Placement Review and Screening Practices

Summary from the 12 Deep End Sites

Purpose of Placement Review

Placement Reviews are premised on the recognition that removing a youth from home and community is, in and of itself, a harmful process, and should be avoided whenever possible.

A quality placement review process seeks to maximize community-based and family-centered solutions, while providing consistency and nuance to decision-making that best serves all youth, families and community.

Placement Review

A Placement Review or Screening process should **evolve and deepen** its efforts over time to support and partner with families, extended family and community.

This continuous improvement effort is best guided by attempting to answer the following question:

What does it take to keep this young person at home and in his community?
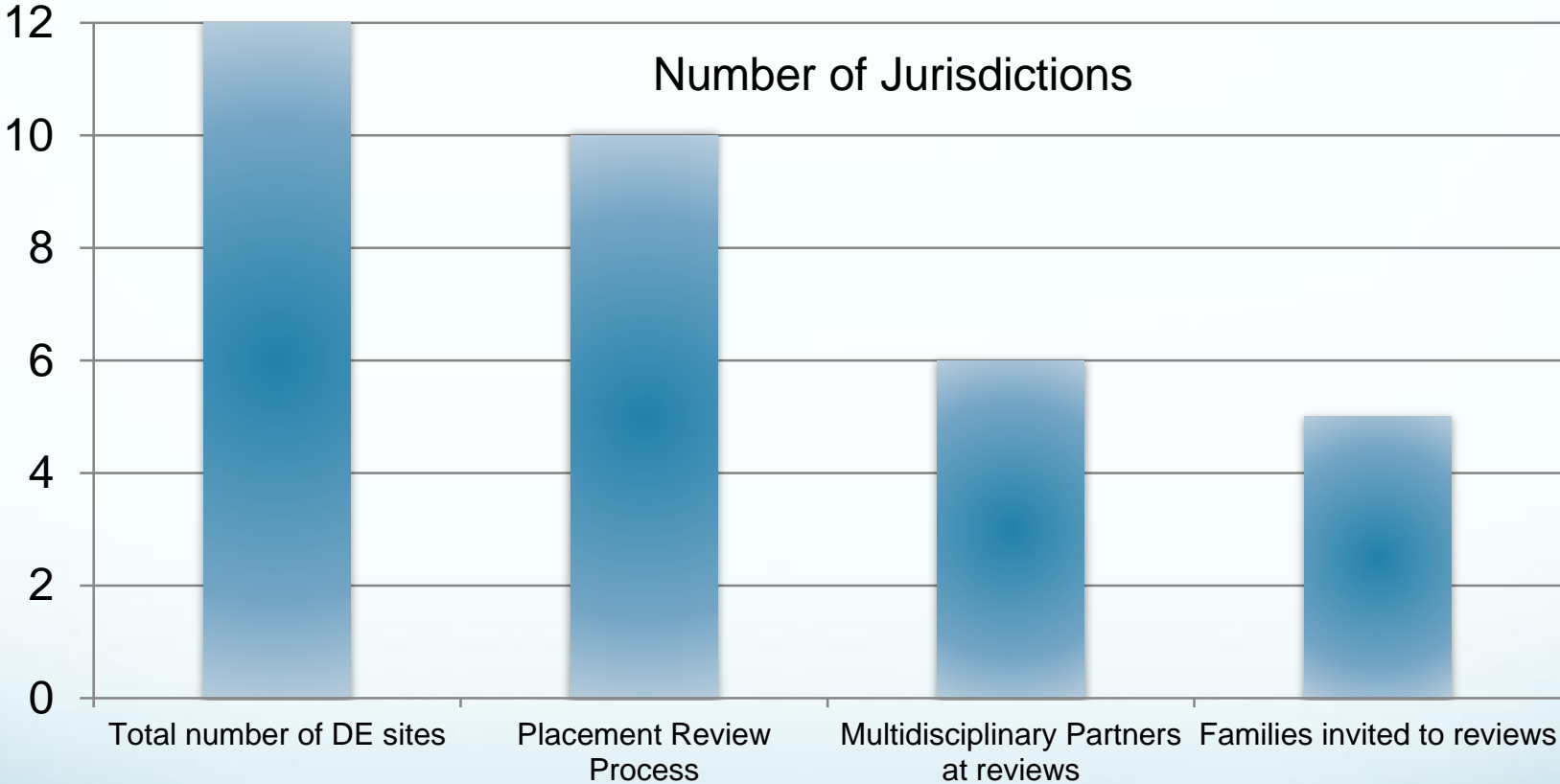
Benefits of a Comprehensive Placement Review

- Provides consistency in placement decisions

- Maximize home and community based alternatives

- Ensure probation officers / case managers/ service providers zealously support youth and families.

- Anchors decision-making in a comprehensive review of each youth's and family's strengths, while also relying on assessments, Structured Decision-Making tools, and relevant case history.

- Build upon the strengths that exist in youth and families to provide hope and support, while resisting an overly clinical or deficit-based approach.

- Engage families, next of kin and informal supports who can provide sustainable support.

Benefits Continued…

- Provide both safety planning as well as address areas plans to build upon strengths and address concerns in multiple domains of the youth's life.

- Provide assurance to judges that the placement alternative will provide Safety, Support, Structure, Supervision, and Success.

- Aggregate review of placement utilization, shorten LOS in placement, provide reentry planning and step down services.

- Conduct ongoing review and identification of gaps, needs, what's working or not.

- Assist in building a menu of culturally responsive services and youth development resources that benefit individuals and communities most impacted by the justice system

Who Participates?

Deep End sites with Placement Review Practices in place

Number of Jurisdictions

Chart showing Number of Jurisdictions:
- Total number of DE sites: 12
- Placement Review Process: 10
- Multidisciplinary Partners at reviews: 6
- Families invited to reviews: 5

Deep End jurisdictions currently use a combination of tools to assist the review process, including:

- Written Case Reviews / presentation of case history and what efforts have been made prior

- Structured Decision-Making Tool

- Risk Assessments

- Needs Assessments

- Psychological Reports

- Behavioral and Chemical Health Evaluations

- Response/sanctions matrices

When were these practices Implemented?

- While a few jurisdictions are implementing new practices, a number of jurisdictions have had their review committees and staffings in place for many years.

- Most expressed that these practices have had an impact in reducing placements, but few had documented these reductions.
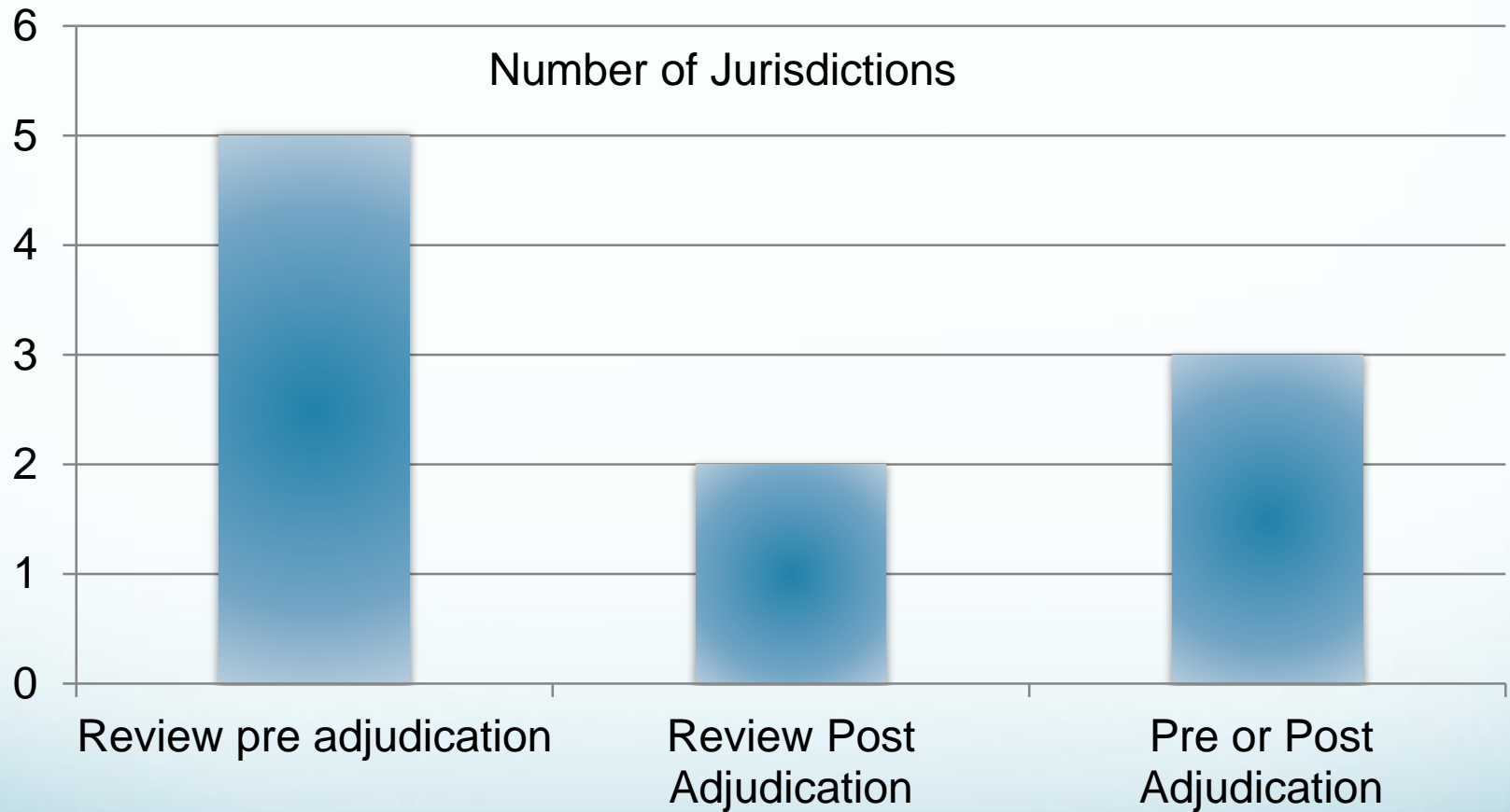
Reviews/Staffings are conducted for varying groups of young people

- Jurisdictions differ in the populations of youth who receive placement reviews. Subpopulations include:
  - Youth at risk of state commitments
  - Youth at risk of local residential placements (non-state commitments)
  - Youth adjudicated for sex offenses where there are safety concerns at home

At what stage in the process are review committees/ staffings done?

- Some jurisdictions conduct staffing pre-adjudication, with procedures to protect due process. They feel that this can help reduce delay and detention bed days. Serious cases are an exception, however in most jurisdictions.

- Others jurisdictions believe post-adjudication is the most appropriate time to conduct a placement review.

Reviews occur at different points in the process

Deep End sites noted the following benefits of a review process:

- Helps provide consistency in decision making.

- Helps reinforce the least restrictive option.

- Can reinforce assertive case management and to provide exhaustive efforts to avert placement.

- Helps identify and address service gaps and needs in order to exhaust efforts to avert OOH placement.

- Can help provide both immediate safety planning and longer term case-planning

- Can be a vehicle for larger system improvement by identifying themes.

Family Input

- Less than half (42%) of counties have a structured process that invites families to placement review.

- While 5 of the 12 counties invite families to the placement review process, we do not know how many families actually participate.

- For the 5 counties that have placement reviews but do not include families in the process, probation officers are typically expected to carry forward the parent input.

- Most have not formally adopted and trained probation officers in family conferencing, facilitation or approaches; family engagement and case management techniques are left to individual PO's.

Community-Based Alternatives Vary

- Community based services include:
  - Traditional probation
  - Specialized probation services
  - MST, FFT, MFT, Wraparound and teaming models

- Structured/ Fidelity models are typically done through contracted providers.

- Counties expressed concerns regarding a shortage of alternatives, lack of quality of some services, and the need to bring fidelity models and approaches in to traditional casework.

- Probation Officers do not appear to be directly involved or trained in direct service of fidelity placement alternative models (the level of coordination was not fully explored in this review).

Quality Improvement opportunity:
Better use of data to drive deep end reform

- Better data systems can include:
  - Use of regular reports on placement utilization
  - Regular Review of Length of Stay
  - Using the placement review process to step down and assist in reentry planning
  - Telling the story of deep end reform over time.
  - Using reviews to capture, codify and aggregate qualitative and quantitative data to drive system improvement.

Quality Improvement Opportunities
Increasing Family Partnership

- Increase family participation in decision-making processes.

- Ensure that families comfortable, not outnumbered by professionals and that decision making process puts families in the driver seat.

- For families that appear to be fatigued or ready to have their child removed, be sure to:
  - Communicate that placement is not the silver bullet
  - Ensure that will be support to address concerns and family needs through support and services.
  - Consider a strength based- positive youth development approach that substitutes a compliance based, or overly clinical approach whenever possible.

- Consider providing probation officer training on strength-based family engagement and support services for greater consistency and capacity.

Family Centered Decision-Making

A family decision making model is more of a family centered practice to which service providers are invited, than an agency centered practice to which family members are invited. And these beliefs are held:

- families have strengths and can change
- families know their children best and are the experts
- Empowering people is better than controlling them
- Strengths resolve concerns
- Families share concerns and can partner to address public safety and restorative justice outcomes
- Families have internal resources, and best use services when when self selected vs. mandated.
- Solutions are more likely to adhere when families and youth are in the driver seat

Discussion points for jurisdictions interested in implementing or strengthening placement review

- For the jurisdictions that include families, how did their presence change the process? How did it influence the decisions made?

- Are families outnumbered by professionals?

- Do staff look like the clients and families they are serving and can they convey trust that they know the communities where youth reside?

- How do you keep the process from being strength and not deficit based?

- How will you keep the process practical vs. clinical?

- If we are to further reduce placements, what do you need?

- Should family conferencing, safety planning, or other approaches be expanded?