

Sonoma County Probation Department

Youth Survey Results 2014 -2018



By Sonoma County Probation's
Planning, Implementation & Evaluation Team

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Background and Methods

In the fall/winter of 2014, 2016, and 2018, youth on Probation were asked to complete surveys as part of an evaluation of Juvenile Probation’s adherence and fidelity to evidence-based practices (EBPs). At a single point in time, youth were asked between 36 and 88 survey questions, depending on their location, about their experience with Probation, in order to reflect how well Probation adhered to various EBPs. Youth also reported on their overall satisfaction with staff, as well as barriers they experience in accessing programs or services. The table below specifies the concepts and sub-scales that were measured through the survey, along with the respective sources.

Concept	Sub-scales	Source
Case Plan Involvement	N/A	Developed for the evaluation using standard ratings approach
EPICS or Core Correctional Practices (CCP)	Check-in, review, intervention, homework, behavioral practices, general ratings, criminogenic needs	Based on Sonoma County Probation’s EPICS Officer Rating Form
Motivational Interviewing	Collaboration, evocation, respect for autonomy, direction, empathy	Adapted from Brad Bogue’s <i>Exercises for Developing MI Skills in Corrections</i>
Probation Office / Caseworker/ Staff Satisfaction	N/A	Adapted from Cherkos, 2008 and DeLude, Mitchell & Barber, 2012
Procedural Justice	Procedural fairness, neutrality, benevolence, status recognition	Huo & Tyler, 2000

Scores for each of these concepts were analyzed each year the survey was administered in order to identify changes in adherence to practices over time. Mean scores (e.g. average scores) were also analyzed for each probation setting, including: community supervision, placement, juvenile hall, Quest/Odyssey, and camp. When comparing averages across years, it is important to know how much confidence we can have that the difference is real and not due to small numbers and variance in the scores included in the average. The bigger the numbers and the less variance, the more confidence we can have that the difference represents real change versus random fluctuation. Tests for statistical significance help us know how much confidence we should have. To test for statistical significance, t-tests for independent samples were conducted. Due to the small sample sizes within each distinct location, statistical testing was only conducted to compare changes between Years 2 and 3 across the overall population, rather than within certain locations. Findings are presented below, followed by a discussion on conclusions and limitations.

Sample of survey respondents

Youth involved with Probation in the fall of 2014, 2016 and 2018 were asked to complete a survey if they had been on a supervision caseload for at least 2 months and were receiving full case management services, or were in an institution for at least 30 days in the last year. Other exclusion criteria included:

- Youth in **Placement** were not included in year 1 of the survey. In years 2 and 3 they were not asked questions pertaining to EPICS/CCP.
- **In year 1, youth in Juvenile Hall** were not asked about case plan involvement.

- **Odyssey** was not established until the end of October 2014, therefore Odyssey respondents are only included in 2016. The Quest/Odyssey program was discontinued by 2018, however in order to capture the experience of youth serving time in Juvenile Hall who receive unique services, in 2018, **youth serving time in the Hall** received a separate version of the survey from other youth in Juvenile Hall. This version was comparable to the Quest/Odyssey version in 2016.

Differences in survey language by location

Depending on the youth’s location, the language of the survey questions varied in regards to the person whom they were evaluating. For example, when asked about their satisfaction level with staff, youth in community supervision and placement were asked about their satisfaction with their PO. Youth in juvenile hall were asked the same satisfaction questions, but alternatively about their satisfaction with “juvenile hall staff.” The table below shows how the language varied by location regarding *who* the youth were evaluating:

Location	Survey Measure or Scale			
	Satisfaction	Motivational Interviewing	EPICS/CCP (including criminogenic needs)	Procedural Justice
Community Supervision	PO	PO	PO	PO
Placement	PO	PO	Not Applicable	PO
Juvenile Hall	Juvenile Hall Staff	Juvenile Hall Staff	Juvenile Hall Staff	Juvenile Hall Staff and PO (if they have one)
Juvenile Hall-Serving Time	Caseworker	Caseworker	Juvenile Hall Staff	Caseworker and Juvenile Hall staff
Quest/Odyssey	Caseworker	Caseworker	Quest/ Odyssey staff	Caseworker and Quest/ Odyssey staff
Camp	Caseworker	Caseworker	Camp staff	Caseworker and Camp staff

Summary of Findings

Survey completion

Overall survey completion rate was highest in Year 3, at 76%, compared to 58% in Year 2, and 72% in Year 1. Response rates in Year 3 reached 100% for youth in institutions, but considerably lower for youth on Supervision. Despite the highest response *rate* in 2018, Year 3 had the fewest number of survey responses compared to prior years. While the response rates for Camp youth and youth Serving Time hit 100%, it should be noted that these samples were extremely small. Findings for these locations should be interpreted with caution; with a sample that small, responses from just one survey could have considerable bearing on the overall results. The table below shows the 2018 response rates by location.

Location	# Surveys Administered	# Surveys Received	Response Rate
Community Supervision	65	37	57%
Placement	16	15	94%
Juvenile Hall	25	25	100%
Juvenile Hall - Serving Time	9	9	100%
Camp	5	5	100%

Youth characteristics

Overall, respondents were overwhelmingly male each year and a majority were Latino/Hispanic (see table 1). The median age was consistently 16-17 years. In Year 3, the proportion of youth completing the survey who were supervised as high risk increased from prior years, while the proportion of low risk youth decreased. Additionally, the proportion of survey responses from Community Supervision decreased in Year 3, while the proportion of youth surveys from the Hall increased.

Table 1. Survey respondent characteristics, years 1-3

	Year 1 N = 125	Year 2 N = 135	Year 3 N = 91
Location			
Community Supervision	76 (61%)	63 (47%)	37 (41%)
Placement	0 (0%)	23 (17%)	15 (17%)
Juvenile Hall	24 (19%)	27 (20%)	25 (28%)
Juvenile Hall – Serving Time	--	--	9 (10%)
Quest/Odyssey	12 (10%)	8 (6%)	--
Camp	13 (10%)	14 (10%)	5 (6%)
Gender			
Male	107 (87%)	108 (80%)	73 (80%)
Female	16 (13%)	27 (20%)	18 (20%)
Age at survey			
Mean age	16.5 years	16.9 years	16.4 years
Range	12-24 years	13-21 years	13-19
Race/Ethnicity			
White/Caucasian	34 (28%)	39 (29%)	26 (29%)
Latino/Hispanic	72 (59%)	69 (51%)	51 (56%)
All other racial/ ethnic groups	17 (14%)	27 (20%)	14 (15%)
Supervision Level *			
Low	24 (19%)	33 (24%)	9 (10%)
Moderate	36 (29%)	37 (27%)	22 (24%)
High	55 (44%)	63 (47%)	51 (56%)
No Supervision Level	10 (8%)	2 (1%)	2 (2%)

Figures may not add up to the total sample size due to missing responses; percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

*Note: Supervision level refers to the risk level assigned by the probation officer. It may be the same as the assessed risk from the PACT, or an override could have been applied based on discretion of the probation officer with review and approval by the unit supervisor.

Placement had a greater proportion of female respondents compared to other locations, and respondents serving time at the Hall and at Probation Camp were generally older than respondents in other locations. Youth respondents in institutions were more likely to be Latino/Hispanic, compared to respondents in the community. The table below shows the characteristics from the Year 3 respondents by location.

Table 2. Respondent characteristics by location in Year 3 only (2018)

	Community Supervision	Placement	Juvenile Hall	JH - Serving Time	Probation Camp
Total Sample	37	15	25	9	5
Gender					
Male	31 (84%)	9 (60%)	21 (84%)	7 (78%)	5 (100%)
Female	6 (16%)	6 (40%)	4 (16%)	2 (22%)	0 (0%)
Age at survey					
Mean age	16.4 years	16.3 years	16.2 years	17 years	17 years
Range	13-19 years	14-18 years	14-18 years	16-19 years	15-18 years

Race/Ethnicity					
White/Caucasian	8 (22%)	7 (47%)	7 (28%)	3 (33%)	1 (20%)
Latino/Hispanic	20 (54%)	7 (47%)	15 (60%)	5 (56%)	4 (80%)
Other racial/ethnic groups	9 (24%)	1 (7%)	3 (12%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
Supervision Level					
Low	5 (14%)	1 (7%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)
Moderate	15 (41%)	5 (33%)	1 (4%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
High	17 (46%)	9 (60%)	22 (88%)	8 (89%)	2 (40%)
No Supervision Level	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

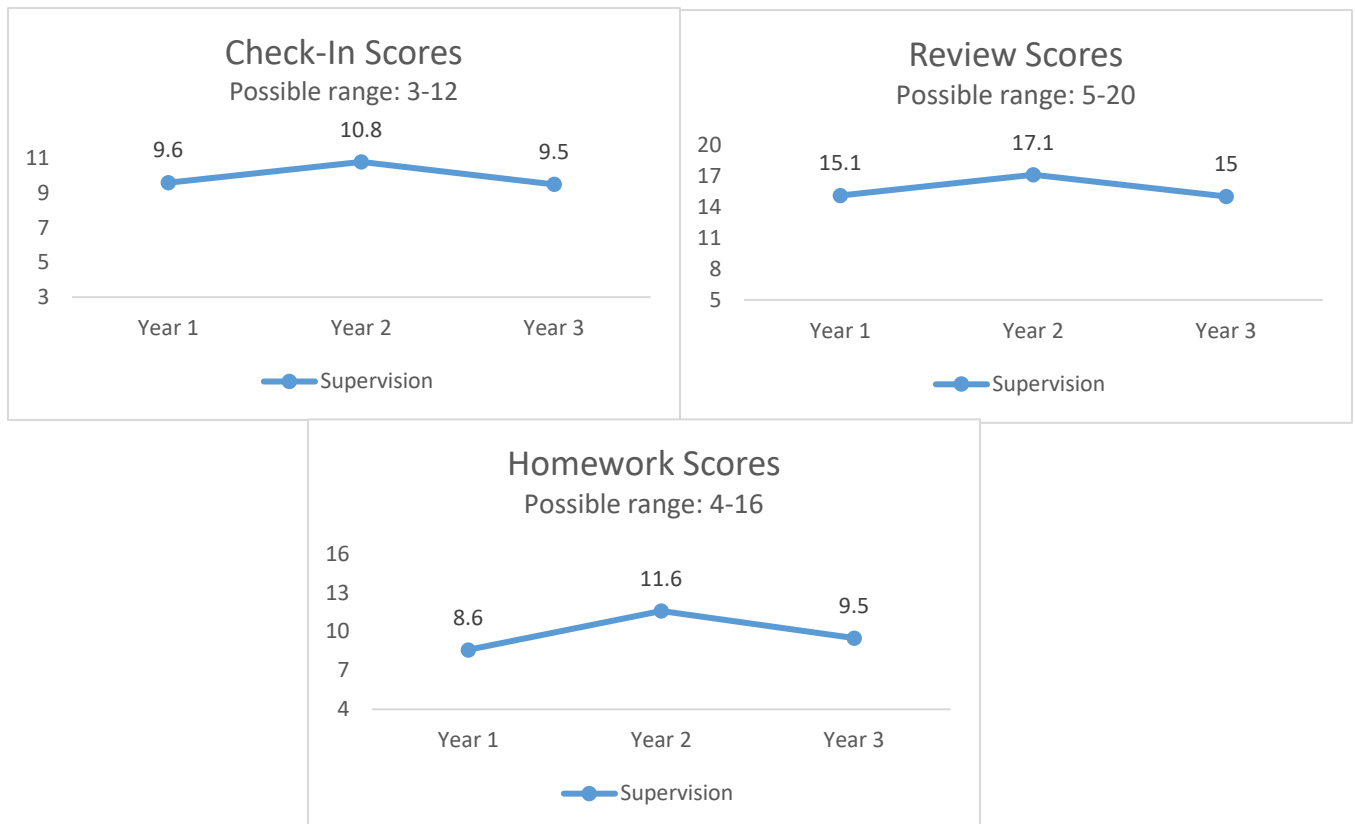
Adherence to Evidence Based Practice

The following set of charts and tables presents overall scores for EPICS/CCP scales, addressing criminogenic needs, motivational interviewing, PO/caseworker satisfaction, and procedural justice, based on youth report. The results presented show the trends over time, broken out by location.

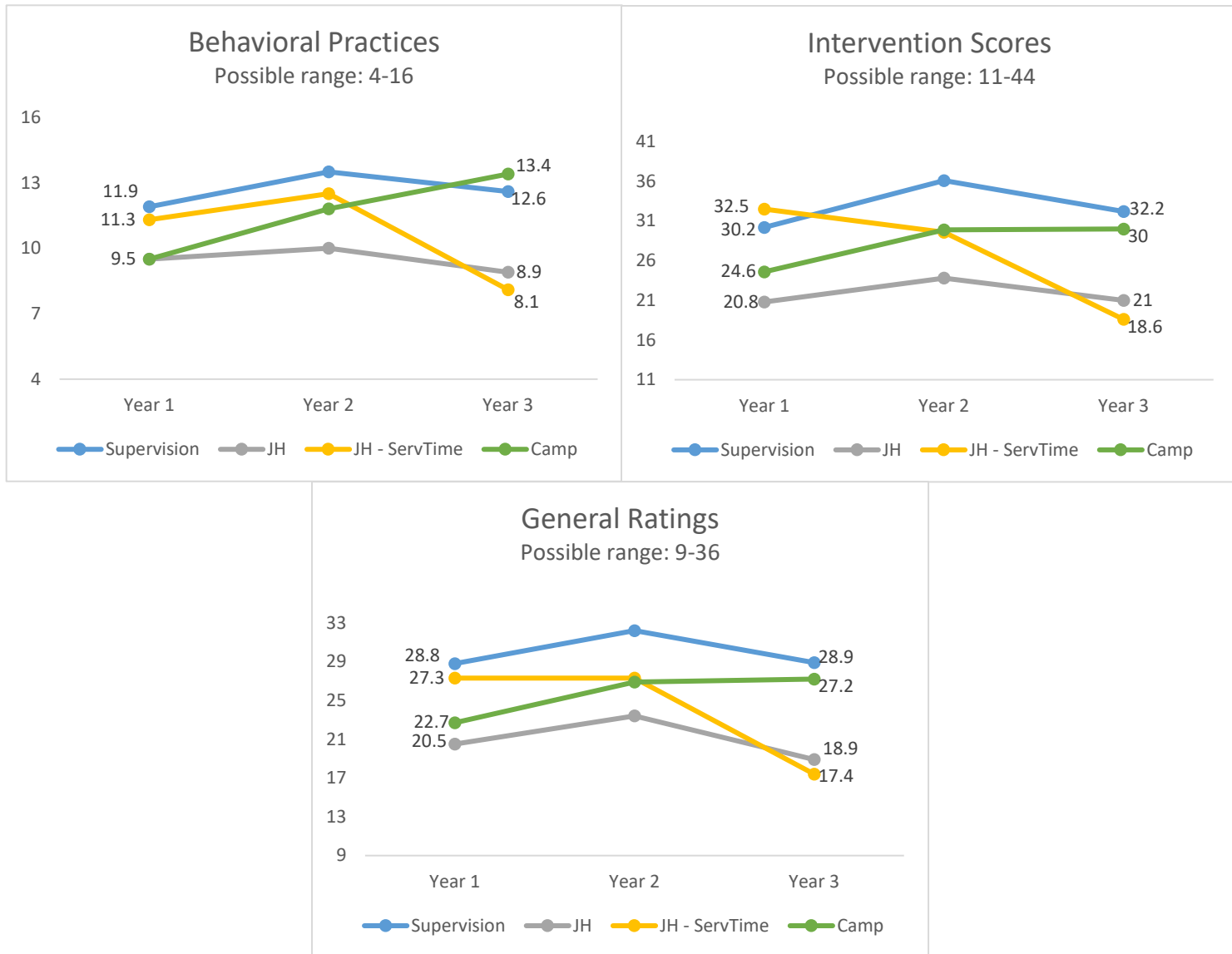
EPICS/CCP scores

Between 2014 and 2016, EPICS/CCP scores increased overall for all measures. Three concepts measured (Check-In, Review, and Homework) apply only to the EPICS model, and therefore measures for these domains are provided for Community Supervision only. Additionally, Placement youth were not surveyed about EPICS/CCP items. Between 2016 and 2018, EPICS/CCP scores decreased to near the levels of 2014. Across all locations, changes in overall scores between 2016 and 2018 for Behavioral Practices, General Ratings and Intervention domains were statistically significant. Serving Time youth experienced more substantial declines in scores in Year 3, though it should be noted this is a very small sample size (n=9). The charts below present the scores for Years 1-3 for each EPICS/CCP domain.

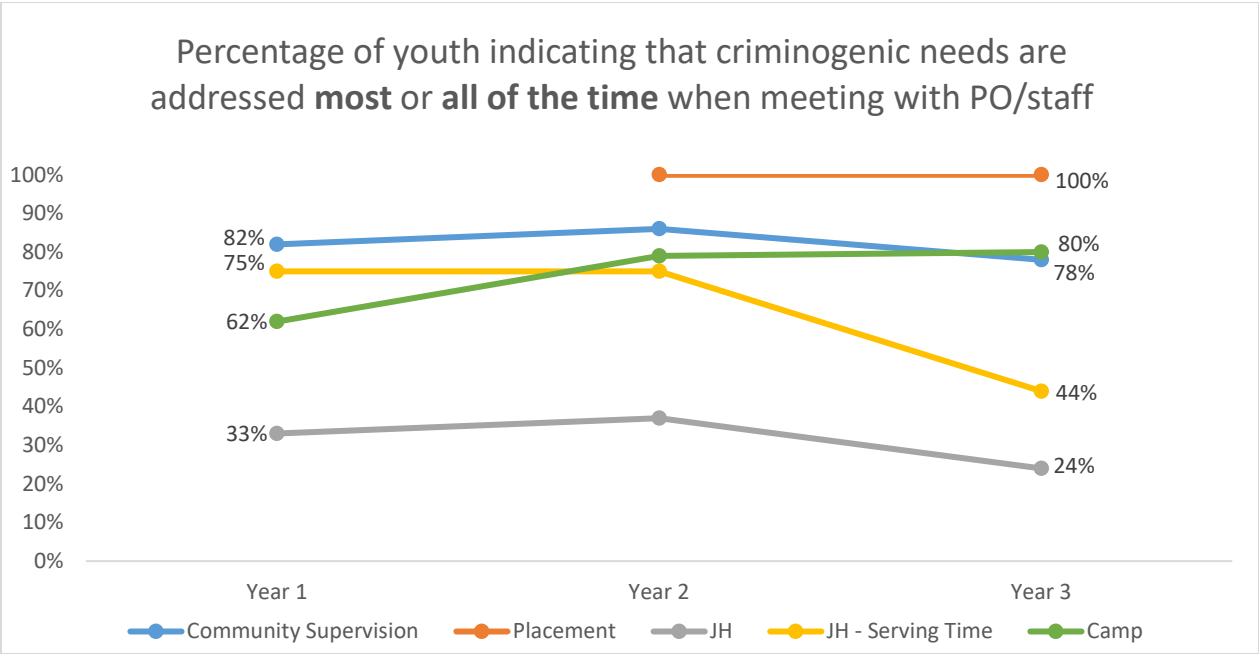
Domains specific to Community Supervision only:



Domains specific to Community Supervision and Institutions:



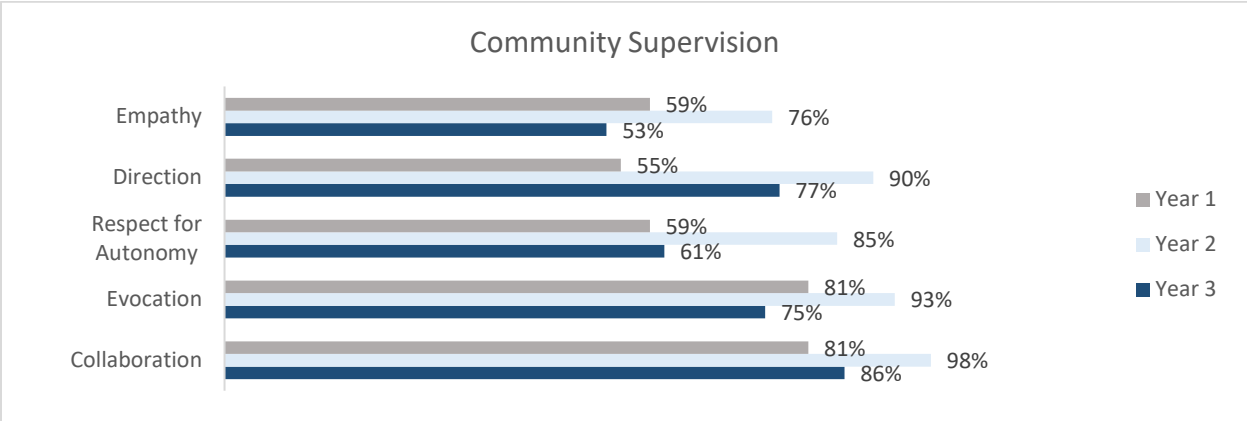
In addition to the EPICS/CCP scales, youth were asked about how frequently their PO or probation staff addressed their criminogenic needs. Specifically they were asked: *“When you meet with your PO, how often does he or she talk to you about things connected with you getting into trouble with the law?”* While the overall percentage of youth reporting that their PO or probation staff address criminogenic needs “most of the time” or “always” decreased to 64% overall in 2018, a statistically significant difference, there was variation by location. Over three-quarters of youth on Supervision, in Placement and at Camp reported that criminogenic needs are addressed most or all of the time when meeting with staff, which was comparable to responses in prior years. Youth in Juvenile Hall, including those Serving Time reported a more noticeable drop in this measure compared to the prior years.

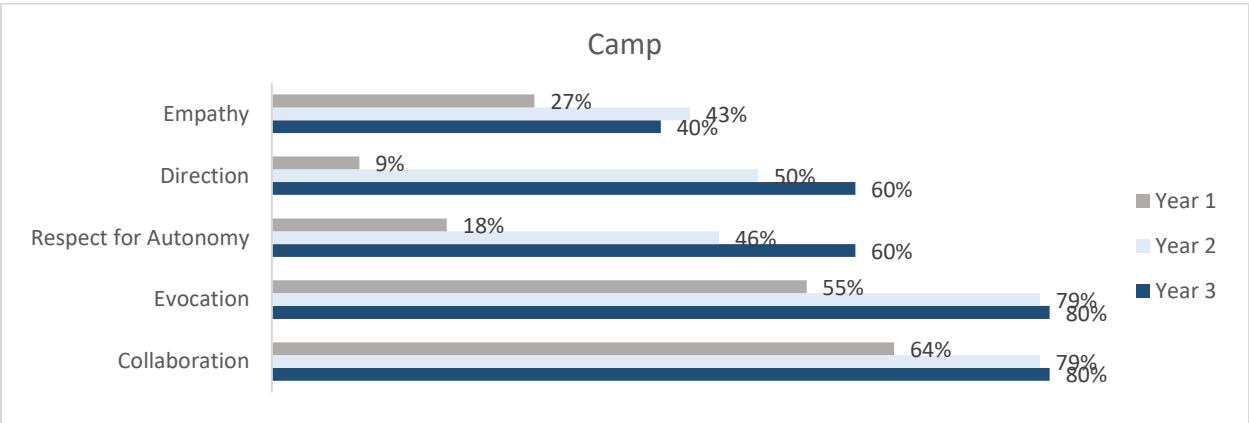
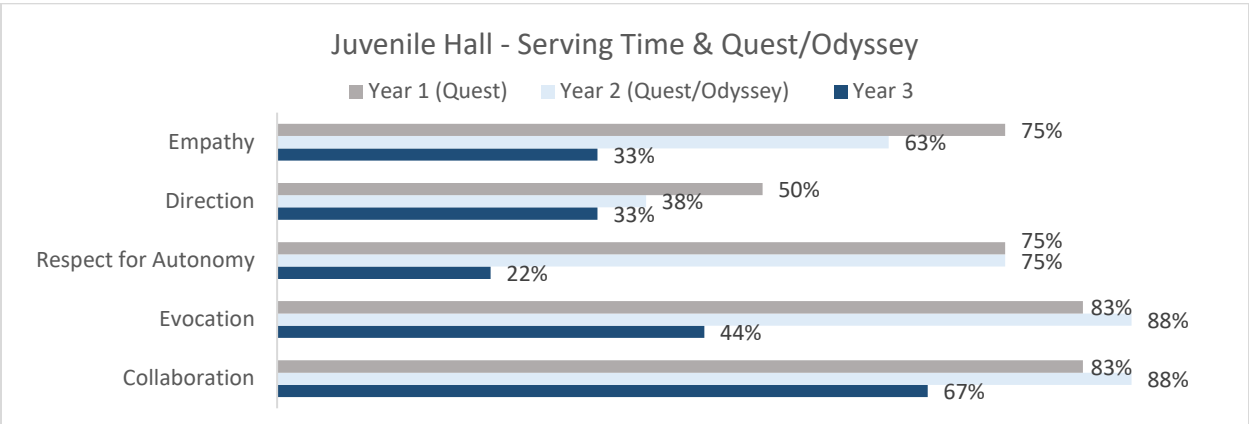
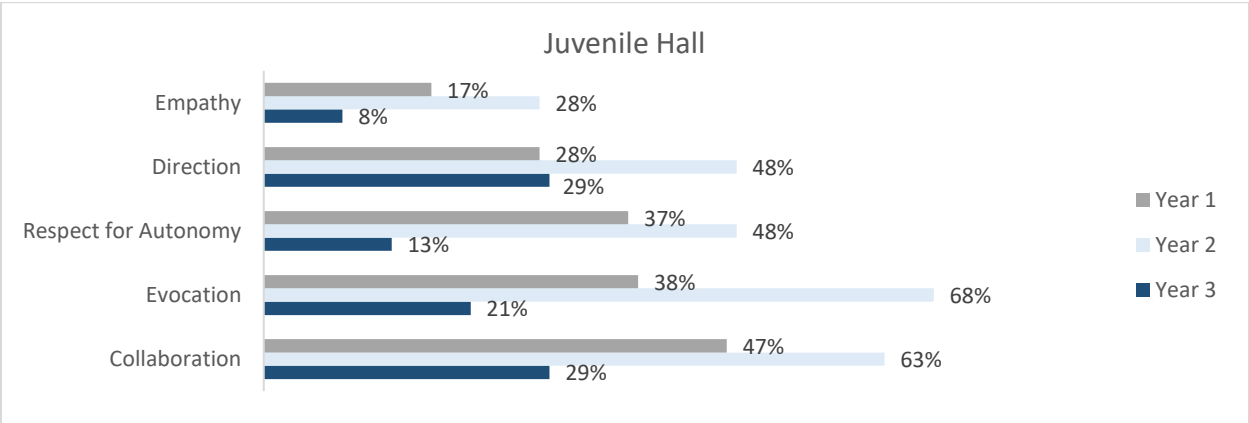
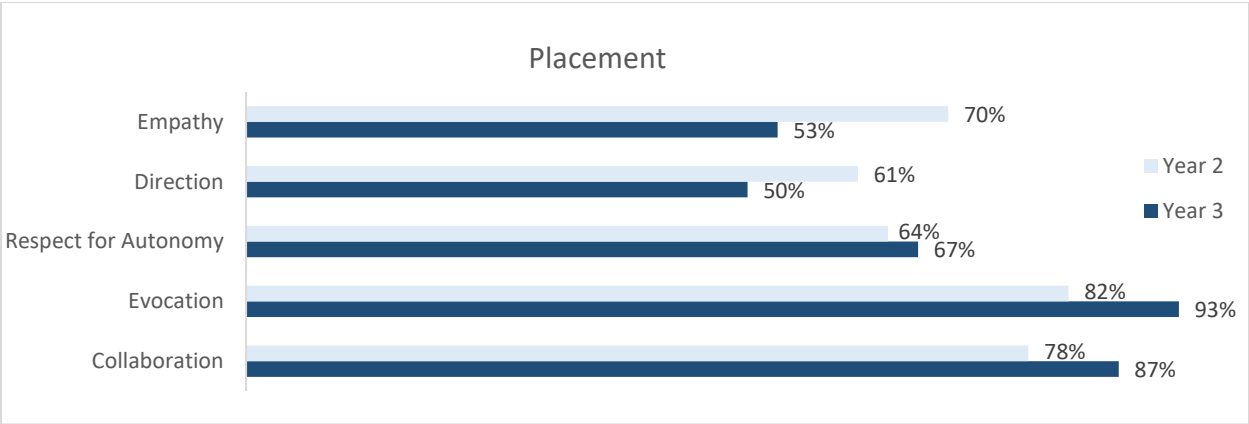


Motivational Interviewing

Adherence to motivational interviewing was measured by 5 items on the youth survey, capturing concepts of *empathy*, *direction*, *respect for autonomy*, and *collaboration*. Between 2014 and 2016, motivational interviewing (MI) scores increased across all sites. In Year 3, Placement and Camp scores in Year 3 were similar, overall, to those in year 2. Youth on Supervision saw a modest decline in MI scores, while youth Serving Time and in Juvenile Hall also experienced declines in MI scores. Statistical testing showed overall a significant decrease in Year 3 for all MI items exception for the *direction* concept. The following charts present results for the MI concepts for each location separately. The five MI concepts were measured by youth who indicated the following:

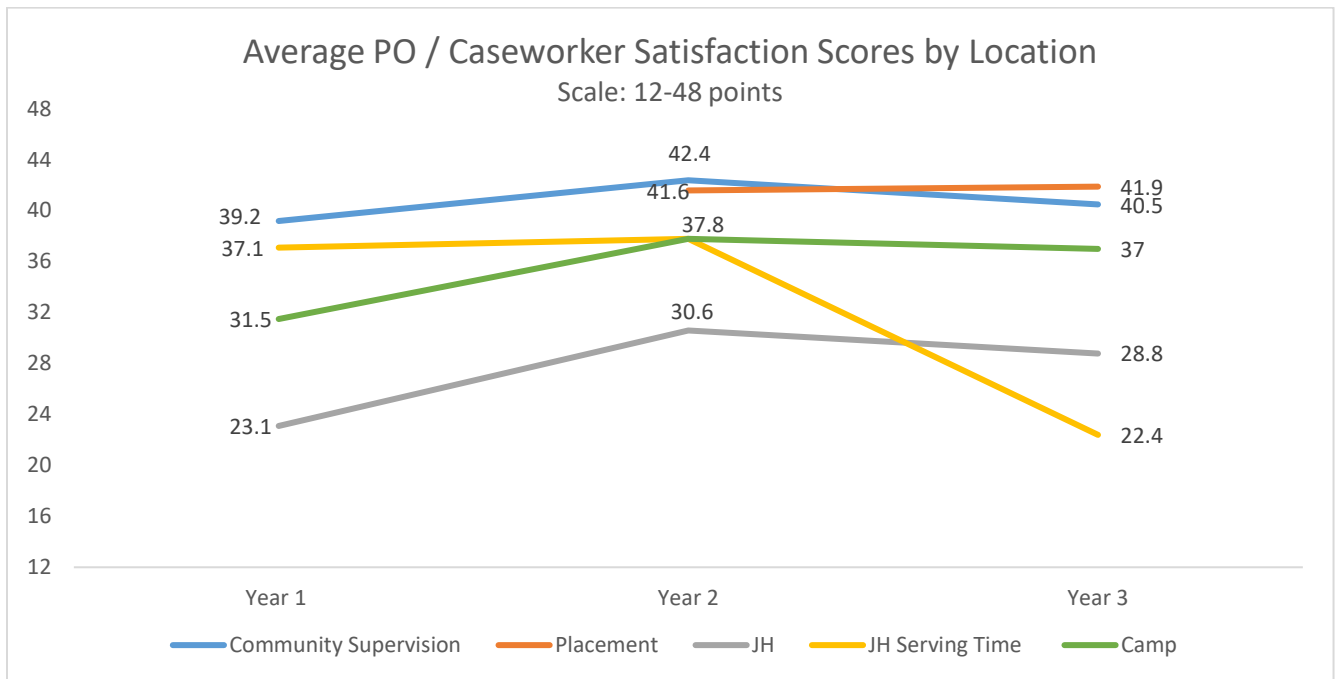
- **Empathy:** “My PO/staff really seems to understand how I think and feel.”
- **Direction:** “Sessions with my PO/staff are always about something specific like learning a new skill.”
- **Respect for Autonomy:** “My PO/staff points out different choices I have and helps me explore them.”
- **Evocation:** “My PO/staff supports and encourages me when I talk about changes I am making.”
- **Collaboration:** “My PO/staff asks me for my ideas on how to solve problems.”





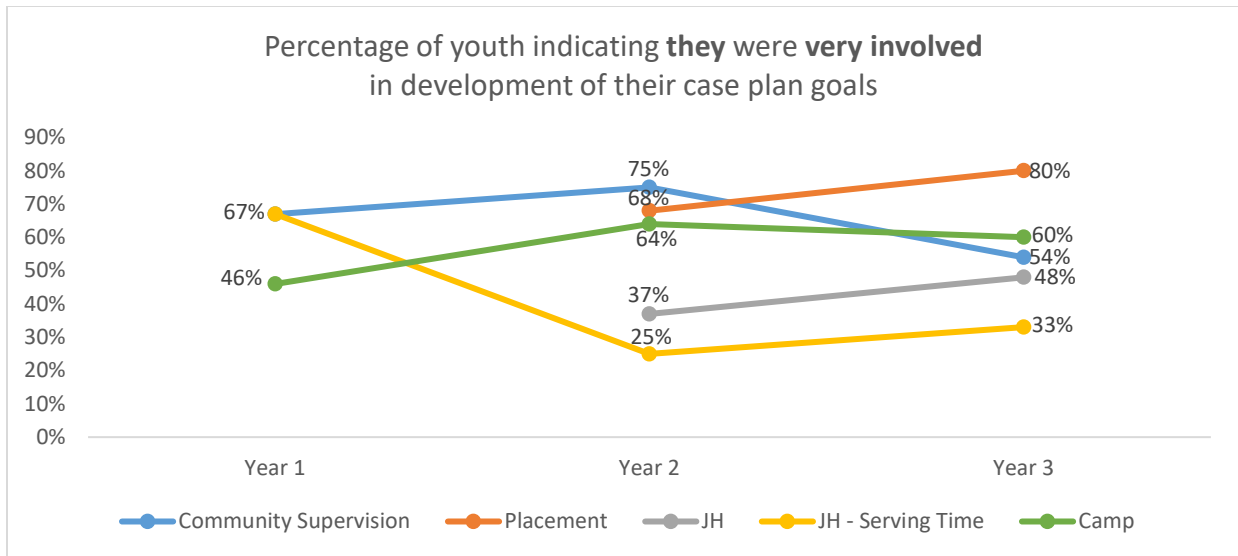
Total probation officer/caseworker satisfaction

Youth were asked a range of questions about their satisfaction with their probation officer or caseworker. Questions pertained to whether staff members are caring, trustworthy, and respectful; provide feedback; and spend reasonable amount of time with youth during visits. All satisfaction items were combined to create a single satisfaction scale, with total possible scores ranging from 12 to 48. Between 2014 and 2016, overall PO/Caseworker satisfaction scores increased moderately across locations. Overall satisfaction scores decreased in 2018 by about 9% from an average satisfaction score of 39.2 (on a scale of 12-48) to 35.7. This was a statistically significant difference between 2016 and 2018 overall. The chart below presents average satisfaction scores by location and year.

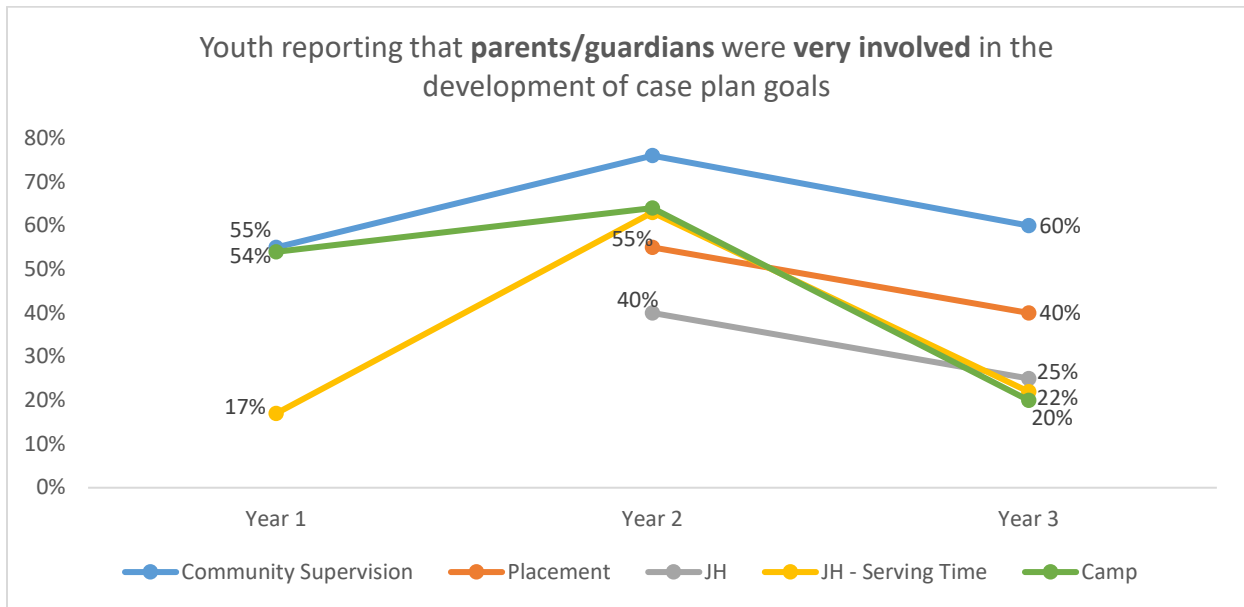


Case plan involvement

Youth were surveyed about how involved they were with developing their case plan goals. In 2018, just over half (55%) of youth reported they were “very involved” in setting of case plan goals, down from 64% in Year 2, not found to be a statistically significant difference. Placement, Juvenile Hall, and Serving Time youth reported increased involvement in case planning, while Camp stayed relatively steady, and youth on Supervision reported a decrease in case plan involvement.



Youth were also asked about family (parent or guardian) involvement in setting of the case plan goals. In 2018, overall about 41% of youth reported that their parents/guardians were “very involved” with case planning, down from 63% in Year 2, a statistically significant difference. Results are presented by location below.



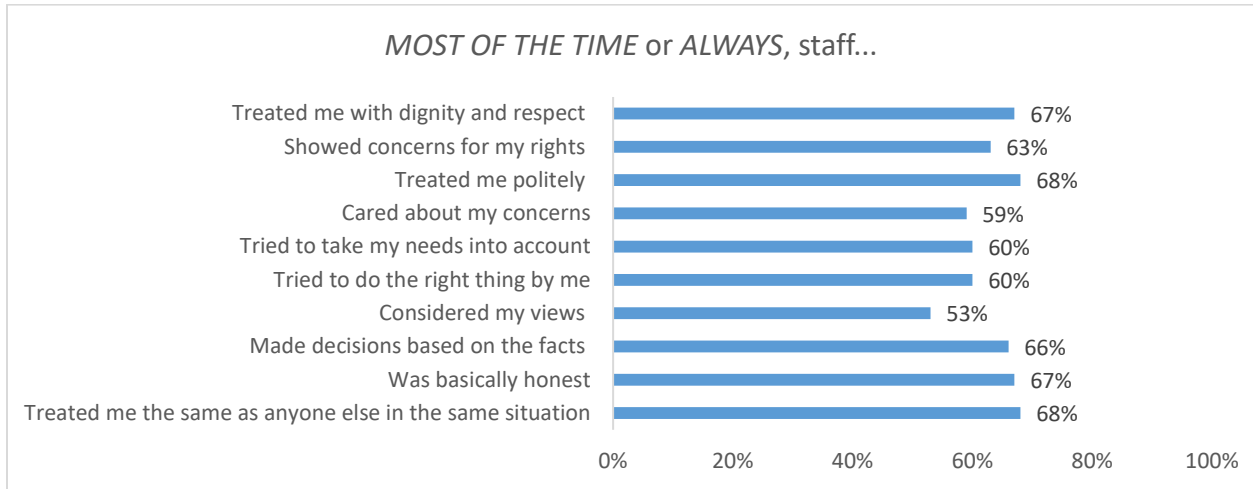
Procedural justice scores

Procedural justice was measured with a series of questions about youth experience, intended to capture the following concepts:

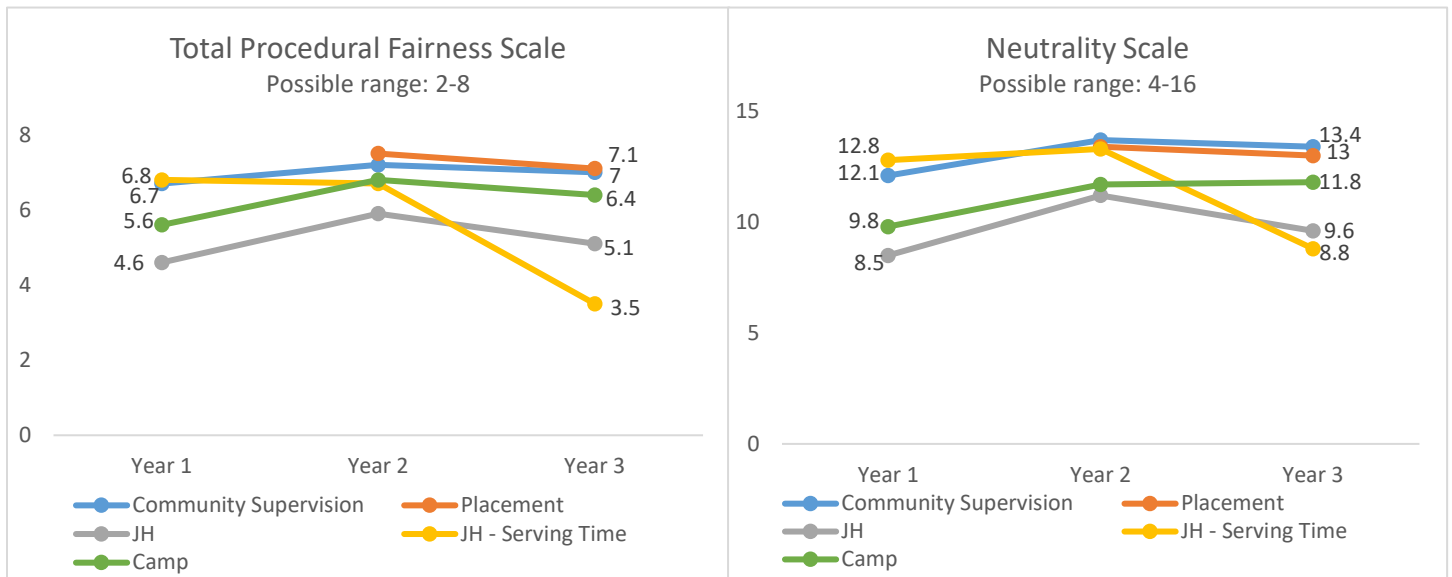
- **Procedural fairness:** To what extent youth view the procedures used by Probation staff as fair.
- **Neutrality:** Probation staff treat youth equally and make decisions honestly, based on the facts.
- **Benevolence:** Probation staff consider youth’s views, take their needs into account, and care about their concerns.

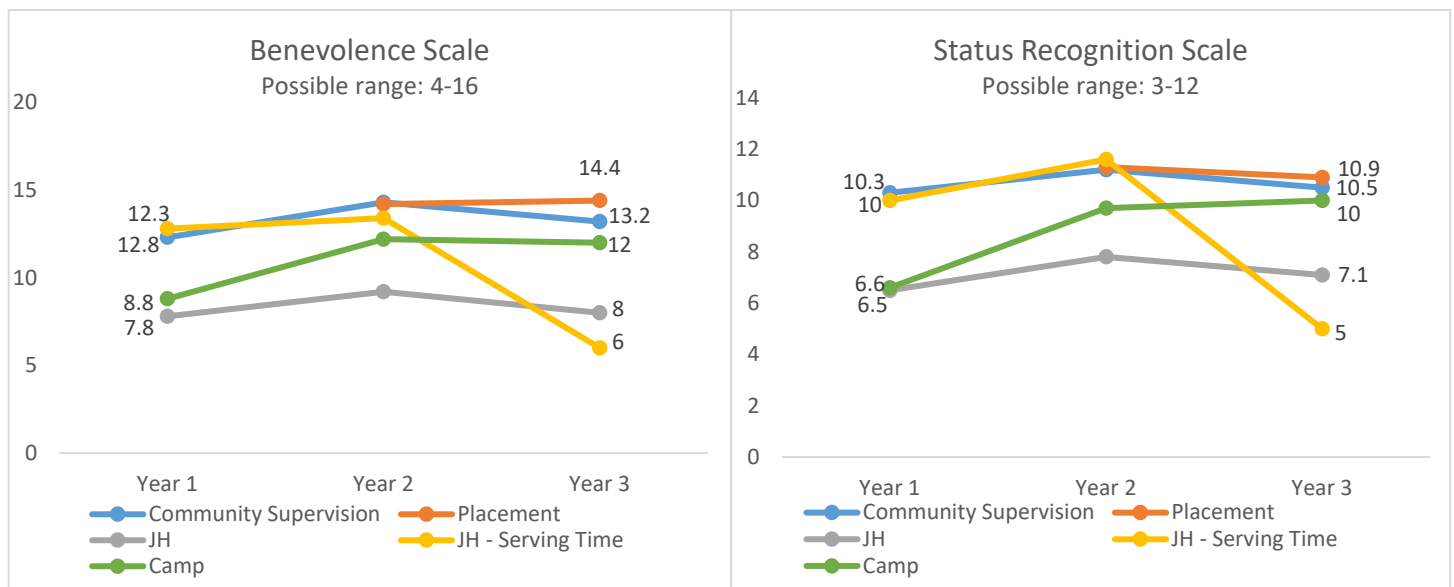
- **Status recognition:** Probation staff treat youth with dignity and politeness, and show concern for their rights.

Responses for individual items in 2018, aggregated across locations, are presented in the chart below.



When comparing procedural justice scores over time, between 2014 and 2016, there were consistent increases in procedural justice scores across each of the procedural justice domains previously described. In 2018, procedural justice scores stayed relatively constant for youth on Supervision, in Placement, and at Camp. Youth in Juvenile Hall reported a modest decline in procedural justice scores, with youth serving time reporting a greater decline. When comparing overall responses across all settings between Year 2 and Year 3, statistically significant decreases were detected for the measures of Neutrality, Benevolence, and Status Recognition.





Conclusions

When comparing the responses across all locations combined, results show a trend of improvement in adherence to evidence-based practice between 2014 and 2016, though some declines between 2016 and 2018, with variation by location and by EBP concept. Below are key takeaways for each concept measured. Of note, due to relatively small sample sizes within each location, statistical testing was not possible by location, so there remains the possibility that some of the trends observed could be due to chance.

- **EPICS and CCP:** CCP scores for Camp were relatively constant (5% increase in CCP scores), while Community Supervision and Juvenile Hall experienced a modest decline. Youth Serving Time showed a more notable decline, when compared to Quest/Odyssey youth in the prior year.
- **Criminogenic Needs:** Over three-quarters of youth on Supervision, in Placement and at Camp reported that criminogenic needs are addressed most or all of the time when meeting with staff, which was comparable to responses in prior years. Youth in Juvenile Hall, including those Serving Time reported a drop in this measure compared to the prior years.
- **Motivational Interviewing:** Overall, collaboration (“My PO/staff asks me for my ideas on how to solve problems”) and evocation (“My PO/staff supports and encourages me when I talk about changes I am making”) were the MI concepts with the highest scores across locations. MI scores in Year 3 for youth in Placement and Camp were similar to Year 2. Youth on Supervision experienced a modest decline, with youth Serving Time and in Juvenile Hall also experiencing drops in MI scores in Year 3. Overall, MI scores for youth Serving Time have consistently remained higher than for other youth in Juvenile Hall.
- **PO and Staff Satisfaction:** Aggregated satisfaction scores stayed relatively constant in Year 3 across all locations, with the exception of youth Serving Time, where there was a decline. Satisfaction scores were particularly high for youth in the community.
- **Case Plan Involvement:** Youth involvement in case planning improved in Year 3 for youth in Juvenile Hall, Serving Time, and Placement. Youth involvement in case planning remained steady

for youth in Camp, though declined among youth on Supervision in Year 3. When asked about parent/guardian involvement in setting of case plan goals, scores declined across all locations.

- **Procedural Justice:** Across most measures, procedural justice scores remained steady compared to Year 2 in all locations except among youth serving time and youth in Juvenile Hall.

The table below presents an overview of the EBP concepts for each location, identifying areas of observed improvement (green shading), areas of decline (red shading), and areas that remained relatively constant (blue shading), compared to the prior year. Areas of improvement are those concepts that had at least a 10% average increase in scores between Year 2 and Year 3 within a given location. Areas of decline had at least a 10% average decrease in scores between Year 2 and Year 3. Areas that stayed constant experienced less than a 10% average change in scores in Year 3. The table below includes the average percent change in scores for each EBP concept in each location.

Percent change in overall scores, by EBP concept and location between Year 2 and Year 3

EBP Concept	Community Supervision	Placement	Juvenile Hall	JH Serving Time	Camp
EPICS and CCP	-13%		-14%	-36%	+5%
Criminogenic Needs	-9%	0%	-35%	-41%	+1%
Motivational Interviewing	-21%	-3%	-61%	-41%	+9%
PO & Staff Satisfaction	-4%	+1%	-6%	-41%	-2%
Case Plan Involvement – Youth	-28%	+18%	+30%	+32%	-6%
Case Plan Involvement – Family	-21%	-27%	-38%	-65%	-69%
Procedural Justice	-5%	-3%	-12%	-48%	-1%

Limitations and Considerations

Certain locations had very small sample sizes. In particular, there were just five respondents from Camp, and nine youth in the Hall serving time. With sample sizes this small, one should be extremely cautious in drawing any conclusions, as responses from just one person could have considerable effect on the overall findings for that location. Statistical testing was not possible to compare results within a particular location due to the relatively small sample sizes.

There is a possibility of selection bias, which occurs when the youth who respond to the survey have a different experience or characteristics than the youth who did not participate in the survey. This could have affected findings for Community Supervision specifically, which had lower response rates compared to other locations. As an example of how selection bias may have played out, in Year 2, the overall response rate was 58%. Those youth who responded may have been more likely to have a stronger connection with Probation staff, and/or may have had a more positive experience on supervision, compared to those who did not respond. In Year 3, there was a more extensive effort to follow up and gather survey responses from youth in the community, leading to a higher overall response rate (76%). PIE staff for example attended chemical testing to administer tests in the evening, and the deadline was extended multiple times in order to give staff additional time to follow up with youth. This additional targeted follow up in Year 3 may have yielded responses from youth who, had they been eligible in Year 2, may not have participated.

Additional efforts underway in the Juvenile Division intended to improve use of and adherence to evidence-based practices have recently gone into effect, and the impact of these more recent efforts may not yet be reflected in the data. These efforts include:

- Formation of the EPICS workgroup, tasked with planning, coordinating and implementing improvements to the delivery of EPICS in the Juvenile Supervision Division (January 2018)
- Quarterly EPICS boosters
- Use of EPICS rating data to inform booster trainings
- Inter-rater reliability trainings for EPICS raters
- Efforts to improve coordination between EPICS trainers and coaches
- CCP live coaching
- Implementation of the Behavior Management System in Juvenile Hall
- Improvements to Probation Camp programming based on results of the Correctional Program Checklist.

External factors, namely the 2017 wildfires in Sonoma County, had significant impact on the community, including Probation staff and youth on supervision or in institutions. The disruption caused by these wildfires, including the interruption of programs and services, and forced relocation of staff and families may have impacted delivery of evidence-based programs and these results shown in 2018.

Continuing to collect, analyze and interpret youth survey data on the same measures in the future will allow further analysis of trends related to fidelity and adherence to evidence based practices in Juvenile Probation. Efforts to analyze results and share findings in a more timely fashion would support ongoing quality improvement efforts. The survey should be administered in the same manner, using the same inclusion/exclusion criteria, instruments, and scoring, in order to effectively compare results overtime. Again, strong efforts should be made to maximize survey responses to minimize selection bias. Further analyses, such as incorporating youth outcome data, as well as dosage, or how *much* of an intervention a youth receives, may be considered for future study.