

Impact of Peer Partner Support on Self Efficacy for Justice-Involved Parents: A Controlled Study of Juvenile Justice 101

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Abstract Systems of care and other health-related initiatives have encouraged the proliferation of parent support policies in mental health, child welfare and education systems. However, the juvenile court system has relatively few programs that provide direct peer support for parents and little is known about the impact of parent support on families navigating the court process. Juvenile Justice 101 is one of only a few such programs. The present study examined the effect of the peer support element of Juvenile Justice 101 compared to video-only and no intervention conditions in a pre/post-test design. One hundred and ten parents agreed to participate in the study, 54 on a day with the peer support condition, 28 on a video-only day and 28 on a no-intervention day. Sixteen parents in the peer support condition were able to participate in the full program and seven parents in the video-only condition participated in the full video. Analyses disaggregate the effects of condition assignment and participation. Self-efficacy in navigating the juvenile court process improved for parents who participated in peer support but no improvement was observed for the other conditions. Parents in the peer support condition also rated peer partners higher than court staff on a dimension assessing process of care. The

implications for practice and policy for peer support and family-driven services in juvenile court are discussed.

Keywords Families · Juvenile justice · Juvenile courts · Parents · Juvenile justice 101

Introduction

Family engagement is an important focus within youth-oriented services (Burns et al. 1999; Friesen and Stephens 1998; Koroloff and Elliott 1996; Worthington et al. 2001). Advocates for family engagement argue that parents are essential collaborators in services designed for youth because of the critical role they play in their children's lives. Within children's mental health, the systems of care philosophy has spread wraparound and family engagement principles throughout the country (Davis et al. 2010; Stroul and Friedman 1986). In child welfare, the Family-to-Family initiative of the Annie E. Casey foundation has encouraged the adoption of similar policies (Romanelli et al. 2009). For a number of reasons, however, the juvenile justice system has been slower to adopt and incorporate family engagement principles into its processes. At least three significant characteristics of the justice system likely contribute to this lag: (1) the historical context of the juvenile justice court; (2) the focus on youth as the court "client" and, (3) the balance of multiple priorities.

The first juvenile courts arose during the Progressive Era, a time of significant optimism and advocacy for improving social conditions (Barrows 1904; Platt 2009). Prior to this time, youth over the age of seven accused of a criminal offense were seen in adult courts and received adult sentences. The reformers of the late 19th century advocated for noncriminal courts that would provide

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protection and guidance for wayward youth, emphasizing youths' developing natures and mitigated responsibility (Barrows 1904; Feld 1993a). While these reforms were a significant improvement and removed youth from adult jails and egregiously harsh punishments, an unanticipated consequence included expanding the jurisdiction of the court around problematic but noncriminal offenses. This led to accusations that the court acted as a cultural oppressor for low-income, largely minority youth whom reformers thought had insufficient parenting (Platt 2009). The implicit and sometime explicit assumption of these courts was that all youth who came into contact with the court system had insufficient guardianship and thus needed substitute parental guidance (Barrows 1904; Platt 2009; Vincent 1977). The legacy of that assumption affects the experience of families today as many parents of youth being served by the justice system report feeling blamed by court staff for their youth's behaviors, leading to distrust between parents and the court (Justice for Families & Data Center 2012).

Another important dimension of the juvenile court is that the youth is the only individual in the family who has a clear role in the legal process. The extension of due process rights to juveniles in the Supreme Court decision in *re Gault* (1967) provided important protections to youth to minimize the risk of overly harsh judicial sentencing. At the same time, this emphasis on due process resulted in infrastructure in the form of defense attorneys and increasingly criminal-like proceedings that often marginalized families and provided little direction for how parents could actively participate in the process (Feld 1993b; Soulier and Scott 2010). Defense attorneys can often experience parent questioning as a distraction or added burden on top of heavy caseloads and parents may be excluded from client/attorney meetings (Feld and Schaefer 2010).

Finally, the juvenile court is an adversarial system in which multiple players come together to attempt to achieve a threefold mission of rehabilitation, responsibility and public safety (Davis et al. 1997; Harvell et al. 2004). As such, judges hear from prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation staff, and other witnesses, in addition to parents, in the process of coming to a decision regarding adjudication and court orders. Within this framework, it is not always clear how parents can best participate or when their involvement is needed. While there is a legal basis for assuming that the parent and child have the same interests (Pennell et al. 2011), the court recommendation may conflict with the parent's wishes or opinion about what will be effective. Further, while the defense attorney has the formal role of advising the youth through the legal process, many parents also play an advisory role for their children. When parents are uninformed, or worse, misinformed

about the system, youth may make ill-advised legal decisions or fail to comply with court requirements (Justice for Families & Data Center 2012).

Despite these barriers, family engagement in the juvenile justice system is a rapidly growing area of focus. In particular, the issue of how courts communicate information to families is a repeated, key, theme in emerging articles on the topic. A recent report from the Georgetown Family Impact Seminar (Harvell et al. 2004) emphasized the importance of providing parents information about the court process. Similarly, focus groups with parents conducted in Pennsylvania as part of a MacArthur foundation funded initiative found that "open, honest, transparent and unambiguous communication or the perceived absence of it between family members and juvenile justice system personnel was **the** [italics original] predominant issue raised during all of the focus groups" (p. 12). Further, in a recent Justice for Families (2012) research and advocacy document on family members' experience of the juvenile justice system, "Unlocking Futures," the authors report that the most consistent theme in their national study of juvenile justice-involved parents was lack of communication and support:

"... having no one who understood what they (the parents) were going through. No one with knowledge who could explain the process, answer questions, provide advice. In the moments when they feel they need the most support, families find themselves alone and isolated" (p. 30).

While any information-strategies aimed at parents are likely to be helpful and an improvement over current practice, the Justice for Families report additionally suggests that families with previous experiences of juvenile court processes would be ideal conveyors of court information to other families. They report that 85 % of families responding to a survey about the juvenile justice system thought providing families with the support of another family who had been through the court system would be a significant improvement. While children's mental health, education and health services are much further ahead in providing peer support, there are some emerging peer support programs specifically for juvenile justice-involved parents around the country. For example, Pennsylvania currently has justice-specific programs operating in two counties as does Washington State (Models for Change 2009; Walker et al. 2012).

There is evidence from the mental health and education literature that peer support, in the form of a parent/family member who has been through the system already, provides an enhanced benefit to families (Davis et al. 2011; Evans et al. 1994, 1996; Koroloff and Elliott 1996). Parent to parent support is thought to contribute to better family

outcomes through two pathways: social support and empowerment. Social support, as reflected in Barrera's (1986) typology, involves three related categories: (1) The degree of an individual's social embeddedness, or connection to others; (2) Perception of social support and belief that adequate supports are available; and, (3) The actual level of support provided from another person. Peer support practices that encompass these activities are related to positive outcomes for parents (Hogan et al. 2002; King et al. 1999). Empowerment theory conceptualizes the parents' role as a bridge between the child and social services and parents are thereby viewed as critical agents of advocacy, not only for the individual child, but for policy and systems change as well (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995). While research on parent-peer support in children's mental health is available and demonstrates well-established outcomes for increased empowerment and reduced caregiver stress (Brister et al. 2012; Graves and Shelton 2007; Kutash et al. 2010; Slaton 2012; Wisdom et al. 2011), little has been done to examine the impact of peer support for parents navigating the juvenile justice system. Accordingly, the current study adds to this nascent area of research.

Juvenile Justice 101

Juvenile Justice 101 is a program specifically developed to address the voiced concerns of parents about the lack of support and information at the initial court phase of the juvenile justice process. The development process was funded by a MacArthur foundation models for change grant through a specific family and peer support initiative in Washington State and implemented in the King County Juvenile Court. The program is innovative for juvenile court because it provides onsite, immediate support at the location of court hearings using a peer-support model. The development of the program involved a community participatory framework with court, parent and stakeholder input and support, which is outlined in detail elsewhere (Walker et al. 2012).

Juvenile Justice 101 (JJ101) involves a 30 min court orientation which is facilitated by veteran parents of the juvenile justice system and followed by one on one support. Prior to the orientation, family partners distribute resource booklets to the individuals waiting in the lobby and invite them to participate in the orientation, which also occurs in the lobby. The resource booklets contain an overview of the juvenile court process including information on court staff roles, court hearings and community resources as well as practical tools parents can use to manage court hearing dates as well as monitor youth behavior. The orientation involves a 15 min court overview video punctuated by live commentary from family partners who are encouraged to speak about their own experiences

while adhering to a general script. Following the orientation, family partners approach individuals one-on-one to answer additional questions and provide support while onsite. The content of these interactions varies considerably but often fall within four broad categories: Reassurance and support; information about the court; how to interact effectively with court staff; and, information about community resources. Family partners receive an initial 6 h training that includes an overview of effective peer partnering techniques, boundaries of the role of peer support in court, and role play practice. Subsequently, family partners attend a bimonthly supervision meeting that often includes information about new community resources and other supports that can be offered to justice-involved families. A preliminary evaluation of the program, using a posttest only design, indicated the program was viewed as highly beneficial by justice-involved parents (Walker et al. 2012).

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between JJ101 participation and changes in key constructs theoretically related to parent outcomes. Specifically, we measured changes in self-efficacy and mistrust as they related to the court in addition to perceptions of the court as a caring system. As we were interested in isolating the contribution of family partner support over and above information-giving activities alone, we hypothesized that the full orientation would increase self-efficacy and lower mistrust as compared to a video only condition. Qualitative results from the first evaluation of JJ101 suggested that parents may not only shift their attitudes towards court as a result of the program, but also view family partners as more aligned with system of care values. Consequently, we expected to find that family partners would be perceived as being more supportive and helpful than other court staff and other informational resources.

Method

Subjects

The study sample was recruited from adults, presumed guardians, waiting in the King County Juvenile Court lobby for juvenile court hearings. Guardians were approached 30 min prior to the start of hearings for the morning. Consequently, the study does not include guardians who showed up later during the court hearing schedule, which may introduce some bias. Also, as the orientation at the time of the study was presented only in English, only English-speaking guardians were invited to be a part of the study. As a significant number of parents with children involved in the court do not speak fluent English, the sample of this study does not represent the racial/ethnicity demographics of the court. Rather, the study sample

Fig. 1 Sample size for Juvenile Justice 101 participation categories

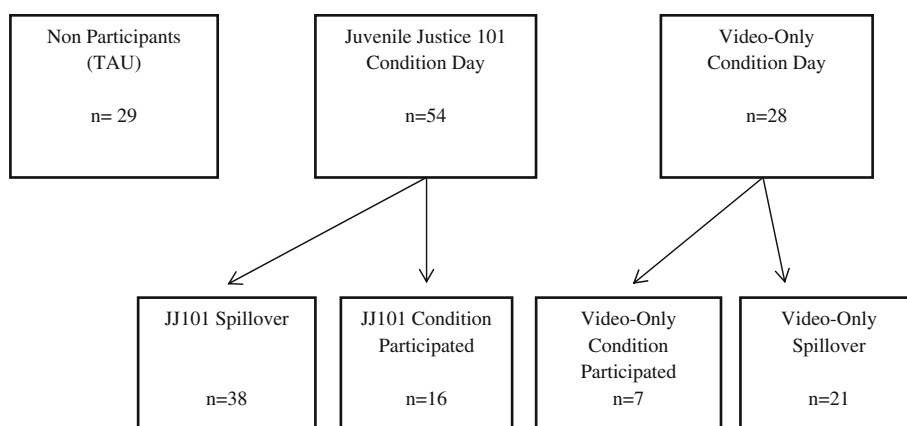


Table 1 Demographic description for Juvenile Justice 101 participation categories

	JJ101 participation n = 16	Video-only participation n = 7	JJ101 spillover n = 38	Video-only spillover n = 21	Non JJ101 day (TAU) n = 29
Race/ethnicity					
White - NL	9 (56.2 %)	3 (42.9 %)	21 (55.3 %)	9 (42.9 %)	22 (75.9 %)
Black	2 (12.5 %)	2 (28.6 %)	7 (18.4 %)	6 (28.6 %)	2 (6.9 %)
Latino	1 (6.2 %)	0	4 (10.5 %)	0	0
Asian/PI	0	1 (14.3 %)	0	1 (4.8 %)	0
Native Am	0	0	2 (5.3 %)	0	0
African	0	0	1 (2.6 %)	0	0
Ukrainian	0	0	1 (2.6 %)	0	0
Mixed	3 (18.8 %)	1 (14.3 %)	1 (2.6 %)	3 (14.3 %)	3 (10.3 %)
Missing	1 (6.2 %)	0	1 (2.6 %)	2 (9.5 %)	2 (6.9)
Gender					
Male	4 (25.0 %)	2 (28.6 %)	17 (44.7 %)	4 (19.0 %)	12 (41.4 %)
Female	12 (75.0 %)	5 (71.4 %)	21 (55.3 %)	16 (76.2 %)	17 (58.6 %)
Missing	0	0	0	1 (4.8 %)	0
Guardian					
Biological	12 (75.0 %)	4 (57.1 %)	27 (71.1 %)	14 (66.7 %)	24 (82.8 %)
Adoptive	0	1 (14.3 %)	2 (5.3 %)	2 (9.5 %)	1 (3.4 %)
Foster	0	0	0	1 (4.8 %)	0
Relative	1 (6.2 %)	1 (14.3 %)	5 (13.2 %)	2 (9.5 %)	2 (6.9 %)
Grandparent	3 (18.8 %)	1 (14.3 %)	2 (5.3 %)	0	1 (3.4 %)
Not guardian	0	0	2 (5.3 %)	2 (9.5 %)	1 (3.4 %)
JJ101 before*^a					
No	10 (62.5 %)	1 (14.3 %)	28 (73.7 %)	18 (85.7 %)	21 (72.4 %)
Yes	6 (37.5 %)	6 (85.7 %)	10 (26.3 %)	3 (14.3 %)	8 (27.6 %)
Times at court					
	m (sd)	m (sd)	m (sd)	m (sd)	m (sd)
	3.44 (2.22)	3.43 (3.41)	3.03 (2.52)	4.10 (2.28)	3.48 (3.44)

* Significant at $p < .05$

^a Chi square = 16.15, df = 8

reflects the participants who were likely to engage in the JJ101 court presentation.

Figure 1 shows the sample description for the five study conditions: JJ101 participation, JJ101 spillover, video-only

participation, video-only spillover, comparison condition (TAU). Spillover refers to those participants who were present on an orientation or video day, but either elected not to participate or were unable to participate because of other

court activities. Of those individuals who were offered JJ101, 16 participated in the full orientation and seven participated in the video-only condition. A total of 88 did not participate—of those, 38 were present on a JJ101 day but did not participate (JJ101 spillover) and 21 were present on a video-only day but did not participate (video-only spillover). There were 29 individuals who comprised the comparison condition, receiving treatment as usual (TAU).

Table 1 illustrates the demographic description of the five study conditions. Bivariate analyses examining sample demographics showed no significant differences for race/ethnicity, gender, guardian present, and the number of times the guardians attended court across the JJ101 participation categories (participation and spillover). The only significant difference found among the JJ101 participation conditions was for those who had previously attended a JJ101 orientation ($\chi^2 = 16.15(8), p < .05$). All but one of the participants in the video-only condition during the study had previously attended some portion of a JJ101 orientation, while previous JJ101 exposure ranged from 14 to 37 % among the other conditions.

Procedures

Research staff approached all adults waiting in the court lobby prior to the beginning of JJ101 and video presentations to recruit parents/guardians for the study. Study procedures were explained and subjects provided informed consent. The study procedures included a short baseline survey that was completed immediately prior to the presentation and a follow up survey that was sent via mail or email within 1 week of recruitment. Participants received a \$5 gift card after filling out the baseline survey and a \$10 gift card on receipt of the follow up survey. Study procedures were approved by the University of Washington Institutional Review Board.

The control group, pre-posttest study design included a JJ101 condition in which a family partner facilitated a full JJ101 presentation with a video, a resource booklet and one-on-one outreach. Another, video-only, condition involved a court staff person or research staff, not a family partner, setting-up and playing the video. No presentation, outreach or booklets were included. Initially, study recruitment for the JJ101 presentation condition occurred on only 1 day immediately prior to first appearance hearings. First appearance hearings are for youth who have been recently admitted to detention, typically the night before or in the case of a weekend, up to 2 days before. The video-only condition occurred on a separate day of the week in which first appearance hearings were also held. It was believed that recruiting for the study prior to first appearances for both conditions would balance differences among parents in their progress through the court process.

However, the numbers of guardians attending the JJ101 condition for first appearance was too low to keep pace with recruitment goals due to normal fluctuations in the hearing calendar; consequently, recruitment for JJ101 subjects was expanded to another day of the week in which the following court hearings were held: Case settings, arraignments and dispositions. The video-only condition continued to be conducted only 1 day a week before first appearances.

The condition with no presentation (orientation or video) was not originally planned in the study design but emerged as scheduling conflicts occasionally arose for orientation and video organizers. The lack of a presentation did not covary with any characteristics of the court process or sample characteristics and so this condition was left in as a TAU comparison group.

Measures

Mistrust of Juvenile Court

There are currently no published scales that measure families' experience with the juvenile court. Consequently, we created a short scale using items adapted from the Mistrust of the Juvenile Justice System subscale of the Juvenile Offender Parent Questionnaire, JOPQ (Rose et al. 2004). The JOPQ items were selected because the subscale had good internal reliability, $\alpha = 0.82$ (Rose et al. 2004) and 0.88 (Cook and Gordon 2012). For the sake of space as well as to temper the language of the items for parents who were filling out the survey during a stressful situation, only three items from the JOPQ subscale and one study-developed item were used to create the scale. The scale reliability for these four items was 0.64 in a range of 1–5 (Table 2). The items included “The court is out to get my child,” “I am scared about how this process will turn out,” “Sometimes I get the feeling that everyone in the court see people as guilty,” and “My child is being unfairly accused” with a 5-point response scale from “not at all” (1) to “very much” (5).

Self-Efficacy in Navigating Juvenile Court

This scale measures a sense of efficacy in being able to navigate the juvenile court process. The items were developed by the authors as no other published or known scale exists to measure parents' experience of the juvenile court process or perceptions of any other elements of the juvenile justice system. The items included “I have the knowledge and materials I need to get through this process,” “I feel like people I meet at the court are trying to help me,” “I am confident about what I need to do next,” and “I think this will all turn out okay,” with a 5-point response scale from

Table 2 Means, reliabilities and ranges for scale measures

Scale items	Mean	Range	Alpha
Mistrust - baseline	2.1	1-5	0.64
Court is out to get my child	1.68		
Scared about how the process will turn out	2.46		
Sometimes I get the feeling that everyone in the court see people as guilty	2.3		
My child is being unfairly accused	2		
Efficacy - baseline	3.3	1-5	0.77
I have knowledge and materials	3.17		
All will turn out okay	3.43		
Court trying to help family	3.41		
Confident about what to do next	3.19		
Process of Care - family partner	2.35	1-3	0.82
Help feel competent	2.3		
Provide written info	2.52		
Provide caring atmosphere	2.7		
Explain court process	2.3		
Provide opportunities ask questions	2.57		
Treat you as an individual	2.74		
Tell you what to expect	2.22		
Give info about services in community	1.91		
Have info available in various forms	2.57		
Help reduce anxiety	2.04		
Provide contacts for other parents	1.83		
Process of Care - court climate	1.87	0-3	0.93
Help feel competent	2		
Provide written info	1.68		
Provide caring atmosphere	1.9		
Loot at needs of whole child	2		
Explain court process	1.94		
Provide opportunities ask questions	2.3		
Treat you as an individual	2.24		
Tell you what to expect	2.14		
Given info about services in community	1.46		
Have info available in various forms	1.46		
Helps reduce anxiety	1.66		
Provide contacts for other parents	1.12		

“not at all”(1) to “very much” (5) The items were purposely worded to be strengths-based and were intentionally staggered within the mistrust questions to offset any potential discomfort when answering the questions. The scale included four items with an internal reliability of 0.77.

Process of Care

The purpose of this scale was to measure parents’ perception of juvenile court as a family-centered environment. Questions were adapted from the 56 item measure of process of care, MPOC (King et al. 1998), a tool designed

to assess the degree to which caregiver/guardian support related to improved outcomes for youth.

While the MPOC provided a solid foundation on which to adapt questions for use in the present study, necessities for space and content required significant changes for the purpose of assessing parent perceptions of juvenile court. Twelve items were retained from the original 56, including “How often did people fully explain the court process to you?” and “How often did people help you feel competent as a parent?” One additional item was added on recommendation of the JJ101 oversight committee relating to anxiety reduction (“How often did people help reduce anxiety about what you should do in the court process?”). Items were scaled from 0 (not at all) to 3 (to a great extent). All items are included in Fig. 2. We examined the inter-item correlations to assess whether items had strong enough associations to be interpreted as one score. The item Look at Needs of Whole Child was not strongly related to any other item (below, 0.20) and negatively related to certain items. Consequently, we removed this item and computed the scale internal reliability for the remaining items: alpha = 0.71. Analyses were conducted with this final Process of Care scale.

The Process of Care (POC) measures were assessed in two ways: First, parents were asked to rate perceptions of care in dealings with a family partner and then with court staff, collectively. All of the POC items remained the same for the two scales in content, only the reference to particular staff in the instructions changed: In the family partner rating, parents were asked to think about their experience with a family partner in court over the past month. In the court staff rating, parents were asked to think about their

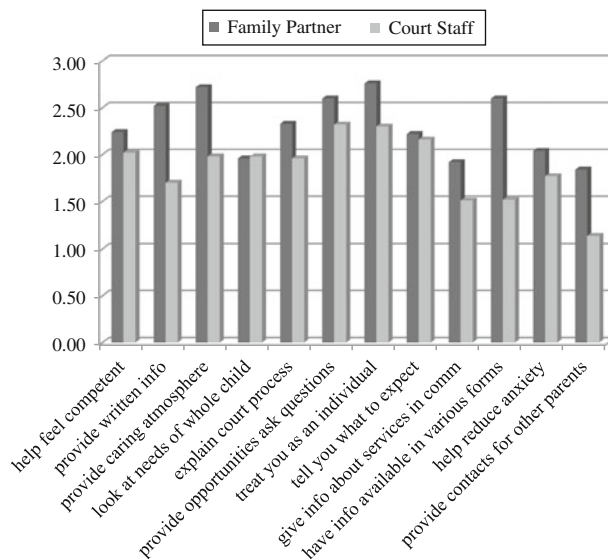


Fig. 2 Mean differences for process of care-family and process of care-court items

experience with all court staff in the past onth, excluding family partners, and including judges, attorneys, information desk staff, and probation counselors onsite at the court.

Qualitative Data: Participant Perceptions

In the follow up survey, participants were asked to note what specific information they learned or what they gained from participating in the orientation, reading the booklet and/or interacting with a family partner.

Missing Data

Attrition in the follow up survey was significant with 45 % missing data from baseline to follow up for the Self-efficacy and Mistrust scales, and 50 % for the Process of Care scales. Even though missingness appeared to be Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) and corrective measures were not needed to adjust for bias introduced by missing data, we used multiple imputation (MI) to maintain statistical power. MCAR assumes that there are no uniform non-responses within a class; for example, if only parents of a certain ethnicity, gender, or who scored low on self-efficacy questions did not complete follow up surveys, missingness would not be considered MCAR.

Multiple imputation was chosen to address missing data in order to develop the best estimates of the relationships between variables using all available data without deleting cases. Imputation adjusts for differences between nonrespondents and respondents on observed variables, as well as differences on variables not included in the model, but that are predicted by the model (Raghunathan 2004). Utilizing this method preserves the natural variability in the data so that the presented estimates are not biased (Graham 2009). In particular, MI offers significant improvements over deletion methods because it relies on more realistic assumptions. Analyzing data using this approach produces accurate parameter estimates in circumstances where deletion methods are unable to and they are consistently more powerful because they use all the available data (Enders 2013). In addition, good inferences can be made with three to five imputed datasets (Raghunathan 2004), with five having only a 13 % power reduction based on 50 % missing information (Graham 2009). Therefore, in order to analyze the study's available data, we used five imputed datasets that were created using the MI package from SPSS version 21, which applies a markov chain monte carlo approach to fill in missing values.

Analyses

To measure change in mistrust and self-efficacy over time, regression models including the baseline measurement of

the outcome of interest were run in Mplus 4.21 using data imputed in SPSS. M-plus was used for multivariate analyses because SPSS does not provide pooled estimates for Analysis of Variance or standardized Beta coefficients using the imputed datasets. Differences between mean scores on the process of care—family and Process of Care—court scales were computed with the t-statistic in SPSS in order to test whether there were differences in how families viewed parent partners versus court staff from a process of care perspective. Finally, Process of Care—court staff levels were compared among the five treatment conditions to assess whether court staff were viewed more positively as a function of JJ101 involvement.

Results

Mistrust

Mistrust of court did not vary by gender, ethnicity or previous JJ101 exposure at baseline. A linear regression model was used to examine JJ101 participation and family mistrust of the juvenile court process. This model incorporated data from five imputed datasets with the time 2 mistrust score as the dependent variable and JJ101 conditions and mistrust at baseline as the independent variables. No JJ101 offered was used as the reference group. Those who were present on a JJ101 day, but did not participate (JJ101 spillover group) had significantly higher levels of mistrust at time 2, $B = 0.45$, $p < .05$. While no other statistically significant differences were found among the remaining conditions on changes in mistrust over time, the JJ101 and video condition were associated with a nonsignificant decrease in mistrust from baseline to follow up, $B = -0.30$; $B = -0.37$, respectively, see Table 3.

Self-Efficacy in Navigating Juvenile Court

Self-efficacy in navigating the juvenile court did not vary by gender, ethnicity or previous JJ101 exposure at baseline. A linear regression model was used to examine JJ101 participation and efficacy in navigating the juvenile court process. This model also incorporated data from five imputed datasets with the time 2 efficacy score as the dependent variable along with the treatment conditions and the baseline self-efficacy score. No JJ101 offered was used as the reference group again. The analysis found that the full JJ101 orientation was significantly and positively related to self-efficacy scores at time 2, $B = 0.57$, $p < .05$. This indicates that those who participated in JJ101 improved in self-efficacy when compared to TAU. As no other conditions saw improvements, it can be extrapolated that JJ101 outperformed all of the other conditions as well in improving self-efficacy.

Table 3 Linear regression models examining efficacy, mistrust, and process of care-court staff on Juvenile Justice 101 participation

Variables ^a	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Efficacy			Mistrust			Process of care-court staff		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Full JJ101 participation	0.57*	0.25	0.25	-0.30	0.25	-0.12	0.31	0.17	0.21
Video-only participation	-0.24	0.31	-0.07	-0.37	0.33	-0.11	0.10	0.23	0.05
JJ101 spillover	-0.15	0.21	-0.08	0.45*	0.22	0.25	-0.13	0.14	-0.12
Video-only spillover	-0.18	0.22	-0.09	0.09	0.24	0.04	-0.15	0.15	-0.11
Baseline ^b	0.29**	0.12	0.33	0.25*	0.11	0.26	-	-	-

Model Fit: Model 1: Chi square = 0.80; CFI = 0.99; TLI = 1.09; RMSEA = 0.03. Model 2: Chi square = 2.20; CFI = 0.94; TLI = 0.64; RMSEA = 0.10. Model 3: Chi square = 0.37; CFI = 1; TLI = 2.11; RMSEA = 0.01

* Significant at $p < .05$; ** Significant at $p < .01$; *** Significant at $p < .001$

^a Reference variable for all models was TAU, no JJ101 condition

^b Model 1 and Model 2 included baseline measures

Process of Care: Family Partners and Court Staff

Scale scores for the ratings of family partners and court staff were compared to test the hypothesis that these two ratings would differ in perceived level of care. A paired-sample t test was run comparing the means of subjects who completed both scales ($n = 25$). The means for process of care were significantly higher for family partners, $m = 2.32$, $sd = 0.48$ than for court staff, $m = 1.93$, $sd = 0.71$, $t(24) = 2.54$, $p < .018$. An examination of the item by item differences in mean scores over all the participants ($n = 111$) (see Fig. 2) reveals that the largest difference, over a full point ($diff = 1.08$), was a higher rating for family partners in having information available in various forms. The second highest differences, also higher for family partners, were for items related to whether parents were provided written information ($diff = 0.82$) and whether a caring atmosphere was provided ($diff = 0.74$). No items were observed to be higher for court staff.

A linear regression model was used to examine any differences among the JJ101 conditions and the court staff Process of Care rating. This analysis also incorporated data from five imputed datasets with the process of care-court staff scale as the dependent variable and the JJ101 conditions as the independent variables. No JJ101 offered continued to be used as the reference group. The analysis found no significant differences in perceptions of court staff across the five JJ101 conditions.

Participant Perceptions of Different Information Strategies

Feedback about the orientation was also collected from participants via three open-ended prompts about participants

learned from the orientation, the booklet, and the family partner interactions, $n = 12$. Learning about the court process was reflected in responses for all three categories. This indicates that providing information is a key activity for all the elements of JJ101. However, some differential benefit of the three sources of information were observed; for example, both the general orientation and booklet were primarily useful for explaining court processes, while the family partners appeared to offer emotional support in addition to information.

As noted, the primary benefit of the full orientation appeared to be in communicating general and specific information about the court. Four of the twelve (30 %) respondents reported learning about general court process from the orientation and two respondents reported learning specific information. One respondent noted that they were too stressed out at the time to absorb much information.

When asked about what was learned from the booklet, some participants also reported learning general system information, e.g., “Learned how system worked,” but overall, the responses are more detailed regarding the specific information gained: e.g., “Clearer idea of process and cases. Roles of officers, child’s options and resources.” One participant also reported that “the booklet was a good reference after we were home because what they say was stressful & things happened so fast.”

Interactions with a family partner largely focused on receiving emotional support: “Made me more at ease and confident. That I wasn’t the only one and not to blame me,” “You are not alone,” “It’ll all work out.” The other theme around family partner support was receiving information about resources. Representative quotes about how parent partners were helpful included the following: “Where to find common information,” “That there are other resources available,” “[that] Materials were available.”

Discussion

While family engagement is associated with positive outcomes in the mental health, health and education systems, little is known about the impact of family engagement within the juvenile justice system. As a peer-led, family information and support program running within a juvenile court for almost 3 years, Juvenile Justice 101 is in a unique position to help elucidate the impact of family support in this setting. Below we discuss the major findings from our study and implications for both practice and future research.

Results of the study indicated that parents' self-efficacy in navigating the juvenile court improved only in the full JJ101, peer support, condition. This provides support for the important role of peer parents in the juvenile justice process over and above other informational strategies, such as a video. Social support and empowerment theory provide a theoretical framework for understanding why peer support might be associated with improved self efficacy in navigating the juvenile court. Parents are viewed by parents as having more credibility than other social service staff (Munson et al. 2009). Being able to work with a peer reduces stigma and enhances perceived level of social support. As self-efficacy refers to a person's belief that they can manage a situation effectively, there is an intuitive appeal to the strategy of having individuals work with someone who has had prior experience with the system. This relationship conveys credibility, hope and practical knowledge. It is likely that parents are able to absorb information more easily when it is communicated by a trusted peer who is perceived as having the parents' best interests in mind. This was additionally supported by the present study which showed that parents also rated family partners as higher in process of care values. Improvement in self efficacy related to juvenile court navigation is promising because it suggests that parents with high self efficacy in this area may be more successful in getting to hearings, providing youth with accurate information, providing court staff with accurate information and partnering with probation counselors as the literature on parental self efficacy in other domains demonstrates direct connections with parental well being and child/youth outcomes.

Parental self-efficacy is associated with a number of positive outcomes in health and education systems. Self-efficacy has positive effects on caregivers' health through lowered anxiety and stress (Cheng et al. 2013; Mystakidou et al. 2013) and mediates the relationship between stress and positive parenting activities. For example, mothers with higher levels of self-efficacy are able to be more involved in home learning activities with children who have difficult temperaments than mothers with low self-efficacy. Similarly, Semke et al. (2010) found that high

parental efficacy was associated with greater involvement in school-related learning activities in the home and that parental efficacy mediated the relationship between parent stress and home-involvement (Semke et al. 2010). These are important and relevant findings, as many parents with youth involved in the justice system are dealing with significant stress. Because stress can interfere with a parent's personal health (Cheng et al. 2013; Mystakidou et al. 2013; Semke et al. 2010) and ability to parent effectively (Cheng et al. 2013; Samadi et al. 2013; Semke et al. 2010), reducing stress and increasing self-efficacy are likely to have multiple benefits for justice-involved youth. Higher self-efficacy is likely to result in reduce burden and strain on justice-involved parents in addition to encouraging more successful navigation of the system. A next step for research in this area should be to examine how improved self-efficacy may relate to specific behaviors or attitudes that affect court-related outcomes like parental monitoring of youth, the quality of parent participation in court activities, or the degree of advocacy a parent provides for the youth.

The study also found that JJ101 participants experienced peer partners as more aligned with broadly defined process of care, or family-centered care, values than court staff or informational resources alone. In particular, participants rated peer partners higher on dimensions of providing a caring environment, allowing for opportunity to ask questions and feeling treated as an individual. It is important to note that a limitation of the comparison between the peer parents and court staff is that "court staff" is ambiguously broad and may be masking skilled and caring interactions with specific, individual court employees and partners and/or poor interactions with only one staff could be coloring the overall responses. However, it is still notable that the peer partners were perceived as offering a family-centered experience at a higher level, overall. Understanding, warmth, empathy and sincerity are characteristics of service systems that are cited in the literature as being highly valued by consumers and related to satisfaction (Wasserman et al. 1999; Wasserman et al. 1983). As such, incorporating parent partners into juvenile court services has the potential to increase the overall satisfaction with the system. This has the potential to impact not only parental well-being but also court function and climate. For example, Juvenile Justice 101 is highly valued by the court services employees who manage the information desk, as they perceive a marked decrease in hostility and tension on days in which peer partners are onsite (Walker et al. 2012).

Another important finding from the study was that only about half of the total parents available in the morning before court hearings began participated in the full JJ101 orientation. While this reduced the study treatment condition sample size and is a limitation for the study, it is also an

important piece of program information. JJ101 was designed to operate onsite because input from family members involved in program design advised the planning team that holding classes in the evening or some other time for families would be inconvenient and would result in poor attendance. This was proven correct when other counties in the state attempted a community-education model rather than an onsite support model (Walker et al. 2012). Even an onsite support program, however, is not reaching all parents with potential support needs. While some of these parents may have actively opted out of participating, it is likely that at least as many were pulled into conversations with attorneys, other court staff or hearings. Identifying diverse avenues for providing family support has the potential to reach families who would otherwise not be inclined to join the orientation. This is further supported by the finding that mistrust grew among parents who elected to not participate in the JJ101 orientation when it was available. Different strategies for outreach could be helpful in reaching these families. A fairly recent study on how peer partners spend their time with families in the children's mental health system revealed that partners engage in a very diverse array of activities to meet the needs of families because the guiding priority of the support is to "meet the families where they are at" (Davis et al. 2010). While the onsite peer support is having an important impact, it could likely expand its impact by considering other venues for providing support as parents' needs arise: e.g., a hotline, receiving referrals from probation or judges, contacting families with youth in detention, etc.

Limitations

The primary limitation of the study is the relatively small representation in the sample from parents who participated in the orientation and video conditions. Only 30 % of parents who attended court on a JJ101 day participated in the full orientation and only 25 % of parents who attended on a video-only day reported watching the video. This reflects some possible self-selection bias (i.e., the most motivated parents may have been more likely to participate in the orientation) as well as the various distractions occurring in a court lobby. Many times, families were called into court before or for discussion with the lawyer soon after beginning the orientation. The study was limited in the number of variables we could collect to examine and control for possible differences. The small sample size also limited power to detect statistical effects. Further, the study was limited to only one juvenile court which may have implications for generalization to other courts where baseline rates of self-efficacy, mistrust or family-directed care may vary. Because the sample consisted of only

English-speaking participants, it did not fully represent the racial/ethnic diversity of the court. The sample, however, was diverse in the range of responses.

Implications for Practice

This study demonstrated that peer parents bring a unique value to information sharing and support which results in improved self-efficacy for parents of justice-involved youth. Further, the JJ101 program's existence is a testimony to the feasibility of implementing peer support programs onsite in juvenile courts. Courts which have an interest in this type of programming are urged to begin developing relationships with existing family engagement and support networks that likely already exist in mental health and/or education systems. (see Walker et al. for an example of this process). Work can also be done to develop these networks specifically within juvenile courts by reaching out to families of existing or former probation-involved youth. The process of engaging parents and court staff in a dialogue about parent support and involvement will likely be challenging. However, as the present results suggest, the benefits of implementing a parent support program are likely to outweigh the challenges.

Implications for Research

The study has research implications for JJ101, specifically, as well as for the larger issue of family engagement in the juvenile justice system. Additional research on the JJ101 model could benefit from larger samples and data from multiple juvenile courts to confirm the present findings. Further, due to the intentional flexibility of the program, it would be of considerable research interest to examine how local variations and adaptations of the program would impact desired outcomes. In addition to studying the same constructs of self-efficacy, mistrust and process of care with greater rigor, future research should also examine the impact of JJ101 on court climate and other court-level variables such as staff acceptability. The field of family engagement is only in its infancy, albeit an enthusiastic one, within the juvenile justice system. While the mental health and education literature provide some clues as to how increased family engagement may benefit services and outcomes in the justice system, differences in system operations and goals leave much to be discovered. In particular, it will be important to study how intermediate variables like improved self-efficacy may translate into modified parent behaviors that could impact youth behavior and subsequent justice involvement or could impact the quality of parent contribution throughout the justice process.

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