

Daviess County JRAC Quarterly Meeting

JRAC

December 6, 2023

The Daviess County JRAC quarterly meeting was held on Wednesday, December 6th, 2023, at the Daviess County Community Corrections Program Center. Members present were as follows: Vanessa Phillips, Laura Petty, Dean Sobecki, Gregory Smith, Brandon Smith, Steve Sturgis, John Schmeling, Maria Bedwell, Gary Allison, David Rhoads, Derrick Devine, Nathan Gabhart, Tony Duncheon, Abby Brown, Marilyn McCullough, and Andre Knepp. Others in attendance were Audrey Conlon, Courtney Howell, and Jenna Mackey, the JRAC technical assistance provider for Daviess County.

Vanessa Phillips: Vanessa started the quarterly JRAC meeting stating that the meeting goals would be the following: reviewing the JRAC statute, learning about evidence-based decision making (EBDM), and an introduction to the workspace.

Jenna Mackey: Jenna introduced herself stating that she is the technical assistance provider with the center for effective public policy (CEPP). The organization that she works with was brought in by the Indiana Supreme Court to help counties around Indiana understand the JRAC statute and start implementing new programs and practices through the JRAC statute. Daviess County is one of the few select counties receiving technical assistance through the funding that the Indiana Supreme Court is providing. Jenna went on to state that she is here to help Vanessa and the rest of the JRAC team and to give added momentum to help make changes that are wanting to be made here for our community.

Brandon Smith: The JRAC statute was put into legislation July 1, 2021, and it lays out a specific group of people from all different practices and areas of the criminal justice system in one county. The main goal is to review and evaluate state and local criminal justice systems, community corrections, probation, etc. and what the policies are and how they all work together. With commissioners and council members how the funding and policies work as far as keeping the jail population as low as possible, reducing costs, and more.

- The purpose of local JRAC is to promote (1) the use of evidence-based practices and (2) the best practices of community-based alternatives and recidivism reduction programs.
- The required membership of the statutes: Chief Public defender, elected prosecutor, community mental health center director, sheriff, community corrections director, chief probation officer, president of the county executive, president of the county fiscal body, and circuit or superior court judge with criminal jurisdiction.

- Brandon also discussed how they will have an annual report that has to be submitted by March 31st of each year.

Vanessa Phillips: Vanessa followed up on what Brandon was saying, stating that, when looking at reviewing and evaluating state and local criminal justice systems and corrections programs, including pretrial services, behavioral health treatment and recovery services, community corrections, county jails, parole, and probation services, this is why the inclusivity of the board is so important, because every member has an insight into their specific service line as to what already exists or what doesn't exist and how that we can meet the needs from a policy and procedure standpoint that could amplify what we are already doing. And if something doesn't exist, how do we identify the funds or meet the need that is not being met? That is where having the county and local officials comes into our advantage of being on the JRAC, so they are staying informed of where our unmet needs are in our county, so they can make decisions to help us best meet these needs.

Jenna Mackey: EBDM: the process has been piloted in more than ten jurisdictions and states nationwide. Indiana was one of the initial states that piloted the EBDM model, with this work, the legislation came, and now we have all of these counties implementing their own local JRACS.

-Evidence based decision making encompasses three main components. 1.) Research and data: Looking at what the research says works for the criminal justice system and what the local data says as well. This includes analyzing the research and data to look at all of the decision points across the criminal justice system and analyzing what is being done well and what can be improved on. 2.) Collaborative partnerships: bringing everyone together and getting everyone's different perspectives so that they can all work together in making changes to impact the community in the way that they want to see. 3.) Framework for harm reduction: All criminal justice stakeholders working together—can move closer to achieving community safety and wellness.

-EBP are the policies, practices, and/or interventions supported by the research. EBDM is the strategic approach to using research and data to guide decision making across the criminal justice system as a whole. EBP informs the evidence-based decisions that are being made as a team. It generally has four guiding principles that through this process, everyone will be working to achieve.

-EBDM principle #1: The professional judgement of the decision makers is enhanced when informed by evidence-based knowledge. It can be beneficial using professional judgement to create outcomes that you want to see.

-Principle #2: Every interaction within the criminal justice system offers an opportunity to contribute to harm reduction. Every contact within the criminal justice system is an

opportunity to support that person and to help them through whatever they are working on or giving them the services and the support that they need.

-Principle #3: Systems achieve better outcomes when they operate collaboratively at the individual, agency, and system levels. When looking at a collaborative approach, it can gather everyone's different perspectives and input. Coming together and understanding how we impact each other in the criminal justice system can be very beneficial in making improvements.

-Principle #4: The criminal justice system will continually learn and improve when professionals make decisions based on the collection, analysis, and use of data and information. Having the data and statistics is very important to back up things that are being done. If it does not back up what is being done, then why is that and what changes could be made because of that?

Gregory Smith: Stated that JRACS is much broader than just the criminal justice system. He went on to say that juveniles, family law, etc. are all tied in as well. He added that the commissioners and council are also involved because they oversee things such as the policies, funding decisions, and more. He talked about how the team has been working on the SIM models and how our county has been ahead on working on the specific topics that fall under JRAC.

Dean Sobeki: Discussed how collaboration within the criminal justice system can stop at various times depending on the situation. Jenna added to say that collaboration is absolutely essential but that a lot of teams who are doing collaborative work can naturally come to a point where the collaboration can dissipate. It is important to stay the course as a team.

Jenna Mackey: Discussed the EBDM model and how professional judgement, evidence-based practices, consumer needs and values, harm reduction, and justice system collaboration all fit into optimal decision.

- Jenna discussed EBDM accomplishments in the real world and used Grant County, IN as an example. They were the original JRAC site and have been applying the program into their county since 2010. A few of their accomplishments include the following: Fully implemented pre-trial diversion for felony cases, implemented an administrative resolution of probation violations, implemented evidence-based sentencing throughout felony courts, and implemented a family recovery court.

- EBDM roadmap (specific sets of activities that JRAC teams will follow to make the changes that they want to make): 1.) Build a foundation – Establish a collaborative and high-functioning local JRAC. 2.) Understand the current system – Gather information and data to clearly understand where you are now across the decision points in your criminal justice system. 3.) Plan for the future – Identify what you want to work on and

how. 4.) Advance current practice -- implement our change strategies. And 5.) Sustain EBDM – Evaluate, expand, and enhance EBDM and evidence-based/best practices.

-All who are working under JRAC will have access to the Indiana JRAC Developmental Activities Self-Assessment. This can be used as a guide on how to move forward as a team, all the activities that can be undertaken, and all the discussions that can be had.

-There are three levels of technical assistance that are being offered: Intensive TA which is the highest level and the most support that you can receive as a county, workspace TA which is the type of assistance that Daviess County will be receiving, and lastly, limited TA where the county can specifically ask for assistance.

-With the workspace TA, it really relies on the JRAC workspace, which is an online learning platform that has been developed specifically for Indiana and the work that is needing to be done to lead counties through. This will be Daviess County's primary mode of technical assistance. Each member will have their own account on the JRAC workspace, and it will be used to review information, prepare for discussions and meetings, to help guide discussions during meetings, and more.

-Jenna mentioned how she also meets with Vanessa, Brandon, and Steve every couple of weeks in a coaching capacity. She helps them to strategize and think through how they want to structure meetings, how they want to present information, and what they may need from everyone involved. She also will be joining the JRAC meetings virtually. Daviess County will get one to two site visits a year where Jenna will come in person.

-The workspace TA is a pilot. Therefore, Daviess County JRAC will be relatively "testing out" the workspace and how it works for everyone. They are hoping to eventually determine the feasibility of rolling it out to other counties in Indiana as well to be able to use it. They look forward to hearing back feedback. Jenna went on to explain the online JRAC workspace, accessing it, as well as details on using it.

Vanessa Phillips: Jenna has everyone's contact e-mail information so a profile will be created, and a link will be sent out with login details on how to login into workspace and everyone will have their own login information.

Brandon Smith: Brandon discussed how he seen JRACs/the workspace being beneficial to the defense council. He explained that hypothetically if one of the officers comes into contact with someone and sees that they are having a mental health breakdown or other issues and it's not someone that the county has had a lot of contact with, an arrest is made, but in the paperwork its written down that they have mental health issues/etc., that way when the defense attorneys get appointed, they know going in that they can start the process to see if they can get them into treatment. It would be known to the prosecutors right away about trying to get them into treatment and looking at how to resolve the case.

Gary Allison: Gary stated that Vincennes is now starting a crisis intervention team and hopefully things will start moving forward with being able to start using those services. It will be a five county crisis intervention team so Daviess County is looking to utilize that as soon as possible.

Gregory Smith: Discussed JRAC and JRAC involvement and mentioned that although it may be time intensive when first starting out, as things get going and policies are put into place, it can be maintained more efficiently, and it won't be so demanding all at once.

Vanessa Phillips: Brandon and Vanessa will be sitting down with Jenna Mackey to do some strategic planning as chair and vice chair, to wrap up the interviewing that she had done in Daviess County, and to try to learn where Daviess County is at from perspectives of keystones and key stakeholders. Jenna is really trying to help everyone figure out how everyone will continue to move forward. Everyone has their own unique role. For example, part of IRAC's contract is seeing system changes within the judicial system, how harm is being mitigated, how are individuals who have a substance use and mental health disorder being helped, and how they are rethinking the way that they manage those individuals within the community. There are some creative solutions that counties have come up with. Vanessa stated that if everyone puts their heads together, that hopefully Daviess County can achieve some of these goals and eventually have a list of accomplishments that are similar to Grant County.

The next quarterly JRAC meeting will be held on March 6, 2024, at 4:30 PM at the Community Corrections Program Center.

