

Inside Diversion

January 2010

Volume 1, Issue 2

Wilderness Experience Gives Teens New Perspectives

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- Published by the Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program of the 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office
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By Stacey MacGlashan, LCSW

Most adolescents benefit from the positive relationship with a supportive adult that occurs in individual therapy and is the staple of the Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program.

However, alternative approaches and services can enhance therapeutic understanding of a client's needs and their overall therapy experience. They allow a therapist a clear perspective of the client's response to real-world challenges and provide opportunities for clients to feel and express frustration, anger or discomfort; to master new skills and identify strengths; and to apply these skills and strengths in new situations.

Through the wilderness component, therapists observe and interact with clients in situations similar to those they encounter, often with difficulty, in their daily lives. Clients are introduced to new situations that require social, physical and emotional skills. They are required to handle these situations without the aid of their usual electronic crutches, such as MP3 players, cell phones and portable video games.

The wilderness component consists of day-long activities and overnight trips. Participating clients set goals related to their unique treatment needs, such as maintaining appropriate boundaries, managing frustration, stretching outside their comfort zones, or simply making friends and having fun. They receive guidance and feedback from peers and staff about their success in achieving those goals.



Therapeutic meaning is attached to virtually every component of the outing. The bus ride is an opportunity to practice social skills. Setting up camp requires communication, cooperation, teamwork and often frustration tolerance. Strengths including (cont. on page 3)

Voluntary Component Offers Another Way to Help

By Shelley Dodd, LPC, NCC, LAC

While presenting at community events, I often hear the discouraging belief that no one will help troubled teens and families, or that services are not available. Here's some good news: Quality

counseling services are available, and you don't have to wait until your child commits a crime to access them.

In the past, the only way to access the Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program's (JDCP) services was by

having a case brought against a juvenile in District Court. In 2006, JDCP received an Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Assistance grant and piloted a voluntary diversion component. The purpose of this (cont. on page 4)

To File or Not to File

By Patryce Engel, Senior Deputy DA

Whether or not to file charges is only part of what the District Attorney's office considers when police officers submit cases to us.

First, we must determine whether the facts exist to establish and prove the charges. When we review cases, we must consider whether any legal issues, such as a search or a confession, were involved, and whether they were properly conducted. We also must determine whether credible witnesses to the event exist and are available. If we don't have witnesses, is there enough evidence to prove the case?

Next, we ask if we can prove this case to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. If so, we then determine whether a juvenile will be transferred to adult court, charged in juvenile court or diverted to the District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program.

Cases that are appropriate for diverting are low-level crimes involving first-time, nonviolent offenders. How-

ever, we also consider many other criteria when we decide to divert a juvenile rather than file a case in court. We ask questions such as: How serious was the offense? Was a person injured? Was property stolen or damaged? Is the juvenile a danger to public safety?

We look at such things as a prior history in the juvenile system or as a run-away. Also taken into consideration is whether the juvenile system can provide an adequate response, and did the juvenile admit guilt, cooperate with police and express remorse for his or her actions.

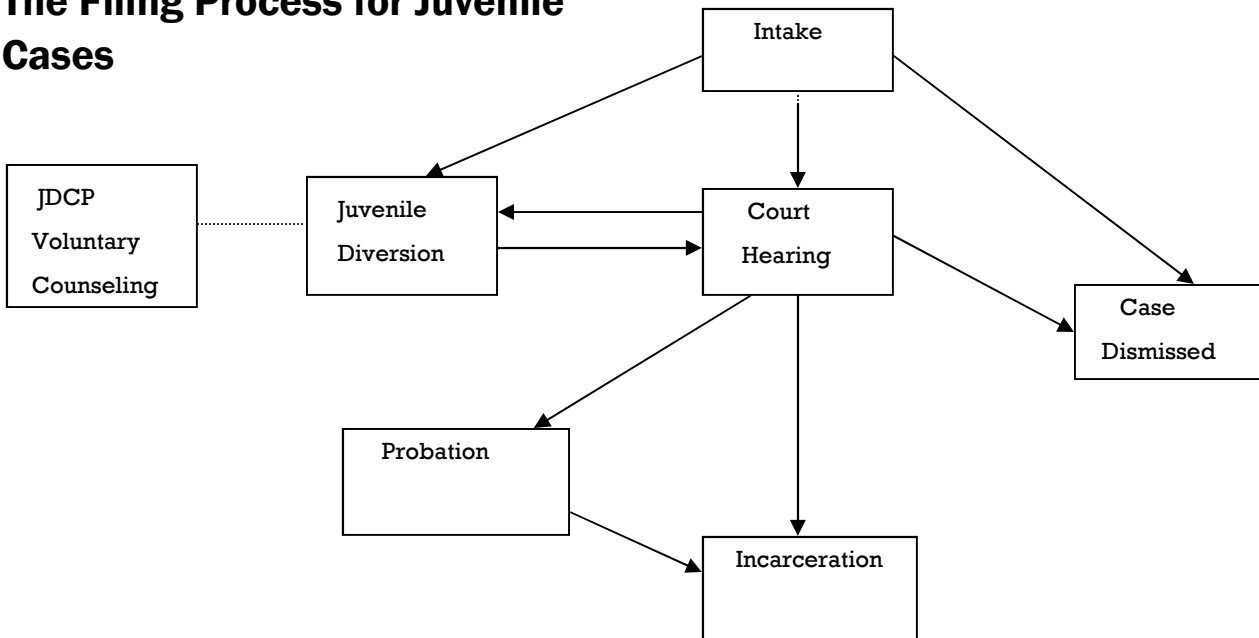
Time is another element we consider. How much time has passed between the alleged offense and the arrest as well as between the arrest and the filing decision? Has the juvenile gotten in more trouble since we received the case, and how involved was the juvenile in the alleged crime? Another consideration is if the juvenile will be able to fulfill the responsibility for financial restitution to the victim.

Finally, we take into account mitigating factors such as the juvenile's age and/or the existence of any mental or physical disability. We explore the family dynamics and assess whether the services diversion provides are beneficial to the family and appropriate for rehabilitation of the juvenile.

Given all the therapeutic and restorative programs offered through the District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program, we divert as many first-time offenders as we can.

The juvenile courts and attorneys recognize the success of our diversion program, and share with juveniles and families the benefits of participating in that option. Diverted juveniles avoid having an adjudication on their record, are eligible to petition to the court to have the case wiped from the record one year after successful completion of the program (if no new cases are filed), and receive valuable services for themselves and their families.

The Filing Process for Juvenile Cases



We're All in This Together

By Debbie Winslow, M.A.,
LPC, NCC

As a counselor in the Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program, I have the opportunity to meet families with many different structures. When we meet for the intake, one of the first questions generally is "When will you meet with my son or daughter?" More often than not, I get a surprised look when I say "all of us will meet as a family next week."

As families, we develop our own unique type of social systems, complete with set roles and rules. Naturally, we become comfortable with what we've developed, so each member of the family maintains the status quo. As natural developmental milestones and family changes occur, i.e., adolescence, di-

voiced, marriage, economic status, etc., families respond to these events in various ways.

For example, when a child "launches," or leaves home for the first time, the rest of the family adjusts to one less person in the house. Siblings who have been close to each other now have to find closeness and support with another family member or somebody outside the family.

Family therapists assist families in adapting to changes



and finding new ways of interaction that support healthy functioning. Sometimes this means throwing out old rules that are no longer helpful, changing family roles or creating new ways to respond and support each other.

Family therapy changes the concept of a problem within a family. It shifts the focus from blaming one family member for an upset or conflict to solutions the entire family can embrace and work into the new family "rules." Instead of solving individual problems as they arise, families are better equipped to improve ways in which they communicate with each other about problems in general.

For example, helping individuals learn how to listen to each other without feeling defensive. When we are open and willing to understand others' feelings and (cont. on page 5)

"Family therapy changes the concept of the problem within a family..."

"Be yourself, everyone else is taken."

- Charlie Schulz

Wilderness Experience (cont. from page 1)

leadership, patience, organization and confidence with unfamiliar tasks emerge during the assignment and completion of camp chores such as cooking and cleaning. Activities like hiking, rock climbing and kayaking demand not only physical prowess but also the ability to encourage, support and teach others.

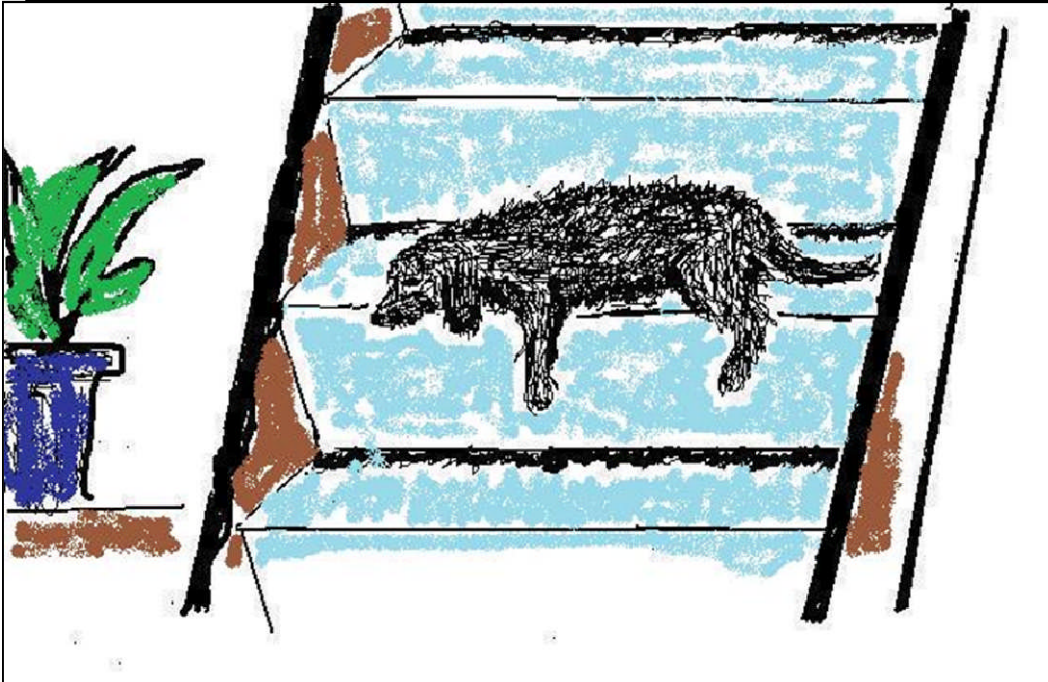
During one wilderness trip, a diversion staff member looked at the group and

commented, "They all look so healthy out here." And they were. Maybe it was because they had a reprieve from difficult decisions, such as whether to smoke weed with friends on a Saturday night or risk being ostracized and left home alone and lonely. Maybe it was because they got some unstructured, unplugged

time to explore themselves and a beautiful natural environment. Maybe it was because for 24 hours, they took responsibility for the well-being of their own little community.



Maybe it was as simple as being seen as healthy, and thus being allowed to see themselves that way. That's what the wilderness component is all about.



The Wisdom of Winston

By
Ruth Darling-Goldberg

“A walk? ... Sorry! Those relaxation exercises you gave me were just too good!”

Voluntary Component (cont. from page 1)

project was to reduce barriers to treatment and services.

One of the barriers in our case had been the criminal charge. Unless a child had received a district-level charge, they weren't eligible for services. To address this, we worked with several community agencies to spread the word that any family in our district was now eligible to participate in diversion services.

Three years later, our voluntary component has evolved into an opportunity for residents to access quality counseling services at a reduced fee.

Our services are best

thought of as outpatient counseling. That means a child or family must be able to come to our offices on a regular basis in order for us to help. Our therapists have

“Through our
voluntary component
we can now most
effectively
fulfill the promise
of our name...”

the same qualifications, experience and expertise as

therapists in private practice. The reason that is noteworthy is that some people may believe if something is low-cost or free, it must be of lower quality. Not true in this situation.

Through our voluntary component, we now can most effectively fulfill the promise of our name.

To divert means to redirect or to change something or someone's path or purpose. The purpose of a diversion program is to divert children ages 10-17 away from committing crime. Our job is to provide meaningful intervention to children as they first enter the criminal justice system in hopes of changing their path. By pre-

venting juvenile crime, we also improve community safety.

Parents who are asking for help because their children are beyond their control, are becoming involved with drugs or alcohol, are refusing to go to or failing at school, all would benefit from our services. When problems are identified early and parents/caregivers are willing to participate in services, the path can be changed, and adolescents can find purpose, joy and success.

To access the voluntary component of JDCP, contact Shelley Dodd at 720-874-8685.

Parent Ponderings *By Sue Seiler, MA, LPC, NCC*

Welcome to Parent Ponderings. This column is for you, the parent of an adolescent. It will offer you food for thought, challenge your views, validate your feelings, and, perhaps, cause some discomfort from time to time. Parenting a teen is a journey and an adventure – embrace the process and enjoy the ride. Your teen will help you to grow!

In the last issue of Inside Diversion, the Parent Ponderings column addressed the importance of getting to know ourselves by asking the questions “What am I?” and “Who am I?” This allows us to respond rather than react as parents.

The next step toward enhancing your parenting is to ask these same two questions about your child so that you may know him/her more accurately. Begin to

ask yourself “*What is my child*” and write down all of his or her external aspects. This list may include things like: 16-year-old male, brown hair, soccer player, average student, dislikes bugs. Remember, this will be a list of the observable aspects of your child.

Next make a list of “*Who is my child*,” focusing on internal qualities. Examples include temperament, values, morals and core beliefs.

The goal of both of these questions is to better *know* your children so that you are better able to help them develop all aspects of themselves, expand their strengths and understand

their weaknesses. This will help your children become the best version of themselves.

Making these lists may mean taking time to talk in an open, accepting way with your child about his or her interests and internal approach to life. This process can be challenging for parents, as we often want our children to be who *we* want them to be rather than seeing them for *who they genuinely are*. Parents may inadvertently encourage activities or traits that do not come naturally or appeal to their child. Comparing how you see your children and how they see themselves can help to minimize this tendency.

Each child is unique and best at being authentic to himself. Genuinely knowing your children is one of the greatest gifts you can give them.



“This process can be challenging...”

Parents may inadvertently encourage activities or traits that do not come naturally or appeal to their child.”

In This Together (cont. from page 3)

needs, we move from a stance of rigidness to flexibility. We “get” each other more. From this perspective, when a problem arises, individuals within the family have a new framework from which to understand the problem and each other.

If family members are better able to express their needs, worries and requests in an open and healthy way, tackling difficult issues becomes less important than the ways in which we talk about those issues. Problems then can be seen as opportunities for

learning.

Although the idea of family therapy may sound surprising at first, feedback at the end of therapy is almost always positive. It’s easier to adapt to long-lasting changes when we’re going through it together.

Who's Who in Diversion

Stacey MacGlashan, LCSW
University of Denver-MSW
University of Maryland -
MA in Journalism
University of Michigan, BA
in English Literature and
Communications

Q: What attracted you to the field of psychotherapy?

A: A friend in high school once said to me that I was his favorite person to talk through problems with, because I rarely told him what to do, but instead asked him questions until he found the answers for himself. I have always felt honored that people would share not only their joys but their sorrows with me, that they would trust me with their vulnerability, and to be capable of offering some comfort and help. What a privilege to be able to do that daily, and get paid for it!

Q: What brought you to Diversion?

A: I was working in the 18th Judicial District for the Residential Work Program and was seeking a concentration-year internship for my MSW program at DU. The process was not going smoothly. Luckily my boss at the time was kind enough to call Bill Beene, then Diversion Director, to put in a good word for me, and the rest is history.

Q: What life experiences have contributed to your success in Diversion?

A: Struggling myself with adolescence and under-

standing it's not always the carefree, happy times adults like to remember it being; working as a newspaper reporter and gaining skill in asking difficult questions and truly listening to understand both the surface and the complexities of the answers; starting over in new places, new careers, new communities multiple times in my life.

Q: What are your areas of expertise and interest in general?

A: In Diversion? That's a hard question. I'd like to think that my interest in



Stacey MacGlashan

people, how they think and feel and how they function in relationships, is also an expertise. I'd also like to think that my interest in nature, in the peace and beauty of the mountains, the sky, the trees, the stars, the ocean, etc. has corresponded with some expertise in helping diversion clients have a therapeutic nature experience through the wilderness program.

Q: What do you think is most important in life?

A: Finding whatever it is for you personally that makes

you truly to the core, happy and fulfilled, and making sure you have that not only in your life but in the center of your life.

Q: Hometown?

A: I never know how to answer this question. Where I was born? Where I live now? What I CONSIDER my hometown? Where I grew up? I spent most of my formative years (most of elementary school, all of junior high and high school) in Mundelein, Illinois.

Q: What do you like to do with your free time?

A: Spend as much of it as possible with my son, Quinn, and spend as much of that, when possible, outdoors.

Q: What is the best piece of advice/wisdom you've received?

A: Go where you truly want to be and trust that you are capable of putting all the pieces together to be successful and happy.

Q: What is something most people don't know about you?

A: My childhood dreams included Olympic speed skater, famous singer and Porsche owner/driver on the Autobahn.

Stacey started with JDCP as an intern in 2001, was hired in 2002 and currently is in the Littleton Office.

“A friend in high school once said to me that I was his favorite person to talk through problems with...”

Dear Sigmund

by Ruth Darling-Goldberg

Dear Sigmund,

Recently my child was suspended from school for something she didn't do. And the incident happened off school grounds to boot! She was eventually reinstated, but only after missing several days and with changes to her schedule, to keep her separated from the student who was really at fault. And nothing happened to the kid who started it! How can this happen and what should I do?

Very Annoyed

Dear Very Annoyed:

Advocating for your child with the school is an important aspect of parenting. Schools must focus on children as a group, both aca-

demically and socially. They maintain a delicate balance of individual versus group needs.

With the onset of two working-parent and single-parent households, schools have taken on more responsibilities in discipline, guidance and general socialization, including outside school walls. While their intentions are good, schools do not



have the law-enforcement skills or resources to properly investigate outside situations involving individual students. This can lead to unfortunate experiences for a child.

It is important that you support your child's individual interests. Listen to her side of the situation and do some investigating of your own. Consult with professionals outside of the school, including law enforcement, lawyers, therapists, etc.

Ask for a meeting with school personnel and include any relevant professionals. Present your concerns logically and ask relevant questions. Be aware that schools cannot give out information pertaining to

other children, but this does not mean that the other child has not received consequences.

Acknowledge concerns presented by school personnel and participate in fostering a team attitude.

Although you cannot change what has happened this time, you can create a foundation for better communication and teamwork for any future situations.

Send your questions to Ruth Darling-Goldberg at rgoldberg@da18.state.co.us

This column is only a brief look at issues and not meant to be a substitute for in-depth therapy.

"I did then when I knew how to do ... And when I knew better, I did better"

- Maya Angelou

Literature Review by Joy Parrish

Columbine

By Dave Cullen

Most people were so distraught about the incident that occurred on April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School that even now they can recall where they were when they heard news of the school shooting.

Ten years have passed, and now Dave Cullen has released his book, Columbine, about the tragedy. If a sad story can be told beautifully, Cullen nails it. With honor and respect, Cullen showers readers

with facts: the stories of the victims, the survivors, the school and the shooters.

The book begins with a history of the school and the town, and transitions to in-depth discussions of the lives of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

What fascinated me most about this book was its depiction of the dynamic between these two young men. Like some eclipse that happens only once in a blue moon, this rare combination of personalities resulted in

that tragic day.

Cullen also explores the controversy that arose from the myths and false accusations, largely from the media coverage. It is amazing how many games of "telephone" were played immediately after the shootings, aired on the news, and adopted as fact.

Most interesting to me was the portion about the Jefferson County Diversion Program. While we might jump to blame a counselor for not catching such crimi-

nals in the making, you'll soon find as you read this book that it really is not an issue of pointing fingers.

One may question why Cullen chose to write about one of the most devastating school shootings in America's history. As you read Columbine, the reason becomes clear. It is a story that must be told in honor of each and every life touched by the events of April 20, 1999.

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Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program

Mission Statement:

In an atmosphere of professionalism and excellence, we provide counseling and support to juvenile offenders and their families. We create opportunities for change with an emphasis on accountability and personal growth.



Top row: (from left) Debbie Winslow, Kate Arellano, Julie Sugioka, Joy Parrish. Third row: Katherine Glines, Shelley Dodd, David Brunick, Sue Seiler. Second row: Vicki Capps, Leigh Hardin, Amber Sokoll, Shannon Oberndorf, Kim Snow. First row: Kate Harwood, Ruth Darling-Goldberg, Stasia Crotzer. Not pictured: Stacey MacGlashan, Myriam Reynolds.