

LEWIS COUNTY JUVENILE COURT



Community Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 1



January 2022



EARLY PREVENTION EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

EMPOWERING YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Inside this Issue

- Resiliency.....2
- Resiliency Survey.....3
- Resiliency Project.....4
- Employee of the Year.....5
- Meet the Team.....6

Growing research supports the idea that early intervention prevents the onset of juvenile delinquent behavior while simultaneously increases a juvenile’s resiliency. Many past approaches focus on remediating delinquent behavior; however, research has shown that prevention and early intervention are more effective. In addition to societal and personal benefits, research has shown that prevention and early intervention is cost effective. A Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) study found that the total benefits of effective prevention programs were greater than their costs. More recent research by WSIPP found that sound delinquency-prevention programs can save taxpayers seven to ten dollars for every dollar invested, primarily due to reductions in the amount spent on incarceration.

Typically, juvenile delinquency follows a trajectory similar to that of normal adolescent development. In other words, children and youth tend to follow a path toward delinquent and criminal behavior rather than engaging randomly.¹ Research has shown that there are two types of delinquents,

- those in whom the onset of severe antisocial behavior begins in early childhood, and
- those in whom this onset coincides with entry into adolescence.²

In either case, these developmental paths give families, communities, and systems the opportunity to intervene and prevent the onset of antisocial behaviors and justice system involvement.

YOUTH.GOV

The Lewis County Juvenile Court has created and implemented a new early intervention program called Early Prevention Empowerment Program (EPEP). In an effort to assist law enforcement and the community to help redirect youth who are on the pathway to delinquent and criminal behavior, the staff at the Juvenile Court are working with youth and families *before* the youth has entered into the system or the family is in crisis. When law enforcement responds to a call involving a juvenile but no Probable Cause exists for a crime, the officer can refer the youth/family to EPEP. Within 72 hours of receiving the referral, staff from the Juvenile Court will contact the family to offer services to help redirect or stabilize the situation. The staff at the Juvenile Court will be empowering youth and families by helping them navigate community based services. Schools can refer youth to the program in order to help increase education engagement, reduce truancy and increase overall wellbeing of youth.

RESILIENCY

THE ANTADOTE TO ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

In the December newsletter, you learned about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and perhaps took the quiz to find out what your ACEs score was. Maybe your score was a 1. Maybe your score was greater than 4. The ACEs quiz is a tool that can be used as a predictor for various outcomes but there are other factors that can effect outcomes just as well.

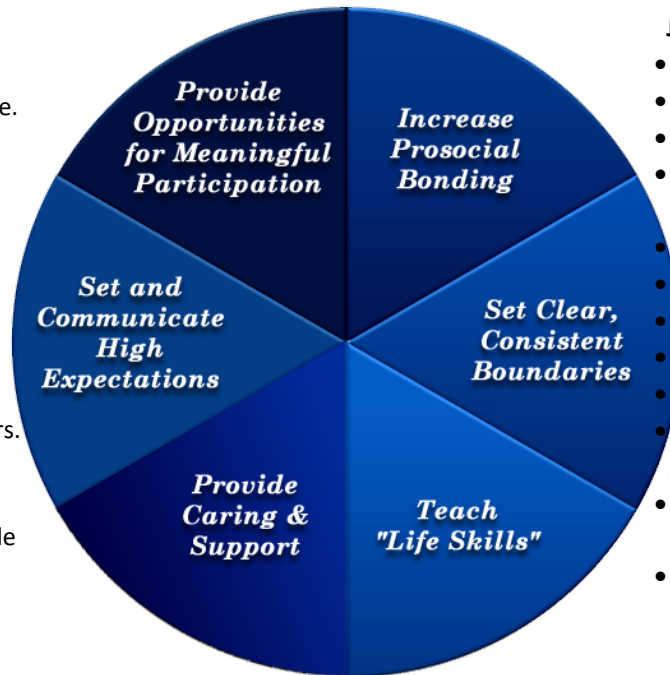
“Think about a toddler who is just learning to walk. Picture the number of times that toddler stumbles and tumbles. Researchers at New York University, directed by Dr. Karen Adolph, showed that newly-walking infants travel about 2,360 steps each hour. They also fall down an average of 17 times during that same period. Imagine you failed at something you were trying to achieve 17 times every hour. You’d be experiencing a setback once every 3.5 minutes – very disheartening. But do toddlers stop trying to walk successfully? Never. They get up again and again and keep moving. This is a compelling way to describe resilience. As Oliver Goldsmith, an 18th century Irish poet, put it: Success is simply standing up one more time than you fall down.”

www.centerforchildcounseling.org

Everyone experiences a traumatic event at some point during their childhood, it’s inevitable. Not everyone is traumatized though. Resiliency reduces the negative effects that a traumatic event can cause.

The Resiliency Wheel

Many, if not all youth that have contact with the Lewis County Juvenile Court have an ACEs score. When a youth is placed on probation, an assessment is completed to determine risk factors as well as safety factors. The objective of probation is to keep the community safe and to modify the youth’s behavior. One of the goals is to reduce risk factors and increase safety factors. This is accomplished through various services and programs offered or directed by the Juvenile Court.



Juvenile Court Services/Opportunities

- Work Crew/Volunteer opportunities
- Prosocial Outings
- Rules and accountability
- Incentives and positive reinforcement
- School support
- Life skills while in Detention
- iACT
- Coordination of Services (COS)
- Mentoring
- Employment & Education Training (EET)
- Early Prevention Empowerment Program (EPEP)
- Court Appointed Advocates (GAL)

Resiliency.com

Devereux Adult Resilience Survey

Authored by Mary Mackrain, the DARS is a 23-item reflective checklist that provides adults with information about their personal strengths. The information can be used to help individuals build on these strengths, such as creativity and setting limits, so that they can better cope with adversity and the stresses of daily life.

1. I have good friends who support me? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
2. I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
3. I provide support to others? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
4. I am empathetic to others? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
5. I trust my close friends? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
6. My role as a caregiver is important? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
7. I have personal strengths? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
8. I am creative? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
9. I am hopeful about the future? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
10. I am loveable? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
11. I communicate effectively with those around me? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
12. I try many different ways to solve a problem? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
13. I have a hobby that I engage in? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
14. I seek out new knowledge? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
15. I am open to new ideas? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
16. I laugh often? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
17. I am able to say no? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
18. I can ask for help? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
19. I express my emotions? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
20. I set limits for myself? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
21. I am flexible? Yes Sometimes Not Yet
22. I can calm myself down? Yes Sometimes Not Yet

Statistical analysis shows that the DARS is an excellent tool for providing adults with an opportunity to gain valuable insights, particularly in these four areas:

- Relationships - The mutual, long-lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives.
- Internal Beliefs - The feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life.
- Initiative - The ability to make positive choices and decisions, and act upon them.
- Self-Control - The ability to experience a range of feelings, and express them using the words and actions society considers appropriate.

“The purpose of the DARS is not to compare individuals’ scores to the population, but to give adults, more specifically those caring for young children, the opportunity to become aware of personal strengths and areas of need. Upon completion of the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey, individuals are encouraged to use the Building Your Bounce: Simple Strategies for a Resilient You adult resilience journal. This journal provides suggested strategies for strengthening adults’ protective factors shown to support resilience. It takes a fair amount of reflection and practice to change any negative thoughts we might have and to integrate new behaviors that are good for us. You are worth it! Even if you are already a strong, happy person, you will want to continue building yourself up to maintain or increase your level of well-being.” centerforresilientchildren.org

Lewis County Resiliency Project (LCRP)

In 2018, Probation Officer Lee Montgomery started LCRP with a small group of people from different organizations. The group collaborated and decided that they wanted to organize some trainings on resiliency for schools and youth serving agencies. LCRP has sponsored, collaborated with or led numerous trainings such as showing of the film *Paper Tigers*, Aces and Resiliency Conference, Champion of Hope Conference, and Trauma Informed Online education. Over the past three years the excitement and support has grown tremendously. The group has added people to their leadership team and are working toward a yearly schedule of trainings for different groups, building resiliency across systems and our communities.

The vision of LCPR is “Bringing together all community members and organizations to build resilience through trauma-informed care practices.” The mission of the LCRP is to create a framework to support our community, schools and families in integrating trauma-informed practices and recognizing the importance of supporting trauma survivors as it relates to building a stronger and safer community.

Community Awareness– Education on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and creating a common language around trauma and it’s affects on the community.

Goal: 2020-2023– have 2500 adult community members trained in recognizing and responding to child abuse and trauma; provide ongoing trainings; continue the “Community Resiliency Award” started by United Way.

School Awareness– Education on ACEs in the classroom and creating a common language for students and staff.

1. Darkness to Light training
2. ACEs training
3. Other trainings that fit the needs of teachers, schools and students
4. In class education on trauma and formation of support groups for students based on what they decide their needs are.
5. Online trauma academy
6. Vincent Perez School Evaluations– how each school implements trauma informed practices.

Home Awareness– Education on ACEs and creating a common language for parents, guardians, and children to recognize and seek support for their own trauma.

1. Create and provide lists of trainings available to parents that address childhood trauma and how to handle it.
2. Provide support to the courts in Dependency cases.
3. Support other agencies and map support systems already in place.

Detention and Court Employee of the Year!

In 2018, the Lewis County Juvenile Court instituted its' first ever employee recognition program. The purpose was to provide a forum for our most outstanding performers to be nominated by their peers and officially recognized in a longstanding and meaningful way. Those employees nominated were done so based upon their contributions to the creation of an excellent work culture, going above and beyond in the performance of their duties, and their initiative in pursuing ways to improve the court overall.

This year's Detention Officer of the Year was Elyssa Smiley.

"She is always happy to help. She has shown a dedication to the whole Juvenile Court regardless of what department she is working in. She is always wanting to learn new things or to be a part of a new task. She brings a positive attitude to work and treats everyone kindly. I appreciated that she helped Lee with COS and was eager to learn more about the program.

If the criteria for the Detention Officer of the year award is initiative, willingness, and going way above and beyond, Elyssa is one of the clear nominees. She displays confidence, knowledge of her job, outgoing, attention to detail, always learning everything that she can about the Juvenile Justice system, never turns down an opportunity to help someone, and is always training, wanting to learn as much as she can. She is a model of work ethic and a desire for professional development."

This year's Court Service Employee of the Year was Jerry Elliott.

"He consistently contributes to a positive work environment. Whether it is to be helpful himself or to acknowledge someone else, Jerry is always the person to do so. Jerry is a true team player. He is always happy to help with literally anything. He treats everyone with kindness and has done a tremendous job with the work crew program.

Jerry is an inspiration, a voice of constant positivity, and the kind of person that genuinely cares about the people around him. He is the ideal teammate whose constant willingness to help and overwhelming positivity is contagious. He serves selflessly every day in whatever way he can find to help the team. If the cars need fuel for a coworker's transport the next day – there's goes Jerry to top it off for them. If someone mentions needing a shelf hung, a dirty job done, or someone to drop where they're doing and go on a transport, there's Jerry. A young person or a parent who is angry, confused, hurting, or otherwise closed off? You give Jerry five minutes and he's found something in common with them and a smile to share. He does so many different little things behind the scenes to make sure everyone else is successful and doesn't care who gets the credit – that's Jerry.

Judge O'Rourke
presenting the award to
Detention Officer Elyssa
Smiley.
Great Job Elyssa!



Judge Lawler
presenting the award to
Community Service
Officer Jerry Elliott.
Great Job Jerry!



Meet the Team



Jerry Elliott

I have been working with youth for what seems like most of my life. I often tell people I was born with a kid's mentality for life. As a high school freshman, I was voted to be the leader of our youth group at church. Because I was heavily influenced by a couple of amazing men in my life, I came to the understanding that influencing others is important and what I wanted to do; I've never been real good at just being a follower. All 4 years of high school I was our youth group leader and eventually became a youth Pastor, a youth event speaker and a youth football & basketball coach. I've served & led in about every way imaginable in church, from men's ministry to small groups. I also served 8 years on the church boards of directors. I founded & led a non-profit organization for 7 years. I was privileged to call high school basketball on the radio for 5 years including

a state basketball championship win by Morton/White Pass. Everything I've been a part of was following the belief that I was to be a positive influencer. In everything I've done, it seems to always include working with youth. When the opportunity to work for Lewis County Juvenile Court became a reality slightly more than 4 years ago, I had no idea where it would take me in life. Eventually becoming the Community Services Officer has turned out to be one of the greatest callings of my life. I worked full time work for the Weyerhaeuser Company for 39 years, never experiencing the inner joy that comes from knowing that I am making a difference at work. I am part of what has to be one of the most amazing teams in the juvenile system. My experiences as a former Reserve Deputy Sheriff with Lewis County has served me well in my current work. I was the Deputy who carried the fuzzy "Dare Bears" in my front pocket to give to little kids. I wanted them to know we were the good guys and that they were awesome. My passion for youth & my belief that I am an influencer keeps me looking forward to work every day. When friends ask me what exactly I do for work, it's often a complicated answer. My job is so diversified and it seems that each day is a new adventure with new people to meet & new ways that I can help someone as best I can. It's difficult to determine what I enjoy most about my job. It could be found in any number of those work crew outings or perhaps in the relationships I've built with my contacts in regards to where or what work crews will look like. It may very well be in the courtroom where I can welcome youth and their families with a kind word or a smile or just supporting them; court can be a scary place. It could be the occasional transports of youth I do with a co-worker or even the interaction I have as I roadside a Deputy and just chat about our days & encourage them. Visiting youth at their schools for various reasons is always fun & getting to know so many staff members at the schools is a delight. One of the more recent aspects I enjoy is visiting so many youth & their families in their homes with Megan as we follow up on truancy concerns. I do a few other things that I hope builds encouragement to our team and that hopefully brings a smile or a laugh. I would like to point out that the work crews with the youth have shifted to more of a relational and educational approach instead of the hard work position I had stepped into a few years back. We do some great things with Fish and Game, State Parks and in the small rural communities, Chehalis Industrial Park and others but I have loved being given the discretion to show the youth more than just physical work. Outside of work I enjoy my family, my adult kids are some of my closest friends and I have 7 grandkids. I love my farm and our cute garden and of course my horses and chickens. Weekend get always are always fun rather it's another hike or exploring new area's as well as trying out new restaurants. I should start my own restaurant review page on Facebook! To anyone that knows me, you know that I love what I call coffee drives; just buy a coffee & drive, relax and enjoy the backroads. There is a peacefulness found in that. I look to my future here at Lewis County Juvenile Court & I am excited.