

DJS State Advisory Board Fatality Review Recommendations January 2020

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) Fatality Review Team (FRT) presented the cases of youth who suffered a fatality while under DJS supervision. The Fatality Review Subcommittee (FRS) of the DJS State Advisory Board (SAB) also reviewed the case with the FRT and developed recommendations which were presented to the SAB to review and finalize. Below are the key findings and recommendations proposed by the DJS SAB:

Key Findings:

- The terminology of levels of “supervision” can sound negative when it’s actually an opportunity for receiving additional services. Families are not always responsive to or understanding of what an increase in supervision means.
- Mental health and substance use evaluations are not being done at the same time
- Additional trauma-informed care may have given the family additional tools and is also less burdensome for the family
- Current practices regarding restitution and victim notification don’t allow adequate time to provide services before becoming involved with justice system

Recommendations:

- Change terminology regarding levels of supervision, and message it so families understand they are getting additional services
 - “Enhanced Support Services”
- Conduct mental health and substance use evaluations simultaneously conduct cross-training between mental health and substance use professionals
 - Ensure referrals for youth and families are recurring services and the same type of programs
- Match Family Peer Support with trauma-informed care services
- Increase inter-agency coordination
- Encourage DJS legislation on restitution and victim notification to allow adequate time to provide services and requiring the court to consider a youth’s ability to pay restitution
- Conduct community conferencing more frequently and earlier in the process
- Use community conferencing as an alternative to filing petitions
- Create a case forwarding form and tip sheet
- Review current statutes and determine whether changes can be made to require mediation before restitution hearing
 - Work with community partners and non-profits to develop/implement alternatives to restitution