

Jasper County JRAC
October 27, 2023
Noon Meeting

PRESENT: Jason Wallace, Kaitlyn Boosma, Kim Denton, Judge John Potter, Rein Bontreger, Samantha Joslyn of the Public Defenders, Michael Spangler, Judge Russell Bailey and Special Guest Presenter, Denise Symdon of the Center for Effective Public Policy (Sr. Manager)

Not Present: Eric Kidwell; Jacob Taulman/Joseph Morrison

Welcome & Introductions: Judge Russell Bailey

Approval of Minutes of 8-25-23 Meeting: Motion made by Judge John Potter, seconded by Kim Denton. Minutes approved.

Special Guest: Denise Symdon is introduced by Judge Russell Bailey and gives a brief background of her involvement with the Center for Effective Public Policy. Materials were passed out regarding "Evidence-Based Decision Making." Also known as EBDM. Her firm was hired through the State of Indiana to offer assistance and development with the Indiana JRAC team. National Institute of Corrections has funded this program. Work is intended to be done and bring JRAC /stakeholders together as a team. Denise informed that she has had conversations with a few members over the last several weeks. Kim advised that through the mental health treatment, that she would like to see happen the coordination of client care with other organizations, mainly the courts, probation and sheriff's department. Judge Potter would like to see develop a model to "catch and refer" people earlier in the system with locations and agencies. He sees access to services as a problem. Kim said that clients who have problems/issues, how do they get services readily available to them without sending them back to either jail or prisons/DOC/ Samantha stated that trying to figure out where to start at the beginning of a solution to JRAC, how to find the appropriate "first steps" to offering programs/and or assistance. Judge Bailey stated that in reading through the materials, he sees that a collaboration is needed among the agencies or services. Meeting frequently might be what is needed.

Denise stated that the foundation/framework is needed. Problems solved within our own agency is a "silence."

Principle #1 – Samantha thinks more communication is needed so that all stakeholders are dealt with accordingly. Judge Potter stated that the Risk Assessment is done when a plea is accepted. Denise asked if having the tools prior to pleas, is that what is needed? Samantha stated that there are times that there is no interaction with the Defendant/client prior to Court dates, so they don't have the capability of helping the assessment prior to pleading. Judge Potter stated that all plea agreements are pretty much written without using other tools for assessment. Denise feels that what she is hearing and taking from comments is that professional judgment is needed prior to sentencing by using a Risk Assessment Tool. Evidence based knowledge means that Risk Assessment Tools can offer Justice Systems/stakeholders knowledge in dealing with decisions to be made. Principles are foundation as to what EBDM is about. Judge Potter stated currently use the Risk Assessment Tool in the Judicial Systems right now through Probation. These are done after the fact and not before the case is completed.

Principle #2: Language is a barrier and Defendants/clients have no respect. But it is stressed that all need to remain with professionalism for court personnel, probation staff and jail personnel. Kim stated that it takes a lot to breakthrough the barrier for respect. Kim questioned how do you define harm

reduction? Denise states how treating people with respect and dignity helps reduce harm. Everyone has responsibility to reduce harm. Jason questioned that doesn't the Defendant/criminal dictate how the reduction goes? As Denise stated, professionalism must be maintained. All agreed. Mike stated that language is a big thing, no respect in or out of court.

Principle #3: Collaborative at the individual, agency and system levels. Rein states that this seems like a good idea, but how can we maintain the levels? All agree that this a poor attribute of the system. Rein stated that we need to stop jumping to conclusions when trying to solve issues. Denise stated that this is about trusting each other in order to work together. Denise stated that bringing collaboration to the team to work on. Judge Potter stated that we/team, has to "buy into" the system. As Judge Bailey states, it is important to have all members of this team, to attend this meeting as a start, and because they are not here, it is harder to work as a team on the ideas presented. It isn't about power within this committee, it is about working together. As Rein stated, ego needs to be deflated in order to work together. Samantha stated that all attorneys/Defense attorneys are approaching with different prospective and ideas on how to complete what they need to for their clients. Rein questioned if other counties have Public Defender Offices? As stated, some counties do, some don't. Judge Potter stated that counties the size of Jasper County do not have a Public Defender Office. Denise stated that the group needs to support a collaborative approach to the purpose of the JRAC team. Rein questioned if other Public Defenders can attend this meeting? Samantha stated that honestly they would not attend if they are not being compensated/paid, so the answer would be "No!" Maybe they might attend for a couple of meetings, but would feel they do not have a vested interest. Denise stated that the team will come back to this issue on adding more attendees. All present on this JRAC team are the advocate to other people.

Principle #4: Collection of data. Denise states that all must come together as stakeholders with commitments on the collection, analysis and use of date information. Kim questioned what is the model way of the appropriate use of the data? Her assessments is what she goes by and HIPPA prohibits the use of some of the information collected. Denise questioned the team as to how they feel about collecting and sharing data? Kim questioned practicality, who collects it? Mike feels that each office should collect their own data. Denise questioned the recidivism rate, is that what people are more interested in? Mike feels that Probation Department/Staff let Risk Assessment determine the data. Judge Potter stated that what the level of probation that are on, has been helpful to the Courts. Jason stated that others look at the data and who determines that is followed or not. Judge Potter questioned the Pretrial Release data, and how do you define recidivism? Denise stated that each state defines data and if you collect data, everyone should have the same understanding of what is collected and how do you/department/courts use it. Judge Potter stated that the Risk Assessment through Probation Department is working very well with the judicial system. Kim stated that this is all interesting to see how this all cross-references with the data that is collected. Mike stated that the Risk Assessments are geared toward other offenses, but not towards the alcohol offenses. Denise indicated that the Validated Risk Assessment Tools do not always have necessary data in all assessments as needed. There is need for more support of all data. Healthy skepticism is good for the team.

Slide 12/Core Values: This doesn't change or re-evaluate the work that each office does or collects.

Slide 16/Sites: Indiana is the only state to pass JRAC legislation.

Slide 17/Collaboration of teams: County levels work with the State teams as needed on issues.

Slide 18/Key Decision Points: Judge Potter would like to add Community Corrections Evaluations under #5. Samantha, as an attorney, would like to see this added between #4 & #5. Mike questioned as to how often attorneys look at Risk Assessment on the plea agreements, prior to plea hearings?

Samantha says she looks at it, but does not know about practices of other attorneys. Denise says within the next year, the team will look at System Mapping within the Criminal Justice System and use data as change targets. Changes within the system to align with the best practices. #11, Community behavior change (treatment) interventions. Need to add programming to this point.

Slide 19/Examples: Examples of EBDM applied in practice at the local levels.

Slide 20/Suspension of Benefits for Incarcerated Members: This is something that needs addressed with the team.

Slide 22/Indiana EBDM sites: These are the original sites established in Indiana.

Slide 23/24/25/Accomplishments of Grant County, Indiana: This is a process for the team to consider.

Slide 26/State JRAC: Responsibility of the team.

Slide 27/Local JRAC team: Is what is expected to do on the local level as a team.

Denise states that this is all intended to help decision making and changes. Bringing together a team to help by moving together with implementation of changes and sustaining the work of what the team has put into these commitments. This is a process that all can get behind as a team. Kim stated that this all can be good, but to look ahead as a collaborative team, to put the past behind and work together as a team, living in a shadow, and how long can we live in that shadow? Judge Bailey stated that we can't keep rehashing the past, as this is not helpful. JRAC has exceptional goals, and has a healthy skepticism that this team can get behind. Mike states that everyone has a job to do and share that data as needed. Denise says that coming together as a team is what is needed to move forward. Jason questioned as to how long to we keep going over basics until we hit the ground running? Denise indicated that there is foundational work that needs to be gone over for the next two (2) meetings. In early 2023, the team will be doing System Mapping.

Jason questioned if Denise is the one to reach out to the Prosecutor's Office as to why they did not attend this meeting? Denise says she will if the team is agreeable. Mike moved for Denise to contact the Prosecutor's Office on the importance of their presence on this team. All agreed. Denise is asking the team to review Self-Assessment between now and the next meeting. Need to review more about collaboration as a team.

Next Meeting: December 1, 2023 at Noon, 2 hour meeting. All agreed.

Adjourn: Jason moved to adjourn. Mike seconded. Approved.

Jason requested change of place of meeting to the CASA Building. Feels it is too close in Superior Court Jury Room. Kim offered the team to meet at the Valley Oaks Conference Room. All agreed for change of meeting place. Next meeting of December 1, 2023 at Noon for an approximate 2 hour session at Valley Oaks Conference Room. Mike moved for the change of place of meeting. Samantha approved.

Respectfully submitted:

Theresa Lakin
Secretary