Tribal Law Enforcement, Youth Engagement, and Deflection: Strategies for Building Positive Relationships

Center for Health & Justice at TASC
National Criminal Justice Training Center at Fox Valley Technical College
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Center for Health & Justice COSSAP Team

TTA provider for COSSAP first responder deflection/diversion grantees since 2017

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Presenters

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Substance use is not just about an individual, but also children, families, and the community.

• 9 million children grow up exposed to a parent, caregiver, or household member with a substance use disorder
• Victims of child abuse and neglect are more likely to develop a substance use disorder and become involved in the justice system
• Research has shown that Native American persons reported the highest rates of physical abuse, sexual abuse, parental substance use, and witnessing violence than members of any other racial/ethnic category
• Research also indicates a relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and early initiation of alcohol and drug use
• Early initiation of substance use increases the likelihood of addiction into adulthood
What is Deflection & Pre-arrest Diversion?

• **Deflection** is the practice by which law enforcement or other first responders (i.e., fire and EMS) connect individuals to community-based treatment and/or services when arrest would not have been necessary (or an option), or *in lieu of taking no action* when issues of addiction, mental health, and/or service needs are present.

• **Pre-arrest diversion** is the practice by which law enforcement officers connect individuals who otherwise would have been eligible for charges to community-based treatment and/or services in lieu of arrest, thereby *diverting* them from the justice system into the community.
Law Enforcement Deflection Programs in Tribal Communities
Traditional Law Enforcement Role

• Crime detection
• Investigation
• Community safety and victim protection
• Choice is to arrest or not arrest
• Culture and Tradition
Challenges in Indian Country

- Jurisdictional
- Lack of resources
- Inability to prosecute
- Challenges with victims/witnesses
- Lack of tribal leadership support
What Do We Know?

• Crimes related to drug use and/or mental illness cause significant impact in tribal communities
• Undermine tribal families, culture, and values
• Treatment/intervention is effective
• Community Youth Programs are effective in prevention
• Alternatives to prosecution (diversion) are employed by different criminal justice entities (e.g., prosecution, courts, etc.)
Law Enforcement Deflection Programs

- Provide resources and services instead of prosecution and incarceration
- Use risk tools and assess/identify lower risk population who would benefit from these services
- Use scarce criminal justice resources for higher risk community members
- Minimizing unintended impact of criminal justice system involvement on the individual, family, and community
Benefits of Deflection

• Changes community perception of law enforcement
• Builds positive relationships (community policing)
• Seen as a resource rather than someone to be feared or avoided
• Prevents future crime committed by those with substance abuse or mental health issues
Deflection: The Role of Law Enforcement in Responding to Children & Families

• Deflection offers us the ability to:
  ➢ Turn every encounter into an opportunity
  ➢ Prioritize early identification and intervention
  ➢ Recognize that addiction is not just about an individual but a family
  ➢ Address racial/ethnic disparity and risk factors
Law Enforcement & Youth Engagement

Camp Triumph and the Tribal Youth Police Academy
Camp Triumph

Kevin Mariano, Project Coordinator, Fox Valley Technical College
Former Chief of Police for Isleta Pueblo

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“CAMP TRIUMPH”

A 4-day camp targeting youth ages 10-16 from the Pueblo of Isleta. The camp will help instill “trust” between the youth and police. The officers will be the mentors who teach a curriculum and participate in activities with the youth.
Who is involved?

• Social Services
• Behavioral Health
• Truancy Program
• Recreation Center
• Police Department
• County Sheriff’s Office
• National Guard
• United States Attorney’s Office
We are actively seeking donations for the camp.

- A) Letter to Casino CEO
  1- Admission to Isleta Lakes
  2- Admission to Fun Connection & Lunch
- Letter to events coordinator for use of Isleta Golf Course to instruct the youth.
- Herrera Coaches- Transportation
- Other Service Providers assisting with snacks and sack lunches.
Who will participate and how are youth selected?

- Local Youth
- Ages from 10-16
- Classes will be divided in three age groups and youth will have color coded teams
- The selections will be made by Social Services, Behavioral Health, Truancy, and Recreation Center
Questions
Tribal Youth Police Academy

Julian Garcia, Gang Unit Detective, Tohono O’odham Police

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What is TYPA?

Tribal Youth Police Academy (TYPA):

• Fostering development of future Tribal Criminal Justice and Community Leaders

• Hosted by National Criminal Justice Training Center (NCJTC) of Fox Valley Technical Collage (FVTC)

• Funded by the COPS Office
What is TYPA?

• August 11-16, 2014 in Appleton, WI
• Police Academy based training program
  - Squad Leaders
  - Room Inspections
  - Personal Discipline
  - Manners “Sir”, Ma’am
  - Uniform Dress Code
  - Marching / Cadence
Who attended?

- 41 students, ages 14 – 17
- 34 Federally recognized tribes
- 13 different states
- 9 instructors/mentors
- 3 staff members

For many this was the first time off their reservation.
Student Experience

Explored Law Enforcement and other Criminal Justice careers

• Lecture
• Hands-on training
• Student participation & Group discussion
• Mock exercises & criminal cases
Student Experience

Law Enforcement activities included:

• F.A.T.S – Firearms
• Building clearing
• Traffic Stops
• Defensive Tactics
• Physical Fitness
• Forensics
Student Experience

Demonstrations & Presentations

• S.W.A.T team members
• K-9 Officers
• Theda-Star Helicopter
Student Experience

Center for Organizational Advancement (COA)

• Ropes Course

• Team Building Challenges
Student Experience

Reflection sessions, conducted in Talking / Healing circle

• Cultural discussions and activities

• Shared stories of growing up in tribal communities

• Gangs, substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide
Student Experience

Evening downtime included:

• Sports Activities
• Games
• Group Activities
Student Impact

• Leaders began to emerge from the group
  ▪ Encouraged others, assisted Staff, organized the group

• Fears were conquered
  ▪ Challenge course, public speaking, being in command

• Passions ignited
  ▪ Law Enforcement, Fire Fighter, Military, Corrections, Tribal Leaders, College

• Friendships were formed
Student Impact

2 Year follow-up

• Criminal Justice careers
• Fire Fighter
• Early Childhood Development and Family Studies
• Military
Family Impact

Parent feedback POST academy:

• Goal Driven
• Renewed confidence
• Respect for Law Enforcement
• Participates more at home, school, community
• Positive role model for youth, siblings
What’s next for TYPA?
Q&A
Lessons Learned

• Youth Programs
• Working with local community youth programs.
• Find a champion within the law enforcement agency.
• Build collaborative relationships with behavioral health/substance abuse programs to ensure capacity for referrals.
• Identify officers who will coordinate with behavioral health/substance abuse programs.
Lessons Learned (Continued)

• Seek community engagement and support.
• Know the community you are serving and gear services to the community.
• Develop cross-training program for law enforcement and behavioral health/substance abuse programs.
What Is Needed to Develop A Deflection Program?

• Training for officers on substance abuse and mental health
• Change in law enforcement culture from investigation and arrest to assess and refer
• Seeing the benefit of behavioral health and substance abuse treatment approaches
• Leadership buy in
• Strong partnerships
• Planning
• Funding
What Is Needed to Develop A Deflection Program? (continued)

• Need to collect data on the nature of the problem and how they have been handled in the past
  • May be uncomfortable to look at this, particularly related to recidivism
• Is the problem a community concern? Have there been any recent unfortunate events and outcomes
Deflection: A Call to Action

• Internal review: assess how your agency addresses the needs of at-risk youth.

• Establish partnerships: leverage trusted relationships with treatment and services providers to enhance your program’s reach and credibility.

• Identify gaps: define and pursue areas of opportunity to connect children and families to community-based services.
Questions?
Additional Resources

• National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College, Adverse Childhood Experiences and their Impact on Tribal Communities, 2020: https://www.cossapresources.org/Content/Documents/Articles/NCJTC_Averse_Childhood_Experiences_Impact_on_Tribal_Communities.pdf


Need TA?

Request training and technical assistance:

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or visit the TTA request page on the COSSAP website:
https://www.cossapresources.org/Program/TTA/Request