

COVID-19 Impacts on Community-Based Interventions for Justice-Involved Minority Young Adults: Practitioner and Consumer Perspectives

PIs: Dr. Jonathan Glenn (NCCU-Juvenile Justice Institute), Dr. Darren Beneby (NCCU Department of Criminal Justice)

Background and Significance

COVID-19 continues to have profound impacts on North Carolina's criminal justice system, and other public service entities. As prisons and jails have emerged as epicenters for infection, The North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NC DPS) and local, county governments have responded to COVID-19, in part, by reducing its confined populations and relying upon community-based interventions as an alternative to confinement. For example, the jail population in Durham decreased from 736 inmates to the current 259 inmates as a result of efforts to mitigate and prevent the spread of the virus (Leonard, 2020). While access to COVID-19 testing has become more widely available in recent weeks, NC DPS has not implemented a comprehensive plan for testing confined youth. According to the NC DPS, among the adult inmates who tested for COVID-19, 98% of positive cases were asymptomatic at the time of the test. As minority youth, especially African Americans, continue to account for a disparate number of youth confined in the juvenile facilities, and likely the majority of youth released from confinement, communities vulnerable to the worst health outcomes associated with the novel coronavirus are seeing an increase in potentially COVID-asymptomatic youth among them. In addition to this health risk, youth released from confinement are in desperate need for community-level intervention to maintain their rehabilitative progress.

Traditionally, community-based interventions for offenders have been shown to be an effective alternative to the use of secure facilities in addressing delinquent behavior (Robertson, Grimes & Rogers, 2001). Monitoring, supervision, and delivery of interventions for these young people is now being conducted using a service delivery model based on virtual connections through videoconferencing (Zoom, Webex, etc.). While this service delivery method has been previously utilized with young people, little is known about the effectiveness of this approach to working with justice-involved youth or related challenges it poses. The risk-needs-responsivity (RNR) model is a widely validated model for the effective implementation of such interventions with juvenile and adult populations (Bonta & Andrews, 2007; Dowden & Andrews, 2003). The first core principle of the RNR model, *risk*, mandates that evidence-based interventions are proportionate or commensurate to an offender's risk to reoffend. This principle requires that providers accurately predict offenders' risk with the use of viable assessment instruments before matching (Ogloff & Davis, 2004). This is an important step because studies have regularly found that there is a positive relationship between restrictiveness of programming and delinquency (Beneby, 2018). Less restrictive interventions result in a decreased likelihood of delinquency when offenders are at low risk for recidivating. The range of restrictiveness of community-based interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic is likely minimized as many justice-involved offenders reside at home, interacting with service providers remotely or reside within close proximity to their families and other social support networks.

The second principle, *needs*, evaluates the criminogenic needs of offenders and subsequently targets them in treatment. Criminogenic needs consist of stable and dynamic risk factors that have been found to be empirically related to offending (Simourd & Hoge, 2000). Community-based interventions sufficiently satisfy this principle as they allow youth to reside with their families and maintain employment and educational progress, key protective factors in reducing delinquency (Bonta & Andrews, 2007). The third core principle of the RNR model, *responsivity*, refers to the consideration of offenders' personal factors that may impede treatment. These factors include personal attributes of offenders (i.e. age, gender, temperament, motivation, anxiety), promoting the idea that individualized treatment is paramount to rehabilitative success and amenability to treatment. Responsivity also addresses the 'how' of rehabilitation, identifying various teaching and learning styles shown to be empirically effective in curbing recidivism.

Recently, two additional principles were added to the RNR model – *program integrity* and *staff buy-in*. These principles maintain that effective correctional interventions emphasize continuity of services, agency management (i.e., training, monitoring and evaluation of programs), and collaborative relationships with other agencies and programs. Research has demonstrated that principles of the RNR model are most effective in treating offenders when practiced in community-based settings, suggesting that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, an evaluation of such programs' adherence to these principles would be invaluable (Bonta & Andrews, 2007).

The present pilot project aims to capture the experiences of consumers and providers of community-based interventions for justice-involved young adults in the era of COVID-19. Qualitative data will be collected using Zoom videoconferencing. Two groups will be targeted, consumers and providers of community-based interventions. Three topic areas will be assessed for each group. 1) COVID impacts: Questions about the virus's impact on the individual participants will be asked. 2) Virtual service delivery: Questions will be asked about the use of videoconferencing and other virtual services that may be used (telehealth information, on-line support groups, etc.). 3) Program Impacts: To ascertain the effectiveness of the community-based intervention program, participants will be asked questions regarding fidelity, intensity, sustainability, interagency collaboration, training, staff-buy-in, and assessment among other topics. These questions will be designed to encompass the principles of the Risk-Needs Responsivity (RNR) model noted above. Because of the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reality of an uncertain future for this already vulnerable population, this study is designed to capture data at two time points, currently (Time 1) and at 6 months following the initial focus groups (Time 2). Longitudinal assessment of the experiences of the participants will provide a broader understanding of the acute needs and challenges as well as longer-term issues that arise as the pandemic wanes. Specific aims of this project are listed next.

Specific Aims:

Specific Aim 1: Time 1 – Conduct initial focus groups with (15) justice-involved young adults enrolled in community-based interventions and (15) service providers / program staff using Zoom videoconferencing. Multiple Zoom meetings (up to 3) may be held for each group to maximize flexibility in scheduling.

Specific Aim 2: Time 2 – At 6 months post Time 1, conduct follow-up focus groups with justice involved young adults and service providers / program staff using Zoom videoconferencing. Multiple meetings (up to 3) may be held for each group to maximize flexibility in scheduling.

Specific Aim 3: Complete content coding of the pilot data, use findings to produce manuscripts and research plans for a larger study of community-based interventions. The PIs hope to use future funding to develop a model for a community health-informed alternatives to confinement.

Research Strategy

Data for this project will be collected using videoconference focus groups. This qualitative approach will allow for in-depth discussions of our key topics with justice-involved young adults (ages 18-25) and providers of services for community-based interventions. Data will be collected at two time points, in order to gauge initial and longer-term impacts. In order to accommodate schedules, up to 3 focus groups will be held for each target group. This flexibility will allow for the full sample size of 15 participants per target group to be included and will likely keep each group size to a maximum of 5 – an ideal number for Zoom-based focus groups, based on experience with similar focus groups conducted by the PIs in other research.

The PIs will submit an application for human subjects research through NCCU's IRB prior to the start of this pilot study. Participants will then be recruited using a snowball recruitment technique based on contacts with criminal and juvenile justice stakeholders known to the PIs. Programs funded by state Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs) will be contacted to recruit consumers (young adults) and providers (officials and staff). The PIs have working relationships with JCPCs in Durham and Wake counties, which serve hundreds of justice-involved young adults. The JCPCs fund a variety of community-based intervention programs, providing an excellent point of contact for the present pilot study. Zoom focus groups will be scheduled and recorded for later transcription, coding, and qualitative data analyses. Following the focus group, each participant will be

mailed a Visa gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation. Time 1 gift cards will be \$25 and Time 2 gift cards will be \$50, providing incentive for participants to return for the second data collection.

Data coding and analyses will be conducted using NVivo qualitative data software. This software is available through the RMCI-CEC at NCCU and will be leveraged for the present pilot project. Content coding to extract themes will be used for this study, a widely used approach for qualitative data analyses (Saldana, 2012; Hesse-Biber & Leary, 2010). Themes from each time point will be compared to assess for differences in perspectives driven by the progression of the pandemic. Findings from this work will be extremely important in understanding the real-world impacts of COVID-19 on an especially vulnerable group – justice-involved young adults. In addition, this study will provide important data on providers of the community-based interventions that are implemented in an effort to prevent recidivism. Findings from this study will also provide data on the use of virtual service delivery for this population, an increasingly popular yet understudied approach. Collecting qualitative data from consumers and providers of community-based interventions at two time points will provide a rich and detailed account of experiences in the COVID-19 pandemic. The research team plans to develop scholarly publications based on this work and will pursue additional research projects based on findings from this pilot project. This information gathered in this study will be useful for improving service delivery models and identifying unmet needs for both consumers and providers, setting the stage for additional research and potentially impacting policies related to health and justice.

Measurable Objectives

- Conduct two (2) to three (3) virtual focus groups of YSPs and justice-involved youthful consumers during the first data collection period.
- Conduct two (2) to three (3) virtual focus groups of YSPs and justice-involved youthful consumers during the second data collection period

Significant Impacts

Despite scientific support documenting the negative behavioral health outcomes associated with punitive and restrictive approaches to juvenile justice, many states, including North Carolina continue to rely on these practices. The present study has the potential to help scholars and practitioners begin to understand the strengths, challenges, and opportunities relative to community-based interventions in North Carolina. A firmer understanding of alternatives to punitive and restrictive responses to criminal behavior has implications for the health and wellbeing of minority, justice-involved youth. This pilot study is a starting point for future research that helps facilitate criminal justice reform in North Carolina.

Feasibility

Because of existing relationships with local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs), the PIs will have streamlined access to a range of community-based programs working with justice-involved young adults. The PIs have budgeted for gift cards to incentivize participation in both data collection initiatives. The PIs have budgeted for access to Zoom to facilitate virtual focus groups and will have access to NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The PIs are confident this pilot project can be completed within the allotted 12-month timeline.

Publications/Grant Applications Plan

- Findings from both aspects of the project can yield manuscripts worthy of publication in high-impact journals.
- Identify NIH R21 or similar mechanism to scale up data collection statewide

Project Budget:

Equipment:

(1) Mac Book Pro: **\$1,300**
(1) Recorders:

Office Supplies (300) and recorders (\$100): **\$400**

Other Expenses:

Postage fees: **\$300**
Photocopying: **\$200**
Zoom license fee: **\$150**
Participant Payments **\$2430 (NCCU internal funds)**
Transcription Services **\$500** (6-60 minute recordings @ \$1.25/minute, plus \$50 for fees)
Other Research Incentives: **\$350** (water bottles, pens, etc.) – **Internal funds**

*Dr. Beneby is requesting 0.5 summer salary in the amount of **\$5,675.00**.

Support requested from CARES: \$8525

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: Darren R. Beneby

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

POSITION TITLE: Assistant Professor

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL	B.S.	12/2000	Criminal Justice
Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL	M.S.	12/2003	Applied Social Sciences
Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX	Ph.D.	8/2015	Juvenile Justice

A. Personal Statement

My role in the proposed project is that of Principal Investigator. I am an Early Stage Investigator, applying for funding to obtain pilot data that will be used to investigate COVID-19 impacts on community-based interventions for justice-involved minority young adults. The skills and knowledge necessary to conduct community-based research were first developed while I pursued a bachelor and master degree in Criminal Justice under the direction of Dr. Narayan Persaud at Florida A&M University. During my tenure there, I learned to conduct ethnographical research and completed my master's thesis, a qualitative study examining elements of neo-colonialism in two predominantly African American impoverished communities. This experience taught me the value of qualitative inquiry and utilizing informants to gain access to otherwise inaccessible environments. I was afforded the opportunity to use semi-structured interviews and participant observation to answer research questions around racial disparities in offending. Additionally, during this time, my first publication came as co-author in a supplemental text entitled, "African American Contributions to Criminology and Criminal Justice." My training did not end there. I later pursued and obtained a doctoral degree in Juvenile Justice. While there, I was introduced to violence research. Under the training of Dr. Camille Gibson at Prairie View A&M University, I co-authored a monograph for Psych Discourse entitled, "Dissecting Black Juvenile Homicides." I learned the theoretical underpinnings of violence as a transaction between involved parties, violence as a mode of "saving face", and hyper-masculinity. The monograph required that I conduct a content analysis of police reports of homicide incidents involving Black and Latino youth. Through the identification of common themes in the police reports, we concluded that homicide perpetration was largely in response to perceived acts of disrespect in the presence of bystanders and homicides were typically interpersonal in nature. In addition to my experience in violence and community-based research, I have held work positions that required that I connect and work with communities in reducing crime and delinquency. These positions include counseling youth diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and supervising adjudicated youth as a probation officer for eight years. Moreover, recently I have been an investigator on a community-based research project examining the impact of disproportionate minority contact and

race-related stressors on the mental health and well-being of rural African American transition-aged youth. This study required focus groups be conducted via the Zoom online platform.

B. Positions and Honors

Academic and Professional Positions

- 2016-Present *Assistant Professor*, North Carolina Central University, Department of Criminal Justice
- 2012- 2013 *Adjunct Instructor*, Prairie View A&M University, Department of Justice Studies
- 2011-2011 *Research Assistant*, Prairie View A&M University, Texas Juvenile Crime Prevention Center (TJCPC)
- 2011-2012 *Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant*, Prairie View A&M University, College of Juvenile Justice and Psychology
- 2006-2007 *Adjunct Instructor*, Florida A&M University, Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology
- 2005-2006 *Research Assistant*, Juvenile Justice and Educational Enhancement Program (JJEPP)

Professional Experience

- 2008-2016 *Certified Juvenile Probation Officer*, Intensive Supervision Program, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, Houston, TX
- 2004-2005 *Program Supervisor*, OPTIONS Juvenile Sex Offender Program, Greenville Hills Academy, Greenville, FL
- 2001 *Home-Based Counselor*, Community Intervention Center, Inc., Tallahassee, FL
- 2000 *Intern*, Juvenile Assessment and Receiving Center, Tallahassee, FL

Fellowship, Honors, and Awards

- 2013 Craig A. Washington Scholarship
- 2010 Harris County Advocate Program Award for Serving Youth and Families
- 2005-2008 McKnight Doctoral Fellowship

Professional Memberships (Past and Present)

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

American Society of Criminology

Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice

American Psychology-Law Society

C. Contributions to Science

- 1. Violence as a situational transaction. As stated earlier, I participated in a project while a graduate student at Prairie View A&M University that explored situational factors that result in homicide perpetrated by minority youth. The project was spurred by an increase in the rates of juvenile homicides in Houston, Texas over a period of five years. My contribution to the project was developing themes around homicide perpetration and a coding scheme. As a result of my role in the project, I learned about the background violence literature and its theoretical and empirical correlates.**
- 2. Community-based qualitative research. My master's thesis was an examination of neocolonialism in two Black communities. Specifically, I conducted interviews and participant observation in the two communities to make theoretical inferences about relations of power and domination between members of the community and the police and local government. This project required that I engage in semi-structured conversations with residents and staff working in the communities and engage in fieldwork. I also engaged in community-based qualitative research recently, conducting focus groups with transition-aged youth via an online platform, Zoom.**

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

Beneby, D. R., Glenn, J. W., & Taylor, L. C. (Under Review). An assessment of the hypercriminalization thesis: Evidence from juvenile justice and human service practitioners at a national conference

Beneby, D. R., Siddique, J. A., Rodriguez, F. A., & Rodriguez, J. J. (2019). Variation in staff and administrator support for community-based probation. *Journal of South Texas*, 33(1), 22-37.

Beneby, D. R. (2018). Examining the gendered effects of intensive supervision programs on juvenile probation outcomes. *Justice Policy Journal*, 6(2), 1-22.

Beneby, D. R. (2016). Juvenile probation professionals' perceptions of community-based probation practices. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 7(2), 39-54.

Gibson, C., **Beneby, D. R.**, & Cobbs, R. (2012). Dissecting Black juvenile homicides. *Psych Discourse*, 46.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME: Jonathan W. Glenn

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login): JWGLENN

POSITION TITLE: Associate Project Director

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE <i>(if applicable)</i>	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
Saint Augustine's College, Raleigh, NC	B.S.	05/2009	Criminal Justice
North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC	M.S.	05/2012	Criminal Justice
Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL	Ph.D.	10/2018	Criminal Justice

A. Personal Statement

As the Associate Project Director of the Juvenile Justice Institute at North Carolina Central University, my training, skills and experience make me well suited for one of the Co-Principle Investigator positions on this project. I have over eight years of experience conducting and coordinating independent research and statistical analyses. My program of research examines the link between punitive excess as a response to actual or perceived deviant/criminal behavior, and its manifestation across institutions of social control. Currently, my research focuses on the application of punitive excess within the context of race, education, and the administration of justice. **My education in criminal justice includes concentrations in juvenile justice at the Masters Level and behavioral science at the Doctoral level. Both of these concentrations, coupled with my experience working with youth of color have positioned me to coordinate the research efforts of the present study. My professional experience includes faculty appointments at two Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs), and coordinating research efforts within academic settings.** I have served as an investigator on funded research at NCCU, including the Collaborative Translational Research Award (CTSA) for a study entitled: Impact of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and race-related stressors on mental health and well-being of Rural African American Transition-age Youth (AA-TAY). This project was funded in collaboration with Duke University, My research experiences also includes directing data collection and analysis efforts in the study of police and community relations among African Americans in the southeast sector of the City of Raleigh, North Carolina.

B. Positions and Honors

2008: Alpha Phi Sigma National Criminal Justice Honor Society

2010-2012: Graduate Research Assistant- Department of Criminal Justice, North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC

2012-2014: Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice- Department of Criminal Justice, Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh, NC

2012-2013: Faculty Research Advisor- Bill and Linda Gates Foundation funded Raleigh Stars Project, Raleigh, NC

2012-2013: Statistician- Community Assessment Project, Operation Breakthrough, Durham NC

2014-2016: Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, Department of Criminal Justice, Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh, NC

2015: Dr. Thelma Johnson Roundtree Research Fellowship, Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh NC

2015-2016: Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, North Carolina Central University, Durham NC

2016: Outstanding Faculty Award, Department of Criminal Justice, Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh, NC

2016-Present: Associate Project Director, Juvenile Justice Institute, Department of Criminal Justice, North Carolina Central University

C. Contributions to Science

As an early career researcher, my work examines the link between punitive excess as a response to actual or perceived deviant/criminal behavior, and its manifestation across institutions of social control. Currently, my research focuses on the application of punitive excess within the context of race, education, and the administration of justice. I have published manuscripts on the school-to-prison pipeline, the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system, and strategies for improving school resource officer (SRO) programs. **In addition to publications that speak to the aforementioned social issues, I have assisted on the preparation of final reports for grant-funded initiatives that focused on school disciplinary disparities. As a member of the report preparation team, I helped draft, proof, and edit various sections of the final report.**

- a. **Glenn, J.W.** (2019). Beyond Skin Deep: Understanding Disproportionate Minority Contact through Ethnocultural Implicit Bias and the Decision-Making Process among Justice System Gatekeepers. *Journal of Applied Juvenile Justice Services*, 19(1), 32-46.
- b. **Glenn, J.W.** (2019). Resilience Matters: Examining the school-to-prison pipeline through the lens of school-based problem behaviors. *Justice Policy Journal*, 17(1), 23-41.
- c. Ganao, J., Suero, F., & Glenn, J. W. (2013). Assessing the differential impact of contextual factors on school suspension for black and white students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 82(4), 393-407.

My research has also explored the manner in which race influences public perception of law enforcement practices, in addition to police and community collaboration regarding innovative methods of approaching anti-gang initiatives. These projects, which include a manuscript that is currently under publication, and a final report from a research initiative funded through a campus based fellowship, contribute to the manner in which scholars understand contemporary policing and its link to public perception of police and community relations.

- a. Parker, M.M., Glenn, J.W., Turner, A. (2014). Criminalizing childhood: the social development of juvenile crime in a rural north carolina school. *Social Development Issues*, 36(2), 35-52.
- b. **Glenn, J.W.**, Taylor, L.C., *Chesterton, H., *Williams, S., *Moavenzadeh, F. (2019) Understanding school-based policing: recommendations for improving School Resource Officer programs and promoting safer schools *Safer Communities*, 18 (3/4), 132-142.