

PROBATION SERVICES



DEMECIA WILSON, MOL, PROBATION ADMINISTRATOR

The Lucas County Juvenile Court (**LCJC**) Probation Department strives to ensure that youth under its supervision receive services that are strength-based, individualized, and fair using the Balance And Restorative Justice (**BARJ**) Model approach; taking into account that probation service should be rendered to ***the right youth at the right time***. In doing so, we continue to build upon our core principles while developing new goals and objectives to promote equity, inclusion, respect, collaboration, public safety, support, and success. The purpose of probation is to provide community based supervision and support to assigned youth, with a strong emphasis on treatment planning that adheres to the fundamental principles of the BARJ Model; Community Safety, Accountability, Victim Reparation, and Competency Development. Probation works within the context of the Positive Youth Justice (**PYJ**) Model to reduce the likelihood of continued delinquent behavior.

While serving youth within the community the probation department works diligently to partner with community stakeholders to provide quality services to youth and families while maintaining our position of applying best practices and evidence-based programming to reduce delinquency, improve outcomes, and enhance community safety. Probation partnerships have included:

- ◆ The Toledo Arts Commission.
- ◆ The Toledo Symphony.
- ◆ The Toledo Museum of Art.
- ◆ The Junction Coalition/419 Junction.
- ◆ Above & Beyond Care.
- ◆ Toledo Bikes!
- ◆ Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).
- ◆ Harbor.
- ◆ Unison.
- ◆ The Sophia Quintero Art and Cultural Center.
- ◆ The Youth Advocate Program (YAP).
- ◆ The National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP).

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The Probation Department remains committed to using probation only as a purposeful intervention to support growth, behavior change and long-term success for youth with serious and repeat offenses. Probation services **should not** be deficit-based and only focus on what a youth is doing wrong, but should focus on the youth's strengths and their ability to make positive changes. The Probation Officer's approach to supervising youth within the community must be rooted in best practices and informed by research in order to encourage favorable outcomes. As such, it is important that Probation Officers are equipped with fundamental skills such as a) supportive skills; b) limit setting skills; c) modeling skills; and d) advocacy skills. Probation Officers are tasked with the responsibility of maintaining caseloads of youth under its supervision, nurturing relationships with youth and families by engaging with them in their homes, neighborhoods, and school; teaching youth cognitive intervention skills, linking youth and families to services and programs based on individual needs, developing and implementing case plans, while holding youth accountable.

In 2023, the probation department experienced significant staff turnover and staffing

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challenges. As such, this created larger caseload numbers for officers. To maintain adequate staffing numbers, the department began searching for people within the community who have a passion for working with at-risk youth. People with the heart of a teacher and coach that is not only willing to teach skills but will do it with compassion and care. The probation team will continue its search for qualified candidates until its team is complete.

LCJC's Probation Officers are trained in Effective Practices In Community Supervision (**EPICS**), Motivational Interviewing (**MI**), Adolescent Brain Development, and Trauma-Informed Care. Graduated responses are implemented to address noncompliance to supervision. Youth assigned to probation are screened, during the intake process, using the following: Ohio Youth Assessment System (**OYAS**), Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Short Screener (**GAIN-SS**), Public Health Screener, and the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (**SOGIE**). These tools are used to determine risk to recidivate, to identify internal and external factors including health disorders, to screen for immediate needs related to the social determinates of health, and to assure that culturally responsive care is being rendered to youth with diverse sexual orientations.

For more information regarding effective probation practices and probation transformation please click on the links below.

Resources:

<https://www.goodjuvenileprobationpractice.org>

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/the-desktop-guide-to-good-juvenile-probation-practice>

BALANCE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Balance and Restorative Justice (**BARJ**) is a set of values and principles that guide the responses of the juvenile justice system. These principles include:

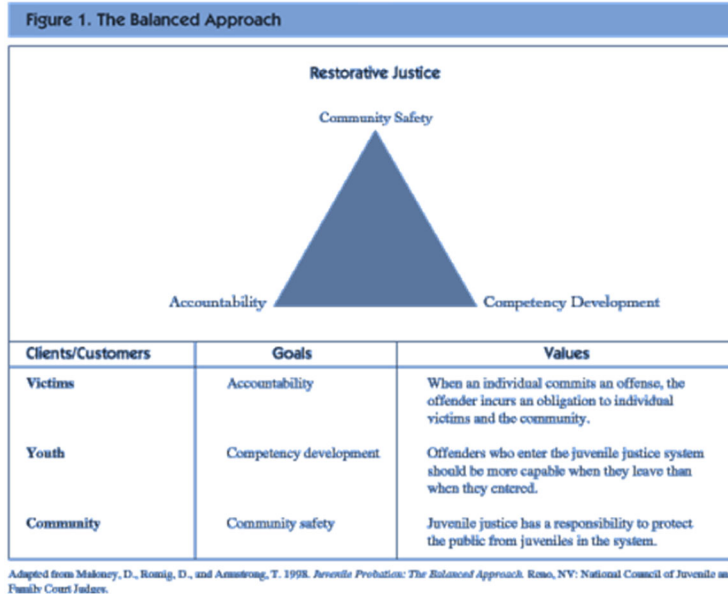
- ♦ Crime causes harm to victims, community, and juvenile offenders;
- ♦ Crime creates an obligation to repair the harm done;
- ♦ All parties have an important role to play in repairing the harm done;
- ♦ Repairing harm to all parties is the primary goal of restorative justice practices.

The BARJ model accomplishes repairing the harm by developing action steps for all parties involved under 3 domains:

- 1) **Accountability**: the youth takes responsibility for harm done to the victim and community;
- 2) **Competency Development**: the youth leaves the juvenile justice system more capable than when they entered;
- 3) **Community Protection**: the juvenile justice system is responsible for protecting the public from further harm.

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Resource: www.ojjdp.ojp.gov

POSITIVE YOUTH JUSTICE

Positive Youth Justice (**PYJ**) is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths. It's a framework that views youth as a resource and seeks to engage them in variety activities to "Learn & Do" new skills and experiences and also Attach & Belong to their community.

PYJ is a strength-based approach to helping youth, service providers, youth leaders, programs, and communities become focused on developing the natural gifts, talents, and assets of youth. PYJ encourages building skills in decision-making, cooperation, reciprocity and giving to others, as well as setting high expectations for themselves and other peers. The PYJ model includes 12 key components. It focuses on two key assets needed by all youth: learning/doing and attaching/belonging. Each asset should be developed within the context of six life domains: work, education, relationships, community, health, and creativity.



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MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational Interviewing is a person-centered, directive method of communication for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence. www.buildmotivation.com

The most current version of MI is described in detail in Miller and Rollnick (2013) *Motivational Interviewing: Helping people to change* (3rd edition). Key qualities include:

- ♦ MI is a **guiding** style of communication that sits between **following** (good listening) and **directing** (giving information and advice).
- ♦ MI is designed to **empower** people to change by drawing out their own meaning, importance and capacity for change.
- ♦ MI is based on a **respectful** and **curious** way of being with people that facilitates the natural process of change and honors client autonomy.

It is important to note that MI requires the clinician to engage with the client as an equal partner and refrain from unsolicited advice, confronting, instructing, directing, or warning. It is not a way to "get people to change" or a set of techniques to impose on the conversation. MI takes time, practice and requires self-awareness and discipline from the clinician. (Miller & Rollnick, 2009)

While the principles and skills of MI are useful in a wide range of conversations, MI is particularly useful to help people examine their situation and options when any of the following are present:

- ♦ **Ambivalence is high** and people are stuck in mixed feelings about change.
- ♦ **Confidence is low** and people doubt their abilities to change.
- ♦ **Desire is low** and people are uncertain about whether they want to make a change.
- ♦ **Importance is low** and the benefits of change and disadvantages of the current situation are unclear..

<https://motivationalinterviewing.org/understanding-motivational-interviewing>

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

Effective Practices in Community Supervision (**EPICS**) is an evidenced-based program developed by the University of Cincinnati which emphasize the need to build a strong working relationship with youth offenders while focusing on reducing criminogenic factors. EPICS challenges the traditional methods of probation supervision, moving from a compliance-based model to a change-based approach. This program provides a structured approach to client/officer interactions, with four different steps, including 1) Check-in 2) Review 3) Intervention and 4) Homework. The "Intervention" step allows the officer, in partnership with high-risk clients, to develop a plan of action which addresses criminal thoughts, feelings and behaviors through positive role modeling, skill building practice, role playing, and positive reinforcement. The emphasis is on teaching youth concrete, simple skills they can use to improve their daily lives while reducing their risk of committing new criminal offenses. The skills taught include

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Structured Skill Building, Cognitive Restructuring, Cost-Benefit Analysis and Problem Solving.

The Lucas County Juvenile Probation Department has since fully integrated this model into how it interacts with probationers and their families. Probation officers are doing EPICS sessions with all youth determined to be of moderate to high risk to reoffend according to the Ohio Youth Assessment System (**OYAS**). The EPICS model is being applied with youth during every contact, with the exception of a few situations where it might not be practical to do so. As probation officers become more and more practiced in the EPICS model they are continuing to find new and creative ways to integrate it into their daily practice.

IN 2024, THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT AIMS TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING:

- ♦ Training and staff development in the following areas:
 - The Purpose of Probation
 - Adolescent Brain Development & Trauma-Informed Care
 - Family-Centered Case Planning
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Youth
- ♦ Establish more community partnerships and resources for youth and families.
- ♦ Create Quality Assurance measures for the probation department.
- ♦ Update probations policy and procedures manual.■

2023 PROBATION DEPARTMENT NUMBERS:

TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUTH REFERRED BY SEX IN 2023	
Males	82
Females	12
TOTAL	94

TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUTH REFERRED BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN 2023	
Black	67
Latino	6
Other	4
Unknown	5
White	12
TOTAL	94

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AGE AT THE TIME OF REFERRAL IN 2023	
11 years old	2
12 years old	3
13 years old	5
14 years old	11
15 years old	18
16 years old	17
17 years old	27
18 years old	9
19 years old	1
20 years old	1
TOTAL	94

TOP OFFENSES IN 2023
CARRYING A CONCEALED WEAPON
GROSS SEXUAL IMPOSITION
FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH POLICE
RECEIVING STOLEN PROPERTY
AGGRAVATED ROBBERY