



Understanding Wraparound

A Study in Recidivism

Recidivism is a fundamental concept in criminal justice and is viewed as one of the most important measures of success for sanctions or intervention programs for juvenile offenders. According to the National Institute of Justice (May 2010), “recidivism refers to a person’s relapse into criminal behavior “during or after receiving sanctions and/or participating in an intervention program for a previous offense.

Therefore, the study and monitoring of recidivism rates is essential to evaluating Wraparound. While youth and families make many important changes while in Wraparound, the question of whether the program is successful in reducing delinquent behavior is perhaps the most powerful piece of data that helps Wraparound monitor its overall outcomes- the data critical to substantiating the effectiveness and success of the program.

Methodology

Conducting research on juvenile recidivism is complex and can be narrowed or broadened to address many varied questions about this population. For this initial recidivism study, the primary question is whether Wraparound is successful in reducing delinquent behavior resulting in arrests during the course of enrollment.

In this present study of Wraparound recidivism, the following definitions and collection strategies have been implemented:

- The delinquent offense that triggered the referral and enrollment in Wraparound is considered the initial offense even though there may have been prior delinquent activity.
- In all cases, the arrest and referred offense is what is documented. Subsequent actions that may occur during the legal process (e.g. reducing or dismissing the charge) are not considered in the data.
- The recidivism data in this report only reflects the juvenile activity while still enrolled in Wraparound.

The Wraparound youth included in this analysis are youth who entered the program from October 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010. There were a total of 411 new youth enrolled during this time period, of which 104 were females and 307 were males. As noted above, Wraparound Milwaukee was able to obtain information about the “triggering” offense for enrollment and offenses the youth may have committed after the date of enrollment.

Results

Overall Recidivism Rate: Only **11.9% (46)** of youth out of the total population of 411 exhibited new, referred offenses after enrollment in Wraparound.





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Length of Time Analysis: The data was further analyzed to determine the distribution of re-offenses across time in Wraparound. Two analyses were conducted. The first looks at the reoffending population, and the second looks at re-offenses within the total Wraparound population entering the program between October 1, 2009 and July 31, 2010.

Table 1 includes the basic data about the number of youth enrolled each “quarter,” the number of youth who reoffended, and the period of enrollment during which they first reoffended. Charts 1 and 2 display the information graphically.

Table 1
Recidivism Rates across Time in the Program

Entered program	Total Enrolled	1-3 Months	Percentage	4-6 Months	Percentage	7-9 Months	
Oct 1- Jan 9 (24)	127	12	12/124 or 9.6%	7	7/127 or 5.5%	5	5/127 or 3.9%
Jan 10- Apr 21 (16)	135	9	9/135 or 7%	7	7/135 or 5%		
Apr 22 – July 31 (6)	149	6*	6/149 or 4%				
Total	411	27	Average percent=6.86%**	14	Average percent=5.25%**	5	Average percent =3.9%**

*As this is rolling admission, this includes youth that have been in the program less than 3 months

**Significantly different at the p< .001 &.008 confidence levels respectively

Chart 1

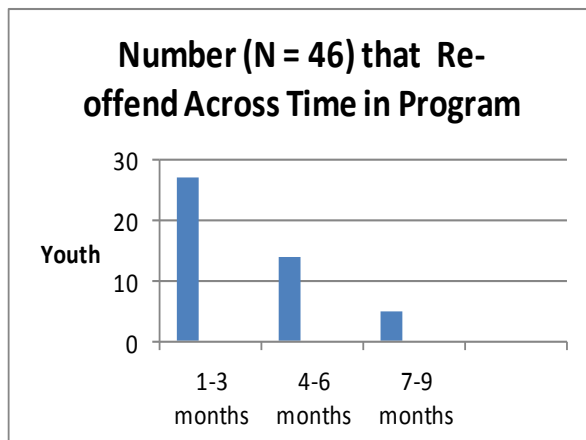
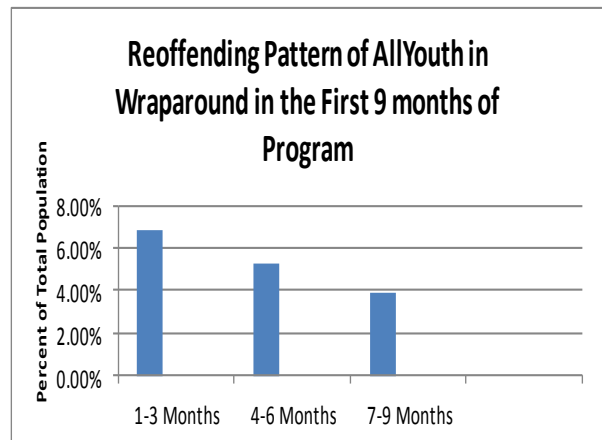


Chart 2





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Within the framework of a nine-month period, the exploration of these outcomes provides a snapshot pattern of recidivism across time. Both analyses reveal a declining trend of recidivism between the first and ninth month of participation in the program. The data also reveals that youth who reoffend do so at significantly higher rates earlier in the program and the number that recidivate decreases as the youth become more involved in the Wraparound program ($p < .0001$ confidence level between 1-3 months & 7-9 months.) The implication of these results is that youth are most vulnerable for re-offending during the critical period of 1-3 months, suggesting that attention to ameliorating risk factors related to reoffending should be greatest when youth are

first starting up in Wraparound. They also confirm that, as one would hope, as the child and family team work in a coordinated effort to identify strengths, needs, and strategies for success, the likelihood of reoffending declines.

Gender Analysis: Table 2 presents the recidivism gender breakdown compared to the total population and their respective same sex population.

Table 2

	Number	Percent
Female Recidivists in the total population who entered the program as of October 1, 2009	10/411	2.4%
Male Recidivists in the total population who entered the program as of October 1, 2009	36/411	8.7%
Female Recidivists in the total population of Females who entered the program as of October 1, 2009	10/104	9.6%
Male Recidivists in the Total population of Males who entered the program as of October 1, 2009	36/307	11.7%

Twenty-five percent of the 411 youth who entered Wraparound were female and 75% were male, consistent with the general demographic data (see Annual Report 2009.) This result reveals that girls are significantly less likely than boys to reoffend during their Wraparound enrollment (significant difference of $p < .0001$).

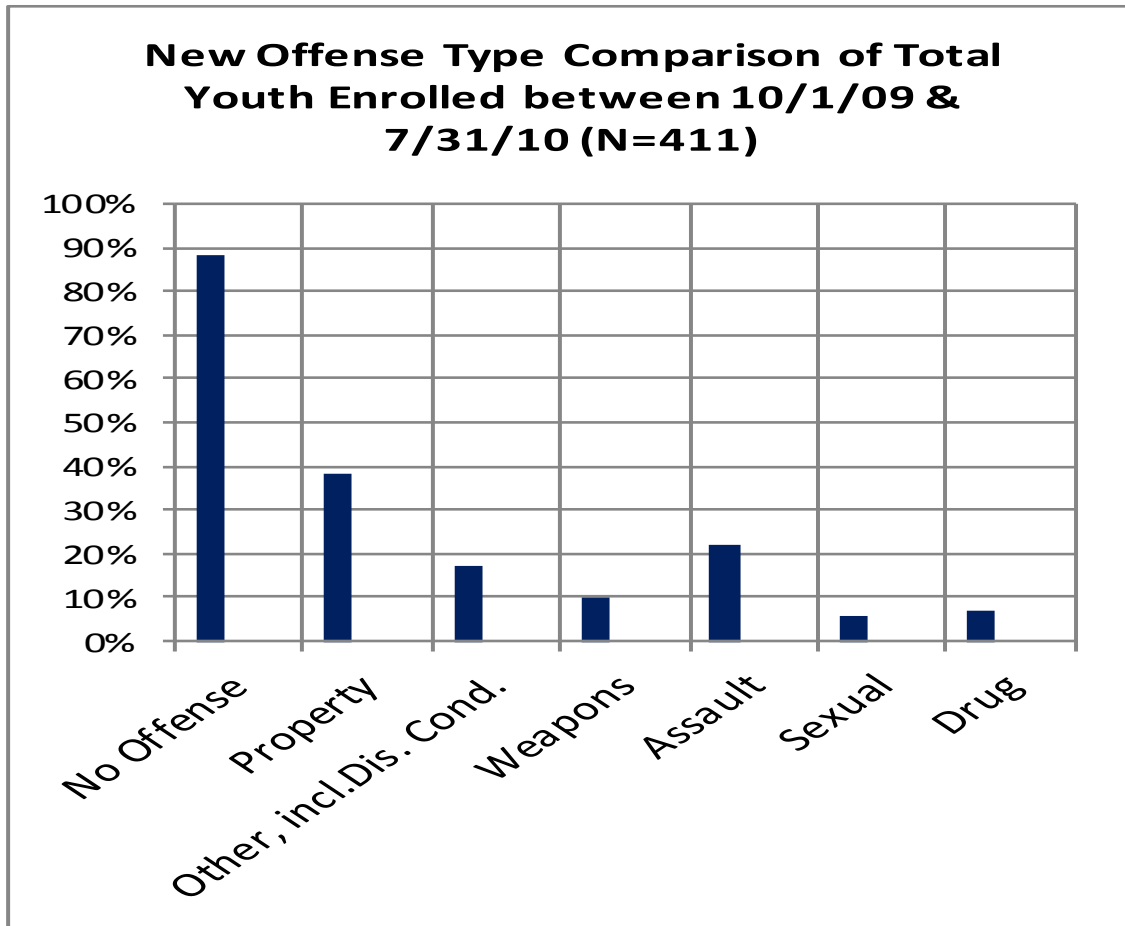




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Offense Type Analysis: Chart 3 reflects data about the new types of offenses youth commit during enrollment in Wraparound.

Chart 3



What is so powerfully depicted in the graph is the small number of total re-offenders (n=46) compared to the total number of enrollments during the time frame of this study (n=411). The distribution of new delinquency types shows “property” to be most common category and “sexual misconduct” the least frequent.





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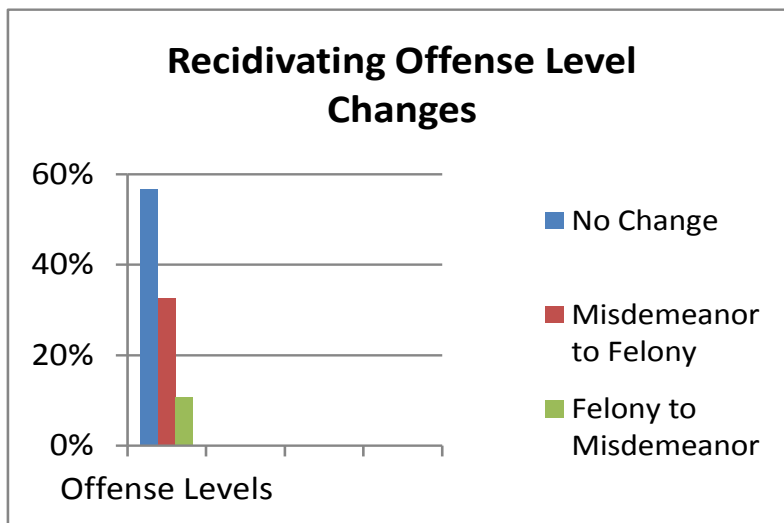
Offense Code Analysis: Table 3 reflects data that was collected to assess shifts in offense codes (misdemeanor and felony) from enrollment to reoffending, essentially trying to

answer the question of whether offending behaviors become more severe or less severe during enrollment. Chart 4 provides a graphic display of that information.

Table 3

	Number	Percent
Youth who change from a presenting Misdemeanor offense to Felony Offense during enrollment	15/46	32.6%
Youth who change from a presenting Felony Offense to a Misdemeanor offense during enrollment	5/46	10.8%
Youth whose Offense Code Status remains the same (either misdemeanor or felony)	24/46	56.6%

Chart 4



The majority of reoffending youth continued to offend at the same severity level at which they offended when entering Wraparound. An analysis of the 20 youth whose offense status shifted yielded no statistical significance in their shifts (either more severe or less severe), suggesting that it is not likely that the program influenced the severity level of the recidivating offenses.





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Summary & Conclusions

Does involvement in Wraparound have a positive impact on reducing reoffending behaviors? The short answer is yes.

This is reflected in both the low number of youth who reoffend and the fact that the likelihood of reoffending decreases over time. Taking into consideration the high-risk nature of the majority of youth enrolled in Wraparound, this data supports the assertion that Wraparound Milwaukee is a cost-effective approach to reducing youth crime and the harmful impact it has on the community, participants' families, and the participants themselves.

As powerful as these findings appear to be, it is very difficult to compare recidivism across systems. Across the country, as well as within Wisconsin, definitions of offenses, collection methodologies, and even notions of what activities actually constitute recidivism vary widely among juvenile justice systems. Therefore, there is no national recidivism rate reported for juveniles as there is for adults (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], September, 2010)

Most states do their own studies on juvenile crime and recidivism and each state approaches its investigations differently. Therefore, any true comparison of different sets of data requires a careful inspection of the definitions and methodologies. Cottle, Lee and Heilbrun (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 23 published studies, representing a sample size of 15,265 juveniles. From this study some baseline figures for comparison can be drawn. Cottle et. al. found the overall mean for recidivism as measured by re-arrests was 48%. Reports of recidivism data from other states range from 31% to 7% (in rural areas) (Pennsylvania 2009,

North Carolina 2004, and Michigan 2006). The Division of Juvenile Corrections reports that within three years of release from a juvenile correctional institution, 45% to 50% of youth reoffend.

While a complete literature review that examines definitions of recidivism and methodologies for analyzing it is beyond the scope of this report, the overall recidivism rate of 11.9% found in this study appears to strongly support the community/strength-based model employed by Wraparound.

Next Steps & Future Analysis

There is much more to be done in analyzing recidivism data for youth in Wraparound. Examples of areas for further study include:

1. Analyzing the overall numbers of youth who reoffend during their whole term of enrollment.
2. Continuing to analyze this type of data going forward to determine if the overall pattern of offending "earlier rather than later" in Wraparound enrollment holds true, and perhaps for how long that decline continues, including whether there are periods of "relapse" as enrollment in the program goes beyond 9 months, 12 months, 18 months, etc..
3. Analyzing the frequency of reoffending behaviors, e.g. how many Wraparound youth reoffend only one time, two times, three or more times?
4. Analyzing youth's reoffending behavior after enrollment in Wraparound.



This publication was prepared by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.
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This project was made possible by a collaboration of Wraparound Milwaukee and Delinquency & Court Services with a special thank you to Eric Meaux & Wendy Moraza.

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9/2010



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