
Young People in the Juvenile Justice System – Perspectives from Missouri

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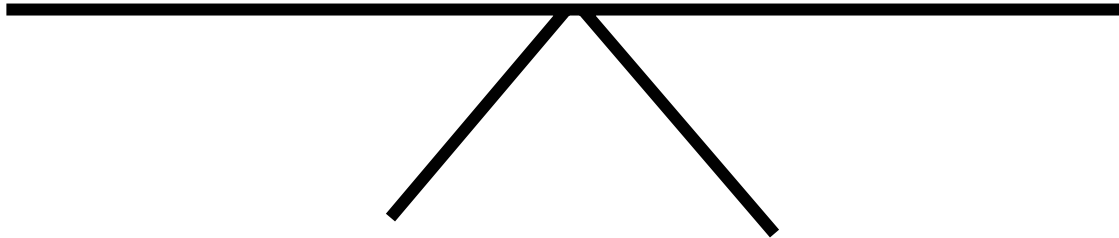
Missouri DYS Statistical Overview

- **1,250+ youth committed each year; over 2,800 served**
 - ❑ 82% Male; 18% Female
 - ❑ 45% - 16 and over
 - ❑ 66% from metro areas
 - ❑ Age of young people served ranges from 10 – 21
 - ❑ 75% from single parent (56.9%) or step-parent families (18%)
- **Committing offenses:**
 - ❑ 51% felonies
 - ❑ 38% misdemeanors
 - ❑ 11% juvenile offenses
- **Educational Disability and Mental Health Conditions**
 - ❑ 34% educational disability
 - ❑ 49% prior mental health; 38% with an active diagnosis

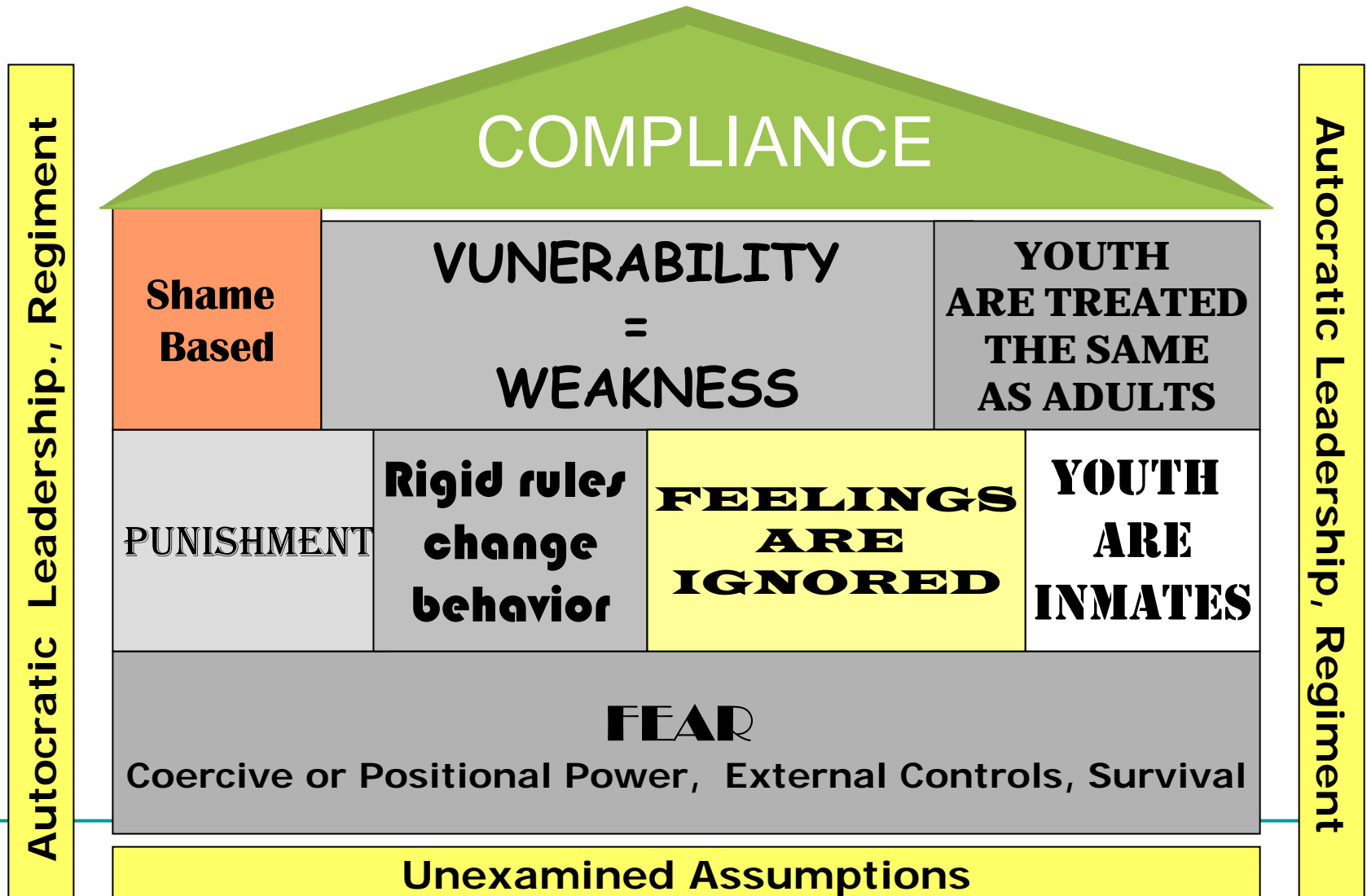
Current Challenges of JJ System

A NEW BALANCE

Prevention Public Safety Treatment



Correctional/Traditional House



Punitive Approaches

- ❑ Based on the belief that **behavior change will occur as a result of punishing** the youth's misbehavior
- ❑ **Interventions have only an arbitrary connections** to the youth's behavior and are neither logical, natural, or therapeutic. **Implies superiority and control in the adult** and inferiority in the youth
- ❑ **Coerces superficial submission** vs. changed behavior. Overtime, long-term, sustained punitive approaches have an oppressive quality and which increases tension, anger, hostility, resentment and the occurrence of acting out behaviors.

Behavioral Modification

- ❑ **Use of rewards or punishments** to reduce or eliminate problematic behavior. Often used with a point system, checklist. **May serve as a tool for supporting and reinforcing** positive behaviors changes and efforts
- ❑ **Often counter productive to long lasting sustainable change.** The focus is on “external” points vs. internalized change. May spend enormous amounts of time and energy “counting” points versus dealing with group dynamics and youth’s core issues.
- ❑ **Tendency for the point system to devolve into a punitive system** of behavioral control vs. behavior change.
- ❑ **Overuse begins to replace positive “here and now” relationships** between youth and adults.

Cognitive Behavioral Approaches

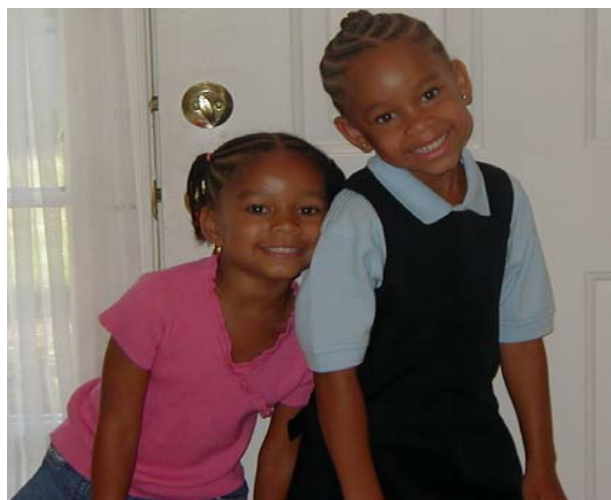
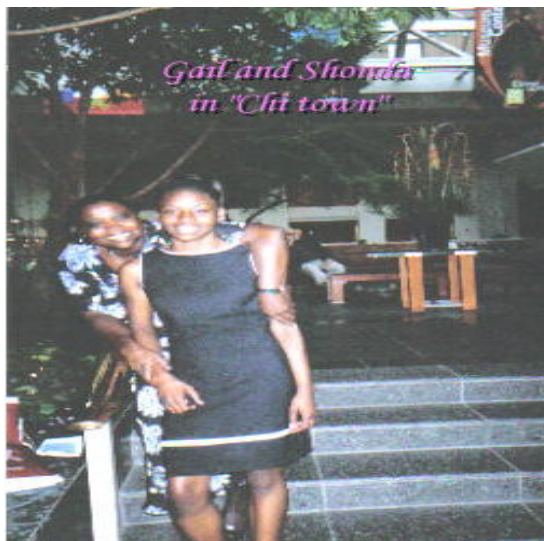
- ❑ Focuses on recognizing unhelpful or destructive patterns of thinking and modifying them with more realistic or helpful ones.
- ❑ Does not address emotional or systemic aspects of behavior

Changing Systems for Youth

Changing our end destination often
involves starting from a
fundamentally different place.

Values x Practice = Results

"If this was your child, what?"



**Picture Your
Child Here**



Organizational Structure/Culture

- **Beliefs and Philosophies** – *values driven, view everything through the lens of our beliefs and philosophies and what works (program fidelity) –*
“Make the program fit the young person, not the young person fit the program”
- **Quality Staff and Team Approach**
 - Frontline staff engaged vs. custodial
 - Consistent team assignments, low ratios
- **Development and Training** – *staff and teams*
- **Accountable/Determined** – “do what it takes” philosophy; proud, hopeful, and dissatisfied.

Organizational Belief System – How we View Youth and Families ...

- ***Each person is special and unique*** - youth viewed as a work in progress and a resource to self and others.
- ***Safety and structure are the foundations for program development*** - youth need to know that staff care enough about them to expect them to succeed. Structure, engaged supervision, relationships and facilitation create the physical and emotional safety youth so desperately need.
- ***It is difficult to change*** - People tend to be naturally resistant and fearful of change. Youth must be guided to try new behaviors, succeed, and be allowed to possibly fail before actual change occurs.

Organizational Belief System

- ***People desire to do well and succeed*** - Even the most resistant youth hunger for approval and acceptance. Programs and services are structured in a manner that will tap into this universal need.
- ***We are more alike than different*** - Everyone has fears, insecurities, and basic needs including safety, attention, and belonging. Programs are expected to normalize and attend to these needs, assisting youth in learning to fulfill these them in positive and productive ways.
- ***Emotions are not to be judged*** - Feelings are not right or wrong. Youth must work on behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Personal disclosure and reconciling our past experiences are an important part of healing and personal growth.

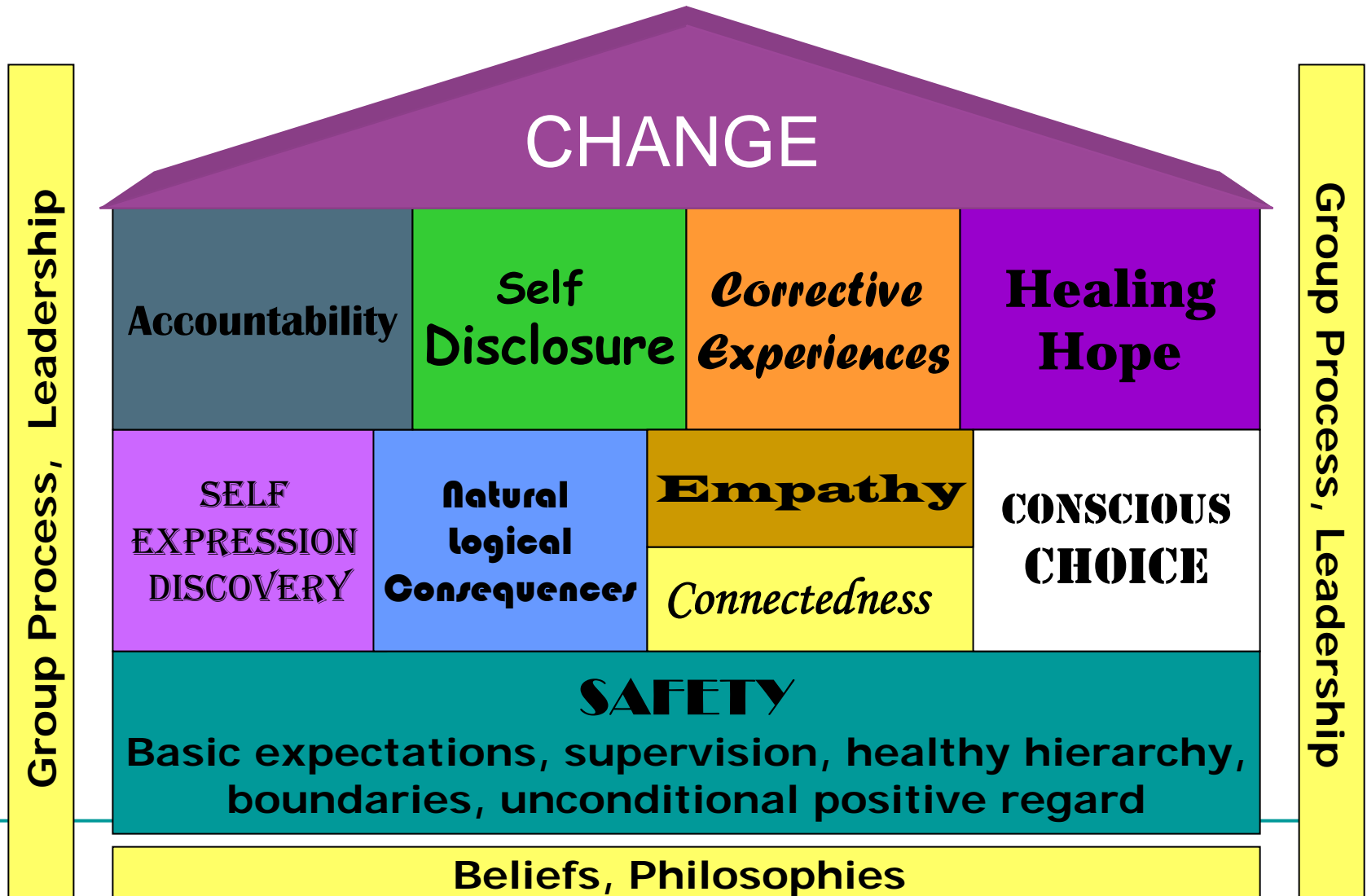
Organizational Belief System

- ***All behavior has a purpose*** - Behavior is often a symptom of unmet needs. Services must help youth investigate and understand their history, behavior and alternatives.
- ***People do the best they can with the resources available to them*** - Youth often come to the agency with limited behavioral and emotional options as well as limited resources. In situations they have experienced, their behavior may seem logical and understandable.
- ***The family is vital in the treatment process*** - Services provided to youth must take into account the values and behaviors established within the family system. Family expertise and participation is essential in the youth's treatment process, and can also help facilitate system change within family.

Highly Effective Strategy

- **Small programs, close to home** – *least restrictive continuum of care beginning diversion in all regions*
- **Humane environments** – *physical and emotional safety through structure, supervision, facilitation*
- **“Group systems”** – *group therapy, family systems, youth development*
- *Healthy marriage between* **treatment and education**
- **Universal case management** – *start to finish*
- **Family therapy, social capital, community support**
- **Therapeutic/Integrated vs. Correctional/Punitive** – *emotional healing, awareness, skill development*

Treatment House



APPROACHES:

Reshaping Behavior



Integrated Treatment Approach

- The belief that for youth to truly change and avoid reoffending, they must go through a process of self exploration and a change process that addresses their history/family dynamics and how it has influenced their present situation
 - “Holistic” approach - perceptions (cognitions), feelings/emotions, decisions and behavioral choices
 - “Group Systems” – integration of group process, developmental, and family systems
 - Level systems reflect the change process and provide an individualized “roadmap”

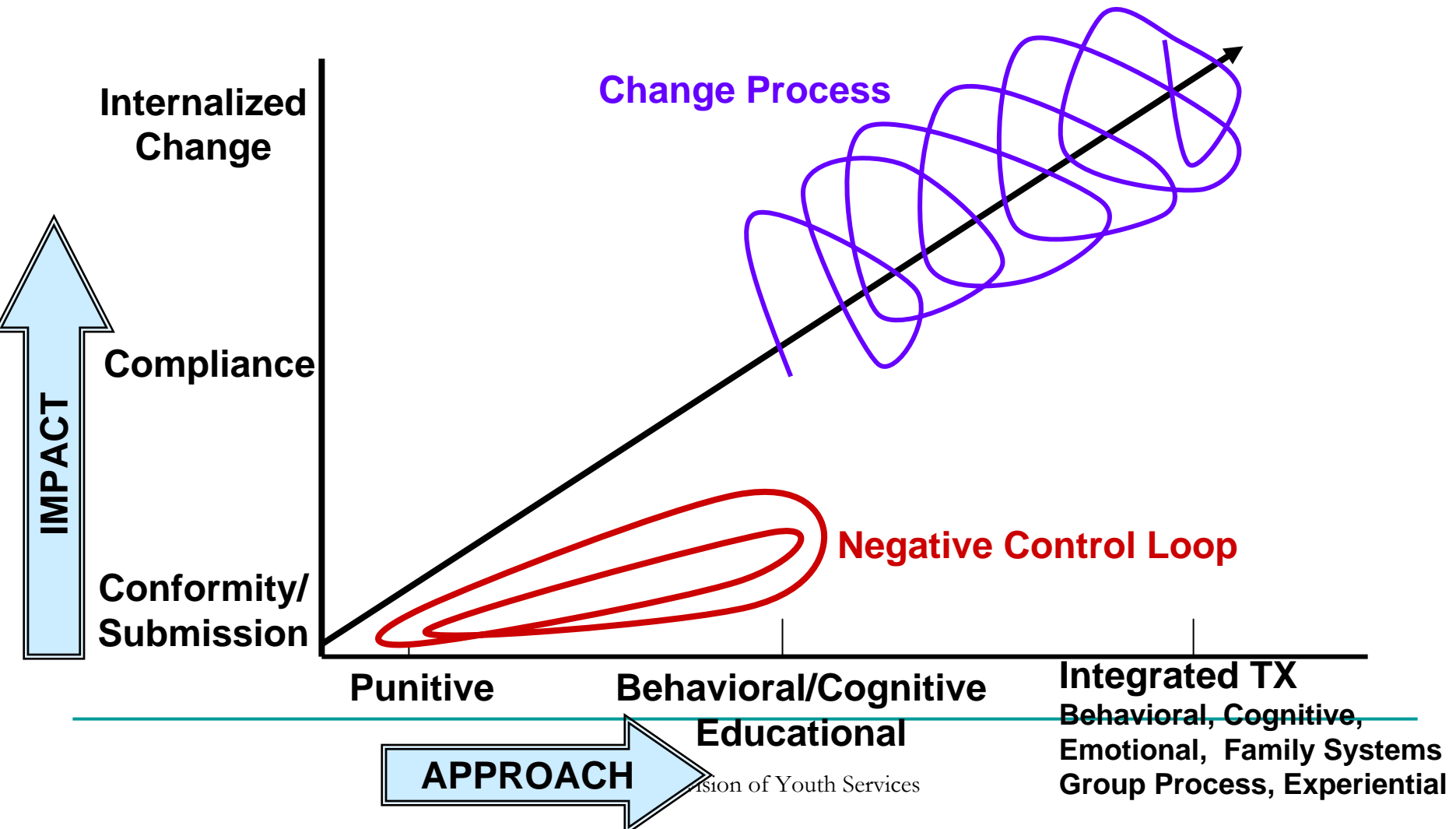
Integrated Treatment Approach

- A system in which youth participate in a structured and purposeful daily schedule focused on building healthy peer-to-peer and adult-child relationships, self-awareness and insight, skill development, resolution of core issues, behavioral change, and leadership
 - ❑ Individualized and integrated educational approach (“therapeutic one-room schoolhouse”)
 - ❑ Predictable daily group meetings (sacred time, emotional safety, trauma work, self acceptance and accountability)
 - ❑ Ongoing treatment activities and group “circles” (educational, conflict resolution, problem solving)
 - ❑ Regular engagement with family and community (empathy and giving back)
 - ❑ Leadership, youth development, and recreational opportunities

DYS Outcomes

- **7.3 % recommitment rate (new juvenile offenses)**
- **Dept. of Corrections Involvement (3 years after discharge/class of 2004):**
 - 6.8% incarceration
 - 22.8% adult probation
- **90% achieve high school credits**
- **25%+ achieve GED or diploma** prior to discharge, 48% successfully returned to school
- **70%+ progress faster rate than same age peers** in core subjects such as reading, writing, math
- **84% satisfactory discharge**
 - Law abiding
 - Productive (school, work)

Reshaping Behavior: Approaches



Social Intelligence – The New Science of Human Relationships by Daniel Goleman

“Half a dozen times a day the members form into a circle to check in with each other to say how they feel.....

They meet for activities that are designed to enhance camaraderie and cooperation, foster empathy and accurate perceptions of each other, and build communication skills and trust. All of that constructs

a secure base and provides them with the social abilities they so desperately need.” – Daniel Goleman, 2006



Missouri Division of Youth Services

Supplemental Materials

Major Components of An Effective Juvenile Justice System

- Leadership & Innovation
- Open & Inclusive
- Quality & Valued Staff
- Safety & Structure
- Learning Environment
- Continuity of Care & Service Integration
- Family & Community Engagement
- Integrated Treatment Approach

Missouri Juvenile Justice 101

- 45 separate juvenile circuits and 24 locally operated juvenile detention centers
- At age 17, a youth is considered an adult for new law violations
- DYS typically retains jurisdiction for juvenile offenders until discharged or until the youth reaches age 18
- Juvenile court can retain jurisdiction until age 21 for abuse/neglect, status offenders, and law violators
- DYS a Division of the Department of Social Services
- Juvenile Court Diversion program administered by DYS for the purposes of strengthening local systems and reducing commitments

Missouri DYS Recognitions

- **Hosted visits from over 25 states** focused on humane therapeutic approaches, outcomes, and long-term cost effectiveness
- **Designated *Guiding Light of Reform*** by American Youth Policy Forum finding treatment and least restrictive care as far more successful than incarceration-oriented programs (2001)
- **Named model juvenile justice site** by the Annie E. Casey and Edna McConnell Clark Foundations and National Council on Crime and Delinquency (2003)
- **Annie E. Casey Innovations in American Government Award in Children and Family System Reform** from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Ash Institute (2008)