
Terms and Concepts

Absent Without Leave (AWOL): A youth who absconds from a non-secure residential program.

Accountability Incentives Management (AIM): A structured statewide system of responses to deter negative behaviors and encourage positive behaviors of youth under court-ordered community supervision. AIM seeks to reduce technical violations of supervision by ensuring certain, fair, and immediate responses to youth behavior to promote successful completion of supervision.

Adjudicatory Hearing: A proceeding before a juvenile judge or magistrate to determine whether allegations made against a youth are true. If the allegations concerning the commitment of a delinquent act are found to be true, the youth may be adjudicated delinquent.

Admission: See definition for “commitment versus admission” and “placement versus admission.”

Aftercare: Supervision and individualized treatment services provided to youth in the community following discharge from a residential program. A youth is assigned an aftercare worker at the time of commitment.

Alternatives to Detention (ATD): Community-based program options that provide structured supervision and accountability of youth who would otherwise be detained pending adjudicatory hearings in the juvenile court.

ASSIST: The Automated Statewide System of Information Support Tools used as the DJS client database from 2001-2021.

Average Daily Population (ADP): Daily population of youth averaged over the number of days in a given time period.

Average Length of Stay (ALOS): Average total number of days in residential placement between admission and release. Youth detained in more than one facility during a contiguous stay are counted as a single placement.

Case Management Specialist (CMS): DJS staff who provide case management services to youth in community and residential settings. Case managers provide supervision, develop treatment plans, link youth with necessary resources and services, monitor progress, and modify treatment plans as needed.

Central Review Committee (CRC): A central committee that convenes weekly to hear case reviews of youth at risk of removal from a committed treatment placement, direct changes in the youths’ provision of services, and make youth placement transfer decisions. Members include the Directors of the Behavioral Health and Resource Offices, the Executive Directors of Residential Placements and Community Supervision, and a representative from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Certificate of Placement (COP): The document that reflects a youth’s placement location, services, and authorizes service payment.

CHALLENGE: A behavior modification program focused on improving youth behavior and maintaining safety and security for youth in DJS detention facilities. It helps youth develop positive behaviors through a system of rewards and support and teaches youth to take responsibility for their behavior. In DJS treatment programs, CHALLENGE has been updated to incorporate PBIS principles and was renamed STARR in 2018.

Child in Need of Assistance (CINA): A youth who is found by the court to require court intervention, such as removal from the home and placement with a foster family or relative, because of abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for their care.

Child in Need of Supervision (CINS): A youth who is found by the court to need guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation because the youth committed an offense applicable only to children, is habitually truant, poses a risk of injury to themselves or others, or who is ungovernable (See definition for “Ungovernable”).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): A psychosocial intervention that aims to improve mental health. CBT focuses on challenging and changing unhelpful cognitive distortions (e.g., thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes) and behaviors, improving emotional regulation, and developing personal coping strategies that help solve current problems.

Commitment versus Admission: A commitment is a court order placing a delinquent youth in the Department’s care, which usually results in placement into an out-of-home program, but in some cases services may instead be provided in home. An admission occurs when a youth physically arrives at a facility and is officially entered onto the facility’s roster, and this normally occurs some weeks after the court order. A single admission to an out-of-home program could be the result of multiple commitments - a youth may be committed by more than one court, or be committed on multiple charges - and a youth may be admitted to several programs under a single commitment order. Thus, the number of commitments will not equal the number of admissions to treatment programs.

Community Detention (CD): A DJS program that monitors a delinquent child or a child alleged to be delinquent who is placed in the home of a parent, guardian, custodian, other fit person, or in shelter care, as a condition of probation or as an alternative to detention (ATD). Community detention often includes electronic monitoring (EM).

Complaint: A written statement made by any person or agency to a DJS intake officer which, if true, would support allegations of a juvenile petition.

Crimes of Violence: Offenses designated as crimes of violence in Maryland's Annotated Code (see Appendix K for more detail). Includes primarily felony offenses, but some misdemeanors.

Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM): A program to coordinate casework of youth who are dually involved in both the juvenile justice system and the child welfare system and foster increased communication and collaboration between the staff members of DJS and local Department of Social Services. DJS partnered with Georgetown University to implement the CYPM in Prince George's County in 2015. Since then, the model is being slowly rolled out in other Maryland counties.

Delinquent Act: An act which would be a crime if committed by an adult.

Delinquent Child: A child who has committed a delinquent act and requires guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation.

Detention: The temporary care of respondents who, pending court dispositions and other hearings, require secure custody for the protection of themselves or the community, in physically restricting facilities or circumstances. A youth may be detained if a court determines that they might fail to appear for a future hearing, continue to break the law, or pose a threat to the public or themselves. Detention may be utilized pending a court hearing or after disposition. A youth's detention status is required to be reviewed every 30 days.

Detention Hearing: A court proceeding to determine whether a youth shall be placed in or continue in detention.

Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI): An assessment of a youth's risk to reoffend and/or fail to appear for future court dates used to guide whether the youth should be detained, placed in a detention alternative, or released to a parent/guardian.

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT): A cognitive-behavioral treatment approach with two key characteristics: a behavioral, problem-solving focus blended with acceptance-based strategies, and an emphasis on dialectical processes. "Dialectical" refers to the issues involved in treating patients with multiple disorders and to the type of thought processes and behavioral styles used in the treatment strategies. DBT emphasizes balancing behavioral change, problem-solving, and emotional regulation with validation, mindfulness, and acceptance of patients. Therapists follow a detailed procedural manual.

Direct Care Staff: An employee whose primary duty is to provide direct supervision of youth.

Disposition: The action taken by the juvenile court that outlines whether the youth requires guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation and, if so, the nature of such assistance, e.g., probation terms or commitment. (Note: In adult courts, this is known as a "sentence.")

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC): A rate of contact with the juvenile justice system among youth of a specific minority group that is significantly different from the rate of contact for whites (i.e., non-Hispanic White) or for other minority groups (See RRI definition).

Diversion: A program or practice where the primary goal is to reduce the occurrence of juvenile delinquency by diverting a youth from the traditional juvenile justice system and providing an alternative to formal processing. Diversion programs and practices vary in terms of the juvenile justice contact point at which the youth is diverted and the types of services provided. Youth may be diverted by law enforcement before arrest, during DJS intake, or between adjudication and disposition.

Electronic Monitoring (EM): A statewide program providing close monitoring of youth in the community as an alternative to residential placement/detention. Youth wear an ankle bracelet that electronically monitors their movement and compliance to established location parameters. This may involve the use of global positioning systems (GPS).

Escape: Absconding from a secure DJS residential program (including Youth Centers) or detention facility (including Community Detention).

Evening Reporting Center (ERC): A program that serves youth as an alternative to detention. Youth are required to report daily to ensure the youth are monitored and get back to court for hearings.

Evidence-Based Services (EBS): Programs that have been found to be effective based on the results of rigorous evaluations.

Family Centered Treatment (FCT): A trauma treatment model of home-based therapy designed for families who are at risk of dissolution or in need of reunification. It is also designed to serve youth who move between the child welfare, behavioral health, and juvenile justice systems. During treatment, FCT practitioners aim to help families identify their core emotional issues, identify functions of behaviors in a family systems context, change the emotional tone and behavioral interaction patterns among family members, and develop secure relationships by strengthening attachment bonds.

Family Engagement: A collaborative relationship between families and DJS throughout the youth's involvement in the system.

Family Peer Support Initiative: A program operated in partnership with Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) that connects DJS youth and families at any stage of DJS contact with a family peer support specialist who has had previous experience with the juvenile justice system. Family peer support specialists help guide a family through the juvenile justice process, connect families to community-based services, and increase family empowerment. The program began in 2018 in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Prince George's, and Wicomico counties.

Felony vs. Misdemeanor: In Maryland a crime is either a felony or a misdemeanor. Generally, felonies are the more serious of these two types of crimes. However, there is no clear line for determining whether a crime is a felony or misdemeanor based on the statutory maximum penalty associated with the offense. Unless specified in a statute or the offense was a felony at common law, a crime is considered a misdemeanor. Most statutes specify whether a crime is a misdemeanor or a felony. Common law crimes retain common law grades as either felonies or misdemeanors unless changed through the legislative process. The General Assembly may choose to label a statutory crime a felony or misdemeanor independent of the amount of punishment the statute provides. The General Assembly may also choose to change the status of a crime from a misdemeanor to a felony or a felony to a misdemeanor.

Fiscal Year (FY): The time period measured from July 1 of one year to June 30 of the following year. FY 2021 runs from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

For Authorization of Formal Petition (FAFP): A decision by a DJS intake officer to authorize the State's Attorney to petition the court for formal processing.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT - an EBS): An outcome-driven prevention/intervention program for youth demonstrating the entire range of maladaptive behaviors such as delinquency, violence, substance use, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or Disruptive Behavior Disorder. Flexible delivery of service is provided by one- or two-person teams to clients in home, clinic, school, juvenile court, community-based programs, and at re-entry from institutional placement.

Global Positioning System (GPS): A global navigation satellite system that provides location and time information for youth monitored with a global positioning system receiver.

Group Home: A residential program licensed by DHS, DJS, or MHA/MDH to provide 24-hour supervised out-of-home care for 4 or more youth providing a formal program of basic care, social work, and health care services.

Hardware Secure Facility: A facility that relies primarily on the use of construction and hardware such as locks, bars, and fences to restrict freedom.

Informal Supervision: See definition for "Pre-Court Supervision."

Intake: The process for reviewing a complaint against a youth and determining whether the juvenile court has jurisdiction and whether judicial action is in the best interest of the public and/or the youth. During intake, youth and their family may be offered services. DJS has statutory authority to screen all juvenile complaints referred.

Juvenile Court: A division of the Circuit Court in Maryland.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI): A best practice model that addresses inappropriate and unnecessary use of detention and reduces the failures of juveniles to appear in court. A primary goal of JDAI is to reduce overcrowding in detention centers by safely maintaining youth in the community in detention alternatives without jeopardizing public safety or increasing the number of youth who fail to appear for court.

Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU): Administratively housed in the Office of the Attorney General, the unit investigates the needs of children under the jurisdiction of DJS and determines whether their needs are being met in compliance with State law. This includes evaluating the conditions of youth housing, reporting on treatment of and services to youth, and investigating allegations of child abuse.

Juvenile Justice Reform Council (JJRC): Established by law in 2019, and currently authorized through 2022, the council has members from all three branches of State government, other key stakeholders, and national experts. It is charged to develop a statewide framework of policies to invest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism of youth offenders, using a data-driven approach.

Juvenile Services Education System (JSES): A part of the Maryland Department of Education, JSES provides educational services to detained and committed youth in DJS facilities across the state. Services will be operated by DJS beginning in July 2022.

Maryland Comprehensive Assessment and Service Planning (MCASP): MCASP uses integrated case management to assess risks and needs of youth throughout their DJS involvement and develop interventions to accomplish the goals of public safety and youth rehabilitation. MCASP enables DJS to strengthen individualized service plans for youth and families and match them with appropriate services/programs, to track youth progress, and to ensure that each youth receives the level of supervision consistent with his or her risk to public safety.

Maryland Evaluation and Treatment Services (METS - formerly SMART): A web-based platform that provides key case management functions, including assessments, contacts, and treatment service planning in coordination with the DJS ASSIST system.

Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS): A research data center established by State law in 2010 to allow research and policy evaluation using matched, then de-identified data from the State education, workforce, and (as of October 2019) DJS data systems.

Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (MPCTC): Under DPSCS, MPCTC is vested with the authority to set standards of initial selection and training for all governmental law enforcement, correctional, parole and probation, and juvenile services employees in the State of Maryland, and to otherwise upgrade the professionalism of these officers. MPCTC provides certification and ongoing training to DJS staff.

Misdemeanor: See definition for “felony versus misdemeanor.”

Multidisciplinary Assessment Staffing Team (MAST): A specialized regional diagnostic team responsible for assessing and evaluating youth who are detained and at risk of out-of-home placement, prior to disposition. Following the in-depth review, the MAST prepares security and treatment recommendations to the juvenile court. The MAST includes psychologists, social workers, community and facility case managers and supervisors, resource specialists, MSDE representatives, and individuals from other disciplines as needed.

Multisystemic Therapy (MST - an EBS): An intensive family- and community-based treatment program that addresses the serious anti-social behavior of juvenile offenders. The major goal of MST is to empower parents and youth with the skills and resources needed to independently resolve the difficulties that arise in coping with family, peer, school, and neighborhood problems. Intervention strategies include family therapy, structural family therapy, behavioral parent training, and cognitive behavior therapies. MST is a home-based model of service delivery.

Pending Placement: A temporary status for youth who have been committed for placement in an out-of-home residential treatment program and are awaiting placement, including youth removed from a committed placement. Youth may be “pending placement” in a variety of settings including: detention facility, home, home with additional services, home under community detention and/or electronic monitoring, family shelter care, structured shelter care, acute care hospitals, or psychiatric respite care programs.

Petition: A formal written request filed by the State’s Attorney’s Office with the juvenile court alleging that a child is delinquent, in need of supervision (CINS) or in need of assistance (CINA).

Placement versus Admission: A placement is based on a decision made by an intake officer or judge to place a youth into detention or a treatment program. An admission occurs when a youth physically enters a facility either through direct placement or through transfer. Thus, during one placement, a youth may have several admissions.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): An implementation framework for maximizing the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of youth in DJS facilities. PBIS principles guide the provision of medical, behavioral health, education, and recreation services, as well as Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and the Department’s STARR program. Facility teams use data on youth behavior to evaluate the effectiveness of facility operations, and youth behaviors and progress.

Pre-Adjudication Coordination and Training (PACT): PACT Evening Reporting Center serves youth 14 to 17 years of age in Baltimore City as an alternative to detention. It utilizes a youth development model and collaborates with participants, their families, DJS, and other partners to develop a plan to address the underlying issues which lead to anti-social or delinquent behavior.

Pre-Court Supervision: An agreement consented to by the youth, parent/guardian, and the victim diverting the case from formal court proceedings. The term is up to 90 days and may be extended to 180 days for substance abuse and mental health treatment needs by DJS or as otherwise ordered by the court. Failure to comply with the supervision agreement may result in a formal petition being filed.

Probation: Court-ordered supervision of youth in the community requiring youth to meet court-ordered probation conditions (general and case specific), including, for example, school attendance, employment, community service, restitution, counseling, or participation in substance abuse treatment.

Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP): A residential program that has a trauma-informed treatment model that does the following: a) addresses the needs, including clinical needs as appropriate, of youth with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances; b) implements the treatment identified for youth within the required 30 calendar day assessment of placement appropriateness; c) has registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff available on-site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and; d) is accredited by any of the independent, not-for-profit organizations approved by the Health and Human Service Administration.

Racial Equity: A condition that would be achieved if one’s racial or ethnic identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.

Recidivism: Subsequent juvenile/adult delinquent or criminal involvement of youth released from treatment programs or youth placed on probation.

Relative Rate Index (RRI): A measure of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) with the juvenile justice system. It is a standardized tool used to assess the level of racial disparity introduced at each decision point (detention, court referral, etc.) For example, RRI compares the detention rate for white youth with the detention rate for youth of a specific minority group. (See Appendix O)

Re-entry: A broad term used to refer to the transition from out-of-home committed placement to community supervision. Generally, re-entry involves a plan to ensure youth are connected to school, employment, and continued treatment services when returning to the community.

Removal from Committed Placement (formerly called an ejection): A youth’s removal from an out-of-home placement upon determination that the youth failed to comply with the rules and conditions of the program. Following a removal, a youth may require a new out-of-home placement. A youth may remain in detention pending a new placement.

Resident Advisor: DJS staff member who provides supervision, support, care, and monitoring of youth placed in DJS-operated facilities.

Residential Treatment Center (RTC): A mental health facility for children and adolescents with long-term serious emotional, behavioral, and psychological problems. RTCs provide intensive services and should only be considered when therapeutic services available in the community are insufficient to address a youth’s needs. In addition to Maryland RTCs, DJS uses a variety of out-of-state providers, including RTCs funded through Medical Assistance, with rates set by the Maryland Interagency Rates Committee, and facilities that are not RTCs and serve moderate-to-high-risk multi-problem youth. These are youth who may be exhibiting moderate psychiatric symptoms and aggressive behavior, or who have histories of unsuccessful/repeated placements and/or hospitalizations. Treatment models vary depending on the client focus of the program, but all provide individualized treatment plans, are comprehensive in services, highly structured, treatment oriented, and behaviorally focused.

Residential Treatment Service Plan (RTSP): A structured treatment planning tool to guide treatment services for youth placed in DJS-operated treatment programs.

Resolved at Intake: A determination by the DJS Intake officer that furthering the case by forwarding it to the State's Attorney's Office for formal processing or informal pre-court supervision would be disadvantageous to the interests of the youth and to public safety.

Restorative Justice: Seeks to repair the harm caused by criminal behavior by involving the community in rehabilitating youth and holding them accountable for their behavior. Includes victim-offender mediation, conferencing, dialogue circles, victim assistance, restitution, and community service.

SafeMeasures: An analytic service provided by Evident Change that provides timely management reports and indicators to DJS case management, supervisory, and executive staff. SafeMeasures pulls data from existing DJS databases and creates visual indicators and reports to ensure that the agency's requirements for effective facility operations, case management, and supervision are tracked and met.

Safety Planning Initiative (SPI): An intense supervision initiative for youth in DJS care who are witnesses to, or victims of violent acts, or otherwise at risk of violence.

Shelter Care: Temporary, short-term (1-30 days), non-secure housing of youth who are awaiting court disposition. Shelter beds serve as an alternative to detention or other short-term circumstance where family or other housing is not available.

Social History Investigation (SHI - formerly PDI): The written study of a youth and his/her family that is presented to the juvenile court. A SHI emphasizes social and legal histories as well as the domain areas of: family functioning, substance abuse, mental health, somatic health, education, employment, and life skills.

Social Skills Training and Aggression Replacement Techniques (START): Based on Aggression Replacement Training (ART), which is an evidence-based, cognitive behavioral, group intervention for committed youth with chronic aggression, START focuses on developing youth's social skills, anger control, and moral reasoning.

Spotlight on Schools (SOS) Program: An initiative to place case managers onsite at certain key schools across the state. DJS Spotlight workers monitor and respond immediately to attendance issues, referrals for disruptive behavior, suspensions, and drop-out issues for youth under DJS supervision, and offer prevention and early intervention services to other at-risk students. In addition, SOS workers provide immediate, on-site intake services for students involved in delinquent activity.

Staff Secure: Residential programs where youth movement is controlled by staff supervision rather than by restrictive architectural features.

STARR Program: A behavior motivation program that incorporates PBIS principles and is focused on improving youth behavior. It is used throughout each treatment program and involves youth and staff. The STARR program teaches youth skills to address negative behaviors and emotions and develop positive behaviors through a structured reinforcement system that includes rewards, supports, and levels. Youth are taught to take responsibility for their behavior, and a safe, predictable, and positive environment is maintained within facilities. It accomplishes these goals by focusing on the following positive behaviors that are captured in the STARR acronym: Solve Problems in a Mature and Responsible Manner; Task Focused; Act as a Role Model; Respect Self, Others, Facility Property, and Rules; Responsible for my Behavior.

State Advisory Board: The Board consists of 21 members appointed by the Governor for 3-year terms. By law, it includes at least one youth member who was under the Department's jurisdiction and also a parent or guardian of a youth who was under the Department's supervision. The Board recommends to the Secretary of Juvenile Services policies and programs to improve State juvenile services. The Board helps plan development, use of resources, and helps inform the public of the Department's work.

Trauma, Addictions, Mental Health, and Recovery for Youth (TAMAR-Y): A structured trauma education group that teaches youth to identify stress and trauma triggers. Youth also learn skills such as deep breathing and mindfulness techniques to address their reactions to stress and trauma triggers. TAMAR-Y uses a multimedia approach that includes videos to stimulate discussion, and incorporates expressive arts therapies that involve writing and drawing activities to engage youth and help them develop a better understanding of their experiences. Some of the topics covered in groups include: Understanding Trauma's Impact, Dealing with Triggers, Trauma and Addiction - How We Cope, Keeping It Together - Containment, Who I Am, and Connections.

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC): A service delivery approach that takes into account past trauma and the resulting coping mechanisms when attempting to understand behaviors and provide services. Trauma-informed care is a framework or a lens through which we recognize the prevalence of early adversity in the lives of youth, view presenting problems as symptoms of maladaptive coping, and understand how early trauma shapes a youth's fundamental beliefs about the world and affects his or her behavior. In trauma-informed counseling clinicians apply the principles of trauma-informed care by identifying youth's strengths and positive coping strategies in order to assist the youth in managing stress.

Trauma Specific Treatment (TST): Treatment services that address traumatic stress as well as any co-occurring disorders (including substance use and mental disorders) that developed during or after trauma. Trauma Specific Treatments directly address trauma related symptoms and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is an example of a trauma specific treatment.

Treatment Service Plan (TSP): A written document identifying treatment objectives, services, and service linkages that address the needs of the youth and family. It also examines the safety and appropriateness of the youth's placement, guides agency recommendations to the juvenile court for permanency planning (where appropriate), and monitors level of supervision and services required.

Under 13 (U-13) Initiative: A school-based intervention designed to provide support and services for juvenile offenders ages 12 years and younger through collaborative partnerships between DJS, Baltimore City/Prince George's County Public Schools, the local Department of Social Services, and other child-serving stakeholders.

Ungovernable: Being beyond the control of parents, guardians, or custodians or being disobedient of parental authority.

Violation of Probation (VOP): A hearing conducted by the court to determine if the conditions of community supervision have been violated. A VOP is considered a technical violation if it does not involve a new delinquent offense.

Youth: The preferred term for individuals under 18 years of age as used by DJS.