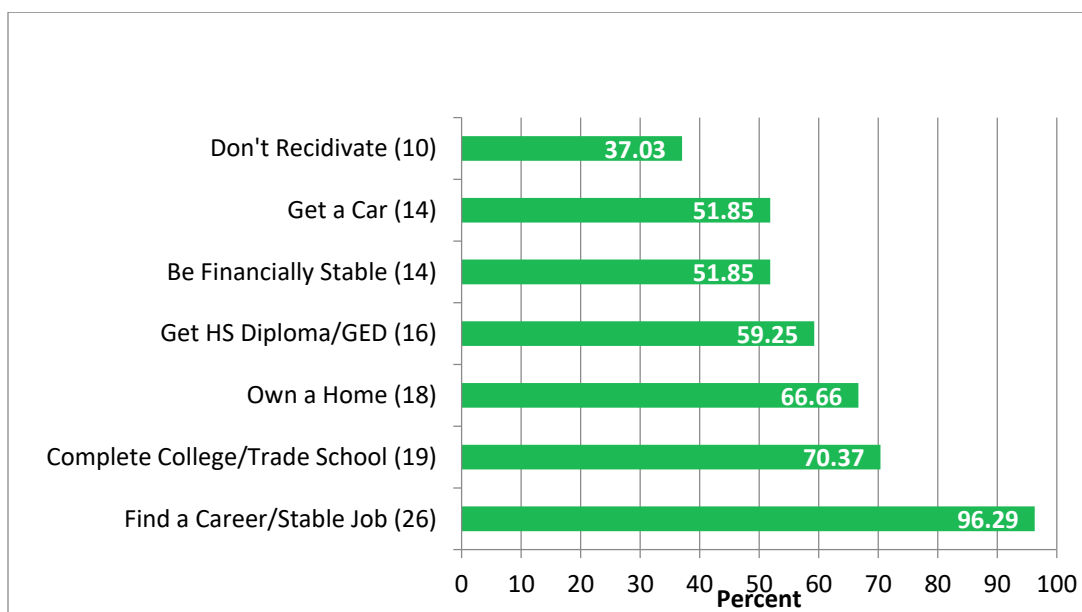
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Overall, the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program provided participating youth with much-needed stability and structure as they reentered life within their family, school, and community. With the guidance and support of multiple agencies and role models, the youth learned how to sustain positive relationships, practice more effective communication; their engagement in the program fostered a new sense of freedom and autonomy. Youth were exhibiting more responsibility – especially in terms of education and employment. Combined, all of these successes led youth to begin thinking more about adulthood and their future.

Looking Towards the Future

Youth respondents were asked about their goals for the future. Notably, nearly 100% of youth interviewed said that they hoped to find a *stable job/career*. This is, of course, connected to the youth’s desire to support their families. Furthermore, youth began expressing a more concrete sense of responsibility for their own lives. The desire to take a more active role in their personal success was most notable in terms of *educational attainment*. Slightly more than half (59%) of participants expressed their plan to complete high school or earn a GED while over 70% wanted to continue on to complete a college or trade school education (see Figure 4.4).

FIGURE 4.4. Goals for the Future



These findings demonstrated a change in perspective and a sense of hope. Two youth spoke excitedly about moving on to higher education, sharing:

“ I see myself still goin’ to a four-year college after the community college. I plan to transfer to a university and decide what I wanna major in and all that...yeah, I have two—either graphic designer or an architect. I never thought I’d be saying this. ”

“ I actually want to go to college. I can’t believe it. I wanna get my Associate’s in business and I wanna get my Bachelor’s in criminal justice. I’m getting ready to start next semester, I’m just getting everything ready, so I know what I’m stepping into. I’m even looking at places out of state, to transfer, for next year ”

One young man spoke passionately about his career aspirations,

“ To be a therapist. That’s what I really want the most. To just sit back and talk to somebody who probably needed the same thing I needed at my state of mind, how I am right now. And I feel like I could help because I know how it feels. I been in camp, I been in jail. Like, I lost family. I know I could identify, I gangbanged. I know I could sit down and share my story with somebody and maybe help them on what they going through and give them different advice on how I dealt with different situations and stuff. ”

Parents also took notice of their children’s interest in education. For many parents, education was an important step toward a better life. One mother spoke gratefully about her son’s newfound educational aspirations,

“ Before, he struggled in school. A lot. And now, he’s working on like – a career, a trade. He was talking about solar. I am just glad because last year he couldn’t even think of something he wanted to do, you know? So...now that he has a goal – he wants to learn a trade...it’s so much better. ”

Financial stability, including owning a home and a car, is an additional component that is essential to supporting oneself and one’s family. All of these traits are, of course, connected to the youth’s strong desire to be an emotionally and fiscally supportive parent and partner.

The excitement in the youths’ voices around becoming a “good parent” was evident. Several of the young men and women with children of their own were now able to reflect on the way they wanted to raise and support their own families. One of the new fathers shared,

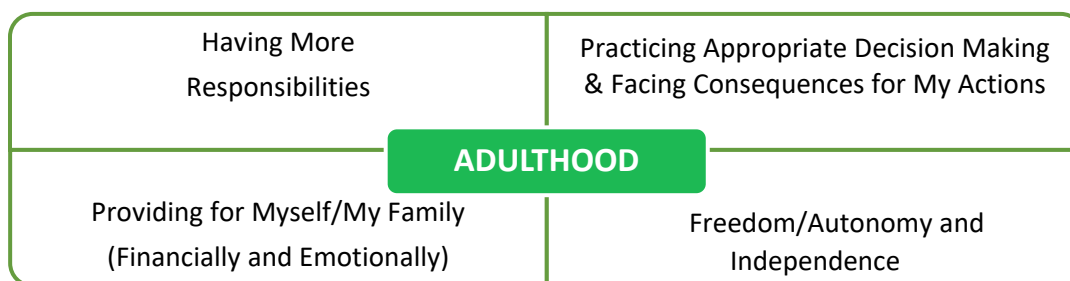
“ Something I’m proud of is getting my life together, you know? Slowly but surely, you get me? I’m working, being stable, supporting my family – my girlfriend and my daughter. I’ve got a lot to learn, but I’m trying to make things better. ”

One young man reflected on his absent father and how he hopes to change that with the birth of his child,

“ I wanna better myself for the baby. Get me a house. Yeah, like my daddy wasn’t there. That’s why – you feel me? It was always me and the homies. I’m not fixin’ to do what my daddy did. I don’t want my son to grow up hating me because I wasn’t in his life when I coulda been. All a kid really want – is love. ”

With their case managers, youth began exploring what it meant to be an adult. Many of these young men and women did not expect to live beyond 18, and for those who did see a future, it was often a future where they were “locked up” or “behind bars.” While nervous about becoming an adult, youth were able to articulate what adulthood meant to them – their ideas in Figure 4.5 below.

FIGURE 4.5. Youth Thoughts on Adulthood



Youth spoke realistically – yet enthusiastically – about turning 18 and having more freedom. One young man framed adulthood in terms of facing more severe consequences if he were to “mess up”:

“ More responsibilities. It’s not like when you’re underage where you can mess around and just...you’re not gonna go to juvie this time. Or YA. You know, this is serious. And it’s also gonna be harder now to get your own stable home and go to school and all. ”

Another young man looked forward to providing for himself and his new daughter. Though scared about these new responsibilities, he was up for the challenge:

“ I feel like when you’re an adult, that’s the time to take care of yourself, become like...I think it’s independent, you know. And actually provide for yourself. And for me, provide for my daughter. So I feel like being an adult is actually taking care of your responsibilities. ”

Two young women talked about the need to take care of themselves and prioritize what’s important:

“ Learn how to prioritize your stuff from what need to be done now, ASAP, to what could be lagged a little bit. Learn how to basically do what’s good for you at that present time that’s gonna help you in the long run. Basically, being an adult is making good decisions that are well thought out. Me, I can do that, but I’m not good at it yet. I’ll put a party before I put my sleep so I get to work tomorrow. That’s my problem. I’m working on it. ”

“

Well...I didn't want to be an adult. I think it's hard. Everything is on you now. But actually, I like it 'cause now I can do certain things for myself. At first, my mom used to sign everything for me. I learned how to sign everything. I feel independent.

”

In sum, it was clear that participation in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program fostered a sense of connectedness and pro-social behaviors among the youth and family members who participated in study interviews. This is not to assert that progress was linear or unimpeded. The interview participants continued to struggle into young adulthood, but their problems were characteristic of the majority of system-involved youth as well as youth of color in marginalized communities. Despite continued challenges (e.g., being a young parent, finishing school, and turning their back on their old lifestyle), the young men and women interviewed reported that they were thinking about their future in ways they never had before. These youth, many of whom did not see themselves living past the age of 18, were now working towards living independently, being a consistent presence in the lives of their children, and securing long-term career employment.

CHAPTER 5

AGENCY AND PROBATION PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAMMING

To augment interviews with youth and families, California State University, Los Angeles conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with reentry agency staff and focus groups with Deputy Probation Officers. The purpose of these interviews was to capture reentry partners' experiences with the program in its early program development and implementation of the model. This chapter presents the results of the interviews with reentry agency staff alongside the findings for the focus groups with Deputy Probation Officers.

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Between 3-4 months after the program launched, Homeboy Industries and SEA agency staff were invited to participate in an in-person interview regarding their experiences with training, effectiveness of the program model, and collaboration with Probation. For staff hired in 2015, interviews were conducted in person 3-4 months after they were hired and until they received a caseload of clients. Table 5.1 below shows a total of 12 reentry agency staff⁹ members interviewed. Staff included five case managers, two site navigators, and two program supervisors.

TABLE 5.1. Total Qualitative Interviews with Reentry Agency Staff

Agency Role	Homeboy Industries	SEA
Case Manager	1	4
Site Navigator	2	N/A
Program Supervisors	2	3
Total	5	7

Participants from Homeboy Industries had worked at their agency ranging from two years to eight years. From SEA, agency staff worked at their agency ranging from three months to six years. All reentry agency staff reported that they had worked with the Probation Department in the past formally and informally at some point in their careers.

Additionally, three focus groups with the Probation Department were held at the Probation area offices 3-4 months after the program launched. All Deputy Probation Officers who had referred and/or participated in the program were invited to attend. Table 5.2 shows a total of 20 Deputy Probation Officers who participated in the focus groups. The breakdown of these participants included 13 Deputy Probation Officers, six Supervising Deputy Probation Officers, and one Program Director.

⁹ While SEA appears to have a greater number of case manager interviews, this is a result of staff turnover. Please see the program history timeline in Chapter 2.

TABLE 5.2. Total Focus Groups with the Probation Department

Probation Role	N
Deputy Probation Officers	13
Supervising Deputy Probation Officers	6
Program Director	1
Total	20

On average, Probation participants had a total of 20 years of experience in the Probation Department, which ranged from 12 years to 29 years. Deputy Probation Officers in this group had an average of 6 active cases in the field. None of the participants were familiar with GRYD services prior to this program.

At the time of the interviews and focus groups, all participants completed a written consent form and permission was given by the participants to audio-record the sessions. These recorded interviews were then transcribed and used for analysis to identify themes and patterns, which are presented in the next section.

AGENCY AND PROBATION INTERVIEW FINDINGS

REENTRY TRAINING AND THE REFERRAL PROCESS

Training on the reentry model was facilitated by the GRYD Office. Case Managers' feedback about training ranged from "good" to they had no training on the model itself beyond reading the contract and handbook. Both reentry agencies felt that the training could be improved with scenarios and walk throughs of the model and its phases, especially if there were more demonstration and "how to" examples. For example, one Case Manager suggested more examples of what to do during home visits and family meetings.

In the referral process, Probation sent the referrals to the GRYD Office, which then assigned the referral to one of the reentry agencies. Overall, the reentry agencies reported that the referral process was very smooth and easy. However, there were a few delays from receiving referrals from the GRYD Office. When delays occurred, agency staff reported that they felt it increased Probation's distrust in the agency.

Once the referral was assigned to a reentry agency, both agencies reported connecting with the DPO as soon as possible. The goal was to establish a relationship with the DPO and debrief about the youth and family's needs. Case Managers reported how important it was to develop a relationship with the DPO in order to get the overall objective of the family's goals. This information was extremely important for the Case Managers to know before contacting the family.

DPOs expressed that the trainings led by the GRYD Office were not very clear about what clients and families were actually receiving as part of the services (i.e., what happens in the client and family meetings). They felt there were too many trainings focused on the referral process and that it felt like an "overkill" of some of the information. Once the program launched, DPOs indicated they did not expect to have such a heavy role in the model itself.

Due to the trainings feeling scattered, DPOs felt confused about program eligibility. One indicated that the program's eligibility was focused on gang-involved youth in certain zip codes, but another

expressed that later it seemed like the criteria was only about zip codes regardless of gang involvement. Nonetheless, referring to the GRYD program was easy for them.

A few DPOs expressed some delays with the referrals and not getting a response back from the GRYD Office or the reentry agency. This is the result of delays in the GRYD Office processing referrals as well as SEA's staff turnover. As a result of this, three DPOs were resistant to sending referrals to the program. Around the time of the focus groups, a new SEA team of Case Managers and a new program supervisor were hired to replace previous staff.

Program Enrollment and Family Engagement

Getting the family to enroll in services was a challenge. One of the agency supervisors gave this example,

“ Mother did not want to do anything with the daughter and so... there's no support from the mother. That case is not an isolated case. You see that across the board. ”

Early program enrollment was extremely important because the reentry agencies saw the dynamics in the home and faced those challenges before the youth was released. However, engaging families early is a challenge. Case Managers indicated that the families felt the program was mandated since the referral came from the DPO. The program was voluntary, but Case Managers noticed that the families were being told different things by the DPO. Another challenge to family engagement was that families were tired of people coming in and out of their homes. Case Managers heard from the families that they don't like to open up to so many people and they felt bombarded by too many services. During the referral process, all of the Case Managers had difficulty accessing the camps¹⁰ to see the youth, which is a requirement as part of the program dosage.

To engage families Case Managers used the following strategies to enroll them into services:

- Inform the families that the agency was not part of the Probation Department
- Remind the families that the agency was there to support them
- Build trust and rapport
- Point out ways to support the family while the youth was in camp (e.g., drive the parents to camp)

DPOs report similar challenges with family engagement with their own clients. Many programs have let the families down in the past so families are resistant to services. Often times, families are bombarded with services and too many people are in their homes. Supervising DPOs noted that services need to match the youth and family's needs. Sometimes, camp pushed youth and families to enroll in the Wraparound program because they didn't know about this program. And other times, Wraparound and other services like Functional Family Therapy (FFT) are more appropriate than this program. Supervisors stressed how important these distinctions are so that youth and families receive the services they need. Furthermore, they added, DPOs should use Probation and the Probation conditions to assist the family in a supportive way rather than as a punitive stance.

If families were engaged too early, DPOs reported that families were resistant to services because the youth just left home and some parents used this time as a “break.” In addition, sometimes youth

¹⁰ There were a few delays with staff clearance to the Probation facility, and the program did not have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with the Probation Department.

and families were only thinking about returning home and not about changing their behavior; therefore, they may have also declined services.

The Director of the CCTP agreed that engaging families regarding services 90 days prior to camp worked well for this program.

“ The program is very family-centered. It’s going to start working with the family prior to the youth’s release. I also like that it’s going to be an estimate of 90 days prior to the kid being released because most of the programs we have don’t start early enough, in my opinion. ”

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM MODEL

Once the youth and family agreed to participate in the program, family engagement remained a top priority during programming. Both reentry agencies stressed that consistency and persistency were the key to engaging clients in services. This meant continuous contact with the families by calling them and going to their homes. When this happened, eventually families saw that the agencies were committed and were not going anywhere. Another importance was ensuring that the families felt safe and comfortable. For example, a Case Manager sat on the porch with the client’s mother in an informal setting to have a conversation rather than met at an office.

In working with this population, both reentry agencies identified very similar needs of the clients and families. For clients, youth needed employment, afterschool programs, and positive activities. However, services for older teenagers and services after business hours were extremely limited. Additionally, the Site Navigator also pointed out that the clients also needed someone to open up to so that they could get in touch with their sensitive side.

Case Managers stressed that families need family therapy and parenting classes, such as education and strategies for conflict resolution and different styles of communication. A Case Manager reported that sometimes families use case management as therapy, but that wasn’t their role. Program supervisors added that families are sometimes more difficult than clients because they’ve experienced trauma in the past and are now barely getting attention through these types of services. Youth and families need:

“ Communities who are willing to receive them. Communities who are set up to hold their hand and walk them through a process because they don’t always have the resources....You need to offer them hope, concrete ways....Through this program, we are the community that receives them....Kids are bombarded by one system of care, that’s healthy....The only way to do that is to build a foundation and small windows of opportunities. ”

Deputy Probation Officers also agreed that families need intensive therapy to work through unresolved trauma and they also need housing support. On the other hand, Probation youth need things to keep them busy, such as jobs and mentoring, as well as services, such as assistance with school enrollment and substance abuse counseling. DPOs collectively agreed that the families need an agency that has good communication skills and is there to support them.

“

Stay true to their word. Knowing the client, know how to speak with them, and stay true to what you say.

”

Welcome Home Celebrations

One of the unique program features of the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program was the development of a “Welcome Home Celebration.” As defined by the GRYD Office, this celebration “creates a foundation for client and family relationships, and begins the family unification process at the time of the client’s release” (GRYD Re-Entry FCM Policies and Procedures Handbook, 2016). This celebration involves any individuals who support the youth in a positive way. Ideally, this is planned as soon as possible while the youth is still detained in camp and implemented during the first month the youth is released from camp in order to reach the youth before the gangs do. Each Welcome Home Celebration is catered to the client’s and family’s preference and may include a family dinner at a local restaurant, a celebration with relatives at the client’s home, or taking the client out to lunch and getting a manicure.

For SEA, the Welcome Home Celebration is called, “Moving Forward.” The change in terminology sets the tone for the celebration. As the SEA program manager explained,

“

Now you’re out, you have to move forward. This is the past, we’re moving forward. Take away what’s familiar to them, like if they’re use to staying at home. This is an opportunity for them as a family to go out somewhere, [that] they never been...a new place for them to experience for the first time together.”

”

Both agencies expressed the importance of these celebrations, but also the challenges with implementing them. For instance, sometimes a youth gets an early release from camp and Case Managers aren’t expecting their release. Therefore, one of the Case Managers pointed out that it can sometimes be chaotic to put together a last minute celebration. At the same time, one can also feel like a stranger in the client’s home because it’s the client and Case Manager’s first contact. Case Managers suggested pushing these celebrations back a month (Phase 3) to allow more time for preparation. One also suggested that the program handbook could be improved by including ideas and suggestions for these types of celebrations.

None of the DPOs reported that they had attended this celebration and did not recall being invited. Many of the DPOs were unclear about the purpose of the celebration itself, and the feedback about this event ranged in perspective.

Multiple DPOs felt that the celebration should only be used as a reward system. For instance, one DPO indicated,

“

Why are we acting in a gang behavior? The effort is there, but the reality is, it’s good but it’s bad too. What about celebrations when they do something right? It goes back to the incentives – they feel that reward. They aren’t going to appreciate it. You’ll get more of a positive response.

”

Other DPOs believe that the Welcome Home celebration is a good idea to ensure that youth know they are supported by family and that they have other positive support systems in the community.

“ To me, they’re going to have a party either way, whether it’s going to be with [his/her] family and it’s positive, or it’s going to be with the homeboys and he gets to leave the house. [Through the program], he meets people that are going to support him prior to getting out....Why not catch him in the front and make it more positive? ”

Individual and Family Meetings

As part of the monthly dosage for programming, Case Managers meet with the clients twice, and the families once, a month. Both agencies reported that they often check in with the clients and families at least once a week.

In individual meetings with the clients, the purpose of the meetings was to review strategies to problems identified, strengths, and the client’s overall progress in services. It is noteworthy to point out that both reentry agencies have organically focused on offering pro-social opportunities for the clients to experience in the community. For instance, these opportunities or outings (e.g., Magic Mountain trips) allowed clients to engage with other clients as well as travel outside of their communities to experience something new and often unfamiliar to their surroundings. Reentry agencies noticed clients’ behaviors were changing and the clients bonded with other young people on these trips.

The purpose of family meetings was used to check in with the clients and families, identify strengths, improvements, and re-evaluate the clients’ progress and goals. Family meetings also offered an opportunity to learn what was going on with the family through an observation of the family’s communication styles and genogram work.

DPOs reported that the highlights of this program were the pro-social opportunities and the family support. DPOs heard from families that they had a very positive experience and felt that the reentry agencies really cared about them. Both agencies were praised for their consistent communication and ongoing updates.

- **Homeboy Industries:** The DPOs indicated that the Case Manager was always immediately in the home. Homeboy Industries’ one-stop shop made it very easy for clients to receive services all at one place and multiple youth were employed by the agency. For one case, a DPO recalled that Homeboy Industries paid the family’s rent for 6 months.
- **SEA:** After having the turnover of two staff members at this agency, the DPOs were extremely satisfied with the newly hired SEA team. They noted that the Case Managers engaged the family, took the youth to outings, and were located at schools, which made it very convenient to coordinate services. One DPO reported that the youth and family on her caseload were getting stabilized with just this program alone.

Genogram

The purpose of the genogram is to “forge connection to one’s history to assist with identifying positive connections and patterns of positive client-family relationships” in an effort to validate family strengths and promote resiliency (GRYD Re-Entry FCM Policies and Procedures Handbook, 2016). As part of this work, reentry agencies must work with clients and families to illustrate at least three family generations. Overall, both reentry agencies were not able to consistently implement the genogram sessions. One agency reported that sometimes it was difficult to sit the client and family in the same room. Instead, family meetings were used to identify positive relationships, but genograms were largely done with the youth only. Another agency found that it was easier to identify

relationships through conversations with families, but to have the agency draft the genogram and later share it with the family.

DPOs were unaware that the program did genograms. They never saw a genogram of their clients' families.

Site Navigator

A Site Navigator is an individual who has connections within the community they are working in and have ties to, knowledge of, and respect on the streets in communities impacted by gang violence. Site Navigators may have a past history with gang involvement that enables them to use their insight and experience to provide guidance and mentoring for at risk or current gang-involved young people. During the duration of the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program, only Homeboy Industries incorporated Site Navigators in its service delivery. Both Site Navigators expressed the importance of having this type of role in programming because the clients can see mentors who have been on the street, and who are now working on improving themselves as well. One described their role as a big brother.

“ Mentorship like a big brother, make sure kids don't fall into the cracks. Stay in tune like talking to em', checkin' in with em', show em' that we're there. Not just as a mentor, as a unique friend. Really out of the heart, you really want to help out. We walk the walk, we know where it leads to, so making sure they don't hit rock bottom like we do. ”

Site Navigators reported that they did not receive training from the GRYD Office on the reentry model. Therefore, they were unclear about their role in the model. Instead, the Site Navigators used their training from Homeboy Industries to shape their role and worked closely with the agency's Case Manager to introduce the Site Navigators at release or subsequently post-release.

Both Site Navigators described that a huge part of their role was promoting positive things to the client and being a role model to show clients they can build a strong foundation in life. One of the Site Navigators described this process as “planting seeds” in which the Site Navigator works on building the client's strengths slowly and continues to offer the client opportunities and new experiences until the client is ready to change.

“ You know, one thing I do know is that if the person wants to change. I clearly understand that part, man. All we can do is just plant seeds. That's all my role is here, plant seeds, plant seeds. I know man, I look at them and back to their age, I be like...I knew it all right there. I get it. I understand it homie, I get it dogg. ”

Overall, the DPOs were not familiar with the Site Navigator role. Only two people reported having an encounter with a Site Navigator. One had a positive experience and noted that the Case Manager and Site Navigator worked very well together. Another DPO was more concerned about the Site Navigator as a result of the Site Navigator's attire at a Probation Office. This DPO was concerned about the youth's safety and was not clear about the Site Navigator's role in the program.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Both Homeboy Industries and SEA expressed how important the relationships with DPOs were to their work with clients and families. Reentry agencies reported that the collaboration worked best when there was constant communication and consistent follow-up about the client and family's needs and progress. They stressed how important it was for the Case Managers and DPOs to be on the same page, not duplicating efforts, and working as a team.

All of the DPOs want the program to be expanded to all of their caseloads to include not just gang-involved youth. DPOs note that this program worked best when it was a team effort. In order for the program to be successful, the families shouldn't be overwhelmed because the DPO and the Case Manager are coordinating efforts. One DPO indicated that the program made her job lighter because she knew the families were taken care of. For this DPO, she indicated that she had to work harder to stabilize the youth on her caseload that weren't participating in this program.

REFLECTIONS FROM REENTRY PROGRAM SUPERVISORS

Throughout this program, program supervisors were consistently involved in the program oversight and shared their reflections about the challenges and successes of the program. Case management oversight and supervision played a significant role in how services were delivered in this program. Therefore, we end this chapter with program supervisors' reflections of "what works" in case management practices.

- **Strong Case Managers:** Program supervisors stressed the importance of having a strong Case Manager in working with this population. This person had to be consistent and committed to working with clients and families in the juvenile justice system. The SEA program supervisor pointed out that she was grateful for her Case Managers because they were willing to do everything necessary to support clients and families in this program.
- **Creativity in Case Management:** Program supervisors at Homeboy Industries reported that they often consulted with the Case Manager about different strategies so that there wasn't a "one size fits all" model in working with clients and families. It was important to enforce creativity with a strength-based approach. When using creativity in case management, supervisors can guide Case Managers to think outside of the box to engage clients and families.
- **Open Door Policy:** As it's important to be consistent with clients, it was also important to show consistency in case management supervision. It was vital to both agencies that their Case Managers knew that they were always supported by them and that they operated as team together. Homeboy Industries discussed self-care and being conscious of secondary trauma when sometimes carrying clients' stories. To that end, knowing the limits of program staff was extremely important.
- **Recognizing Power and Privilege:** All program supervisors recognized that they had to meet the client where they were at. This meant letting the clients have power and not showing an imbalance of power by forcing clients to change. In case management supervision, this message can be translated in very subtle ways. This could mean dressing informally to visit the family or sitting on the porch to have a conversation.
- **Ongoing Program Model Training:** Program supervisors suggested more training to ensure that the model was implemented as prescribed. One agency recommended having GRYD monitoring meetings with the partnering agency in order to share strategies of client and family engagement with one another.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective reentry and aftercare programs share a critically important characteristic: the preparation of a detailed plan for community reentry, engaging the youth in services prior to release and continuing through their placement in the community, and intensive supervision paired with services. Best practices in juvenile reentry, in particular, indicate that this continuum begins at the time of the youth's entry to camp and continues beyond the youth's release into their time in the community. For gang-involved youth, this process of reentry is extremely challenging when youth return back home to their communities because their previous gang associates are waiting for their return. If youths' support systems have not essentially changed, youth are more likely to revert to their previous delinquent activities, attitudes, and beliefs. As research supports, family- and community-centric approaches are core principles of reducing recidivism and other outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system (Seigle, Walsh, & Weber, 2014).

In general, this evaluation underscores the need for Probation youth and families to receive early aftercare services and planning, starting when the youth are incarcerated. The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program utilizes this same idea to strengthen youth/family interactions by focusing on family engagement early and on community reentry through the provision of needed services with the support of reentry agencies and the Probation Department. The collaboration between the GRYD Office, the Los Angeles Probation Department, Homeboy Industries, and Soledad Enrichment Action (SEA) is a unique partnership in Los Angeles County. It is clear from the data that it is challenging to engage gang-involved Probation youth exiting from camps into services and to retain them as clients' over time. Interviews with reentry agency staff highlighted the importance of consistency and persistency when working with this population, and their efforts to engage youth and families were not overlooked by Deputy Probation Officers. The expertise and knowledge of both reentry agencies were evident in three areas: education, employment, and assisting youth to obtain work-ready documents. Additionally, the voices of youth and families reveal that the program had a positive impact on their lives. They reported feeling supported by their case managers, experiencing positive changes in their family relationships, having increased stability in their living situations, and being able to look forward into the future.

Like many pilot programs, however, during its first year this program experienced considerable challenges related to training, staff turnover, program oversight, model fidelity, and understanding of Probation practice. Due to high dropout rates, many clients did not remain in the program for more than 2-3 months' post-release. Therefore, in discussions with partners of this program and findings from this report, we offer the following recommendations to the GRYD Office and Probation to improve future programming:

- **Improve the model to better fit the reentry population:** One of the significant criticisms from partner agencies was that the existing GRYD intervention model did not fit the reentry population. Reentry agencies suggested a model that "meets the clients where they were at" by improving the assessment questions to identify youth and family needs, capturing all the work/efforts done during the pre-release and post-release components using more targeted intervention/strategies at each phase, and finding ways to monitor client changes. The planning and redevelopment of the reentry program components should directly involve partner agencies' feedback, expertise, and experiences from this year.

- **Develop clear roles and responsibilities for each partner agency.** In order for a partnership to be successful, the roles and responsibilities for each partner should be clearly defined. For instance, the Site Navigator's role is crucial and can be beneficial for both reentry agencies. When expectations are clear, partner agencies are accountable for their work and their level of participation in the program; therefore, improving coordination and communication between partners is important.
- **Improve program oversight and support for model fidelity:** Some of the core programming components in the model were not fully implemented, and model fidelity was not monitored on an ongoing basis. To that end, partners requested more training, support, and clarity of the program's model and its implementation.
- **Produce regular data reports to inform practice.** We also strongly encourage the use of data as a tool to assist with program oversight, real-time tracking of youth progress, and regular reporting. Reports should be distributed on an ongoing basis as a feedback loop to inform practice.
- **Training on Probation practice and operations.** All agencies that work with the Probation youth and families should have some knowledge about Probation practice and its operations. By understanding Probation practice, collaboration with Deputy Probation Officers are more effective, Probation youth and families' needs are better coordinated, and partners can provide advocacy for the youth and families in the juvenile justice system.

CHAPTER 7

GRYD OFFICE REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

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Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD)

The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Partnership demonstrated the first collaborative effort of its kind across public and private partners to address youth and families impacted by the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. This momentous collaborative would not be possible without the commitment of key individuals in the Los Angeles County Probation Department, including CCTP Director Marybeth Walker and her team, IGSP Director Carol Mayes and her team, Supervising and Deputy Probation Officers across both units, and the support of LA County Probation leadership. Our GRYD Reentry contracted reentry agencies, Homeboy Industries and SEA, hit the ground running from the start and have demonstrated a remarkable spirit in support for some of the most vulnerable and hard to reach families in our city.

As expected, over the course of its implementation, the program encountered some ups and downs. These shifts as well as the completion of the grant period have provided a turning point for the program as the GRYD Office moves into future funding cycles while continuing to develop a data-driven model that addresses on-going trauma experienced and lived by families and youth.

The program also experienced growth and continued support from the City of Los Angeles. Originally a federal match-grant program, the City of Los Angeles continued its commitment for juvenile reentry programming and currently is supporting the program with close to \$700,000 city funds, bringing the overall investment and commitment by Mayor Eric Garcetti to just over \$1 million. The 20-month program is still in operation, with comprehensive report findings that have sparked reflection and dialogue from all partners on the program's overall shared goal of developing and supporting a coordinated system of care for reentry youth and families. The program's first year brought challenges related to various aspects of the program, yet the collaborative efforts and investments between all partners continue to drive our concerted approach to addressing the needs of reentry youth, identifying supportive resources for successful outcomes, and reducing recidivism for this very vulnerable population.

As various challenges developed, feedback from GRYD reentry agencies was welcome and will be considered for future redesign and development of the program. An internal GRYD team has come together to review the evaluation report and, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Probation Department, will move forward with addressing any relevant gaps in services and data collection in order to restructure a stronger and more effective model of services. The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Partnership will continue for Fiscal Year 2016-2017, as the GRYD Office takes the fall and winter 2016 quarters to dive deep into the highlights of this report and address model fidelity and identify best practices nationwide. The teams from SEA and Homeboy Industries will play key roles in the revitalization of the model, as well as support from our data partners, Cal State LA. The expected completion and launch of the GRYD Reentry Model is set for July 2017.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. Client Characteristics at Post-Release

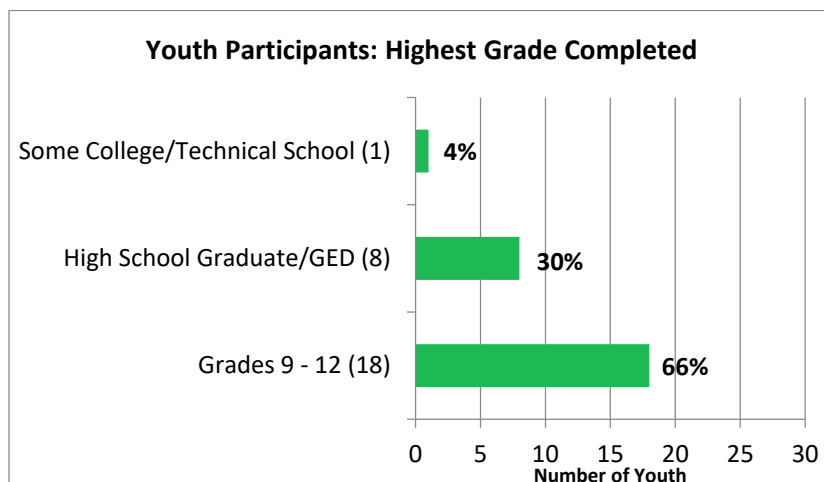
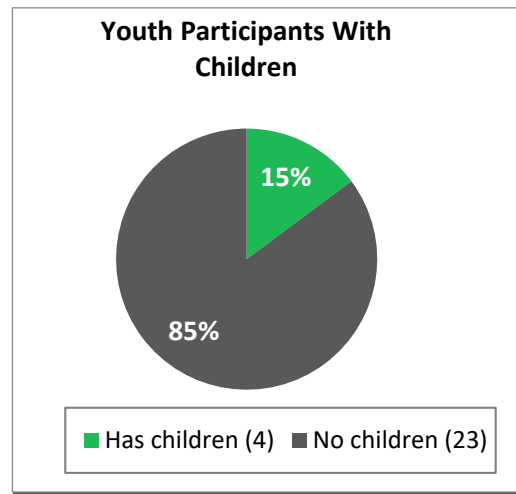
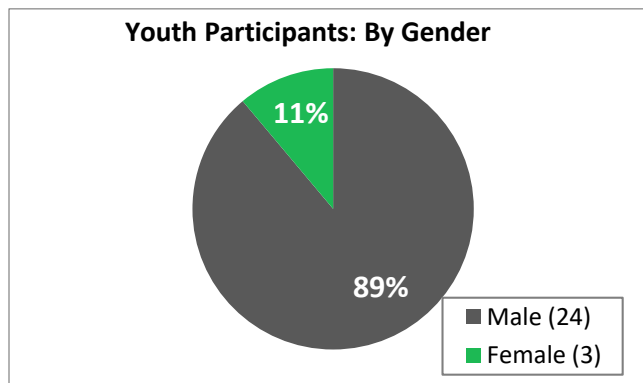
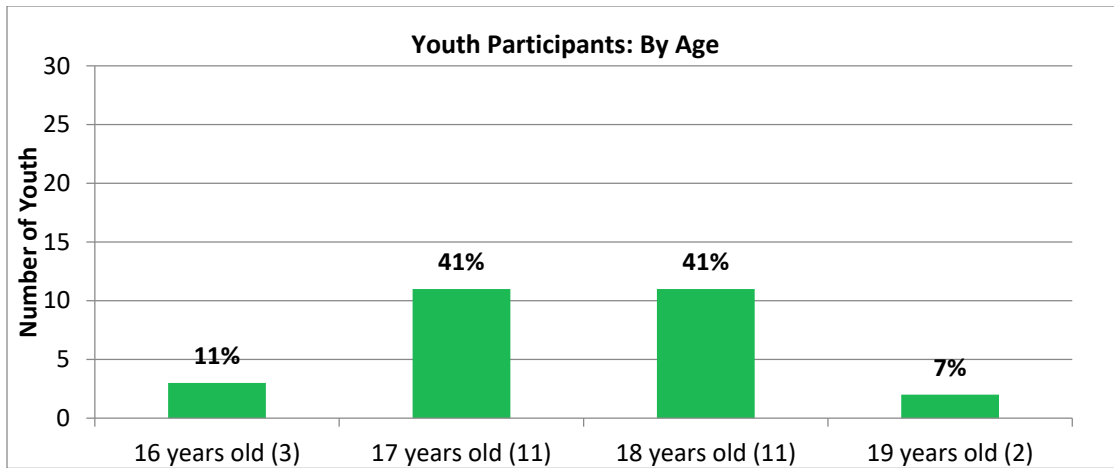
	All Clients (N=77)	
	N	%
Living Situation		
Home with one biological parent only	42	55%
Home with both biological parents	13	17%
Home with biological parent & stepparent	10	13%
Home with grandparent	6	8%
Home of relative	2	3%
Lives with boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife	2	3%
Home of legal guardian	1	1%
Lives with other non-relatives	1	1%
Education		
None	59	77%
High school diploma	16	21%
GED	2	3%
Individualized Education Plan—IEP		
No	56	73%
Yes	19	25%
Unknown	2	2%
Department of Children and Family Services—DCFS		
No	64	83%
Yes – currently	1	1%
Yes – previously not currently	12	16%
Mental Health		
No problems	52	68%
Some mental health problems	18	23%
Moderate mental health problems	7	9%
Significant mental health problems	0	---
Substance Use		
No—doesn't use alcohol or other drugs at all	39	51%
Yes—uses occasionally	23	30%
Yes—pattern of misuse	13	17%
Yes—substance abuse (regular use causing some problems to self and others as a result of use)	2	3%

APPENDIX B. Reassessment Outcomes for Clients

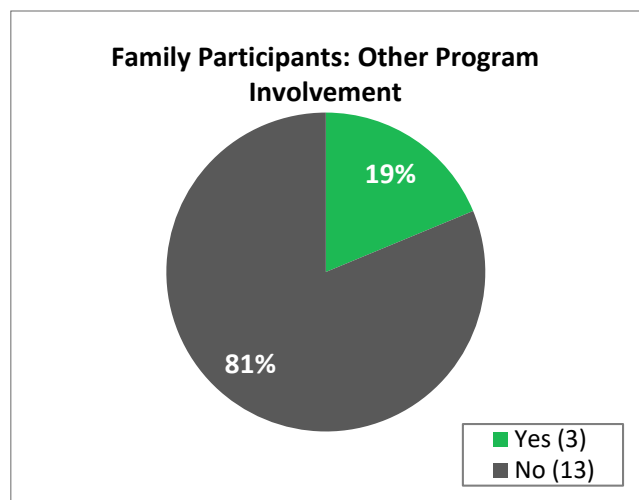
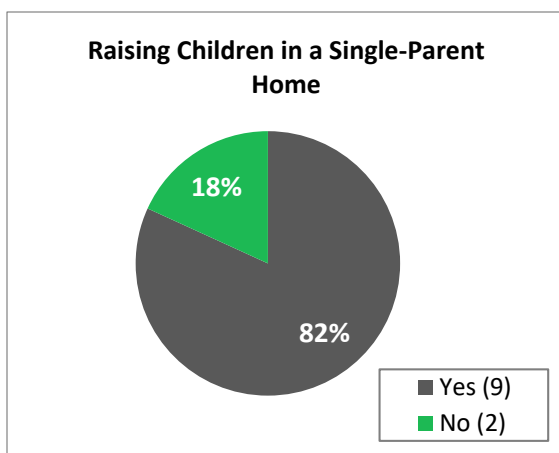
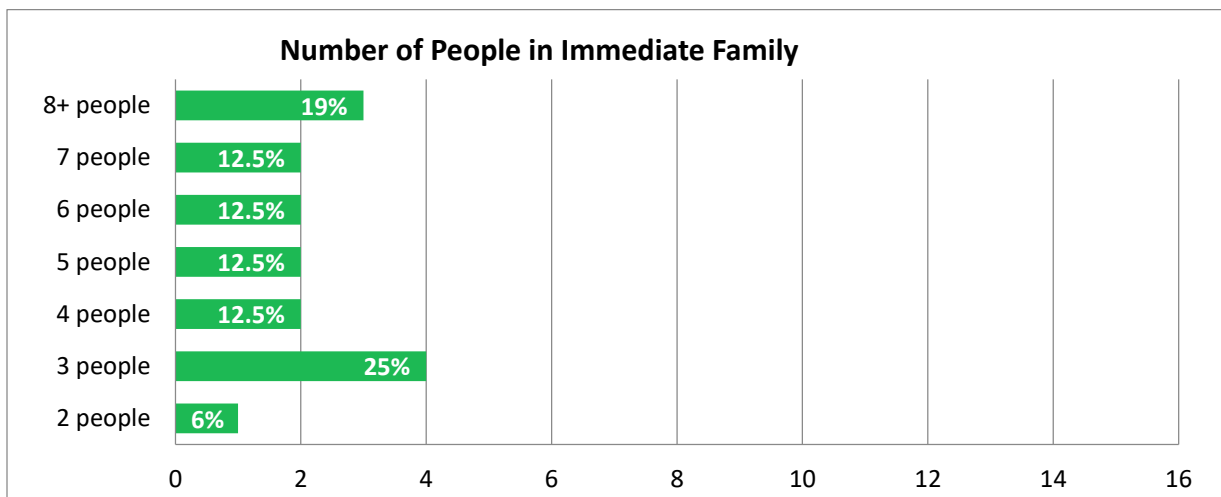
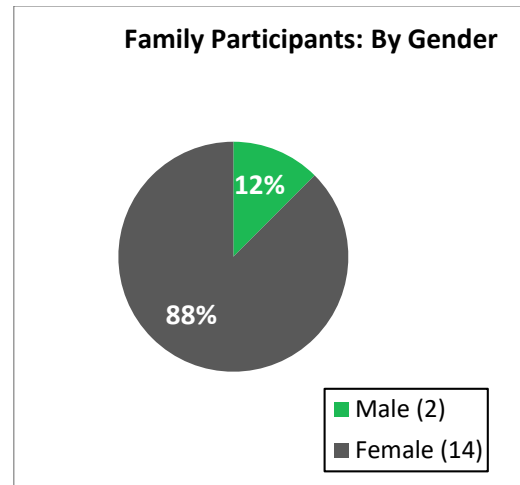
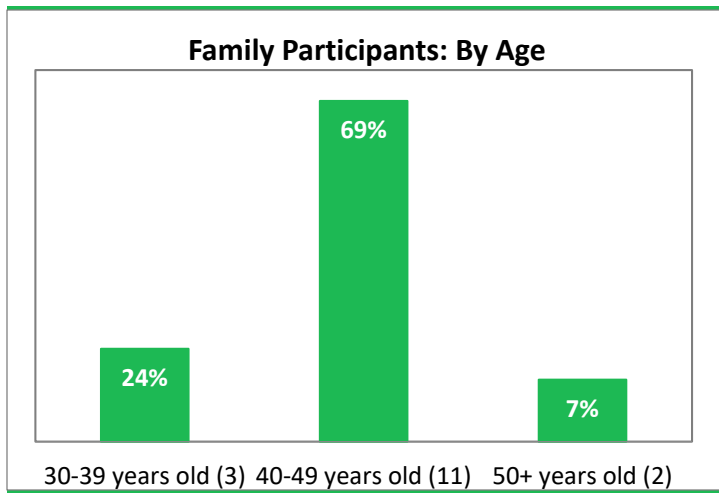
	Initial Client Meeting (N=17)		Cycle 1 Reassessment (N=17)	
	N	%	N	%
Living Situation				
Home with one biological parent only	11	65%	9	53%
Home with biological parent & stepparent	3	18%	2	12%
Lives with boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife	1	6%	2	12%
Lives with other non-relatives	0	---	2	12%
Home with both biological parents	1	6%	1	6%
Home of relative	1	6%	1	6%
Home with grandparent	0	---	0	---
Home of legal guardian	0	---	0	---
School Enrollment/Plan				
Community College	1	6%	2	12%
High School	16	94%	14	82%
Has not attended programming in the past 6 months	---	---	1	6%
School Attendance				
Enrolled and attending regularly	4	24%	12	71%
Not currently enrolled in any type of educational programming*	3	18%	3	18%
Not currently enrolled, but in process of enrolling	10	59%	2	12%
School Performance				
Good	2	12%	7	41%
OK	7	41%	6	35%
Poor	4	24%	2	12%
Very poor	4	24%	1	6%
Missing	0	---	1	6%
Educational Attainment				
None	13	77%	12	71%
GED	1	6%	1	6%
High school diploma	3	18%	3	18%
Job Training Certificate	0	---	1	6%
Employment				
Yes – full time	0	---	3	18%
No	16	94%	6	35%
Mental Health Needs				

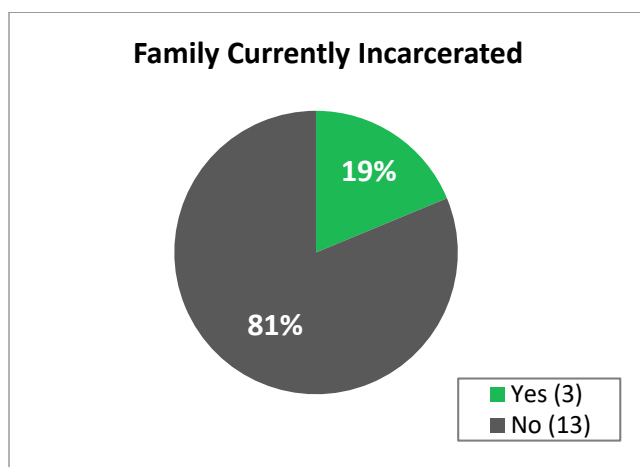
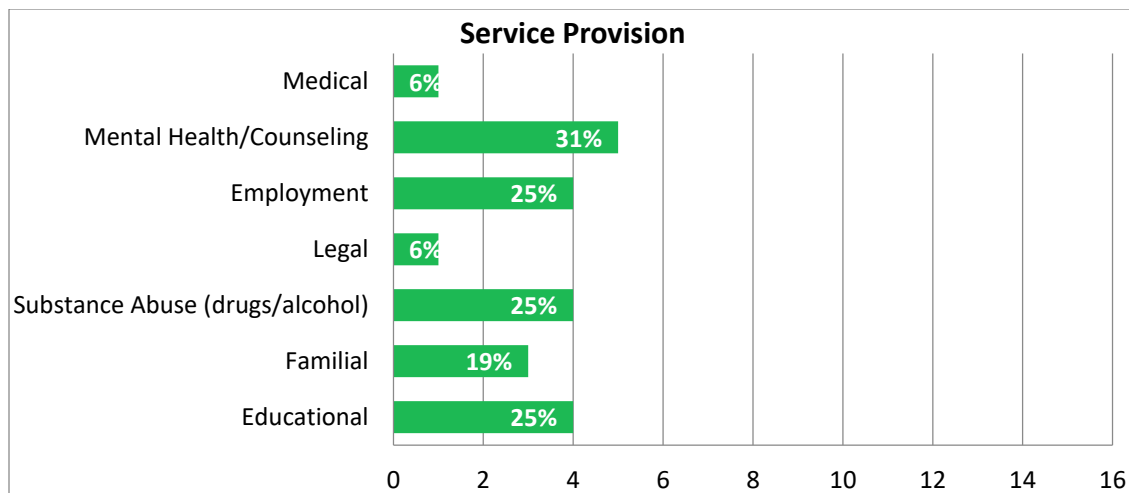
No problems at initial meeting and no change since that time			11	65%
No – condition has remained the same			3	18%
Yes – condition improved			2	12%
Yes – condition has worsened			1	6%
Mental Health Treatment				
No	13	77%	13	77%
Yes	4	24%	4	24%
Substance Abuse Problem				
No problems at initial meeting and no change since that time			8	47%
No – condition has remained the same			5	29%
Yes – condition improved			4	24%
Substance Abuse Treatment				
No	16	94%	14	82%
Yes	1	6%	3	18%
Pro-social Developmental Activity				
No	16	94%	3	18%
Yes	1	6%	14	82%

APPENDIX C. Youth Participant Demographics



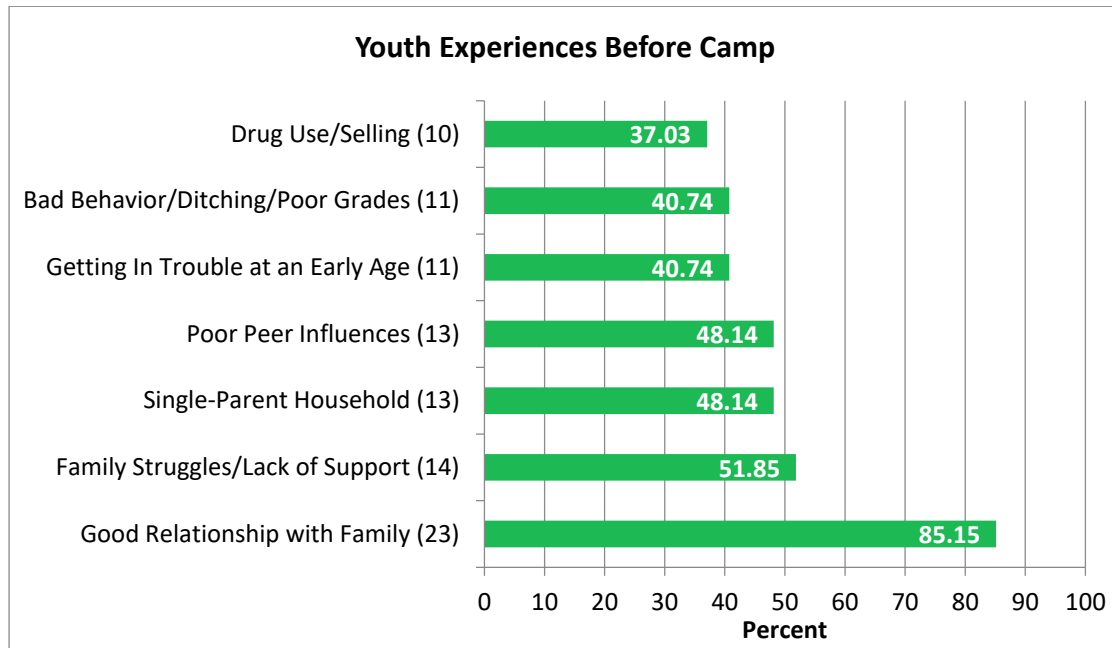
APPENDIX D. Family Participant Demographics





APPENDIX E. Youth Experiences Before Probation Camp

Youth spoke candidly about their early childhood experiences leading up to their camp stay. Seven prominent themes emerged from coding and are represented below by youth and family quotes. What was most striking was the cluster of four predominant themes: good relationships with family (85%), family struggles/lack of support (52%), single-parent household (48%), and poor peer influences (48%). Though not presented graphically, family feedback mirrored these results.



While participants report having *positive relationships* with their parents and siblings, this was not synonymous with receiving *emotional support* and/or *living without turmoil*. Youth discussed this distinction,

“ Since there’s so many of us, there’s always something going on. We get along good, but you just have to have a lot of energy dealing with this family. But to deal with the issues...we get together, talk, and see how we’re going to face it together. ”

Having grown up in an “unstable” one-parent home without any rules and boundaries, one youth explains the lack of discipline and traditional forms of support,

“ There was support, but not like...I don’t know how to explain it, there wasn’t really emotional support. I think that’s what you guys would call it. I stopped caring what they said, so whatever behavior I did, I tried not to do it in front of them...I didn’t care no more. ”

Family interviewees also spoke about a history of *familial hardship/struggles* and the difficulty in establishing relationships with their children. One of the fathers shared an important turning point in his life and his daughter’s with regards to their relationship,

“ That’s when I started reaching out cause that’s when it hit me. When we all ended up together, incarcerated, all looking at time. I believe she had two years, I got 2 years, and my other daughter up got 5. So we’re all gonna do some time and I was like, that’s when it hit me like, ‘God damn, what’s going on here?’ You know what when I got out I started reaching out to her and that’s when we started to get closer. Now we’re so close. She comes to me with things she used to go to her mother about. I love our relationship. ”

While many interviewees’ family struggles were between the parent/child, several other youth and their parents attributed these family struggles to the loss of a loved one, whether through death or incarceration,

“ After my grandma passed...I just start wilin’. Cause I didn’t have my grandma no more and it’s just like...shit. My grandma is the one who raised me. I didn’t have the connection with nobody else. ”

“ He was a good kid. He found my dad dead when he was 10 years old. I should have got him counseling for it because my dad was the only male role model in his life. There was a lot of stuff happening in our family...and he was only 10 years old. It was like... how much do a kid endure? ”

Compounding the history of family struggle and lack of support, nearly 50% of youth, grew up without a *positive male role model/father figure*, and began *getting in trouble* at an early age to fill this void. For many youth, this meant involvement with *negative peer influences* that often resulted in “running the streets”, skipping school, and entering into a destructive, often gang-involved, lifestyle. During interviews, youth talked openly about consistently getting into trouble for fighting, stealing, drug use, and poor educational performance. One young woman reflected on her relationship with her father, who was absent from her life for over a decade. Once they finally reconnected, they immediately began working to repair their relationship. Throughout the interview she expressed a great deal of appreciation for this moment – and getting the chance to have her dad back in her life, and the chance to be a better daughter. She shared,

“ When I was 11... that’s when I met my dad. He came back in my life...I had known about him since I was 2, but I didn’t know him or nothing. When I was 11, we bumped into him at a store and my mom told me, ‘Oh that’s your dad.’ From there, like... I mean, me and my sister we were already getting high, we were already drinking, stealing, we were already doing stuff... and my mom she just got tired of it. She told him, ‘These are your kids too.’ And she just left us with him... ”

In addition to family turmoil, youth described being involved “*turning to the streets*” for support and love. This translated to involvement with *negative peer influences* that often resulted in skipping school and entering into a destructive, often *gang-involved*, lifestyle. During interviews, 40% of youth talked openly about consistently getting into trouble at school for *fighting*, *stealing*, and *poor educational performance*. Many of these youth were kicked out of multiple schools or forced to move to another school through an opportunity school transfer because of disciplinary problems. Parents

agreed that school presented a specific challenge for their children. One mother spoke candidly about her son's troubles in schools, which she felt ultimately led to his gang involvement,

“ I think he's feeling low confidence in himself, because he did so many years with continuation that when he had that opportunity to go back to his home school, that's when it got really bad. That's why I wanted him to stay in continuation because he was starting to improve at his own pace. He was doing really good. He didn't miss a day. But because he was doing so good, they said, oh, he made it. He can go back to his home school. And they told me like I was minimizing his ability by asking that he stay at continuation. Like you should be proud of him, you should want him to go back to his home school! But exactly what I knew would happen, happened...the work was more advanced, he got embarrassed, guys would fight him. He didn't wanna go. He started ditching, selling, hanging out with the wrong guys...it all started there. ”

Another parent reflected on her son's tendency to be a “follower,” which led him down a destructive path,

“ Dealing with the wrong people – hanging around the wrong crowd. The record he got now, that ain't even my son's record. It's from him being with them. Whatever they got caught for, he went with them. He's just a follower. So basically – like I told the PO in Camp – that's what he needed, just some counseling – cause if they say something and it sounds good he's ready to go. He's gotta learn to say 'No,' sometimes, homies or not. Hopefully he can learn some confidence and respect for himself. ”

In addition to having academic and behavioral challenges, the young men and women reported that they began using drugs at an early age, which for most, quickly escalated to selling/dealing. They associated their drug use with excessive anger and an increased tendency toward violence. Along with this, for many youth, selling drugs proved to be an easy way to earn some much needed money for themselves and their family. One young man offered an illustrative narrative, explaining that things were going positively until he got caught up with “bad influences,”

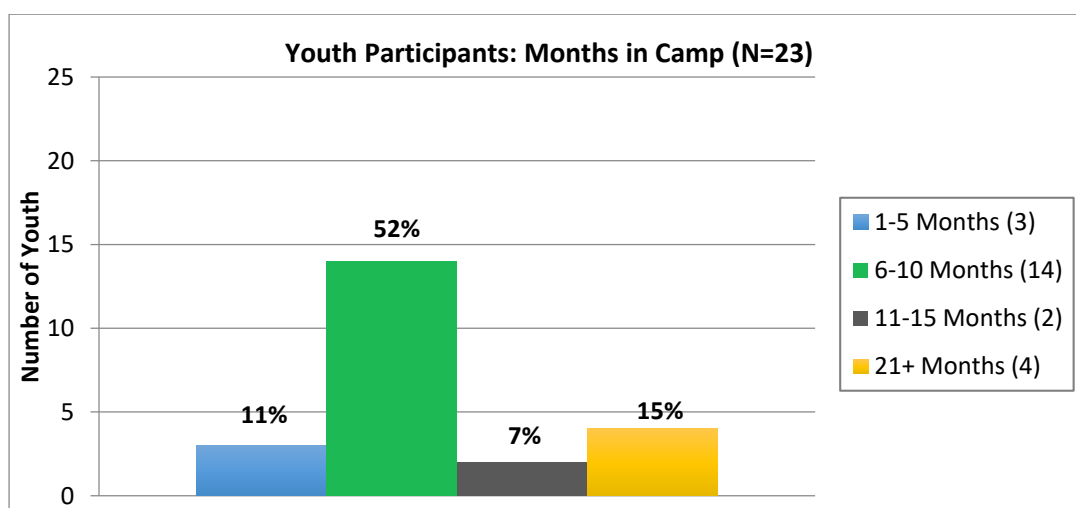
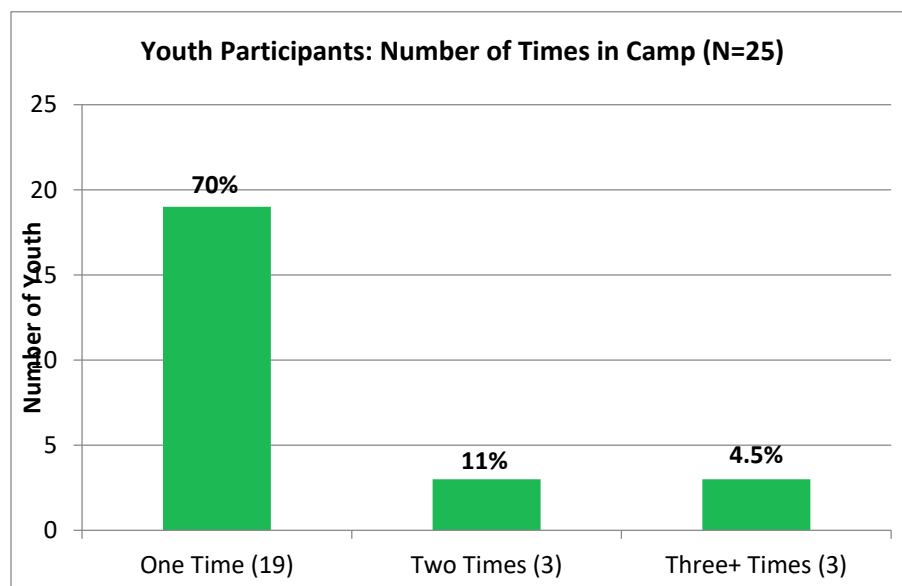
“ Following the wrong crowd at 15, 16. It changed cuz I went from playing football and getting good grades to like...just hanging out all night and not even going to school no more. Then that's what led to me getting on probation and going to camp. ”

Without rules or support, many of these youth felt invincible – as if there would be no consequences and they would not/could not get caught. Youth felt that violence, and furthermore, incarceration was symbols of respect in their neighborhoods. Acting out, getting in trouble, and being disrespectful at school were seen as “cool.” One young man spoke about how he felt “empowered” because of his gang affiliation and how it formed a basis for his identity:

“ I was just running the whole school. Everybody, even teachers, were scared of me...cuz, it's true I was the only person at my school to gangbang. I was the only official person from my hood. And then after that everybody started getting put in the hood, following me, tryna be ”

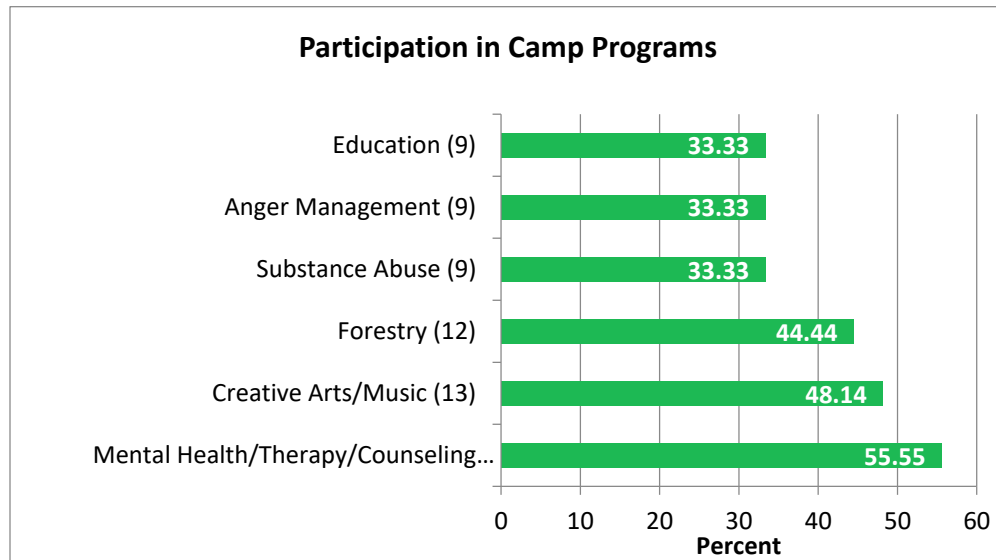
like me and shit. They see me – and the power – the transformation, and they want it. We all started sagging, gangbanging, wearing colors, smoking weed, coming to school and selling weed. All this. I wasn't there for school – I was there for my hood.

It is evident that all youth interviewed faced myriad challenges. Interviews uncovered little to no structure in the home, absence of positive influences, lack of role models, and poor decision-making exacerbated by susceptibility and vulnerability to peer influence. In order to support a successful reintegration into the community, effective reentry programs need to address the diversity of needs that juvenile offenders present with, including, but not limited to, family trauma/struggles, educational challenges, gang-involvement, and substance use/abuse. With this in mind, the discussion will not turn to youth and family feedback about their participation in the GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program.



APPENDIX F. Youth Experiences During Probation Camp

In Los Angeles County, the Probation Department is co-located with other County departments on grounds to provide youth a variety of services while they are detained. In camp, youth in our sample participated in varied programming, displayed below, that began to address their particular areas of need.



Mental health/therapy/counseling had the highest rate of participation at 55% of our sample. Addressing the need for *mental health services*, two young men spoke extensively about how anger management helped them to change their tendency to lash out aggressively. These two young men reported that they continue to rely on these skills now that they've integrated back into their families. They both indicated that they were able to deal with aforementioned family conflict in more appropriate ways. Youth report that there are fewer disagreements between themselves and their parents and/or siblings. The skills learned in anger management directly relate to the development of more positive decision-making. Two youth recalled:

“ It was Anger Replacement Training. That one was cool. They explained different scenarios. What would be the best option for me when I'm angry? Basically think twice before you do something. ”

“ Think about it, think before you move, just see it to the end, just play out the situation and if it don't look right then just go. [Anger management] kept me out of a lot of fights. It improved my state of mind. The way I think now is different. ”

Nine youth (33.33%) interviewed expressed a desire to further their education – whether it be earning a GED, receiving a high school diploma, or pursuing technical school/community college. The youth saw education as an important stepping stone to increased freedom and autonomy as they enter adulthood. A young woman spoke with pride about her educational advancements,

“ I did everything in there. I was actually reading at a 6th grade level. I ended up reading at a 12th grade level when I left. So being isolated, I actually focused on work. I might as well; I have nothing else to do. So I actually did work. ”

Nine youth (33.33%) discussed participating in substance abuse classes. While for the majority of these youth, these classes were mandatory, many report that months after release they are still – and hope to remain – clean. Understanding the side effects of long-term drug use and recognizing the barriers it creates in terms of educational and employment success was an important lesson. One young man commented on the lessons learned in substance abuse classes,

“ I attend drug abuse classes...it's like they are speaking about real stuff that has happened and I relate to it. I think about it. I actually found that program better than others. Everyone is trying to do better for themselves, stay positive, and stay sober. ”

Multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings in camp are designed to set goals and expectations for the youth while in camp and ease the transition back to the community. Teachers, social workers, POs, case managers, and the youth and their families were part of the meeting process. Both youth and family members reported that the meetings provided stability and direction, setting small, manageable goals that could be achieved. This family involvement during incarceration helps the youth stay connected, build relationships, and gain trust that may have previously been lost. These meetings give youth a newfound sense of responsibility as well as accountability. Many of the young men and women developed goals that focused on completing their high school credits, staying out of trouble, and obtaining a driver's license. One parent elaborated on the importance of the MDT meeting for her son, explaining,

“ They set their goals. They started this in Camp so when they come home, they actually have a plan. It's so hard for our youth, you know, to try to set goals. They already know that they are coming back to an area where they got in trouble with all their friends. My son had to pass by his friends – they were gangbanging, and I know he wanted to be with them – but we all – me, the case manager, the PO, we all discouraged him. This aftercare is important. ”

Two youth also shared the goals they set for themselves, speaking with pride about their accomplishments,

“ One of them was to graduate, cuz I knew I was so close, and I accomplished that one! Another was to have a plan for myself, come up with a plan for myself for when I do get out, you know I have a plan for myself already. So I did accomplish that. And I think the other goal was to just to finish my community service and pay off my restitution. I pretty much accomplished everything. I was proud that I did that stuff. ”

“ I already accomplished pretty much everything, but one of the goals that I wanted to do was... when I get out was stay out for a long time. Cuz every time I used to get out, I used to go right back. This is the longest I've been out. I've been out since December [7 months]... the 17th will make it eight [months]. ”