



Healthy, Wealthy & Wise

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and
Transformative Credible Messenger
Mentoring to Reduce Violence and
Justice System Involvement



By David Muhammad and Cait Ahearn | March 2020

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Healthy, Wealthy & Wise (HWW) is a culturally relevant, trauma-informed cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program specifically developed to reach very high-risk youth and young adults. HWW serves 15 to 25 youth per cohort with facilitated group CBT sessions held weekly over a 14 to 16-week period. The program also includes a companion evidence-based CBT journal and connects participants to a Life Coach or mentor. Following program completion, participants continue to receive consistent Life Coaching and case management services for a period of up to 18 months.

HWW is a program of Community & Youth Outreach (CYO), a community-based nonprofit organization in Oakland, CA, serving youth and young adults at the very highest risk of being involved in gun violence. CYO serves approximately 150 young people each year, nearly all of whom have involvement in the criminal justice system and most of whom have been assessed by the City of Oakland as very high-risk for gun violence. Leadership of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) developed the HWW program, in collaboration with CYO staff members. This paper explores HWW and the background and impact of similar Transformative Mentoring programs across the U.S.

As discussed in more detail in the report, variations of Transformative Mentoring programs have grown from their origins in Oakland and now operate in New York City through the Arches Initiative; Washington, D.C., through the Credible Messenger Initiative; and Chicago, IL, through the READI program, with additional variations in other major cities.



HWW is an extension of the growing body of Transformative Mentoring programs, also referred to as Credible Messenger Mentoring due to the incorporation of mentors with similar backgrounds and experiences as the young people they serve. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, The Mentoring Center (TMC), based in Oakland, CA, developed a mentoring model to serve highly at-risk youth in the juvenile justice system. Following years of program development and implementation, TMC created Transformative Mentoring, a curriculum-based, group mentoring CBT intervention. While trademarked by TMC, several organizations throughout the U.S. serving vulnerable young people now utilize a similar approach.

TMC defines Transformative Mentoring as “an intentional, structured, systemic and corrective intervention focused on personally transforming the attitude and mental framework of a disrupted human development cycle (The Mentoring Center, n.d.)” Utilizing an intensive service delivery model, the program seeks to transform the thinking and behavior of high-risk youth.

Transformative Mentoring includes two primary components:

1

A regular group mentoring session during which mentors or facilitators deliver a curriculum focused on decision making, cognitive restructuring, identity, and life-skills development.

2

The establishment of a one-on-one relationship between the young person and a caring adult mentor, often referred to as a Life Coach or Case Manager.

Uniquely, programs that utilize a Transformative Mentoring approach generally employ adult mentors that are “credible messengers” meaning that they have themselves experienced incarceration and encountered many of the same societal and institutional barriers as the young people with whom they work. These mentors understand the context and many of the emotions that their mentees experience. As a result, their advice and guidance are more credible to the young people they serve.

Although there are several iterations of the model, a successful Transformative Mentoring program includes the following key elements:



A Curriculum-based, Cognitive Restructuring Program.

Transformative Mentoring Programs include a CBT curriculum that is designed to “change the mentality that gives rise to destructive behavior (The Mentoring Center, n.d.)” This curriculum often covers topics of identity, purpose, decision making, character development, culture, and life skills.



The Mentoring Spirit. Mentors or Life Coaches must believe that every young person, regardless of their current condition or behavior, has unlimited potential and innate greatness. Mentors, facilitators, life coaches, and staff of the program exhibit an unconditional compassion for the young people in the program, guided by the wise axiom, “Young people don’t care about how much you know, until they know about how much you care.”



Intensive Case Management or Life Coaching. Mentors or Life Coaches focus first and foremost on developing trusting relationships with the young people they serve and use these relationships to influence young people to make better decisions. Over time, Life Coaches guide young people in developing Life Plans and provide hands-on brokering of vital services in the areas of education, employment, housing, transportation, substance abuse treatment, and mental health services.



Long-Term Commitment. It takes youth years to develop the destructive thinking and behaviors that Transformative Mentoring is designed to address and behavior change will not occur overnight. The mentor/mentee relationships established should at the very least last for one year but preferably, life-long bonds are established and maintained.



HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

As discussed, TMC led the way in developing the Transformative Mentoring model, which differed from traditional assistance-based mentoring programs in that it was designed to transform the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors of young people already deeply involved in delinquent and violent behavior. The model was developed and refined over a few years by leaders in youth development and was informed by several curricula.

In the early 1990s, Dr. Wade Nobles at the University of California, Berkeley, created a curriculum designed for Black youth who were considered at-risk that focused on developing self-esteem and a positive sense of identity to counteract negative societal expectations. Around the same time, in 1991, Martin Jacks founded TMC to serve as a technical assistance and training provider for mentoring programs in the Bay Area specifically working with very high-risk youth who were not benefitting from traditional mentoring approaches. TMC quickly grew to include direct mentoring, intervention, and transition services for incarcerated and at-risk youth.

In 1992, Mr. Jacks created the African American Male Transition Program, a 14-week course for incarcerated youth who wanted to improve their outcomes. In this program, a multigenerational group, including an elder and a younger adult with past experience of incarceration, would conduct weekly visits to a juvenile detention center to talk with youth. The conversations during these visits

were somewhat structured around various topics but initially the program did not use a formal curriculum.

During this time, David Muhammad, who joined TMC in 1999 and became Executive Director in 2002, began working with Mr. Jacks and DeVone Boggan to develop a specific curriculum for the Transition Program. Boggan and Muhammad would go on to create the Office of Neighborhood Safety in Richmond, CA, of which Boggan would serve as Director. TMC partnered with Dr. Nobles and used his original curriculum as a basis to develop a more detailed program focused on slightly older, much higher risk youth and young adults that continued to evolve over time.

Through funding and partnership from the City of Oakland's Department of Human Services, the Transition Program eventually became Project Choice, which focused on working with youth incarcerated at the California Youth Authority (CYA), now the California Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), who would return home to Oakland. In addition to its work inside juvenile facilities, TMC developed the Positive Minds Group (PMG), a program for youth coming home from CYA, as well as youth on probation in Alameda County, specifically in Oakland. PMG utilized the same Transformative Mentoring approach as Project Choice.

In 2006, Muhammad brought Transformative Mentoring to Washington, D.C., where he served as Deputy Director of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), the local juvenile justice system. During this time, DYRS began holding Transformative Mentoring sessions for youth in the community under the supervision of the department.

In 2010, Muhammad became the Deputy Commissioner of Adult Operations at the New York City Department of Probation where the model grew further. With funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Arches Transformative Mentoring program launched in 2012 as a component of the New York City Young Men's Initiative (Urban Institute, 2019). After initially developing the Arches program based on TMC's original model, Muhammad returned to Oakland to serve as Chief Probation Officer of Alameda County. Clinton Lacey, who replaced Muhammad as Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation, significantly expanded the Arches program.



ARCHES PROGRAM

Administered by the New York City Department of Probation, the Arches Transformative Mentoring Program (Arches) is a group-mentoring program for young adults, 16 to 24 years old, under adult probation supervision (Urban Institute, 2019). Several program components are reflective of the TMC model: "Arches uses an evidence-based interactive journaling curriculum centered on cognitive behavioral principles, delivered by mentors with backgrounds similar to those of their mentees, known as 'credible messengers,' direct service professionals with backgrounds similar to the populations they serve, often including prior criminal justice system involvement (Urban Institute, 2019)."

In 2018, following six years of implementation, the Urban Institute released findings from an extensive external evaluation of Arches, which found that the programs were extremely effective at reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for high-risk young men and women in the criminal justice system (Urban Institute, 2019). More detailed findings from the study are included in the research section of this report.

Following the implementation of Arches, the Transformative Mentoring model has continued to grow in New York City. In 2017, the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School created the Institute for Transformative Mentoring (ITM), a training

program for the development of credible messengers working in social services fields throughout the City (The New School Center for New York City Affairs, n.d.). ITM offers an intensive training course covering topics of trauma-informed care, youth development, a history of mass incarceration and social justice framework, and career advancement to better prepare credible messengers for success in their work with young people (The New School Center for New York City Affairs, n.d.).

The impact of the Arches program has also grown outside of New York City. In 2015, Deputy Commissioner Clinton Lacey, who grew the Arches program in New York, became the Director of DYRS in Washington, D.C., where David Muhammad had introduced a Transformative Mentoring program years earlier. In his role at DYRS, Lacey, again, greatly expanded this work by launching the Credible Messenger Initiative. In addition to Transformative Mentoring programming, the Credible Messenger Initiative also incorporates family engagement specialists, restorative justice techniques, employment opportunities, and neighborhood-based programming to support youth (Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, n.d.). Over the past few years, DYRS has also made significant dollar investments, including a multi-million dollar investment, in Credible Messenger Mentoring (The Pinkerton Papers, 2017).

THE RESEARCH

Several recent formal evaluations of Transformative Mentoring programs suggest that the model can have a positive impact on reducing rearrests or reconvictions and improving educational and other life outcomes among high-risk young people.

Becoming A Man Program

In February 2017, the University of Chicago Crime Lab produced the results of two large-scale randomized controlled trials evaluating Becoming A Man (BAM), a program developed by Youth Guidance in Chicago, IL, that incorporates several elements of the Transformative Mentoring model. Youth in the BAM program have the opportunity to participate in weekly, hour-long group sessions during the regular school day (University of Chicago Crime Lab, n.d.). The program “uses standard elements of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to help youth to recognize their automatic responses and slow down their thinking in high-stakes situations (University of Chicago Crime Lab, n.d.)” BAM’s curriculum includes immersive/experiential, reflective/introspective, role-playing, skill building, and stories/discussion activities, as well as field trips to local colleges (Heller et al, 2017). The program also incorporates a mentoring component by introducing participants to a positive adult (Heller et al, 2017).

In 2009-10, The Crime Lab research team worked with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to identify 2,740 male students in grades 7 through 10 in 18 CPS schools who were at an elevated risk for dropout and crime involvement (University of Chicago Crime Lab, n.d.).

The team randomly assigned youth to one of two conditions – enrollment in the BAM program or a control group receiving standard services – for a one-year period (University of Chicago Crime Lab, n.d.). In 2013-14 and 2014-15, the team again identified 2,064 male youth in grades 9 and 10 across nine CPS high schools and randomly assigned them to one of the two conditions over two years (University of Chicago Crime Lab, n.d.).

In both studies, participation in BAM reduced total arrests during the intervention period by 28-35%, reduced violent-crime arrests by 45-50% and reduced arrests for other crimes by 37-43% (Heller et al, 2017). The program also improved school engagement. In the initial study, where researchers had follow-up data, BAM increased on-time high school graduation rates by 12-19% (University of Chicago Crime Lab, n.d.). Researchers found “suggestive support for the hypothesis that the programs work by helping youth slow down and reflect on whether their automatic thoughts and behaviors are well suited to the situation they are in or whether the situation could be construed differently (Heller et al, 2017).”

Participation in BAM:

Reduced total arrests during the intervention period by

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Reduced violent-crime arrests by

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Reduced arrests for other crimes by

37-43%



Increased on-time high school graduation rates by

12-19%



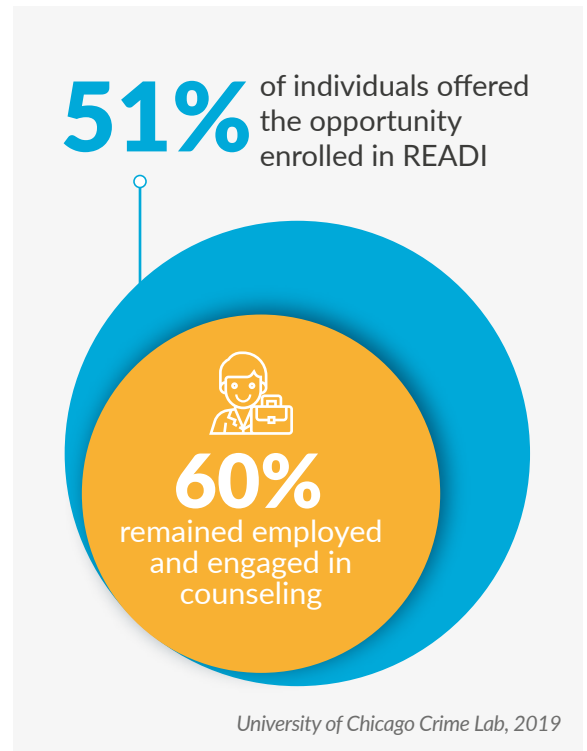
Heller et al, 2017

READI Chicago



The University of Chicago Crime Lab is also evaluating a separate program – READI Chicago – that incorporates several principles of Transformative Mentoring. READI, which stands for Rapid Employment and Development Initiative, was developed by Heartland Alliance following a visit to Oakland. The program received initial support from NICJR, which also helped to develop CYO’s HWW program. READI Chicago is a two-year career pathway program targeting young adults at the highest risk of gun violence involvement. The program is relationship-based and intensive. Participants receive employment in paid transitional jobs, cognitive behavioral therapy, and support services (READI Chicago, n.d.).

An initial assessment of READI Chicago by the Crime Lab showed promising early results, specifically around engaging participants. Fifty-one percent of individuals identified as high-risk and offered the opportunity enrolled in READI and one year following enrollment, 60 percent of participants remained employed and engaged in counseling (Chicago Sun Times Editorial Board, 2019).



Arches Transformative Mentoring Program

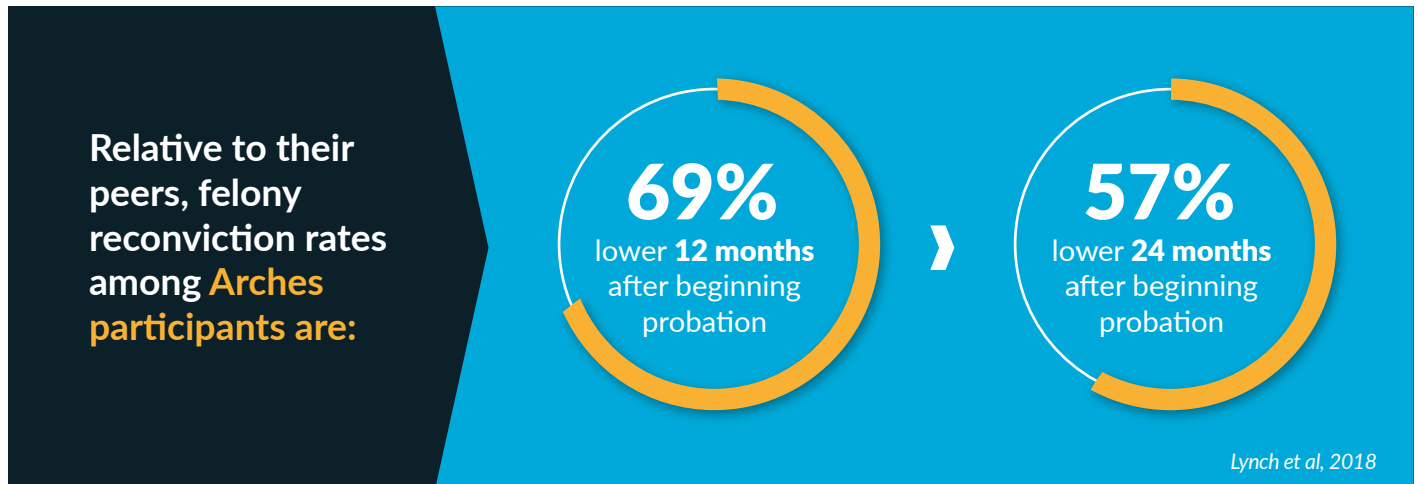


As mentioned above, in February 2018, the Urban Institute released a report evaluating the impact of the Arches Transformative Mentoring Program in New York City. Between November 2015 and March 2017, the Institute conducted an implementation and impact evaluation of Arches at the request of the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity (Lynch et al, 2018). The impact evaluation assessed the effects of the program on participant outcomes, including recidivism, using a matched comparison group (Lynch et al, 2018). The Urban Institute examined rearrests and reconvictions for 279 Arches participants as well as 682 young people who began probation around the same time but did not participate in the program (Lynch et al, 2018).

The results of the impact evaluation found that Arches participants were much less likely to be reconvicted of a crime than members of the comparison group: “Relative to their peers, felony reconviction rates among Arches participants are 69 percent lower 12 months after beginning probation and 57 percent lower 24 months after beginning probation (Lynch et al, 2018).” Evaluators found that the program was particularly successful for participants 17 years old and younger (Lynch et al., 2018).

The evaluation also found that participants in Arches achieved improvement in self-perception, as well as relationships with others (Lynch et al, 2018). “Pre- and post-assessment surveys show gains in key attitudinal

and behavioral indicators, including emotional regulation and future orientation (Lynch et al, 2018). Researchers found that scores on the Positive Youth Development Index, which measures the five C's of positive youth development (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring), were significantly higher post-program among participants in the Arches program (Lynch et al, 2018). Participants reported "very close and supportive relationships with mentors, attributed to mentors' status as credible messengers, their 24/7 availability for one-on-one mentoring, and a 'family atmosphere' within the program (Lynch et al, 2018)."



Additional Research

In addition to the studies of Transformative Mentoring highlighted in this report, there have also been several evaluations over the past 15 years of programs utilizing Credible Messenger Mentoring (Austria & Peterson, 2017), a key component of the Transformative Mentoring model. In The Pinkerton Papers' January 2017 article "Credible Messenger Mentoring for Justice-Involved Youth," authors highlight these programs and their impact, including the following:

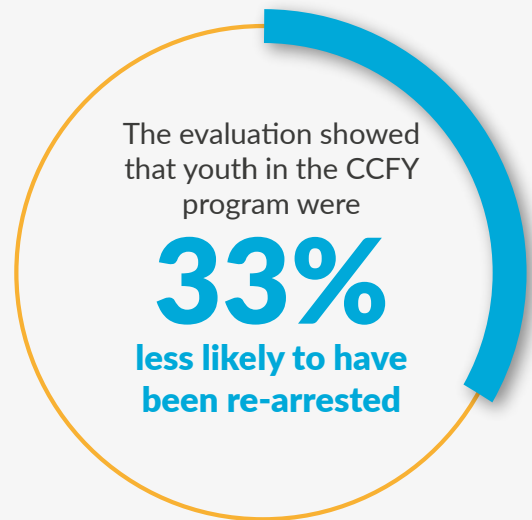
Roca, Inc.

One of the programs profiled in the report is Roca, Inc., a Boston-based organization serving high-risk youth that focuses on employment placement and incorporates transformational relationships – "relationships for the purpose of change" – in its High Risk Youth Intervention Model (Austria & Peterson, 2017). At the time of the publication, Roca was "two years into a five-year Pay for Success Initiative using social innovation bonds to serve approximately 1,000 high-risk young men in Boston, Springfield, and surrounding communities (Austria & Peterson, 2017)."

In year two, of participants that remained in the Roca program for two years or longer, "98 percent had no new incarcerations, 93 percent had no new arrests, 88 percent had no new technical violations of probation or parole, and 92 percent retained employment for at least 90 days (Austria & Peterson, 2017)."

Community Corrections for Youth

John Jay College of Criminal Justice conducted a three-year evaluation of a youth diversion program launched by Community Connections for Youth (CCFY) in the South Bronx in 2010 that incorporates credible messenger mentors from community and faith-based organizations to serve youth (Austria & Peterson, 2017). The evaluation showed that youth in the program were 33 percent less likely to have been re-arrested and that youth remained engaged in relationships and programming well beyond the mandated time (Austria & Peterson, 2017).



Youth Advocate Programs

John Jay also conducted a 2014 evaluation of Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), Inc., a national organization that matches justice-involved young people with mentors, often credible messenger mentors, as an alternative to incarceration (Austria & Peterson, 2017). The evaluation found that 86 percent of YAP participants avoided rearrests. Ninety-three percent of youth remained in the community upon completing the program and participants were more likely to remain in the community in the year following completion (Austria & Peterson, 2017).



86% of YAP participants avoided rearrests.



93% of youth remained in the community upon completing the program

The evaluations discussed above are just a snapshot of a larger body of research discussed in the Pinkerton Papers article that points to Transformative Mentoring and Credible Messenger Mentoring as promising models for reducing young people’s involvement in the justice system and risk for violence.



Community & Youth Outreach

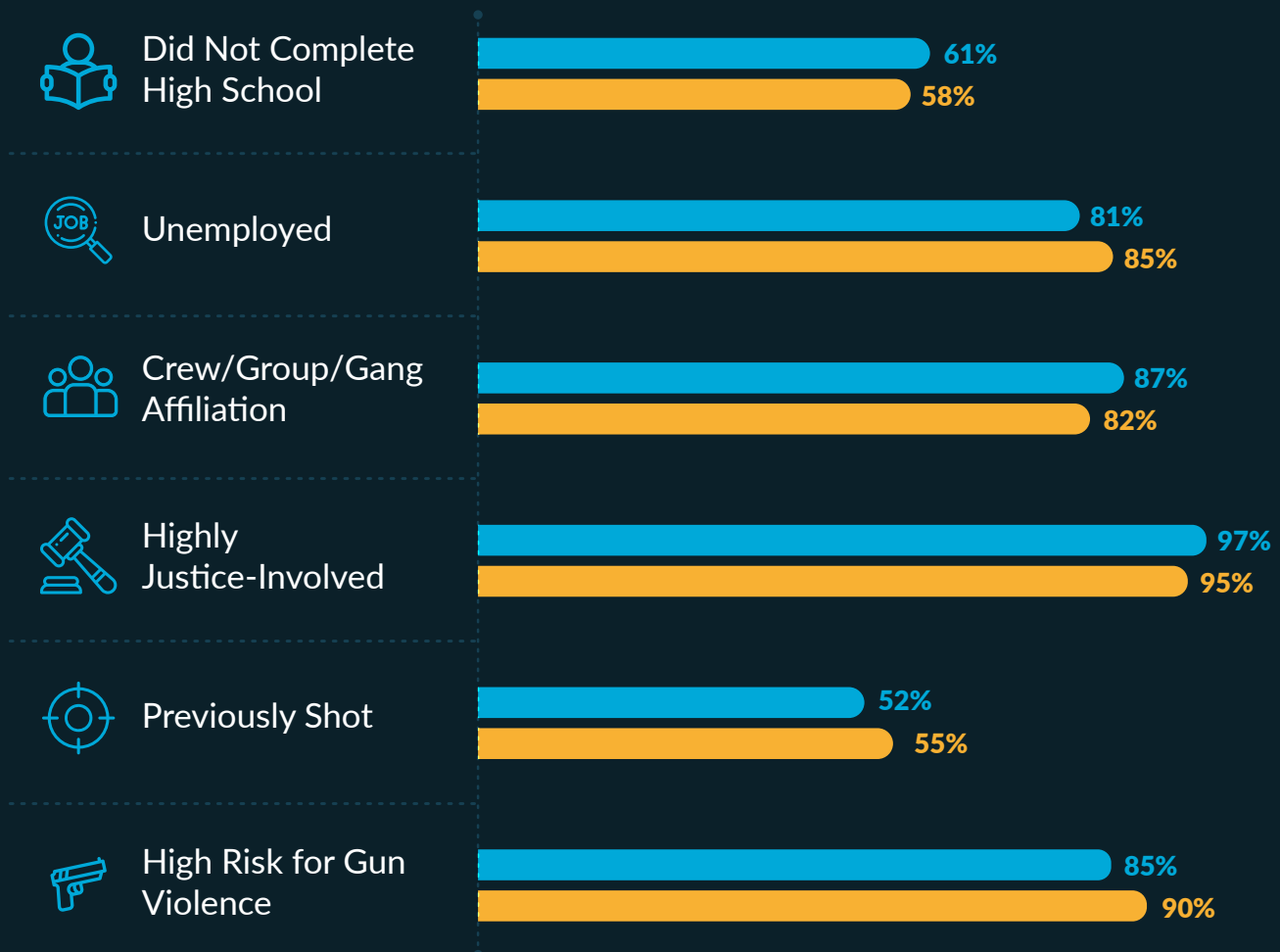
Community & Youth Outreach (CYO) was founded in 2010, growing out of larger statewide community outreach organization in California. For the past decade, CYO has provided intensive case management services to youth and young adults in Oakland who have been identified as highly at risk of being involved in violence, in partnership with Oakland Unite, a division of the City of Oakland's Department of Human Services. CYO also serves high-risk youth and young adults under the supervision of the Alameda County Probation Department, as well as those recently released from state prison and on parole. CYO has consistently played a pivotal role in the direct services component of the City of Oakland's highly successful Ceasefire Gun Violence Reduction Strategy.

CYO provides Intensive Life Coaching (ILC) services to young people at high risk of being involved in gun violence, based on the risk factors established by a City commissioned study that assessed the details of several years of homicides in Oakland. The study determined that approximately 60-65% of gun homicides in Oakland involved people with a very similar risk profile: young Black and Latino men, age 18-35; with significant criminal justice history (10 or more prior arrests); who are affiliated with an active crew, group or gang; have been shot before; and/or have a close friend or family member that has been shot in the past year.

CYO Participant Profiles for 2018 and 2019

Participant Details Upon Enrollment

● 2019 ● 2018



Once very high-risk individuals have been identified and referred to CYO through the City’s Ceasefire Strategy or other partners, CYO enrolls them in ILC. CYO Life Coaches prioritize developing an authentic, trusting relationship with their clients. They serve no more than 12 to 15 young people at a time and are required to communicate with their clients daily and see them in-person two to three times per week.

CYO employs credible messenger Life Coaches who share similar life experiences as clients and are closely connected to the communities where clients live. Life Coaches establish trusting relationships with clients and their families; develop detailed Life Plans to address clients’ risks and needs; connect clients to services, supports, and opportunities; and keep clients safe, out of the justice system, and successful. Clients are eligible to receive incentive stipends for remaining engaged and active in programming.

CYO's Theory of Change involves three important steps:

1. Relationship

The first step in helping to transform the lives of high-risk and system-impacted young people is to establish a trusting relationship between staff and clients. CYO Life Coaches focus first and foremost on establishing a close and trusting relationship and rapport with each client. Upon initial connection, Life Coaches explain to clients that they are there to support them, to keep them safe and out of prison, and to help them succeed. Staff share their own journey and the reasons why they CARE about the client. This initial stage of engagement focuses on safety and support – to simply “be there” for the client.

2. Mentality Shift

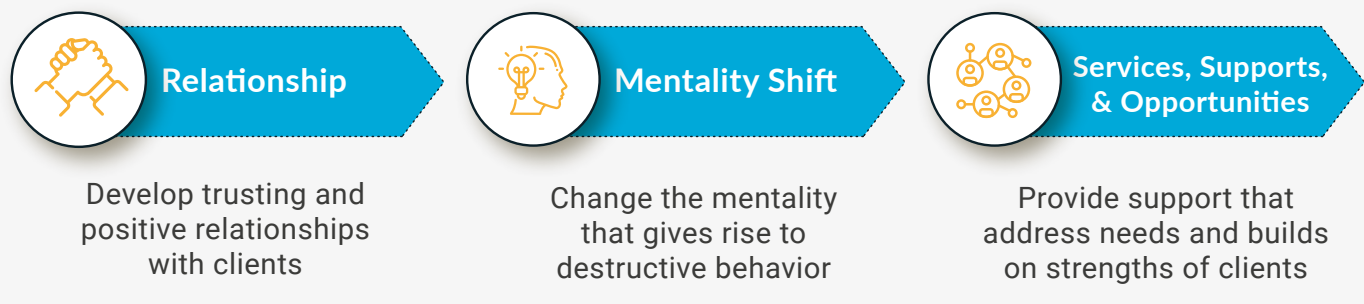
Many young people who are system-impacted have experienced trauma, have grown up in under-resourced, high-poverty neighborhoods, have had limited exposure to pro-social environments, and have encountered many negative influences. These experiences often form a mentality that can cause young people to make poor decisions, leading to detrimental life outcomes. One's mentality forms the basis for their decisions, which determines their outcomes.

A critical element of CYO's work is to change the mentality that leads to destructive behavior. CYO achieves this through a combination of credible messenger staff and CBT programs. Credible messenger Life Coaches serve as examples of people who have changed their lives and can therefore provide good information and influence. Life Coaches use their trusting relationships with their clients to build influence with them and use their influence to help them make better decisions. CYO also uses HWW as a primary strategy to help clients make better decisions.

3. Connection with Needed Services, Supports, and Opportunities

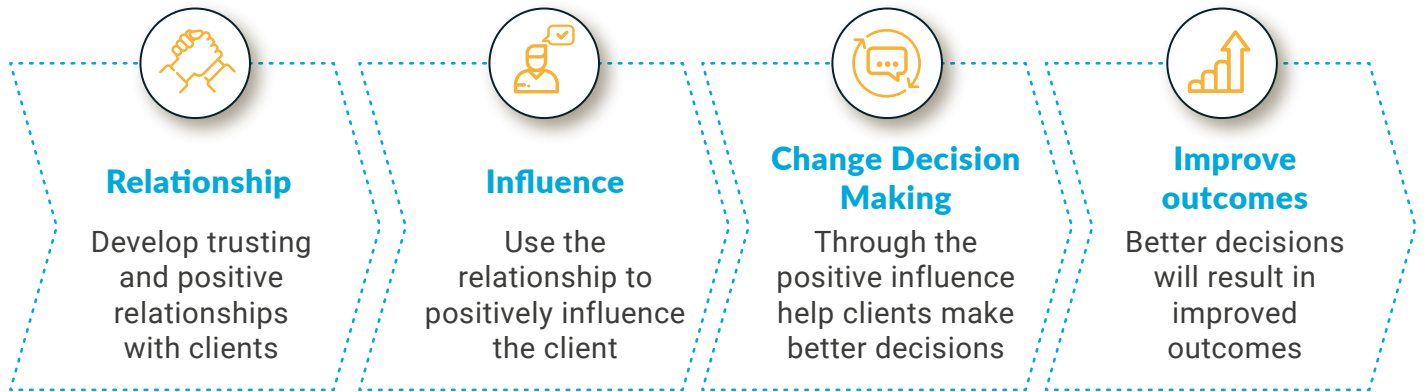
Once a strong mentoring relationship has been established and the client has been exposed to information and experiences to begin their mentality shift, there can be a greater emphasis on connections to services, supports and opportunities. Life Coaches sit down with each client and ideally their family to develop a detailed Life Plan or case plan. These plans should identify the client's greatest needs and challenges, as well as their strengths. Life Plans emphasize education, employment, and housing, and overcoming barriers to success in each of those areas. Once a plan has been developed, Life Coaches do not simply refer their clients to a particular service or program, but, instead, personally connect them to services, programs, and organization they know and trust. Life Coaches initially accompany and transport clients to meetings and programs, directly connecting them to each service provider.

Theory of Change



Intensive Life Coaching

CYO's model of ILC follows this Theory of Change:



David Muhammad helped to develop much of CYO's Theory of Change and program model. In 2015, the organization's Board of Directors asked Muhammad, the Executive Director of NICJR, to provide management support to CYO. Muhammad ultimately became the Interim Executive Director of CYO. With his background in developing Transformative Mentoring programs, Muhammad began working with CYO staff to create Healthy, Wealthy & Wise.

Healthy, Wealthy & Wise

Healthy, Wealthy & Wise (HWW) is a trauma-informed, culturally relevant CBT program developed for high-risk, system-involved youth and young adults. HWW consists of a 14 to 16-week group session primarily covering four topic areas: 1) Decision Making, 2) Identity and Purpose, 3) Overcoming Trauma and Pain, and 4) Life Skills and Financial Literacy. Each participant enrolled in HWW is also assigned a Life Coach to work with one-on-one through the process, providing the support and services described above. By combining trauma-informed CBT group sessions and one-on-one Life Coaching, and emphasizing relationship building and decision making, HWW is a Transformative Mentoring program.

Building on experience and knowledge from The Mentoring Center, the Washington, D.C. DYRS Transformative Mentoring Program, New York City's Arches program, and several additional CBT curricula, in 2016, Muhammad worked with staff at CYO to design the HWW curriculum to align with evidence-based practice and include cultural relevance to the population CYO serves.



Curriculum Areas



The HWW group curriculum covers four main areas:

- 1 Making Better Decisions:** Participants explore the decisions they make and how these decisions determine their outcomes. Using real life scenarios, participants analyze and discover new ways to handle critical situations they commonly face.
- 2 Identity & Purpose:** Participants explore self-identity and purpose, become aware of their true power and potential, and learn how their identity drives their behavior and decision making.
- 3 Overcoming Trauma and Pain:** Participants learn how trauma and emotional pain affects their lives and learn tools to mitigate the effects of trauma. Participants role-play scenarios that can lead to triggers and discuss how to overcome these challenges.
- 4 Life Skills and Financial Literacy:** Participants learn life skills and financial principles, including budgeting, saving, banking, and other financial literacy tools.

Participants spend three to four weeks on each focus area. In order to graduate from the program, participants must attend at least 12 sessions and complete the “Getting It Right” companion journal, designed by the Change Companies. In this evidence-based CBT journal, participants examine eight basic thinking errors that lead to harmful behavior.

Financial Incentives



Another key component of HWW is the use of financial incentives to keep young people engaged. Participants receive stipends for on-going participation in the program. Those who attend the entire session receive a \$25 stipend following each class. Graduates of HWW receive a \$100 incentive stipend at the graduation ceremony. Additionally, participants enrolled in Intensive Life Coaching are eligible to receive modest monthly stipends, up to \$300 per month, for remaining connected to their Life Coach and achieving certain milestones.

Financial incentives are critical tools that show hard-to-reach clients that their Life Coach is serious about their success by rewarding achievement. These tools have been proven to be effective in evaluations of similar violence reduction programs, as well as other self-improvement programs, such as weight loss (Mayo Clinic, 2013).

Program Graduations



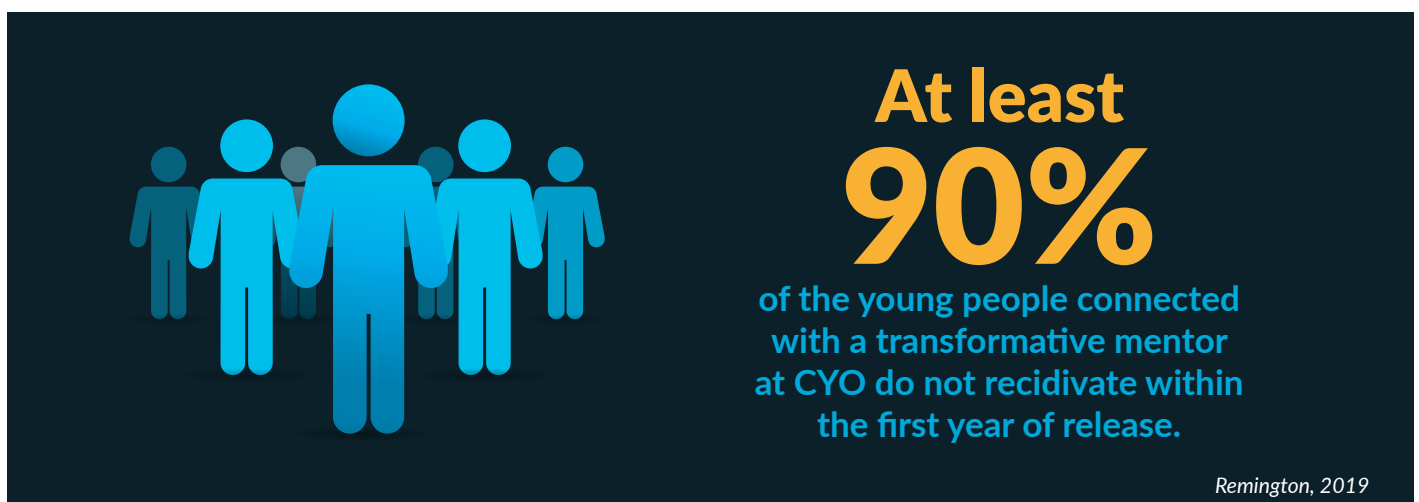
At the end of each HWW cycle, CYO hosts a graduation celebration to acknowledge participants who have completed the program, recognizing that for some graduates, a HWW certificate may be the first certificate they have received. Graduations feature food, music, guest speakers, and a graduation ceremony with certificates and moments of individual recognition for each participant. Participants are encouraged to invite family and friends to the ceremony. Graduation speakers have included authors who have given graduates copies of their books, well-known local rappers, and star players of the Oakland Raiders football team.

Client Outcomes



Participants of CYO's HWW and ILC programs have achieved tremendous outcomes, especially given their high degree of risk upon enrolling in services. Dr. Kathleen Remington spent two years observing HWW, interviewing staff, and researching CYO for her dissertation, "Capacity, Community, and Consolidation: Transformative Mentoring for Formerly Incarcerated Young Adults in Re-Entry (2019)."

Dr. Kathleen writes: "Transformative mentoring at Community and Youth Outreach (CYO) is an intensive modality of mentoring that is more effective in reducing recidivism for the young adult participants compared to traditional approaches...at least 90% of the young people connected with a transformative mentor at CYO do not recidivate within the first year of release (Remington, 2019)."



**At least
90%**
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with a transformative mentor
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the first year of release.

Remington, 2019

A review of client data from the past two years indicates that enrollment in ILC can contribute to reduced risk for violence and recidivism and improved educational and employment outcomes among participants. Included below are short outcomes summaries from the 2018 and 2019 ILC cohorts.

2018 Cohort

110
high-risk clients

Over 2018, CYO served 110 high-risk clients with ILC services. Nearly all ILC clients also participated in HWW programming. Clients had an average age of 26 years old. Upon enrollment, 85 percent of participants were unemployed; 58 percent had not completed high school; 82 percent were gang-affiliated; 55 percent had been previously shot; and 95 percent were highly involved in the criminal justice system.

41
participants
secured new jobs

Over the course of the program, 41 participants secured new jobs, with 25 participants retaining those jobs past 90 days. Seven clients earned their GED and five enrolled in community college.

10%
recidivism rate

Most notably, although 95 percent of clients enrolled in ILC had numerous previous arrests and most had been to state prison, the recidivism rate for ILC participants was just 10 percent. When compared to statewide recidivism rates for young people in California, this number is exceptionally low. According to research from the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, recidivism rates for young people incarcerated in California's Division of Juvenile Justice are much higher - 74 percent are rearrested, 54 percent are reconvicted, and 37 percent return to incarceration (Washburn & Menart, 2019).

<5%
were involved in
incidents
of gun violence

Furthermore, fewer than five percent of ILC participants were involved in incidents of gun violence, despite their very high risk. The Oakland Police Department assessed most clients as very high risk of being involved in gun violence within the year. While 11 clients were rearrested, just one client was rearrested for a shooting. Tragically, four clients were victims of gun violence, with one client dying from their injuries.

2019 Cohort

95
high-risk clients

Over 2019, CYO served 95 high-risk clients through the ILC program. Again, nearly all ILC clients also participated in HWW programming. Clients had an average age of 26 years old. Upon enrollment, 81 percent of participants were unemployed; 61 percent had not completed high school; 87 percent were gang-affiliated; 52 percent had been previously shot; and 97 percent were highly involved in the criminal justice system.

49
participants
secured new jobs

Over the year, 49 clients received new jobs, with 27 participants retaining those jobs past 90 days. Seven clients earned their GED. While 97 percent of clients enrolled in ILC were highly justice involved, the recidivism rate for participants was just 18 percent, significantly lower than the overall recidivism rate for young people in California, as discussed above.

3%

were involved in incidents of gun violence

Just over 3 percent of ILC clients were involved in gun violence incidents, despite their very high risk. Again, the Oakland Police Department assessed most clients as very high risk of being involved in gun violence within the year. While 17 clients were rearrested, just one client was rearrested for a shooting. Two clients were victims of gun violence.

18%

recidivism rate

While 97 percent of clients enrolled in ILC were highly justice involved, the recidivism rate for participants was just 18 percent significantly lower than the overall recidivism rate for young people in California, as discussed above.



In 2018-19, NICJR conducted a “Train the Trainer” training for the City of Stockton’s Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). OVP staff received several days of training in the HWW curriculum and learned how to facilitate the program. In 2019, the OVP launched its own version of HWW for young adult clients who were identified as highly at risk of gun violence.

NICJR also provided a series of trainings, including training in the HWW curriculum, to staff of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC), a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization that provides a support network, comprehensive services, and opportunities to advocate for policy change for currently and formerly incarcerated people. ARC is now using elements of the curriculum in their workshops inside several California state prisons through their Hope and Redemption program.

NICJR continues to offer training in the HWW curriculum to non-profit and public agencies serving high-risk youth, further growing the Transformative Mentoring model.

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