

JUVENILE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR TREATMENT



TIMOTHY BAUERSCHMIDT, PROGRAM MANAGER

The Lucas County Juvenile Sexual Behavior Treatment program (**JSBT**) is committed to developing community partnerships which promote public safety, victim restoration, education, and treatment for youth and families in an effort to reduce the incidence of sexual abuse. This approach will enhance healthy relationships, hold youth and parents accountable, and ensure an effective continuum of care for both survivors, and youth who sexually offend. The Lucas County Juvenile Courts (LCJC) approach promotes collaboration, community education, valid and reliable assessment tools, effective treatment, competency development, supervision, and transition to different levels of care. LCJC has worked to be a leader in the area of treatment of adolescents who have sexually offended through the use and understanding of the latest research.

Efforts continued as the Court applied best practices in managing cases throughout the pandemic in 2021. The hybrid approach to supervision and services continued which included a combination of phone calls, zoom meetings, and face-to-face meetings while utilizing safety protocols to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus. April of 2021 brought the reconvening of treatment groups that had previously been halted because of Covid-19. The number of Zoom counseling sessions were also significantly reduced. In August of 2021, Bill Weis, the long-time program manager for the JSBT program retired and JSBT Probation Officer Tim Bauerschmidt was promoted to JSBT Program Manager. Tim brings more than 26 years of probation and JSBT experience to the position and almost 40 years of experience working with juveniles.

In 2021, JSBT Probation Officers maintained an average of nearly 20 cases monthly. 16 new referrals were received with 11 cases being assigned and made active. The 5 remaining cases were either deferred, or given alternate dispositions through assessment and support from the JSBT program. 27 cases were closed that were carried over from the prior years. 22 were successfully terminated, including 2 youth that transferred in from other states. Probation Officers continued work on 7 existing cases that had been placed in residential or group placements. 6 of the youth that were placed in an out-of-home placement returned to their homes after successfully completing treatment.

Prior to 2021, it became even more apparent that it was necessary to change the program name to reflect a better understanding of the work being done with the youth in our community. The Juvenile Sexual Behavior Treatment Program (JSBT) name change reflects the understanding that many individuals who come to the court's attention through a sex offense are not necessarily sex offenders by intention, but did so, by not truly understanding how to navigate pro-social sexual relationships. Their choice to sexually act out are issues that are quite often treatable in the mental health realm. Due to the adolescents' developmental processes not being fully developed, juveniles appear to be very responsive to the program's Mastery Learning, and the wraparound approach that starts with the youth's lowest level needs and helps them to work up from there. This begins in most cases at adjudication, where the JSBT Probation Officer will utilize multiple valid and reliable assessment tools to get a better understanding of the individual's risk factors, needs, ownership of offense, understanding of the overall impact of their choice, comprehension level, and skill level in multiple domains including cognitive, social, emotional, and may also include physical skills. These assessment tools are what the JSBT Probation Officer uses to write a social history and a sex offender assessment report that provide recommendations to the jurist for best practice outcomes for the individual. Once the legal case is disposed of and a treatment provider is identified by the family, the youth is given a mental health assessment in the community and the JSBT probation officer works with the mental health team to develop a plan that will aid in developing this youth to be a productive, pro-social member of the community.

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The needs are addressed through a treatment team that includes the specialized JSBT probation officer that had followed the youth through the legal process, interviewed the family, and wrote the reports and recommendations for disposition. It also includes an individual therapist and a group therapist and a case manager when possible. The Court/Harbor cases are staffed with the case managers and therapists weekly to discuss progress and strategy to support this progress. The program partnership with Harbor Behavioral Health goes back to 2007 when we understood the need to enhance the range of treatment interventions offered to our youth and families. These interventions can include a wide range of populations including, pre-adolescent, adolescent, young adult offenders, and lower functioning offenders of all genders by using individual, group, and family therapy. The bulk of the cases are referred to Harbor Behavioral Health Care for the youth to complete The Court/Harbor JSBT Program. The JSBT probation officer also works closely with individual community therapists that can provide JSBT counseling and education for individuals and their families that are not able to complete the work through the Court/Harbor JSBT Program. Each case is reviewed monthly in court unless otherwise indicated by Magistrate Pam Field, Our assigned JSBT Program Specialized Docket Magistrate.

As outlined above, the additional goal of the JSBT Program has been to develop best practices that fit within the goals of Lucas County Juvenile Court's mission statement to:

- ◆ Ensure fairness, equity, and access to justice to all children and families regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation.
- ◆ Ensure Public Safety.
- ◆ Protect the Children of the Community.
- ◆ Preserve Families by Supporting Parents and Intervening only when it is in the Best Interest of the Child and/or the Community.
- ◆ Work with the Community to Develop and Enforce Standards of Responsible Behavior for Adults and Children.
- ◆ Ensure Balance Between Consequences and Rehabilitation while Holding Offenders Accountable for Their Actions.

The JSBT approach works with the Juvenile Court's mission statement through a focus on community safety, competency development, pro-social skill-building, and accountability in an effort to transition youth to the least restrictive environment based on the individual client's ability to develop pro-social skills and safety in the community. The JSBT program will continue to execute these goals through management, treatment, and education of juveniles, young adult, their families, and the community about a best practice approach for children with problematic sexual behavior. The JSBT Program has been on the leading edge in helping youth to manage their needs and learn to develop meaningful pro-social change. The treatment team's focus continues to be collaboration between the JSBT probation officers and the mental health providers has resulted in building a foundation for a highly successful holistic approach. This approach has helped develop and strengthen client protective factors.■