



# The Process Evaluation of Connecticut's 2008-2010 Motivational Interviewing and Strength-Based Case Management Initiatives

May 2011

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## Final Process Evaluation Report

May 2011

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Project funded by the Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Services Division

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing effective interaction styles that encourage positive behavior change in offenders has recently been recognized by the National Institute of Corrections as an evidence-based approach to corrections.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, effective correctional practice that incorporates brief interactions using Motivational Interviewing can significantly influence offender compliance and behavior change. Developing effective interaction styles is essential to meeting the needs of at-risk and delinquent youth.

In 2002, the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (CSSD) launched a Risk Reduction Program. The intended goal of the program was to: 1) improve services and outcomes for persons served by the court as well as those referred for services, 2) increase the occurrence of lasting behavioral change, 3) reduce recidivism in clients, 4) offer high quality treatment, and 5) improve public safety. Additionally, CSSD hoped to establish an organizational culture that supports juvenile Probation Officers in the application of Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Strength-Based Case Management (SBCM) practices.

In September 2006, CSSD initiated a new direction in the delivery of assessment, supervision, monitoring and rehabilitation services for juvenile clients which are based on the principles of probation risk reduction and

recidivism reduction.<sup>2</sup> This approach offered a new and refined way of training juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) to enhance their Motivational Interviewing skills and facilitate a Strength-Based approach in providing services to probationers.

The initiatives under evaluation were launched in May 2007 in three distinct phases. Phase I included training the administrators, Supervisors and lead juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs). Phase II included instruction for Probation Officers in Motivational Interviewing techniques, Strength-Based Case Management, and the Assessing Individual Motivation (AIM) tool. The workshops were delivered to eleven training groups staggered over a sixteen-month period as follows:

📅 MI - May 2007 through June 2008;

📅 SBCM - September 2007 through August 2008; and,

📅 AIM - October 2007 through June 2008.

The staggered trainings proceeded in groups of four, geographically, in the following sequence: Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, New Haven; New Britain, Waterbury, Danbury, Middletown, Hartford; and Torrington, Rockville, Willimantic, Waterford. Phase III began approximately six months following the completion of Phase II and included monthly meetings with Supervisors and

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<sup>1</sup> Please see <http://community.nicic.gov/blogs/training/archive/2007/07/03/Using-Motivational-Interviewing-to-Change-Offender-Behavior.aspx>.

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<sup>2</sup> Connecticut Court Support Services Division, Three Year Strategic Plan (2006-2009)

probation staff. Additional support and feedback on coaching and reinforcing Motivational Interviewing skills and the Strength-Based Case Management to Probation Officers was also provided. At the time of the first site visit, Phase III activities were coming to a close.

Justice Research Center (JRC) officially commenced its involvement in the project on July 22, 2008. The MI and SBCM research agenda includes a process and outcome evaluation. The process evaluation of Connecticut's MI and SBCM examined the Initiatives' development, implementation and management for factors that influence program operation and youth outcomes. It was carried out over a two-year time period and included six site visits, staff and client interviews, survey administration, direct observations and archival data analysis. This is the JRC's final report on the *Process Evaluation of the 2008-2010 Connecticut's Motivational Interviewing and Strength-Based Case Management Initiatives*.

The process evaluation assessment results demonstrate that:

- 📌 Staff are well qualified and they receive continuous training boosters;
- 📌 There is strong support for the model throughout all agency levels;
- 📌 Validated assessments of risk and need are being conducted to properly serve and assess youth;
- 📌 Treatment is driven by youths' individual needs;
- 📌 Officers are skilled in the MI and in SBCM;
- 📌 There is strong supervision and management in place to support the Officers; and,

- 📌 A quality assurance system has been established to ensure model fidelity.

The State of Connecticut has successfully implemented a pioneering intervention for at-risk and delinquent youth. Further, the Principles of Effective Intervention guided model development, implementation, operation and management. The following recommendations support the continuation of effective and efficient services for at-risk and delinquent girls in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

### **Staffing Characteristics, Qualifications and Training**

- 📌 Continue and expand booster sessions. Trainings should be provided to all Officers concerning the specific domains by which the observation scores fell below proficiency in order to improve Motivational Interviewing skills (Evocation, Collaboration, and Empathy, Reflection to Question, MI-Adherent, Open-Ended Questions, and Complex Reflections).
- 📌 Boosters should be held within each jurisdiction which refresh Officers on the 40 Developmental Assets and how those assets should be documented throughout the case file and especially within the case notes.
- 📌 Supervisors should continue to receive trainings and boosters so that their skills are as effective as the Officers they supervise.

### **Assessment of Risk and Need**

- 📌 Continue using validated risk and need assessments.
- 📌 An instrument (preferably validated), such as the MITI, should be used by Supervisors and the Risk Reduction

Unit (RRU) for observations to enhance skill development.

everyday interactions at each level of the agency.

### **Services and Treatment Interventions**

- 📖 Continue boosters in the areas noted above.
- 📖 Improve model fidelity and the quality assurance system in order to effectively collaborate between agency, levels ways to increase skill enhancement.

### **Supervision and Management**

- 📖 Designate lead Probation Officers within each jurisdiction to collaborate with other Officers, Supervisors and to work collaboratively with the Risk Reduction Unit (RRU).
- 📖 The Risk Reduction Unit should be expanded in order to have more lead Officers within the actual Unit at CSSD headquarters. Additionally, lead Probation Officers identified within each jurisdiction should also be incorporated into the Unit on a smaller scale.
- 📖 The Risk Reduction Unit should integrate and update new approaches within Policy 7.21 to guide quality assurance efforts and fidelity monitoring.

### **Internal Support**

- 📖 Continue to monitor administrative and internal support across agency levels. Assessments should be done at routine intervals to sustain Initiative goals.
- 📖 All agency levels should utilize the Strength-Based Approach when providing feedback. Project support will be heightened by a sense of understanding of how these perspectives assist in

### **Quality Assurance and Model Fidelity**

- 📖 Quantify quality assurance forms to incorporate Likert scaling and MITI domains. Forms should utilize both quantitative and qualitative information to assist Supervisors in providing Officers guidance.
- 📖 The RRU should aid Supervisors in the quality assurance process. A staggered approach may be beneficial so that lead Officers can conduct quality assurance for one jurisdiction every few months.
- 📖 The RRU should examine one taped feedback session a month by Supervisors per jurisdiction until all Supervisors are proficient in providing feedback that is Strength-Based and consistent with Motivational Interviewing.
- 📖 The RRU should monitor each jurisdiction's quality assurance system by randomly selecting 2 files per month to review from each Supervisor.
- 📖 Supervisors should continue monthly observations and case file reviews. Supervisors should maintain a confidential file for each Officer within their jurisdiction.
- 📖 Many Supervisors and Officers cited the need for digital recorders. If possible, CSSD should provide one or two digital recorders for each jurisdiction.

Process and outcome evaluations are critical to program success as they provide valuable information on the relative strengths and potential weaknesses of juvenile justice initiatives

and can assist policy makers in improving program operations and outcomes for youth. This report provides an overview of all process evaluation activities and assessment results. The discussion will focus on the

procedures and methods used to gather information during the process evaluation, a summary of the findings, and recommendations to sustain the Initiatives.



## PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE MI AND SBCM INITIATIVES

The growing emphasis on probation practices that are effective at building intrinsic motivation to change behavior is growing across the nation. While many probation units throughout the country have begun implementing MI and SBCM approaches for use with probationers, simple exposure and training are not sufficient to build proficiency. Many researchers are now stressing the importance of continued training, feedback, monitoring and evaluation as key elements to successfully utilize MI and SBCM approaches with at-risk populations.

In September 2006, CSSD initiated a new direction in the delivery of assessment, supervision, monitoring and rehabilitation services for juvenile clients which are based on the principles of probation risk reduction and

recidivism reduction.<sup>3</sup> This approach offered a new and refined way of training juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) to enhance their Motivational Interviewing skills and facilitate a Strength-Based approach in providing services to probationers.

The initiatives under evaluation were launched in May 2007 in three distinct phases. Phase I included training the administrators, Supervisors and lead juvenile Probation Officers. Phase II included instruction for line Probation Officers. Probation staff were trained in Motivational Interviewing techniques, Strength-Based Case Management, and the Assessing Individual Motivation (AIM) tool. The workshops were delivered to eleven training groups

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<sup>3</sup> Connecticut Court Support Services Division, Three Year Strategic Plan (2006-2009)

staggered over a sixteen-month period as follows:

- ✎ MI - May 2007 through June 2008;
- ✎ SBCM - September 2007 through August 2008; and,
- ✎ AIM - October 2007 through June 2008.

The staggered trainings proceeded in groups of four, geographically, in the following sequence: Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, New Haven, New Britain, Waterbury, Danbury, Middletown, Hartford, and Torrington, Rockville, Willimantic, Waterford. Phase III began approximately six months following the completion of Phase II and included monthly meetings with Supervisors and probation staff. Additional support and feedback on coaching and reinforcing Motivational Interviewing skills and the Strength-Based Case Management to Probation Officers was also provided. At the time of the first site visit, Phase III activities were coming to a close.

As a part of the research project, the JRC was to conduct a process and outcome evaluation by gathering information and collecting data in collaboration with CSSD, project administrators, Supervisors and juvenile Probation Officers. Process and outcome evaluations are critical to program success as they provide valuable information on the relative strengths and weaknesses of juvenile justice initiatives, and can dramatically improve program operations and outcomes for participating youth.

The process evaluation of Connecticut's MI and SBCM examines the initiatives'

development, implementation and management for factors that impact program operation and youth outcomes. The MI and SBCM process evaluation was carried out over a two-year time period to include all site visits, staff and client interviews and archival analyses. The assessments incorporated quantitative quality assurance (QA) data and qualitative interview and observation data. The evaluation seeks to answer the following research questions.

### **MI and SBCM Process Evaluation Research Questions**

1. Is the program being implemented, operated and managed as designed?
2. Are there significant deviations from the original program design?
3. Is there qualified staff in management and service delivery positions?
4. Does field staff perceive MI and SBCM to be useful and effective in their casework?
5. Have the Juvenile Probation Officers received adequate training and booster sessions in MI and SBCM?
6. Is there a quality assurance and fidelity monitoring system in place to assess the operation of these approaches?
7. Does the Juvenile Probation Officers receive feedback and instruction on MI and SBCM?
8. Is there sufficient agency financial, administrative and technical support for the MI and SBCS approach?



## PROCESS EVALUATION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Evidence-based justice programming has several common characteristics:

- 📌 Well qualified and trained staff;
- 📌 Appropriate clients;
- 📌 Validated assessments of risk and needs;
- 📌 Treatment that is driven by the individual's strengths and growth areas; Internal and external support for the Initiative;
- 📌 Strong supervision and management; and,
- 📌 A well developed quality assurance system that is used to monitor activities, provide feedback and guide program operations.

Each of these qualities was assessed during the two-year process evaluation. Qualitative data were gathered during local site visits and interviews with

Probation Officers, program administrators and agency Supervisors. The process evaluation site visits began in January 2009 and concluded in September 2010, with assessment activities approximately every three months.

The first site visit focused on documenting staff qualifications and training, internal and external support for the Initiative, and quality assurance. For the second site visit, JRC evaluators presented an overview of the MI and SBCM research study to Supervisors at a statewide Supervisor meeting and interviews were subsequently conducted with participants the following week. Accordingly, both the first and second site visits consisted of qualitative interviews with probation Supervisors

and Officers. Additionally, Probation Officers were asked to participate in a short online survey to gather more quantifiable on staff characteristics.

The next phase of the process evaluation (site visits three, four and five) focused on observing and documenting service delivery. To do this, 17 Probation Officers were randomly selected to take part in the study. At the time of the selection, there were 13 Connecticut jurisdictions. Thus, Officers were selected at random from each jurisdiction and two Officers were selected from the larger areas. Over the process evaluation, two Officers dropped out of the study. Thus, there were 15 Officers in total and at least one Officer to represent each Connecticut jurisdiction. Taken as a whole, the Officers represented the larger population of Connecticut's juvenile Probation Officers. Gender responsive Officers and low supervision Probation Officers were excluded from the selection. All process evaluation activities were conducted with these Probation Officers and their Supervisors.

Site visits three, four and five procedures also included collecting quantitative data by observing the Probation Officers' interactions with clients. The observational data included 15 Probation Officers from the following Connecticut jurisdictions: Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, Norwalk, Rockville, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury, Waterford, and Willimantic.

Probation Officers were scheduled for a four-hour period to be observed. Observations took place at the probation office, at school, at home, in a program

and in detention facilities. In addition, to direct observations, Probation Officers were asked to submit three digitally recorded sessions with clients in 3 periods of the probation supervision life cycle: intake, during services and at discharge.

The measurement of staff performance using formal and validated mechanisms is a foundational element of evidence-based practices. JRC staff utilized three different instruments to observe and assess the use of MI. These instruments include: the validated Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity instrument 3.1 (MITI), a criminal justice adaptation of the validated Behavioral Change Counseling Index (BECCI) and a SBCM assessment.<sup>4</sup> Descriptions of the instruments are provided in the following sections.

### Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity 3.1

The Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity instrument 3.1 (MITI)<sup>5</sup> is a behavioral coding system measuring MI beginning competency and proficiency. It can be used for research purposes or as a means of providing structured, formal feedback about ways to improve practice. This instrument is a coding system which measures an interaction in two ways: globally and behaviorally. The global scoring requires a coder to evaluate the

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<sup>4</sup> Please see the appendix for the instruments. It should also be noted that the CSSD checklist and the BECCI were formatted to fit on the same page. The BECCI represents the last 10 items on this list.

<sup>5</sup>Moyers, Martin, Manuel, Miller and Ernst (2009). The MITI 3.1 instrument was validated using twenty-minute, random segments of audio taped interviews.

entire interaction and assign a single number between 1 and 5. Behavior counts require the coder to tally instances or utterances of specific practitioner behaviors. The tally does not address the overall quality of the event, but simply counts categorized utterances from the beginning of the segment being reviewed until the end. The table below illustrates those standards for the global dimensions and behavioral counts (Moyers et al., 2009:27).

**Table 1. MITI Proficiency and Competency Bench Marks**

	<u>Beginning Proficiency</u>	<u>Competency</u>
MITI Global Ratings	3.5	4.0
Reflection to Question Ratio	1:1	2:1
Open-Ended Questions	50%	70%
Complex Reflections	40%	50%
MI-Adherent	90%	100%

The Behavior Change Counseling Index Criminal Justice Version<sup>6</sup>

The JRC also utilized a criminal justice adaptation of the validated Behavioral Change Counseling Index (BECCI). The ten item list is designed to assist in the evaluation of person-centered skills in three domains: Agenda Setting, Behavioral Change, and Whole Interview. Each item is rated on a four-point Likert scale. The BECCI can be used for interactions as short as 5 to 10 minutes. The instrument is scored by using the average score of relevant items. Additionally, the BECCI reports

<sup>6</sup> Specific scoring and definitions can be reviewed in the Manual for Coding Behavior Change Counseling available at <http://www.motivationalinterview.org/library/becci-cj.pdf>.

a total score for the interview and a measure of Officer Talk Time percentages.

In addition to scoring direct observations, site visits four and five included reviewing and scoring case files for the Probation Officers in order to assess whether the Strength Based Case Management Initiative was successful. The Strength-Based Approach incorporates the need to identify and build on youths’ strengths in order to reduce delinquency and further involvement in the system. Probation Officers were trained on how to document strengths and criminogenic risks and needs in case files. Strengths are to be used as the foundation for behavior change.

Procedural methods for selecting case files were random. Approximately 10 percent of the Probation Officers’ cases were selected for review. This equated to 73 file reviews for 16 Probation Officers. Three domains were rated on a Likert scale of zero to four relative to how well strengths were documented in the file.

Strengths were scored in the following areas of the case file: Case Notes; Pre-Dispositional Studies (PDS), if available; and, the Mitigation of Risk and Need. The 40 Developmental Assets<sup>7</sup> were used as a guide when assessing strengths and the mitigation of criminogenic risk and need.

For the last assessment, site visit six, qualitative data interview data was

<sup>7</sup> Please visit the Search Institute to see a complete list of the developmental assets at <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists>.

gathered concerning the Initiative's strengths and growth areas particularly pertaining to Model Development, Training and Boosters, Internal and External Support, and Fidelity Monitoring and Quality Assurance. The Project Coordinator was also interviewed for the final site visit. In addition to qualitative interviews, 15 Probation Officers and 19 Supervisors were solicited to take part in two online surveys in order to gather quantitative information on growth areas of the project. The next section of the report will discuss the process evaluation results.



## **PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS**

The process evaluation documented the development, implementation and management of the MI and SBCM Initiatives. The assessment focused on the core elements of effective justice programs: staff, training, clients, assessment, services, management and support, and quality assurance. The results discussion will begin with staff characteristics, qualifications and training. Next, the instruments used to assess risk and need, and the services available through the MI and SBCM are presented. Then the supervision and management style of the Officers is examined followed by a discussion of the level of support for the program, both within CSSD and from external agencies. Finally, the report will discuss the system in place for monitoring service delivery and staff fidelity.

### **Staffing Characteristics, Qualifications and Training**

Empirical research on best practices in program implementation indicates that staff involvement in the creation and design of the initiative is important to program success. Additionally, findings suggest that staff members' academic attainment, training, prior work experience and personal characteristics, are likewise linked to program effectiveness and outcomes.

At the time of the first site visit, all Probation Officers had progressed through the training curriculum as a group and completed all components of the initial training schedule. Staff preparation and training in evidence-based practices has been strong, in large

part due to the efforts of the Connecticut CSSD to ensure appropriate trainings are offered and completed by all probation staff. This represents a significant undertaking and one that should facilitate effective service delivery.

Feedback on trainings was mostly positive and all probation staff reported that the skills they learned were useful in their daily work with clients. Most Officers reported using their skills consistently; however, there was some variability in their understanding of MI and SBCM as an overarching foundation to promote behavior change in probationers.

While all probation staff reported being a part of the initial MI and SBCM trainings, several staff reported being involved in only some the subsequent booster sessions. This can potentially lead to variation in the knowledge and technical skills needed for successful program implementation. A lack of adequate booster sessions for all probation staff may increase confusion and frustration when utilizing Motivational Interviewing and the Strengths-Based Approach. Additionally, some Officers reported apprehension about Administration's expectation of them concerning the delivery of such services to youth.

The selected Connecticut probation staff are extremely well-qualified, both in terms of academic achievement and prior work experience. All identified staff members have at least a bachelor's degree and a minimum of three years of prior experience working with juvenile populations.

Overall, the majority of Officers perceived both MI and SBCM skills as beneficial because it gave them guidance when confronted with a noncompliant youth. One Officer reported,

*“Since I've been trained in MI it's been easier to speak with my clients and to get them to see certain things they want to change instead of me telling them what to change.”*

At the time of the last process evaluation, 53 percent of the Officers and 33 percent of the Supervisors reported having trainings and boosters since the initial site visit. The training for Officers and Supervisors consisted of in-office refreshers. Officers reported that the MI and SB trainings were usually coupled together; however, most could not remember the content of the SB booster.

In addition, some Officers, and the majority of Supervisors, felt that they needed more training and boosters in Motivational Interviewing so that they could improve their skills. A number of Officers and Supervisors (about 32 percent) reported wanting additional boosters in the Strength-Based Approach. Probation Officers felt that boosters in MI and SB were beneficial while the Supervisors were less likely to find the Strength-Based boosters beneficial.

### **Assessments of Risk and Need**

Probation Officers screen and assess youth and their families before developing their specific treatment plan. They report that success or treatment plan development is a collaborative process involving the juvenile, their

family and the treatment staff. The client's success or treatment plan outlines the services and other community-based programming options. Probation Officers regularly update the case plans during services to objectively determine client progress, needs and risk reduction.

There are three assessments that youth receive when entering in the system, the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI), the Juvenile Assessment Generic (JAG), and Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS). A brief description of each assessment is outlined below.

#### Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI)<sup>8</sup>

The MAYSI is a standardized, reliable true-false method for screening youth, ages 12-17, that are entering the juvenile justice system, in order to identify potential mental health problems in need of immediate attention. This is not a diagnostic instrument. It serves as a "triage" tool for decisions about the possible need for immediate intervention when little other information is available about the youth.

#### Juvenile Assessment Generic<sup>9</sup>

The JAG is a risk and needs assessment instrument that identifies and addresses an offender's criminogenic needs. It measures an offender's protective factors and arrives at an overall score that assesses the offender's likelihood of recidivating.

#### Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on the MAYSI please go to [www.assessments.com](http://www.assessments.com)

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the JAG please go to [www.ctjja.org](http://www.ctjja.org)

The CANS is a document that organizes clinical information collected during a behavioral health assessment in a consistent manner, to improve communication among those involved in planning care for a child or adolescent. This can also be used as a tool to guide care planning, and to track changing strengths and needs over time.

Overall, the instruments used to assess risk and need are validated and aid Gender Responsive Officers in the development of the case plan and appropriately treating girls' needs. Case files were reviewed during the process evaluation in order to assess how these instruments were used in the development of individualized treatment goals.

### **Assessment Results**

The findings from the case file reviews are presented next. A summary table of the scores for the file reviews is provided below. Overall, the average scores for the file reviews were moderate. The findings reveal that the Probations Officers understand how to document strengths in the case notes to some extent. Scores ranged from 0 to 4, and the highest score was reported in the category of the Mitigation of Risk and Need (2.22). Recall that both the Probation Officers and the case files were randomly selected. Thus, these scores should approximate the average scores throughout the State of Connecticut.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on the cans go to [www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/masshealth/cbhi/cbhi\\_cans-faqs.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/masshealth/cbhi/cbhi_cans-faqs.pdf)

**Table 2. SBCM File Reviews**

	<u>Average Score</u>			<u>N</u>
	<u>Visit IV</u>	<u>Visit V</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Case Notes	1.44	1.59	<b>1.52</b>	73
PDS	2.00	2.29	<b>2.14</b>	42
Mitigation of Risk and Need	2.00	2.41	<b>2.22</b>	73

**Services and Treatment Interventions**

The MI and SBCM Initiatives were designed to reduce recidivism and improve quality of life outcomes by using brief strategic MI and recognizing and highlighting youth strengths. Probation Officers received a version of MI which focused on ways that Probation Officers could help elicit behavior change. Because MI was becoming more standardized in regards to the techniques used to promote behavior change in the field, Probation Officers were assessed on all portions of MI. These include all of the following aspects

- 🗨️ Evocation- the extent to which the practitioner conveys to the client an understanding of the client’s motivation for and ability to change.
- 🗨️ Collaboration- the extent to which the practitioner interacts in a way which communicates a belief that both client and practitioner are equal partners in addressing the problem area under consideration.
- 🗨️ Autonomy and Support- the extent to which the practitioner uses strategies that actively support and foster the client’s perception of choice.
- 🗨️ Direction- the degree to which the practitioner maintains appropriate

focus on the specific target behavior and concerns regarding such, and

- 🗨️ Empathy- the extent to which the practitioner understands or makes an effort to understand the client’s perspective and feelings.

Probation Officers were also assessed on specific types of utterances which ultimately are used to help elicit change talk, including:

- 🗨️ Reflections to questions;
- 🗨️ Open-ended verse close-ended questions;
- 🗨️ Complex reflections verse simple reflections; and,
- 🗨️ MI-adherent verse non-adherent statements.

Table 4 below summarizes the findings from the direct and remote observations conducted during the site visits. Recall that the MITI calls for proficiency in these domains to be at or above a score of 3.5 and that competency represents a score of 4 or greater. Overall, the MITI global ratings score shows that averages were relatively stable across site visits for a total average score of 3.55 for 119 observations. This demonstrates proficiency ( $\geq 3.5$ ) for the MITI global domains. Officers also demonstrated proficiency in one domain, Autonomy and Support (3.67), while they demonstrated competency ( $\geq 4$ ) in Direction (4.19). All other domains fell slightly below proficiency. There seems to be no bias concerning the method of data collection, direct versus remote observations. In other words, both methods produced similar results.

**Table 3. Summary Findings for the MITI by Site Visit**

	Average Global Dimensions Scores (1-5)						
	<u>Visit III</u>	<u>Visit IV</u>	<u>Visit V</u>	<u>PDS</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Discharge</u>	<u>Total (N=119)</u>
Evocation	3.71	3.61	3.24	3.44	3.31	3.62	<b>3.49</b>
Collaboration	3.05	3.25	3.12	3.00	3.31	3.38	<b>3.18</b>
Autonomy/Support	3.71	3.50	3.96	3.47	3.56	3.69	<b>3.67</b>
Direction	4.14	4.54	4.00	4.56	4.00	3.69	<b>4.19</b>
Empathy	2.71	3.18	3.44	3.25	3.44	3.46	<b>3.23</b>
MI Spirit	3.49	3.45	3.44	3.33	3.40	3.56	<b>3.45</b>
<b>MITI Global Ratings</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>3.55</b>
	Average Behavioral Counts (%)						
Reflection To Question	37	37	30	24	31	33	<b>32</b>
MI Adherent	69	61	70	53	71	72	<b>66</b>
Open-Ended Questions	52	44	50	37	42	46	<b>46</b>
Complex Reflections	31	41	36	25	48	52	<b>38</b>

Table 3 also illustrates the summary findings for the MITI behavioral counts by site visit. Moyers and colleagues (2009:25) call for the Reflection to Question Ratio category to be reported as ratios (1:1 for proficiency; 2:1 for competency). However, in order to compare the scores across categories, percentages are reported and ratios are discussed. Additionally, benchmarks for the MI Adherent category are set at 90 percent for proficiency and 100 percent for competency, while they are 50 percent for proficiency and 70 percent for competency for the Open-Ended Questions category. Lastly, the proficiency and competency benchmarks for Complex Reflections are 40 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

On average, Officers gave reflections to clients 32 percent of the time compared to the number of questions asked. As noted, the MITI benchmark for proficiency calls for giving one reflection for every question asked. For the Reflection to Question category, 32 percent translates into a one-to-three ratio. In other words, for every reflection given, three questions were asked. Probation Officers scored the highest percentage in the MI-Adherent category (66%). However, this percentage does not reflect proficiency or competency. Officers also scored slightly below proficiency in two categories, Open-Ended Questions (46%) and Complex Reflections (38%).

**Table 4. Summary Findings for the BECCI-CJ by Site Visit**

	Average Total Score						
	<u>Visit III</u>	<u>Visit IV</u>	<u>Visit V</u>	<u>PDS</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Discharge</u>	<u>Total (N=119)</u>
Agenda Setting (0-4)	2.29	2.71	2.72	2.69	2.75	2.77	<b>2.65</b>
Behavior Change (0-4)	2.19	2.49	2.34	2.24	2.71	2.74	<b>2.43</b>
Whole Interview (0-4)	2.10	2.39	2.34	2.09	2.47	2.54	<b>2.32</b>
Talk Time (Scale 0-3)	1.76	1.89	1.56	2.19	1.63	1.33	<b>1.75</b>
<b>BECCI Index (%)</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>61%</b>

Table 4 above illustrates the findings from the BECCI. As illustrated, scores remained relatively constant across observations. Officers scored highest in Agenda Setting (2.65), followed by the Behavioral Change category (2.43), and Whole Interview (2.32). Officers, on average, were likely to speak a little bit more than half of the time. Overall, the BECCI Index (%) for the total number of observations conducted during the site visits is 61 percent, which is 14 percent less than the recommended BECCI-CJ score of 75 percent.

Overall, the preliminary findings point to more strengths than weaknesses in the skills and techniques of the Probation Officers. Averages are mostly high especially for two global domains: Direction and Autonomy and Support. In addition, Probation Officers met the proficiency benchmarks for the MITI global domains. This demonstrates that Probation Officers are utilizing and understanding motivational interviewing techniques more globally with their clients specifically in regards to maintaining focus on the target behavior and actively supporting the client's perception of choice. Despite these accomplishments, there is room for growth. The observational data shows that Officers fell slightly below proficiency in three domains Evocation, Collaboration, and Empathy.

Additionally, Officers also fell below proficiency in the following MITI behavioral count categories Reflection to Question, MI-Adherent, Open-Ended Questions, and Complex Reflections.

In regards to the BECCI-CJ the overall score of 61 percent is relatively low.

The BECCI-CJ indicates that an overall score of a 75 to 100 percent would be sufficient to demonstrate skills.

### **Supervision and Management**

The overarching mission of the Risk Reduction Unit (RRU) is to support the integration of the Eight Principles of Effective Treatment throughout the Juvenile Probation department. The unit functions as a link between administration and field staff to promote organizational alignment through the provision of training and quality assurance activities for Juvenile Probation Officers and Supervisors. In addition, members of the unit serve on a variety of committees to ensure that risk reduction principles are adhered to in the further development of probation policy and practice.

The RRU manages all of the Probation Officers and Supervisors MI and SBCM trainings, boosters and provides them with technical assistance. They also conduct and document quality assurance activities and provide the Officers and Supervisors with feedback to help improve their skills.

Overall, Probation Officers reported a great deal of satisfaction with the Risk Reduction Unit. Some Officers and Supervisors reported that,

*“The Risk Reduction Team can't be more supportive. They are always available to us for feedback.”*

*“I believe the Risk Reduction Unit is valuable and provides another level of oversight and instruction to JPOs and Supervisors. I also believe there needs to be continued boosters, refreshers, new approaches and on-going maintenance*

*of our MI skills to ensure the quality of engagement techniques are problem focused and targeted.”*

Most Officers and Supervisors felt this same level of support. There were few suggestions for improving support to the Officers and Supervisors and this ranged from sending out emails as reminders of enhance skills to having a greater presence within each jurisdiction, and conducting more observations. This finding is further detailed in the next section.

**Internal Support for the Initiative**

Successful program implementation and program performance are dependent on administrative support and collaboration between upper, middle and lower level management. At the administrative level, decisions about whether a program should be implemented are made, while the implementation phases of the program are dependent on the lower organizational levels which include project coordinators and managers, Supervisors and project staff. Once commitment to a program is made, administration is even more crucial to the underlying success of the program. More specifically, administration is critical in leading and motivating all organizational levels in adopting and articulating the vision of the initiative to program staff.<sup>11</sup> Generating enthusiasm at all organizational levels is essential to program success.

During the first and second site visit it was found that Probation Officers and

<sup>11</sup> Mihalic, Irwin, Fagan, Ballard, and Elliot (2004). Successful Program Implementation: Lessons from Blueprints. *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*. July

Supervisors reported a high level of support for the Initiatives. At the management level, support for the initiatives was apparent due to the presence of the regional managers at the initial trainings. Moreover, because administration was in attendance during the trainings, it led to buy-in from Supervisors to strengthen the support for the implementation of Motivational Interviewing and the Strength-Based Approach. Most Supervisors reported that these techniques were useful at both the management level and for Probation Officers. Supervisors reported that it was because of the support and enthusiasm from Administration and the success of the initial trainings that encouraged Supervisors to present the initiative in a positive manner to the Officers within their units. According to Supervisors and Probation Officers, this level of enthusiasm was essential to the successful implementation of the initiative.

The main purpose of the sixth site visit was to quantitatively assess the level of support for the MI and SBCM Initiatives. Officers and Supervisors were asked, “On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being not at all supportive and 10 being very supportive, how you would rate the overall support for the Motivational Interviewing Initiative by the Probation Officers, Supervisors, the Risk Reduction Team, and Administration and Central Office.

**Table 5. MI Initiative Support by Probation Officers (N=15)**

	<u>Average</u>
Probation Officers	7.40
Supervisors	8.27
Risk Reduction Unit	8.27
Administration & Central Office	7.60

As noted above, Officers rated Supervisors and the Risk Reduction Unit as having the highest level of support for the Initiative at 8.27. Overall support for the Initiative was high. Supervisors were also asked to rank the level of the support for the MI Initiative. Supervisors had the highest reported level of support at 8.21.

**Table 6. MI Initiative Support by Supervisors (N=19)**

	<u>Average</u>
Probation Officers	7.42
Supervisors	8.21
Risk Reduction Unit	8.16
Administration & Central Office	6.95

Overall, support for the MI Initiative varies moderately at various agency levels.

The level of support for the SBCM Initiative was also assessed. Officers were asked, “On a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being not at all supportive and 10 being very supportive, how you would rate the overall support for the SBCM Initiative by Probation Officers, Supervisors, the Risk Reduction Unit, and Administration and Central Office.

**Table 7. SBCM Initiative Support by Probation Officers (N=15)**

	<u>Average</u>
Probation Officers	6.86
Supervisors	7.67
Risk Reduction Unit	7.67
Administration & Central Office	7.27

As noted above, Officers rated Supervisors and the Risk Reduction Unit as having the highest level of support for the Initiative at 7.67. Interestingly,

Officers rated themselves as having the least amount of support for the SBCM Initiative.

Supervisors were also asked to rank the level of the support for the SBCM. Supervisors believed that they had the highest level of support for the project at 7.68. Overall support for the SBCM Initiative varies somewhat by agency levels

**Table 8. SBCM Initiative Support by Supervisors (N=19)**

	<u>Average</u>
Probation Officers	6.84
Supervisors	7.68
Risk Reduction Unit	7.58
Administration & Central Office	6.84

In summary, Administrative and Internal support for the project is relatively high and stable across agency levels. At the time of the last site visit, the Probation Officers reported feeling supported by other Probation Officers, Supervisors, the Risk Reduction Unit, and Administration and Central Office. Specifically, the active engagement of the Risk Reduction Unit and Supervisors has created a sense of communication, collaboration, and opportunity for technical assistance and guidance within each jurisdiction.

**Quality Assurance and Model Fidelity**

Program success hinges upon two key factors: effective interventions and effective implementation of those interventions. An internal and external system of monitoring service delivery and staff fidelity to evidence-based practices is critical to effective implementation.

At the time of the first site visit, Probation Officers reported that there was an informal quality assurance system in place to monitor and guide the MI and SBCM Initiative. However, there was some variability in implementing quality assurance in terms of observational reviews and conducting case file reviews. At the time of the last site visit, the quality assurance process is much more developed. There is less variability concerning when Officers receive observational feedback. At the agency level, there is a formal mechanism in place for monitoring the Initiative, providing feedback to staff on the program and measuring project outcomes. Despite these achievements, the quality assurance system is still in its beginning implementation phase. While the Officers reported receiving feedback and the Supervisors reported monitoring Probation Officers, quality assurance practices were inconsistent across jurisdictions.

In order to assess the implementation phases both Supervisors and Probation Officers were asked a series of questions. Supervisors were asked questions to assess the frequency of conducting quality assurance with Officers. In addition, Officers were asked to determine the quality of feedback that they received from Supervisors. The results from these assessments are presented next.

Supervisor Findings

Supervisors were asked, “Do you have quality assurance files on each Officer you supervise in your jurisdiction?” All of the Supervisors reported having a quality assurance file on the Probation Officers. Next, Supervisors were asked, how often they update the quality

assurance files. Almost all Supervisors reported updating the files monthly while some reported updating the files every other month. Then, Supervisors were asked, how often they conduct direct observations or review digital/tape recordings and how often they provide feedback to Officers. Responses for both questions ranged from not very often to two times a month; however, the majority of Supervisors reported conducting and providing feedback to Officers about once a month. In addition, Supervisors were asked those same questions in regards to reviewing case files. Responses ranged from once a month to two times a month; however, almost all Officers reported providing feedback and reviewing case files once a month. Last, Supervisors were asked to rank the helpfulness of the observational and case file feedback form on a scale of 1 to 10. The results from these questions are presented below.

**Table 9. Helpfulness of the Quality Assurance Instruments by Supervisors (N=19)**

	<u>Average</u>
Observational Instrument	6.53
Case File Review Instrument	6.89

As noted above, Supervisors reported both the case file review instrument and the observational instrument as helpful. Despite this, there seems to be room for improvement for both instruments particularly in regards to incorporating the instruments with more quantifiable data. In addition, 79 percent of the Supervisors reported that they wanted the RRU to have a larger role in assisting them with their quality assurance duties. Overall, there was an overwhelmingly need for digital recorders to be provided

so that recordings could be gathered more easily.

Probation Officer Findings

Probation Officers were asked to rank, on a scale of 1 to 10 the overall manner by which their Supervisor provides feedback. Overall, the Probation Officers felt that they receive better feedback in regards to their case files than their observations. However, both scores were relatively high.

Despite these high scores, some Officers stated that while they receive feedback on their case files it is not necessarily done to monitor the SBCM Initiative but to ensure specific standards. There was a substantial amount of variation as to when and how the Supervisors review and provide feedback to Officers. In some cases, Officers do not receive feedback on a regular basis.

**Table 10. Quality Assurance  
Feedback by Probation Officers**

	<u>Average</u>
Observation/ Recording	7.86
Case File Review	8.79



## PROCESS EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested to the State of Connecticut in order to ensure MI and SBCM fidelity and to promote positive outcomes for youth involved with the juvenile criminal justice system. The recommendations are made in the following areas of best practice: Staffing Characteristics, Qualifications, and Training; Assessment of Risk and Need, Services and Treatment Interventions; Supervision and Management, Internal Support, and Quality Assurance and Model Fidelity.

### **Staffing Characteristics, Qualifications and Training**

- ☛ Continue and expand booster sessions. Trainings should be provided to all Officers concerning the specific domains by which the observation scores fell below proficiency in order to improve

Motivational Interviewing skills (Evocation, Collaboration, and Empathy, Reflection to Question, MI-Adherent, Open-Ended Questions, and Complex Reflections).

- ☛ Boosters should be held within each jurisdiction which refresh Officers on the 40 Developmental Assets and how those assets should be documented throughout the case file and especially within the case notes.
- ☛ Supervisors should continue to receive trainings and boosters so that their skills are as effective as the Officers they supervise.

### **Assessment of Risk and Need**

- ☛ Continue using validated risk and need assessments.
- ☛ An instrument (preferably validated), such as the MITI, should be used by Supervisors and the RRU for

observations to enhance skill development.

### **Services and Treatment Interventions**

- 📖 Continue boosters in the areas noted above.
- 📖 Improve model fidelity and the quality assurance system in order to effectively collaborate between agency levels to increase skill enhancement.

### **Supervision and Management**

- 📖 Designate lead Probation Officers within each jurisdiction to collaborate with other Officers, Supervisors and to work collaboratively with the Risk Reduction Unit.
- 📖 The Risk Reduction Unit should be expanded in order to have more lead Officers within the actual Unit at CSSD headquarters. Additionally, lead Probation Officers identified within each jurisdiction should also be incorporated into the Unit on a smaller scale.
- 📖 The Risk Reduction Unit should integrate and update new approaches within Policy 7.21 to specify quality assurance and fidelity monitoring procedures.

### **Internal Support**

- 📖 Continue to monitor administrative and internal support across agency levels. Assessments should be done at routine intervals to sustain Initiative goals.
- 📖 All agency levels should utilize the Strength-Based Approach when providing feedback. Project support will be heightened by a

sense of understanding of how these perspectives assist in everyday interactions at each level of the agency.

### **Quality Assurance and Model Fidelity**

- 📖 Quantify quality assurance forms to incorporate Likert scaling and MITI domains. Forms should utilize both quantitative and qualitative information to assist Supervisors in providing Officers guidance.
- 📖 The RRU should aid Supervisors in the quality assurance process. A staggered approach may be beneficial so that lead Officers can conduct quality assurance for one jurisdiction every few months.
- 📖 The RRU should examine one taped feedback session a month by Supervisors per jurisdiction until all Supervisors are proficient in providing feedback that is Strength-Based and consistent with Motivational Interviewing.
- 📖 The RRU should monitor each jurisdiction's quality assurance system by randomly selecting 2 files per month to review from each Supervisor.
- 📖 Supervisors should continue monthly observations and case file reviews. Supervisors should maintain a confidential file for each Officer within their jurisdiction.
- 📖 Many Supervisors and Officers cited the need for digital recorders. If possible, CSSD should provide one or two digital recorders for each jurisdiction.



## **GROWTH AND DIRECTION**

The Motivational Interviewing and Strength-Based Case Management Initiatives were developed according to the Principles of Effective Intervention. These initiatives represent a fundamental change in the approach to services for probationers in Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System. System level transformations of this nature require detailed planning, direction, continual monitoring and support to ensure that true change is accomplished.

Successful implementation is just one element in transforming how CSSD approaches handling delinquent juveniles. True sustained change also requires continual support and an efficient quality assurance and fidelity monitoring system.

The process evaluation assessment results demonstrated that the following accomplishments:

- 🔧 Staff are well qualified and they receive continuous training boosters;
- 🔧 There is strong support for the model throughout all agency levels;
- 🔧 Validated assessments of risk and need are being conducted to properly serve and assess youth;
- 🔧 Treatment is driven by youths individual needs;
- 🔧 Officers are skilled in the MI and in SBCM;
- 🔧 There is strong supervision and management in place to support the Officers; and,
- 🔧 A quality assurance system has been established to ensure model fidelity.

The Motivational Interviewing and Strength-Based Initiative is an innovative approach to dealing with at-risk youth. The project represents an evidence-based intervention for probationers. Sustaining this type of system change is dependent on consistent booster and training sessions, model fidelity and quality assurance, and

continual guidance and support from CSSD management, the Risk Reduction Unit, Supervisors and Probation officers.

In July 2011, the final outcome evaluation will be complete. The final

report will provide a detailed examination of program effectiveness by comparing client outcomes for youth who had a probation officers effectively trained in these techniques.

## APPENDIX A- MITI

<b>JPO:</b>			<b>Purpose of Meeting with Youth:</b>		
<b>Observer:</b>			<b>Date:</b>		
<b>Youth #:</b>			<b>Start Time:</b>		<b>End Time:</b>
Global Ratings					
Low			High		
<b>Evocation</b>	Actively provides reasons for change or education about change, in absence of exploring client's knowledge, efforts or motivation	Relies on education & info giving at the expense of exploring client's personal motivations & ideas	Shows no interest in or awareness of client's reasons for change & how change should occur. May provide info or education to client circumstances	Accepts client's reasons for change & ideas about how change should happen. Does not attempt to educate or direct if client resists	Works proactively to evoke client's own reasons for change & ideas about how change should happen
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Collaboration</b>	Actively assumes the expert role for the majority of the interaction with the client. Collaboration is absent	Responds to opportunities to collaborate superficially	Incorporates client's goals, ideas & values, but in a lukewarm or erratic way. May not perceive or ignore opportunities to deepen client's contribution	Fosters collaboration & power sharing so that client's ideas impact the session in ways that they otherwise would not	Actively fosters & encourages power sharing in the interaction so that client's ideas substantially influence the nature of the session
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Autonomy/ Support</b>	Actively detracts from or denies client's perception of choice or control	Discourages client's perception of choice or responds to it superficially	Is neutral relative to client autonomy and choice	Is accepting and supportive of client autonomy	Adds significantly to the feeling/meaning of client's expression of autonomy to markedly expand client's control & choice
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Direction</b>	Does not influence the topic or course of the session, & discussion of the target behavior is entirely in the hands of the client	Exerts minimal influence on the session & misses most opportunities to direct client to the target behavior	Exerts some influence on the session, but can be easily diverted away from focus on target behavior	Able to influence direction of the session toward target behavior; yet, may be lengthy episodes of wandering without re-direction	Exerts influence on the session & generally does not miss opportunities to direct client toward target behavior or referral question
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Empathy</b>	Has no apparent interest in client's worldview. Gives little or no attention to the client's perspective	Makes sporadic efforts to explore client's perspective. Understanding may be inaccurate or may detract from client's true meaning	Is actively trying to understand the client's perspective with modest success	Makes active/repeated efforts to understand client's view. Accurately understands view, yet mostly limited to explicit content	Shows evidence of deep understanding of client's view, not just what's explicitly stated, but what the client means, but has not said
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>TOTAL SCORE (25)=</b>					
<b>Behavioral Counts</b>					<b>Total Counts</b>
<b>Giving Information</b>					
<b>MI Adherent</b> <small>(Ask permission, affirm, emphasize control, support)</small>					
<b>MI Non-Adherent</b> <small>(Advise, confront, direct)</small>					
<b>TOTAL SCORE (MiAd / (MiAd + MiNad))=</b>					
<b>Open-Ended Question</b>					
<b>Closed-Ended Question</b>					
<b>TOTAL SCORE (OQ / (OQ + OC))=</b>					
<b>Complex Reflection</b>					
<b>Simple Reflection</b>					
<b>TOTAL SCORE (CR / (CR + SR))=</b>					
<b>RATIO (Total Relections/ Total Questions) =</b>					

## APPENDIX B- CSSD Checklist and BECCI-CJ

JRC MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING OBSERVATION FORM			
JPO:		Purpose of Meeting with Youth:	
Observer:		Date:	
Youth #:		Start Time:	End Time:
Skills	RATING- 0-Not at all / 1 – Minimally / 2 – To some extent		COMMENTS:
	3 – A good deal / 4 – To a great extent		
<b>Officer sets positive tone for the meeting</b>			
Demonstrates good listening skills			
Officer is positive and optimistic			
Picks up on issues important to probationer			
<b>Officer makes behavior change a focus of discussion</b>			
Facilitates probationers' motivation to change			
Identifies and reinforces probationer strengths			
Encourages probationer to talk about behavior change and maintains focus on criminogenic needs			
Positively reinforces all efforts to positively change behavior			
<b>Officer discusses program / treatment referrals</b>			
Facilitates referral to appropriate program			
Encourages and reinforces participation			
Reviews progress with probationer			
<b>Officer reviews probationers' Case Plan</b>			
Reviews Condition compliance			
Reinforces positive choices made by probationer			
Assists probationer in problem-solving any issues or concerns			
<b>Officer used Motivational Interviewing techniques</b>			
Targeted the Next Step of Change			
Stage I: Find a Seed of Motivation (Identified and/or assessed motivation for change)			
Stage II: Develops Intrinsic Motivation (Explored importance/benefits of incentive)			
Stage III: From Change Talk to Change Plans (Summarizations, Affirmations, Elicit Next Steps )			
<b>TOTAL SCORE for CSSD (68- N/A):</b>			
JPO picks up on issues important to the probationer			
JPO encourages probationer to talk about current behavior			
JPO encourages probationer to talk about behavior change			
JPO uses open questions to elicit how probationer thinks and feels about change			
JPO uses reflective statements to show that he/she is listening			
JPO uses summaries to bring together what the probationer has said			
JPO acknowledges challenges about behavior change that the probationer faces			
When JPO provides information, it is sensitive to probationer concerns and understanding			
JPO actively supports probationer choice and personal responsibility			
JPO and probationer <i>exchange</i> ideas about <i>how</i> the probationer could change behavior			
<b>TOTAL SCORE for BECCI (40):</b>			
JPO Speaks for: _____ <b>More than half the time</b> _____ <b>Half of the time</b> _____ <b>Less than half the time</b>			
* Observation form modified from CSSD QA Protocol and Policy & the Behavior Change Counseling Index (BECCI)- Criminal Justice Version			