



Perspective July 2015

Snapshot of the conditions of confinement and quality of life in secure facilities for young offenders

Introduction

Performance-based Standards (PbS) is a data-driven improvement model that collects and reports both quantitative administrative record data and qualitative survey data from youths, staff and families to provide a holistic and comprehensive picture of the conditions of confinement and quality of life in secure facilities for young offenders. The data is collected and reported every April and October by participating facilities. In April 2015, 157 facilities in 32 states participated: 95 correction, 48 detention and 14 assessment. The PbS Perspective provides a snapshot of PbS facilities' performance in areas research shows impact youths' safety and healthy development: isolation, racial and ethnic disparity, staff training, education achievement, connection to family, zero tolerance and trauma-informed care.

Isolation Still a Focus

PbS participants have made reducing the use and duration of isolation/room confinement a priority. Aggregate results for April 2015 show:

- The number of times isolation/room confinement was used in corrections facilities dropped 56% from the high in October 2012, from 127 uses in an average facility with 100 youths to 66 uses in April. The average time the youths spent in isolation spent was 15.23 hours, continuing the decrease from the high of 24.43 hours in October 2010, but more than the 12.8 hours six months ago; and
- Detention centers increased the number of times isolation/room confinement was used to about 200 times in an average facility with 100 youths but the average time each time a youth was placed in isolation/room confinement dropped 51% to 5.97 hours in April, down from the high of 12.27 hours in October 2010 and 6.14 six months ago.

Identify and Reduce Disparity

To ensure all youths receive appropriate and effective treatment services and to help identify and reduce any disparities, PbS disaggregates youth record data by race and ethnicity. April's report showed slight differences:

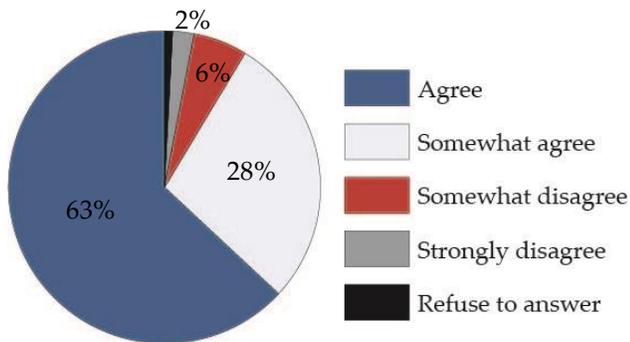
- More White, non-Hispanic youths' reading scores improved between admission and discharge (60%) than Black, non-Hispanic youths (56%) and Hispanic youths (55%). Similarly, 66% of White, non-Hispanic youths' math scores improved compared to 58% of Black, non-Hispanic youths and 59% Hispanic youths;
- More Hispanic youths (18%) were discharged without aftercare, compared to Black, non-Hispanic youths (16%) and White, non-Hispanic youths (13%); and
- More White, non-Hispanic youths (94%) were accepted into at least one community service/agency program prior to release compared to Hispanic youths (87%) and Black, non-Hispanic youths (86%).

Staff

Research done by Snyder and Kupchik in 2011 concluded staff perceptions of the quality of their training and supervision impacted safety outcomes – if staff reported positively, the facility had more positive safety outcomes. If staff reported negatively, there were more negative outcomes. In April 2015:

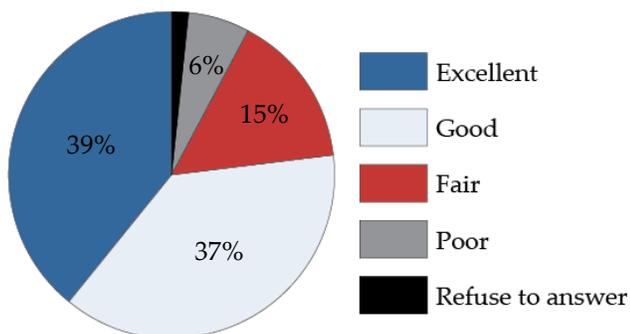
- Nearly all staff (91%) agreed or somewhat agreed that they received the training they need to perform their job.

Staff received the training they need to perform their job.



- Over three quarters of staff (76%) rated the support and guidance of their supervisor as excellent or good.

Staff rate the support and guidance of their supervisor.

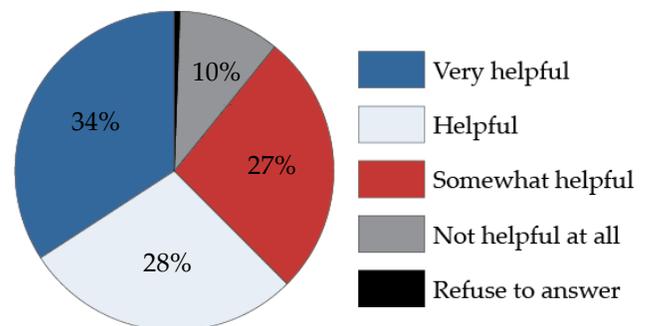


Improving Educational Services

Time in custody can greatly improve a youth's chances for success and reduce the likelihood of repeat offending when it includes a strong academic component that improves and furthers youths' education. In April 2015, most youths in PbS facilities reported positively about their educational experiences:

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of youths surveyed said that the facility has a good school program and almost two-thirds (62%) of youths who attend school said it was being very helpful or helpful.

Of youths who attend school, the helpfulness the youths report of the school program.



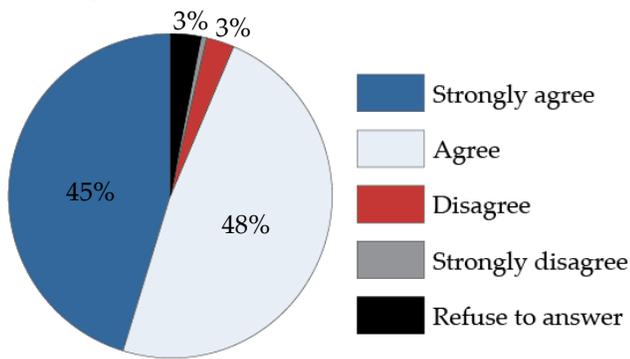
- Youths in correction facilities felt most positively about their school experience, with 66% saying it is "very helpful" or "helpful," compared to 55% of youths in detention facilities and 57% of youths in assessment facilities. The pattern of correction facilities being rated the highest was also observed in October 2014. However, each facility type including detention and assessment has seen an increase in positive responses.

Connecting with Family

PbS launched the first national family standards initiative in 2012 to strengthen and support relationships between incarcerated youths and their families and facility staff and families. The results of 1,087 surveys completed by family members are encouraging:

- In April 2015, 94% of family members said staff treated them with respect and 88% said staff value their opinion regarding their child's rehabilitation/care.

Family members reporting whether staff treated them with respect.



- For correction facilities, most family members (90%) said staff make it easier to stay in contact with their child. Family members visiting youths in detention/assessment facilities said staff were helpful in arranging the visit (82%).
- Although 78% of staff reported that they value family members as partners in their work with the youths, only 64% said they have better results working with the youths when they include families.

Zero Tolerance

PbS promotes a holistic approach to help create and sustain safe and healthy facility environments and ensure zero tolerance for sexual abuse. PbS facilities look at youths' self-report of abuse with other indicators of the need to reinforce zero tolerance such as youths' fear, staff-youth relationships and contact family and attorneys. In April 2015:

- In correction facilities, 2.67% of youths reported being forced to engage in sexual activity. This has remained fairly constant over time. The highest percentage reporting was 3.65% in October 2010 and the lowest was 1.86% in October 2013.
- In detention centers, the percentage of youths reporting that they were forced to engage in sexual activity was less than 1 percent (.58%), a significant drop from the highest percentage reporting one year ago - 1.45% in October 2014.
- Of the youths who said they were forced to engage in sexual activity, 47% said they reported it to someone who could help them but 53% said that nothing had been done to stop it.
- About 16% of all youths reported that they feared for their safety. However, of the youths who said they were forced to engage in sexual activity, 65% said they feared for their safety within the last six months.

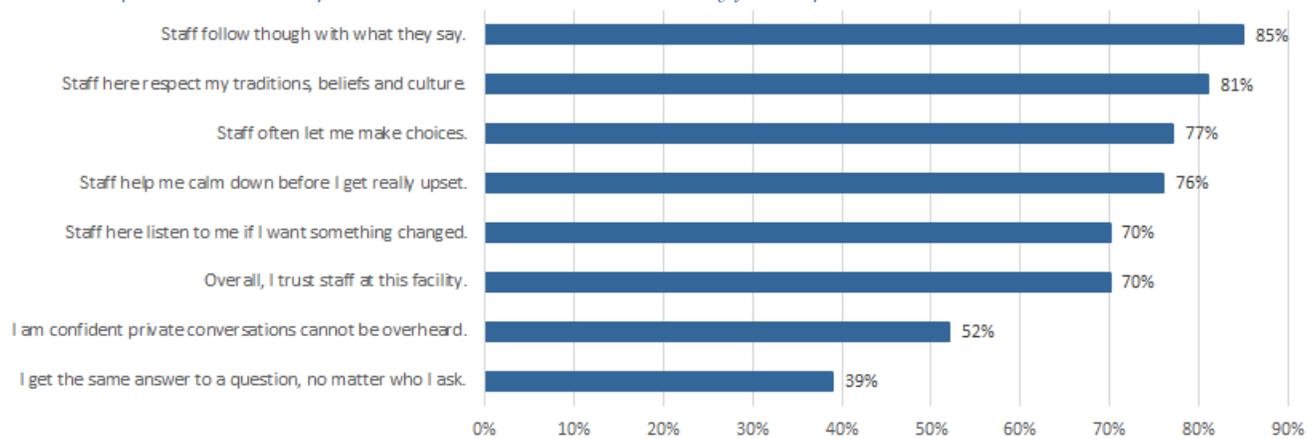
Gauging Trauma-Informed Care

In 2012 PbS began working with trauma-informed care experts to add questions to PbS surveys that indicate the effectiveness and extent trauma-informed care principles and practices are impacting youths, staff and families. Some of the results from April 2015:

- Nearly half of youths (49%) said that someone from the facility had explained what trauma is and why it matters.

- Youths from detention facilities reported the least (36%), compared to 44% in assessment centers and 55% in correction facilities; and
- Of those same youths, 54% said that someone from the facility asked if any bad or upsetting things ever happened to them. Youths from detention facilities reported the least (44%), compared to 59% in assessment centers and 57% in correction facilities.

Youths' responses to trauma questions on the Youth Climate Survey from April 2015.



The PbS Perspective is published twice a year after each of the two PbS data collections periods (April and October) because we've learned over the past 20 years that looking at data is the first, fundamental step to positive change and reform and that continuous measuring is necessary to sustain and improve juvenile justice facilities' operations, programs and services. You can't change what you don't measure. PbS' aggregate data is one of the largest, timely, uniform and comprehensive available that describes conditions of confinement and quality of life with both quantitative administrative data and qualitative descriptive data that is uniformly reported and undergoes a multi-tiered data quality process. PbS data looks at facility safety, order, security, education, programming, fairness, positive youth development, connection to family and community, health, mental health, substance use, trauma and reentry treatment and services. For more information, visit <http://pbstandards.org>.