

**SPORT IN JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES IN THE UNITED  
STATES: A STUDY OF THE SCOPE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

by

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

DYRS	Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services
EST	Ecological Systems Theory
JCA	Juvenile Correctional Administrators
NCJJ	The National Center for Juvenile Justice
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NJDC	The National Juvenile Defender Center
NRCIM	National Research Council and Institute of Medicine
OFDT	The Office of the Federal Detention Trustee
OJJDP	The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
PQAYS	Program Quality Assessment in Youth Sports
PYD	Positive Youth Development
PYDS	Positive Youth Development through Sport
RDS	Relational-Developmental Systems
SDoH	Social Determinants of Health

## **ABSTRACT**

There is an extensive literature base exploring the positive benefits of sport on the growth and development of young people in school and community-based settings, which has found significant physical, psychological/emotional, intellectual, and social benefits for youth participating in thoughtfully constructed sport programs. Yet, there is much more limited systematic exploration into sport with young people in more non-traditional settings, such as juvenile justice settings, especially in the United States (US). Considering the appeal of sport among young people, findings that show high levels of sport participation among incarcerated youth, and poor health outcomes for youth who have been incarcerated; more research is needed in this area. The study focused on addressing two significant gaps in the literature related to (1) the landscape of this phenomenon across the US and (2) how such programs are implemented in secure facilities. Findings revealed that just over half (55.1%) of the sample of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities were operating sport programming revealing an inequity of access to sport for youth who are incarcerated. Among a sample of exemplar programs, it was found that implementation of the sport program largely occurred through factors at the facility-level, and policy (a community level factor) was not found to play a critical role in implementation, which could contribute to the variance in sport programming in juvenile facilities across the US. Findings suggest the need to draw upon and better integrate evidence from public health, juvenile justice and sport in order to promote equity in access and positive outcomes for youth. Such an integrative perspective has implications for future research as well as policy and practice.



# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Problem

The United States leads all industrialized nations in the number of youth, and subsequently adults, who are incarcerated (Bochenek, 2016). Currently, there are approximately 37,529 youth housed in 1,510 juvenile facilities across the United States (OJJDP, 2020). A large number of young people who interface with the juvenile justice system in the United States have been shown to have poor outcomes upon release, including poorer health. These poor outcomes include high recidivism rates (Calleja et al., 2016; Trulson et al., 2005; Seigle et al., 2014), increased rates of adult incarceration, decreased high school graduation rates (Aizer & Doyle, 2015), and decreased levels of employment (Western & Beckett 1999). In addition, any period of incarceration during adolescence or young adulthood is also associated with worse general health (Massoglia, 2008), stress-related illness such as hypertension (Massoglia, 2008), and higher rates of overweight and obesity in adulthood (Houle, 2006).

Utilizing the broadest definition of health, "...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1948) helps to frame an expansive view of the problem. The cyclical and compounding nature of the issue is revealed as there is strong evidence of a relationship between various social determinants of health (SDoH) (i.e., poverty, parental education, and parental incarceration) and risk of incarceration (Barnert et al.,

2016), and incarceration is linked with poorer physical and mental health (Barnert et al., 2016), and has shown to contribute to detrimental effects on various SDoH (i.e., education, employment, adult incarceration) (Aizer & Doyle, 2015; Western & Beckett 1999). Through this lens of SDoH, juvenile incarceration can be viewed as both a product of and contributor to health inequities in the United States.

As a result of these poor outcomes and compounding inequities, the historically- punitive programming in the juvenile justice system to “rehabilitate” young people continues to be questioned (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Recognizing this issue, programming in the juvenile justice system is increasingly applying a treatment philosophy including positive youth development (PYD) approaches (Menon & Cheung, 2018), which are grounded in a strengths-based approach to treatment. Sport programs have widely been identified as a setting for PYD for young people (Bean et al., 2018), and there are findings that show high levels of sport participation among youth who are incarcerated (Lewis & Meek, 2012). Acknowledging this natural setting for intervention, sport is one programming opportunity to support PYD and overall health of young people in the system. Yet, not enough is known about these programs in the United States, how they are structured and implemented, and if they align with PYD principles.

Currently, there is one federal policy outlining the standard for recreation in juvenile facilities across the United States. The standard states, “The facility director ensures recreation activities for juvenile detainees that includes at least one hour of large muscle activity per day, outside when weather permits, and at least one hour of constructive leisure time activities" (OFDT, 2011). This standard provides limited guidance or structure on the use of sport in facilities, which based on a general review

of the literature, can be used for PYD when operated in a thoughtful manner that supports young people.

There is an extensive literature exploring the positive benefits of sport on the growth and development of young people in community and school-based settings, which has found significant physical, psychological/emotional, intellectual, and social benefits for youth participating in thoughtfully constructed sport programs (Holt et al., 2017; Blom et al., 2013). However, participation in physical activity and sport follow a social gradient, as those who are more socially and economically advantaged are also more likely to be physically active and less likely to experience adverse health outcomes than their peers who experience more disadvantage (Ball et al., 2015). This also has implications for young people's potential inclusion in sport opportunities to support PYD.

Sport scholars have often grounded their research in the strengths-based theory of adolescence (i.e., PYD perspective) to explore the ways in which sport programs and sport participation can support healthy development and thriving among young people. Although there is not a unifying theory of Positive Youth Development through Sport (PYDS), many researchers in the field utilize PYD theories and frameworks as a lens to explore and build knowledge around PYDS.

An emerging body of international literature focuses on the use of sport with individuals who are incarcerated, and several themes have emerged including: (1) physical health benefits (Gallant et al., 2015; Meek & Lewis, 2014; Elger, 2009; Nelson et al., 2006), (2) mental health benefits (Gallant et al., 2015; Meek & Lewis, 2014; Buckaloo et al., 2009; Cashin et al., 2008; Woodall, 2010) (3) psychosocial benefits (Draper et al., 2013; Meek & Lewis, 2014, Parker et al., 2014), (4)

rehabilitation (Draper et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2014), (5) reentry services (Meek & Lewis, 2014), and (6) facility management (Gallant, et al., 2015). Yet, gaps in the literature continue to exist for the role of these six themes exclusively in juvenile correctional facilities as well as in the United States, as the majority of these studies were conducted internationally.

In looking across the literature, the following gaps were identified and contributed to the impetus for this study. First, existing knowledge on PYD and PYDS has almost exclusively been created through studying school and community settings (Holt & Neely, 2011), and studies in non-traditional settings, such as juvenile correctional facilities, are much more limited especially within the context of the United States (Meek, 2014). Second, studies that exist on sport and correctional facilities have utilized frameworks and theories from criminology and juvenile justice but have not utilized a PYD framework (Meek & Lewis, 2014; Parker et al., 2014; Draper et al., 2013). Third, there continues to be gaps in how physical activity programs, such as sport, are implemented in real-world settings (Cassar et al., 2019), specifically in secure juvenile correctional facilities.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

In order being to address the three gaps identified in the literature, the purpose of this study was to provide a baseline description of the landscape of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities across the United States, and build knowledge on how sport programs are implemented in in a sample of secure, juvenile correctional facilities. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What is the current landscape of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States?

- a. What is the frequency of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities?
  - b. What types of sport programs exist in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities?
  - c. What is the identified purpose of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities?
2. How are sport programs implemented in a sample of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States?

### **1.3 Research Approach**

The nature of the research questions called for an explanatory sequential mixed methods study, in which quantitative research was initially conducted and then results were further explained through qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). For purposes of this study, quantitative research was conducted to (1) identify the landscape (frequency, type, purpose) of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities across the United States, and then qualitative research (2) built knowledge on program implementation in a sample of facilities, which were identified through the initial quantitative data. This study relied on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative inquiry to construct an illustration of the phenomenon nationally and then built a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at the program level.

The study adopted a pragmatic approach, which emphasized the research problem and supported employing all approaches available to build knowledge to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic approach is primarily concerned with solutions to problems and pulls from both quantitative and qualitative

assumptions when conducting research (Creswell, 2014). The historical roots of pragmatism are born out of the work of Peirce (1844) and James (1907), and later John Dewey and Jane Addams who applied the approach to issues of social improvement (Giacobbi et al., 2005; Legg & Hookway, 2019).

The pragmatic approach adopts a philosophy of knowledge which asserts that "...truth is verified and confirmed by testing ideas and theories in practice" (Patton, 2015, p 152). In sport research, Giacobbi et al. (2005) recognize that an allegiance to orthodox scientific methods, and an inattention to the unique sport context, has led to divergent fields in applied and academic research (Giacobbi et al., 2005; Martens, 1979). Pragmatism's lack of loyalty to one method, supports researchers in applying multiple methods to enhance the strengths and minimize the limitations of any one philosophy. This approach was critical for this study as it stressed utilizing the most effective inquiry tools to answer the research questions, strengthen the theoretical knowledge on PYDS, and sought practical and useful knowledge on the implementation of sport programs in facilities, which has implications for the implementation science literature. Furthermore, the pragmatic approach supported a revised line of inquiry when the originally planned data collection methods were ruled unavailable due to a global pandemic (Patton, 2015).

The multiphase study commenced with a survey of superintendents, administrators, and wardens of the 211 juvenile correctional facilities (long-term secure) in all 50 states. The survey was electronically distributed to the population through the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) list serve by their leadership. The survey was used to collect quantitative data on frequency of sport programs, type of sport programs, and the identified purpose of the sport program in

facilities. Survey data was analyzed to (1) describe this phenomenon nationally (2) answer the first set of research questions, and (3) understand the range across the sampling frame in order to create purposeful sampling criteria for exemplar cases for which key informants were recruited to answer the second research question. Since there is little academic scholarship in this area, purposeful case selection is challenging without a more informed selection criteria to identify rich cases. The second stage of the study utilized key informant interviews at exemplar facilities, identified through survey data, to build knowledge on how sport programs are implemented in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities.

#### **1.4 Rationale and Significance**

The rationale for the study was borne from parallel gaps in existing policy and academic literature as it relates to sport in juvenile correctional facilities in the United States. As was previously stated, the one federal mandate regulating recreation in juvenile facilities across the United States provides limited guidance or structure on the use of sport in facilities, which could have the potential to serve as a useful intervention and support PYD based on literature in community settings (Holt et al., 2017). In the academic literature, there continues to be a gap in our understanding of PYDS in non-traditional settings, such as juvenile correctional facilities (Holt & Neely, 2011; Meek, 2014), and the ways in which it supports or hinders positive development of young people.

The significance of this study, a continuation from its rationale, is a theoretical contribution to the literature on PYDS, has policy implications in the area of juvenile justice and recreation, builds practical knowledge on how sport programs are implemented in more secure settings, and ultimately seeks to improve outcomes for

youth who are incarcerated. These potential contributions have significance for the ways in which programming occurs in juvenile correctional facilities for the “rehabilitation” or rather, development, of young people.

### **1.5 Researcher Perspectives**

As a coach of a sport team in a juvenile correctional facility, I have an engrained belief of the potential benefits of sport for both personal and societal growth, with an intimate understanding of both the challenges of operating a thoughtful program and the immense challenges facing young people in the system. Thus, I have both a personal and professional interest in conducting rigorous and systematic research on this topic to inform scholarly literature, policy, and practice.



## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Juvenile Incarceration in the United States**

##### **2.1.1 Historical Overview**

Since the collection of youth institutions and programs were brought together by the creation of the juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois in 1899, the juvenile justice system in the United States has gone through several eras of reform (Sankofa et al., 2018). The National Research Council (2013) outlined four stages of juvenile justice reforms in the United States. The initial stage of the system spanned into the 1960's and was grounded in a theory of rehabilitation which recognized the distinct difference between youth and adult offenders and outlined the unique purpose of the juvenile justice system in the “treatment” of youth (National Research Council, 2013). Despite the recognition that youth should be treated differently than adults, the proceeding stages of reform were marked by a growing harshness in sentencing and treatment perspectives toward young offenders.

In the second stage of reform between 1960s and 1970s, procedural due process was introduced into the juvenile justice system, and there was a belief that the earlier rehabilitative era had failed youth by not holding them to the principles of justice (National Research Council, 2013). This era was subsequently followed by the “get tough” and “zero tolerance” era in the 1990s, which saw a significant rise in juvenile incarceration and the sentencing of youth as adults (Sankofa et al., 2018).

Currently, the juvenile justice system is immersed in a new era of reform, which is focused on adapting the system to reflect the original goals of treatment and rehabilitation of young people (Sankofa et al., 2018). This reform era has been spurred by evidence on the dangers and ineffectiveness of youth incarceration, research on adolescent development and brain science, and the financial cost of juvenile incarceration to taxpayers, which will be discussed in subsequent sections. For purposes of this study, the review will be limited to secure juvenile correctional facilities where youth are deemed most “at-risk” as their post-release outcomes have been shown to be worse compared to their counterparts in less secure facilities or community supervision (Seigle et al., 2014).

### **2.1.2 Terms and Concepts**

The distinct nature of the juvenile justice system has contributed to inconsistent use of terminology in relation to the adult justice system. Terms and concepts are outlined below to provide additional clarity. The National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) and The National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) have defined the following terms:

- **Adjudication hearing:** Described as a “fact finding” hearing, in which the judge determines if there is enough evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, to uphold the charges against the juvenile (NJDC, n.d.)
- **Adjudication:** An adjudication is the juvenile justice system’s equivalent of a “conviction” in the adult system, and occurs when the juvenile is found guilty at the adjudication hearing or enters into a guilty plea or admission (NJDC, n.d.)
- **Commitment:** Commitment is one of the options available at the disposition hearing, and it involves the placement (or incarceration) of the juvenile. At this time, the legal responsibility of the child is

transferred to the state, and they are placed in a state-run or private facility. The disposition for a commitment may impose an “indeterminate sentence” in which the length of commitment is based on youth’s good behavior, perceived rehabilitation, and the prior record (NJDC, n.d.)<sup>1</sup>

- Detention: Juveniles who are charged with an offense can be detained pending their adjudication and/or disposition hearing, and at various times throughout the case. Adjudicated juveniles can be held in detention during their commitment. Levels of detention range from “secure detention” to “non-secure detention” and “home detention” (NJDC, n.d.)
- Disposition: The disposition is the juvenile justice system’s equivalent of a sentencing in the adult system, and occurs after an adjudication. Since juvenile courts are focused on the rehabilitation of the child, the disposition usually includes a treatment plan that considers the needs of the child, the available resources, and the interests of the state. Depending on the nature of the offense, and the factors included above, the disposition can include fines, restitution, community service, in-home placement under supervision, and out-of-home placement in a facility (NJDC, n.d.)
- Long-term Secure Facility: A specialized type of facility that provides strict confinement for its residents. Includes training schools, reformatories, and juvenile correctional facilities (NCJJ, 2019)

### **2.1.3 Research Encouraging Reform**

The dangers and ineffectiveness of juvenile incarceration have been well documented in the literature. Violence, abuse, isolation, and excessive restraints have been shown to persist in juvenile correctional facilities, and present real dangers to

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<sup>1</sup> In the juvenile justice system “commitment” is the formal terminology to refer to the placement of a young person in a juvenile facility, and “incarceration” is the formal terminology for the adult system. For purposes of this report, commitment and incarceration will be used interchangeably to reflect the placement of a young person in a juvenile facility.

youth (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011 p. 5). Between 1970 and 2011, fifty-seven lawsuits in thirty-three states, and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, resulted in court-ordered sanctions and remedies to address the alleged abuse and unconstitutional conditions in juvenile facilities (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011, p. 5).

Along with dangerous conditions, the ineffectiveness of facilities has been substantially supported. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's (2011) report, *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*, identified that detention institutions have consistently, over time, failed to reduce criminality among young people (p. 2-3); and follow-up studies on youth who are incarcerated show high rates of recidivism, and negative effects on future success in education and employment (p. 9).

As the Casey Foundation (2011) report details, juvenile correctional facilities have not proven to be a productive deterrent to youths' participation in future crime, as measured by recidivism rates of those released. The juvenile justice system can use a number of different measures to track outcomes for youth who are incarcerated, but the most popular measure continues to be recidivism rates. Recidivism is defined by the National Institute of Justice (2019) as:

...a person's relapse into criminal behavior, often after the person receives sanctions or undergoes intervention for a previous crime. Recidivism is measured by criminal acts that resulted in rearrests, reconviction or return to prison with or without a new sentence during a three-year period following the prisoner's release.

In the United States, juvenile justice systems across states do not adhere to a uniformed definition of recidivism, as defined above, which makes identifying a singular, national juvenile recidivism rate impossible. Yet, researchers have estimated the range of recidivism rates for juveniles across the country at approximately 50-80% (Seigle et al., 2014). In addition to the persistence of juvenile delinquency, this period of incarceration has also been shown to significantly increase the likelihood of incarceration as an adult (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

The ineffectiveness of incarceration in deterring future crime is highlighted more substantially by studies that have found reduced recidivism rates for youth deterred to diversion services or probation (Early, Hand, & Blankenship, 2012). For example, a study among three groups of low-risk youth offenders found substantial disparities in recidivism based on placement type. Low risk youth that were sentenced to residential facilities had a recidivism rate of 48% compared to 35% on general/intensive probation, and 27% in diversion services (Seigle et al., 2014).

Along with the ineffectiveness of juvenile incarceration to deter crime, there exists a number of negative outcomes, including poorer health, that have been shown to result from youth incarceration. Utilizing the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, Massoglia (2008) found a significant relationship between incarceration during adolescence and decreased general health status in midlife. In addition, due to the disproportionate rates of incarceration, Massoglia concluded that the penal system played a role in perpetuating racial differences in physical health later in life (p.290).

Additional research has found negative outcomes among incarcerated youth in relation to many of the social determinants of health (SDoH), or the social and economic conditions that influence health (Dahlgreen & Whitehead, 1991), including

adult incarceration, education, and employment. Aizer and Doyle (2015) conducted a longitudinal study that included over 35,000 juvenile offenders across 10 years, and found that incarceration not only significantly increased the likelihood of adult incarceration, but decreased the likelihood of high school completion (p. 759).

Incarceration as a young person has also been shown to negatively affect future employment. Western and Beckett (1999) reported that for youth who were incarcerated, compared to those that were not, there was a 5% reduction in employment four years after release, and a 10% reduction in hours worked fifteen years after release. Higher rates of recidivism and adult incarceration, decreased likelihood of completing high school, and reduced employment have been documented in the literature as the negative outcomes resulting from youth incarceration.

A growing body of literature on adolescent development and brain science highlights the importance of this unique time in young peoples' lives, and advocates for developmentally-appropriate treatment to counteract the poor outcomes stemming from youth incarceration. "Adolescence is a distinct, yet transient, period of development between childhood and adulthood characterized by increased experimentation and risk taking, heightened sensitivity to peers and other social influences, and the formation of personal identity" (National Research Council, 2013). The strong evidence base characterizing the distinct period of adolescence has not always been recognized in the treatment of detained youth, but has significant effects for youth and the systems for which they are involved.

Empirical evidence in behavior science has outlined three features of adolescents that differ between childhood and adulthood (National Research Council, 2013). These features are (1) a lack of maturity and self-regulation in emotionally-

heighted situations, (2) an increased susceptibility to peer pressure and immediate incentives, and (3) a decreased ability to make future-oriented decision (National Research Council, 2013; Steinburg, 2009). The behavior science on adolescence is complimented by brain development science and has implications for programming in facilities.

Existing evidence shows support for a dual-systems model of adolescent development pertaining to risk-taking behavior, which argues that such behavior is a product of interactions between two distinct neurobiological systems in the brain: socioemotional system and cognitive control system (Steinburg, 2009; Cauffman & Steinberg, 2012). The existing evidence on adolescent development highlights the critical nature of this time in young peoples' lives, and the importance of utilizing developmentally-appropriate treatment with young offenders (National Research Council, 2013; Steinburg, 2009).

Along with the negative impact on youth, juvenile incarceration remains a high burden on state taxpayers. In a Justice Policy Institute (JPI) (2014) survey on state expenditures for confinement in 46 states, the average cost for the most expensive confinement for juveniles was \$407.58 per day, \$36,682 per three months, \$73,364 per six months, and \$148,767 per year, with an estimated long-term cost of confinement between \$8 billion and \$21 billion each year (JPI, 2014). The financial cost of incarceration, coupled with the ineffectiveness of treatment and high recidivism rates, means that the detention of young people will continue to be a significant budgetary issue for states if reforms are not made.

#### **2.1.4 Youth Who Are Incarcerated**

The challenges and complex issues many young people are dealing with as they enter juvenile detention, and subsequently develop during detention, should not be undervalued. Youth in detention are more likely to come from disadvantaged backgrounds with more limited economic and educational opportunities (Shader, 2015; Baglivio et al., 2014), as well as have unmet health needs when entering the facility (Barnert et al., 2016).

Complex issues present major challenges for treatment. In a 2004 study of randomly selected, stratified sample of 898 youth in detention, researchers found that 92.5% of youth had experienced one or more traumatic exposures, and 11.2% met the criteria for a post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis (Abram et al., 2004). As many as 65% of justice-involved youth have been involved with the child welfare system (Herz et al., 2012), an estimated 60-70% have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder (Skowrya & Coccozza, 2006), and approximately 60% have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues (Hodgdon, 2008).

In addition, young men of color continue to be disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system in the United States. In 2015, minority youth accounted for 69% of youth in placement, and black youth had the largest representation (OJJDP, 2018). Furthermore, black youth have a national detention rate that is six times that of white youth, and a commitment rate that is five times the rate of white youth (OJJDP, 2018). Black youth placement rates are the highest across racial and ethnic categories regardless of the commitment status (OJJDP, 2018).

The Casey Foundation (2011) stated that juvenile facilities have become “dumping grounds” for youth dealing with serious mental health issues and other disadvantages (p. 14). “Being able to successfully treat adolescent offenders continues



to present a challenge to the juvenile justice system, especially the most serious offenders” (Calleja et al., 2016, p. 1). The complex challenges that youth face are often exacerbated by incarceration in facilities that are not adequately resourced to address their complex challenges.

### **2.1.5 Current Era**

As a result of the recognition of the ineffectiveness of juvenile facilities, the new reform era has ushered in a dedication to social science research and the implementation of “evidence-based correctional practices” within the correctional setting (Abrams, 2013). Abrams (2013) outlines the major goals of evidence-based correctional practices as, (1) tailoring interventions to the risks of the individuals, (2) increasing youths’ motivation to change, (3) intervening with cognitive-behavioral therapies that address criminogenic needs, (4) strengthening ties with community for continuity, and (5) operationalizing and measuring results (p. 742).

Paralleling discussions to dismantle the current system of juvenile incarceration (Casey Foundation, 2011), there is a recognition of the importance of effective programming for young people that are committed to a period of confinement (Mathys, 2017). These discussions are empirically supported by studies that have found a 9% reduction in recidivism for youth involved in treatment during placement (Grietens & Hellinckx, 2004), as well as studies that suggest that therapeutic interventions better support change in young people more than punitive approaches, such as surveillance and deterrence (Mathys, 2017; Howell & Lipsey, 2012). These findings have ushered in a new era of reform in the juvenile justice system, which is increasingly abandoning the prior philosophy of retribution for a

treatment philosophy underpinning programming in juvenile facilities (Sankofa et al., 2018).

One programmatic framework that is gaining popularity in the juvenile justice system under the new treatment philosophy is Positive Youth Development (PYD) (Butts et al., 2018). PYD has been widely utilized in community settings, but its adoption by the justice system has only recently gained traction in response to reform in the system and a change in its approach to youth who are incarcerated (Butts et al., 2018). Although a strengths-based approach (i.e., PYD) could have implementation challenges in a justice setting, which previously (and at times, currently) adopts a punitive approach; there are findings that show a link between positive development outcomes and desistance from crime among youth (Butts et al., 2018).

## **2.2 Positive Youth Development**

### **2.2.1 Historical Overview**

The study of adolescent development focuses on the second decade of life (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004), and has been defined as, “..the life span period in which most of a person’s biological, cognitive, psychological, and social characteristics are changing in an interrelated manner from what is considered childlike to what is considered adult-like” (Lerner, 2005, p. 3). There are co-occurring changes within the self (puberty, cognition, emotions), as well as changes outside of the self (family, social institutions, peer groups) (Lerner, 2005). The numerous and complex changes occurring within this stage of development previously portrayed adolescence as a time of great turbulence, which was formerly studied using deficit models (Lerner, 2005).

In the first phase of the field of adolescent development, deficit models highlighted the “storm and stress” of adolescence (Hall, 1904; Freud, 1969) and viewed youth as “broken.” (Lerner, 2005). In what Lerner (2005) described as the second and third phase in the field of scientific study of adolescent development, the emergence of a PYD perspective led to a paradigm shift in the field of adolescent development. With synergy between scholars, youth workers, and policymakers addressing issues concerning youth and communities in the 1990s, a new conceptualization of adolescent development grew in popularity, which viewed youth as “...a resource to be developed, and not as a problem to be managed” (Lerner, 2005).

PYD is a strengths-based theory of adolescent development, which maintains that all young people have the potential for healthy development and success over a lifetime (Lerner et al., 2005). Emphasizing the plasticity of human development, the theory of PYD hypothesizes that if young people, with their individual and inherent assets, have mutually beneficial relationships with their ecologies, it will lead to their healthy development and allow them to contribute to their self, family, community, and society (Lerner et al., 2005).

The PYD perspective in the field of adolescent development was supported by the Process-Relational and Relational-Developmental-Systems (RDS) scientific paradigm shift in the field of developmental sciences and is nested under Process-Relational metatheory and RDS theories (a mid-range metatheory) (Overton, 2015). Broadly, developmental systems theories reject the reduction of individuals to fixed genetic traits, but rather view individuals’ development as a product of their internal qualities and the bidirectional relationship with their social environment (Lerner et al.,

2005). With the new paradigm, the elements of a system are now viewed as being fused together instead of as separate pieces, which has critical implications for inquiry in the field.

Constructed within the PYD perspective, which is grounded in RDS theories, researchers have attempted to identify personal and social assets that facilitate healthy development during adolescence into adulthood. This is a challenging task as researchers strive to identify universal assets needed for all young people across diverse cultures and communities, and operationalize PYD (NRCIM, 2002). There have been several models utilized for the study of PYD, and two of the most cited will be discussed in further detail (Benson et al., 2011).

Benson and the Search Institute have outlined a framework of developmental assets, which hypothesized the developmental “nutrients” needed for young peoples’ healthy development and articulated the role that communities play in aiding this development (Benson et al., 2011). The framework incorporates 20 external assets and 20 internal assets (Benson, 2006; Benson et al., 2011). Although the framework is applied extensively by practitioners, a systematic review of the literature suggests that the framework has not been utilized with the same frequency by researchers, who have relied more heavily on a second model, the Five C’s Model of PYD.

The Five C’s Model was originally presented by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM, 2002), which articulated five constructs for PYD: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring/compassion. Researchers at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tuft’s University orchestrated a large-scale, longitudinal study of PYD among 4-H programs, in which they used the Five C’s to operationalize the constructs (Bowers et al., 2015;

Lerner et al., 2017). It was believed that the Five C's would culminate in a 6<sup>th</sup> "C" of "contribution" (Lerner et al., 2003).

The 4-H Study of PYD was initiated in 2002 and went through eight waves of data collection including 7,000 adolescents and 3,500 parents in 42 states (Bowers et al., 2015). The study was designed to gather information on youth and key settings in their lives and understand possible links between individual and ecological assets using the Five C's (Bowers et al., 2015). In addition, the study explored the association between PYD, youth contributions, and risk/problem behaviors (Bowers et al., 2015).

Measurement in the study included assessing each part of the relational, developmental systems model of PYD by Lerner et al. (2014). Researchers utilized multiple instruments to survey individual strengths, ecological assets, the Five C's, and youth's contribution and risk/problem behaviors (Bowers et al., 2015). The theory that was tested on the developmental process of PYD in youth programs was stated by Lerner et al. (2014) as:

"1. The strengths of youth (for example, a young person's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement with the school context), have the 'virtue' of hope for the future, or possession of intentional self-regulation skills such as Selection [S], Optimization [O], and Compensation [C]); can 2. be aligned with the resources for positive growth found in youth development programs, for example, the 'Big Three' attributes of youth development programs (that is, positive and sustained adult-youth relationships, skill-building activities, and youth leadership opportunities); then 3. young people's healthy development will be optimized." (p. 19).

Findings from the study offered empirical support for the operationalization of theoretical latent constructs that represented the mental, behavioral, and “social-relational” fundamentals of PYD, or the Five C’s (Lerner et al., 2005). In addition, ecological assets identified in the lives of young people were grouped into four categories: other individuals (i.e., parents, teachers, mentors); community institutions (i.e., youth development programs); collective activity between adults and young people; and access to the prior three assets (Lerner et al., 2014). Specifically, findings from the 4-H Study help to identify how community programs contribute to the development of young people, and emphasize the importance of these programs in youth development (Lerner et al., 2014), which was an important focus for this review. Finally, the 4-H Study provided researchers with both individual constructs (i.e., 5C’s) and key settings which have supported the creation of new knowledge in the field of PYD.

The 4-H Study does have key limitations, which must be acknowledged in the context of this review. The 4-H Study utilized a convenience sample, which resulted in a sample that was disproportionate to the population (Lerner et al., 2017). For instance, approximately two-thirds of the sample were White youth, less than 10% of the sample were Black youth, and less than 10% of the sample were Hispanic youth (Lerner et al., 2017). Furthermore, youth in the sample came from relatively educated families from middle to high socioeconomic statuses (Lerner et al., 2017). This limitation is prominent for scholars engaged in work with young people of color and/or youth in lower socioeconomic statuses. Yet, the 4-H Study does have significant implications for the field because of its longitudinal design and large

sample size. Considering the demographics of youth who are incarcerated, this is an important consideration for the fit of this theory and highlights potential adaptations that may need to be made.

### **2.2.2 PYD Setting Features**

There are three settings that have been highlighted in the literature as key contexts to provide resources to young people for their healthy development: home, school, and community (Lerner, n.d.). Specifically, community programs have been found to promote PYD through the growth of external assets among youth participants, when program activities align with individuals' strengths (NRCIM, 2002; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner et al., 2014). Specifically, the review is focused on what is known about setting features that support PYD among participants.

Research on what young people need for healthy development has increased significantly over the past twenty years, and the 4-H Study made a strong contribution to that knowledge base. With the understanding of assets that young people need for healthy development, several researchers have proposed the necessary setting features for youth development programs to support PYD. Yet, a lack of rigorous program evaluations in the field means that setting features continue to be unsubstantiated in the literature (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Currently, there is not a unified set of features proven to support PYD, but there are promising features that have been presented by key scholars in the field.

There are eight “promising” setting features of PYD programs, which were constructed using knowledge from youth development literature (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). The eight features are (1) physical and psychological safety, (2) appropriate structure, (3) supportive relationships, (4)

opportunities to belong, (5) positive social norms, (6) support for efficacy and mattering, (7) opportunities for skill building, and (8) integration of family, school, and community efforts (NRCIM, 2002).

Researchers have condensed this list, creating larger, bucketed categories for PYD program features including: (1) positive and sustained adult-youth relations, (2) life-skill building activities, and (3) opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of family, school, and community activities (Lerner, 2004). These “Big 3” program characteristics were originally identified through the 4-H Study of PYD, but follow-up studies explicitly testing these characteristics through experimental or quasi-experimental design has not yet occurred (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016).

In addition, other researchers have differed in their conceptualization of program concepts; Roth & Brooks-Gunn (2003) proposed that youth development programs are characterized by their goals, atmosphere, and activities. From survey results, Roth & Brooks-Gunn (2003) suggest the following program characteristics: (1) program goals that strive to promote positive development, (2) program atmosphere that facilitates positive relationships with adults and peers, empowers youth, communicates the expectations of positive behavior, and provides opportunities for recognition and (3) activities that support participants in building skills, engaging in real and challenging activities, and broadening their horizons (p. 107-108). Yet, this list is postulated as preliminary because of the limitations of gathering such data through a survey as well as the lack of a systematic program evaluation to link features directly with outcomes.

Although sport programs were identified in the 4-H Study as among the most popular community programs that youth were involved in (Lerner, 2005), it is



important to note that PYD concepts were not developed within a sport context, and thus the recommendations for setting features listed above do not have direct links to the nuanced environment of youth sport programs (Holt et al., 2017). Accompanied by the strong literature base in adolescent development, a review of the literature of PYDS will aid in identifying pertinent knowledge and key concepts specifically for youth development in sport programs.

### **2.3 Positive Youth Development through Sport**

Sport is often viewed as a natural setting for PYD, and as such, this perspective has been widely used to study young peoples' involvement in organized sports (Holt & Neely, 2011). Although there are myths and misconceptions about the “power of sport,” which will be discussed later in this section, there is a significant evidence base on the contribution of sport participation for the development of young people that is contingent on a multitude of programmatic, social, and cultural factors (Coakley, 2011; Holt & Neely, 2011; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Strachan et al., 2011). In this section, the theoretical underpinnings for PYDS will be discussed laying the foundation for inquiry, and a model of PYDS (Holt et al., 2017), displayed in Figure 1, will be used as an organizing agent for a review of the literature. As outlined in Holt's et al. (2014) model, the review will flow from the PYD climate, to sport program design and activities, implicit and/or explicit transfer, and then PYD outcomes.

#### **2.3.1 Theoretical Underpinnings**

The RDS metatheory, stemming from the Process-Relational paradigm, provides the framing for the PYD perspective and subsequently PYDS (Ettekal et al., 2016). RDS theories help to frame the PYD perspective around several key concepts.

First, a mutually beneficial relationship between youth and their various contexts (Ettetal et al., 2016). Second, the metatheory highlights the adaptive nature of human development often referred to as plasticity, “Plasticity refers to the capacity for systematic change and is always a relative phenomenon within the relational developmental system because the temporal events in the life or lives of individual or a group, respectively, may also constrain change as well as provide affordance to it” (as cited in Ettetal et al., 2016).

These two concepts are a fundamental contribution to PYDS in that they suggest development occurs as a result of individuals and their relationships with their various contexts and acknowledges individuals’ active role and ability to change over the life span (Agans et al., 2016). Agans and colleagues (2016) articulate the implications of this metatheory for scientific inquiry in the field:

For sport research, adopting an RDS metatheoretical perspective means that studies of one aspect of participation should be viewed not as a discrete piece of a puzzle that can be added together with other pieces to understand the whole. Instead, knowledge develops through ‘moments of analysis’ (Overton, 2015) where one aspect of a complex system is examined while maintaining awareness of its essential interconnectedness or fusion with other aspects of the system. (p. 35-36)

### **2.3.2 Sport Program Setting Features**

How sport is delivered significantly impacts its potential to support positive development among youth participants (Holt & Neely, 2011). As Coakley (2011) states, “By itself, the act of sport participation among young people leads to no

regularly identifiable developmental outcomes” (p.309). Thus, this review will focus on exploring the features identified, theoretically and empirically, which show promise of supporting PYDS programs.

Holt and colleagues conducted a comprehensive review, which provides the core of information to follow. Holt and colleagues (2017) used a grounded theory approach to synthesize qualitative literature on PYD in sport and constructed the model of PYDS displayed in Figure 1. Starting with the “PYD climate,” Holt and colleagues identified three “social contextual features” of sport programs that were consistently identified in the literature as salient features to support development. PYD climate was defined as, “...a social environment that enables youth to gain experiences that will contribute to PYD outcomes” (Holt et al., 2017, p. 32). These three features were adult (leader/coach) relationships, peer relationships, and parental involvement (p. 32).

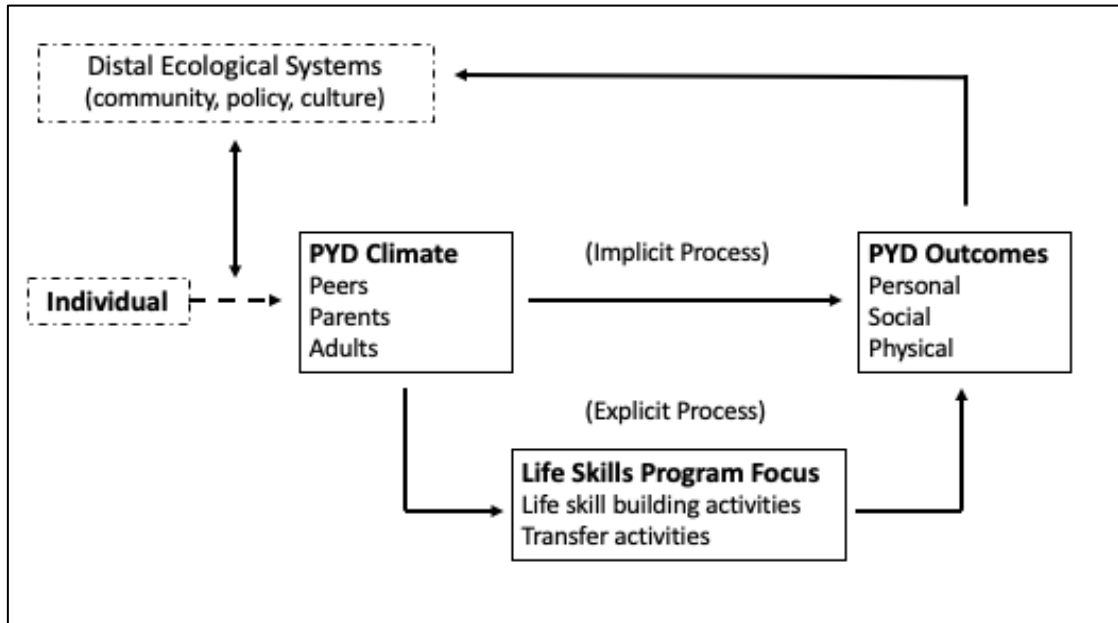


Figure 1. Model of Positive Youth Development through Sport (Holt et al., 2017)

There were nineteen studies on the importance of adult (leader/coach) relationships, which create a supportive and conducive environment for PYD (Holt et al., 2017). For instance, in a case study of a high school ice hockey program designed to teach life skills and values, Camiré et al. (2013) found that a key program strength was the coaches’ ability to build relationships with the players. Another case study exploring the sport “components” that led to long-term benefits for African-American girls playing on a high school basketball team, again highlighted the important role of the coach-player relationship, as well as the coaches’ role in creating an environment which upheld certain values, rules, and discipline for team members (Olushola et al., 2013). This study reveals the nuanced difference between the adult-coach relationship as a part of the PYD climate, and the coaches’ role in constructing other aspects of the PYD climate. This nuance is important when thinking of coaches as the “broker” of the PYD climate.

Holt and colleagues (2017) also identified nineteen studies that highlighted the theme of peer relationships in PYD climates. The authors defined the theme as, "...strong peer relationships among youth leading to the creation of a PYD climate, and it included opportunities for peer leadership and feelings of belonging to a wider community" (Holt et al., 2017, p. 33). For example, in a study of 20 "underachieving" male students involved in a life skills through sport program, students articulated the importance of "peer support" as an enabler of transfer of life skills from beyond the sport program (Allen et al., 2015). In addition, among a team of 31 female basketball players, participation on the team was reported as providing an opportunity to feel a part of a "family" and a sense of belonging among team members, especially if it was over an extended period of time (Harrist & Witt, 2015, p. 760-761).

Lastly, Holt and colleagues (2017) identified the theme of parental involvement: "This theme referred to parents supporting youth involvement in sport programs in positive ways to promote PYD" (p. 33). This theme was identified in nine studies. A study by Strachan et al. (2011) explored setting features of an elite sport program as it related to PYD, and found that parental involvement was critical to delivery of the program (p. 25). Yet, many of these studies were from the parent perspective, which draws into question the potential bias in this feature as it was limited to just one perspective.

Beyond what has been synthesized in the qualitative literature on PYD in sport, researchers have also attempted to "bridge" the PYDS literature with existing literature on PYD as it relates to program features. Côté et al. (2007) linked NRCIM's (2002) eight recommended setting features of community programs to support positive

development, outlined previously, to existing youth sport research. Côté and colleagues (2007) outline the following features within sport programs:

1. Physical and psychological safety: Sport program with safe facilities and practices that encourage respectful peer interactions (p. 39).
2. Appropriate structure: Sport program that has clear expectations, rules, and boundaries administered through supervision (p. 39).
3. Supportive relationships: Sport program that cultivates supportive relationships marked by positive communication and connectedness (p. 39).
4. Opportunities to belong: Sport program that provides opportunities to belong including social engagement and cultural competence (p. 40).
5. Positive social norms: Sport program that develops values and morals and discourages anti-social and risk behavior (p. 40).
6. Support of efficacy and mattering: Sport program that empowers young people, respects their autonomy, and supports them in contributing to their community (p. 40).
7. Opportunities for skill building: Sport program that teaches a variety of skills including sport-specific as well as life skills (p. 40).
8. Integration of family, school, and community efforts: Sport program that merges the various environments for which a young person is engaged (family, school, community) (p. 41).

Also popular in the field of PYDS is the implementation of the “Big 3” features of youth development programs previously introduced by Lerner (2004). Expanding on the definition here, the three characteristics are (1) positive and sustained relations with an engaged, competent, and continuously available adult (i.e., coach), (2) youth skill development opportunities, and (3) opportunities to enact these skills in valued family, school, or community settings, including sport programs (as

cited in Ettekal et al., 2016). Using data from the 4-H study, Zarrett and colleagues (2009) found that participation in a combination of sport and youth development programs, which utilized the Big 3 program design, were associated with youth development and contribution outcomes. This study not only suggests the importance of the Big 3 characteristics of program design, but also highlights the various ways that sport programs are designed to work with young people.

The limitations of the current research on setting features that promote PYDS programs, mirror the limitations in the larger field of PYD, is the lack of rigorous, systematic evaluations that link program features with outcomes. This is a critical gap, as it perpetuates sport programs as ambiguous “black boxes” in which the program process is not always clear, and there is an inability to link the program process with PYD outcomes (or detriments) (Jones et al., 2017). This limits the theoretical foundation in the field and hinders what can be said about how setting features are linked to outcomes.

Acknowledging this gap, currently there are not specific setting features of programs which are uniformly accepted to promote PYD among sport participants. Building knowledge about program features is an initial step to eventually address this gap in the literature. In addition, the lack of longitudinal studies to support the presence of PYD outcomes continues to be a challenge in both fields of PYD and PYDS. In order to measure change, multiple observation points are necessary, and one-shot assessments or cross-sectional designs cannot account for change over time (Ettekal et al., 2016) which makes empirical support for PYD outcomes challenging. Furthermore, the significant number of studies of PYDS are conducted in community

or school settings but have not been conducted in nontraditional settings such as juvenile correctional facilities.

### **2.3.3 Sport Program Design and Activities**

In addition to the salient features of sport program settings, the activities and purpose of the sport program play an important role in sport for PYD. Common rhetoric in PYDS is the use of sport as a vehicle or hook to “...communicate, implement, and achieve non-sport development goals” (Schulenkorf et al., 2016, p. 22). Programs that use sport to achieve non-sport goals have been outlined along a continuum: Sport Plus or Plus Sport (Coalter, 2007; Coalter, 2010). Sport Plus programs are described as having traditional sport development objectives (i.e., building sport knowledge and skill), and also include additional activities to teach skills for overcoming challenges in life (Coakley, 2011). Plus Sport programs have primarily non-sport objectives and incorporate sport in their programs often as a “hook” to recruit and retain young people, but have a main focus in an area outside of sport, such as education. (Coakley, 2011).

Besides these more overt program designs, there are also different activities within programs that make them distinct from one another. These activities provide a window into the ways that sport programs are striving to achieve PYD outcomes. Holt et al. (2017) identified two types of activities emerging in the literature on PYD in sport, which were labeled “transfer activities” and “life skill building activities” (p. 28).

Transfer activities, are defined as, “...activities that were perceived to promote the transfer of personal and social skills learned in sport to other life situations” (Holt et al., 2017). The study of transfer activities was reported in seventeen studies



reviewed by Holt et al. (2017). For instance, Allen et al. (2015) reported on a “transfer-ability programme” (TAP), in which sport sessions were delivered at a school once a week over the academic year. Each sport session focused on a different life skill that students were able to practice while playing, and also included focus groups to help students discuss and implement the learned skills in outside domains (p. 56).

Holt’s et al. (2017) review highlighted the role that coaches played in reinforcing the transfer of skills from sport to life among their players without an emphasis on explicit pedagogical techniques (p. 34); which is referred to as “implicit” transfer. Several studies reported that participants believed implicit transfer, between sport contexts and other life contexts, was a natural and somewhat effortless process (Chinkov & Holt, 2015; Trottier & Robitaille, 2014).

The second type of activity identified, “life skill building,” was defined as, “...the use of specific pedagogical strategies focused on teaching life skills” (Holt et al., 2017, p. 34), which were more explicit attempts at transfer. Holt et al. (2017) reported that among the thirty-two studies reviewed, there were both personal life skills and social life skills that were the focus of interventions and associated with successful outcomes (p. 34). Although similar to transfer activities, the distinction between the two helps to display the nuance of program activities designed to promote positive development, and the concepts of implicit and explicit transfer (Turnidge et al., 2014). The topic of “transfer” is critical for a field striving to use sport for non-sport outcomes, as it ensures that the potential growth and development that occurs within the sport program is sustained in the various environments for which youth are involved.

Although there may be agreement on the importance of transfer, there is not consensus in the field about if and how such transfer evolves in other environments (Turnidge et al., 2014). There are some researchers who believe that skills learned in the sport context will only transfer into other contexts if they are explicitly taught by coaches and program staff (Danish et al., 2005). Conversely, other scholars view youth as active agents in their development, and do not believe that coaches need to be explicit in the process of teaching through sport. These scholars promote the role of coaches in providing a healthy environment that supports young people in leading their own development (Larsons et al., 2005; Turnidge et al., 2014). This implicit approach focuses on the holistic development of the child within the sport program (Turnidge et al., 2014). Although there is preliminary evidence which supports both types of transfer, Turnidge et al. (2014) call for more longitudinal studies to measure long-term outcomes, as well as quasi-experimental and experimental evaluations to compare the two approaches (p. 213).

#### **2.3.4 Benefits and Detriments**

Following the organization of Holt's et al. (2017) model of PYDS; there is the flow from the individual athlete, into a sport setting conducive to PYD, which includes either implicit and/or explicit transfer of skills, and has the propensity to lead to personal, social, and physical benefits among young people. A synthesis of benefits associated with youth participation in sport programs is outlined along NRCIM's (2002) four domains of adolescent development (physical, psychological/emotional, intellectual, and social).

The physical benefits of sport participation are often the first domain considered and highlighted in support of youth participation. Research has found that

sport participation helps to improve movement skills (Neely & Holt, 2014); increases the likelihood of maintaining healthy weight (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness, 2001); increases lifetime participation in sport and physical activity (Healthy People, 2010); lowers risk of diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and other related disorders (Blom et al., 2013); and helps to teach a healthy lifestyle (Fuller et al., 2013).

Emerging literature on sport with youth who have experienced complex developmental trauma, found that sport helped young people “...reconnect with their physical and emotional selves through physical movement” (Whitley et al., 2018, p. 120), which is especially important considering the common symptom of disassociation related to complex developmental trauma (Pearlman & Courtois, 2005). The physicality of sport has been shown to have benefits for not only the body, but also the mind, and the “reconnecting” of the two (Whitley et al., 2018).

The psychological/emotional benefits of sport may not be as overtly obvious as physical benefits, but findings highlight the critical role it plays in development. Researchers have found that sport participation can support positive self-perceptions (Camiré et al., 2009); self-esteem and physical self-concept (Blom et al., 2013; Harrist & Witt, 2015); self-discipline, conflict resolution, anger management, and decision-making (Harrist & Witt, 2015). For example, in an international study of high school sport participants, athletes discussed how they used sport to learn to regulate their behavior, develop self-awareness, and work with others (Hayden et al., 2015).

In a study of a sports-based intervention designed using trauma-informed principles, D’Andrea et al. (2013) reported a reduction in restraints, time-outs, and internalizing and externalizing symptoms among sixty-two female residents in a

residential treatment facility. Again, this research supports the use of sport-based interventions in working with young people who have experienced trauma to support their psychological and emotional healing and development.

There is also evidence which suggests that sport participation aids in intellectual development of adolescents (Blom et al., 2013). Researchers have found that in a comparison of athletes to nonathletes, sport participation was associated with higher perceptions of school belonging, more favorable attitudes towards school, increased association with prosocial peers (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005), and greater academic achievement (Fox et al., 2010).

Lastly, there has been research that links sport participation with social development of young people. When youth participate in organized sports it provides them an opportunity to engage and build a relationship with an adult who could become a mentor (Blom et al., 2013). In a 2009 study of high school sports, parents discussed the critical role that sport played as a setting for their child's social development: building social skills, creating friendships, and making new connections (Camiré et al., 2009). Sport has also been identified as a structure to build social capital. Participation in interscholastic sports was associated with greater social capital, and increased social ties between athletes and their peers, teachers, and parents (Broh, 2002).

Participation in sport is not without its detriments, which have also been documented in the literature. Hansen et al. (2003) reported negative issues related to modeling of inappropriate behaviors by adults in youth sports. In addition, participation in sport naturally places young people at risk for traumatic overuse injuries (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004; Merkel & Molony, 2012), which can impact not

only sport performance but increased stress, anxiety, and social pressure around sport participation (Merkel, 2013; Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). Imperative to the study of PYDS is not only the recognition of the critical role that sport could play in positive development, but also recognizing the detrimental role that sport can play if it is not implemented properly through a PYD perspective.

Limitations in current research exist around the lack of rigorous, systematic program evaluations to explicitly identify outcomes in connection with program features. Creating a challenge for building such an evidence base is the multiple definitions of PYD, which creates barriers to unifying the field (MacDonald & McIsaac, 2016). For instance, MacDonald and McIsaac (2016) identify that PYD has been operationalized by some researchers as life skills (Danish, 2002), responsibility (Hellison, 2003), developmental assets (Search Institute, 2004), and thriving (Lerner et al., 2003). In addition, there is a lack of longitudinal studies that can account for impact over time, and speak to the transfer of sport benefits into other life domains. Lastly, there continues to be a much more limited understanding of the use of the PYD model with young people of color and youth from lower socioeconomic status, and in nontraditional settings.

### **2.3.5 Distal Ecological Systems and Individuals**

Included in Holt's et al. (2017) model, due to its fundamental importance in the broader PYD literature, were "Distal Ecological Systems" and "Individuals." Holt and colleagues describe the reciprocal relationship between social-ecological systems and individual characteristics, and the role that this plays on and is influenced by the sport program (p. 37). Although these concepts were included in Holt's et al. (2017) model, they were not as prevalent in the qualitative articles reviewed (p. 37). This represents

an additional gap in the literature, as the social-ecological systems and individual characteristics interact to play a fundamental role in the developing PYDS theory.

### **2.3.6 A Critical View of PYDS**

There are some scholars who have taken a critical view of PYDS. Although there is substantial evidence to support the use of sport to promote positive development among young people, there continues to be popular rhetoric among the public of the “essential goodness” of sport, and an assumed inherent ability to produce positive development without a critical recognition of the importance of intentional programming (Coakley, 2011). Coakley (2011) challenges both of these assumptions, as well as the narrow focus of PYDS on changing individuals without significant recognition of the larger social and structural forces that deeply impact and influence their lives (Coakley, 2011).

Coakley (2011) argues that sport for development programs can be organized into three categories: personal character development, reforming “at-risk” populations, and building social capital (p. 308). As opposed to other more affluent populations, for the “at-risk” population, interventions promote control and discipline, and focus on “fixing” the child and providing them with personal attributes that their environment has been unable to instill (Coakley, 2011). This recognition reveals a contradiction that exists in PYDS which is intended to take a strengths-based, and not a deficit-model, to youth development. In addition, the personal focus may not be adequate to address the larger social issues. Coakley (2011) states:

...it [sport] is often woven into popular narratives, reproduced in uncritical forms, and used by well-meaning people and organizations from wealthy

nations to justify the creation of sport programs for populations that lack participation opportunities and face challenges caused by poverty, war, natural disasters, and oppression (p. 307).

As Coakley's description reveals, many of the social issues targeted for sport interventions are not dysfunctions at the individual level, but are crisis at the societal level. Yet, development has largely been defined as "personal" which underestimates and diminishes the power of "wicked problems." Coakley (2011) describes how "positive development" is often defined in sport programs:

...positive development in most sport programs was not defined in terms of the need for social justice, rebuilding strong community-based social institutions, reestablishing the resource base of the communities where young people lived, or empowering young people to be effective agents of social change in their communities. Instead, development was defined in terms of providing socialization experiences that would maintain and extend opportunities for "privileged youth" or compensate for what was missing in the lives of "disadvantaged youth" (p. 313).

Personal development is important for any young person, or person of any age, but it is critical to recognize the larger social and structural forces that collectively impact certain groups of people (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Sport programs can continue to intervene at the individual level but may not find a great deal of collective success if links are not made to address structural level issues and address issues of social justice. Coakley's (2011) recommendations highlight the importance of recognizing the larger ecological environments for which youth and sport programs are immersed,

as well as, expanding the definition of “positive development” to include developing young people’s sociological imagination and empowering them to be social change agents.

#### **2.4 Public Health Perspective**

Heeding Coakley’s recommendation to acknowledge and address structural-level issues to increase the potential for greater collective impact; while also adapting positive development programming for youth enrolled in sports programs now; it is important to draw from literature in public health which has expertise in working to address structural-levels related to prevention and individual-levels related to health promotion.

Frieden (2010) articulates a 5-tier health impact pyramid, displayed in Figure 2 below, which supports the call for addressing structural-level issues for greater collective impact. Frieden’s health impact pyramid is positioned in the public health space and has implications and overlap for PYDS. The pyramid includes a number of important public health interventions, such as counseling and education as well as clinical interventions. Yet, the pyramid visually articulates that interventions that focus on changing the environment as well as socioeconomic conditions for which people live have a relatively greater impact on population health improvement compared with interventions closer to the top of the pyramid (Frieden, 2010).



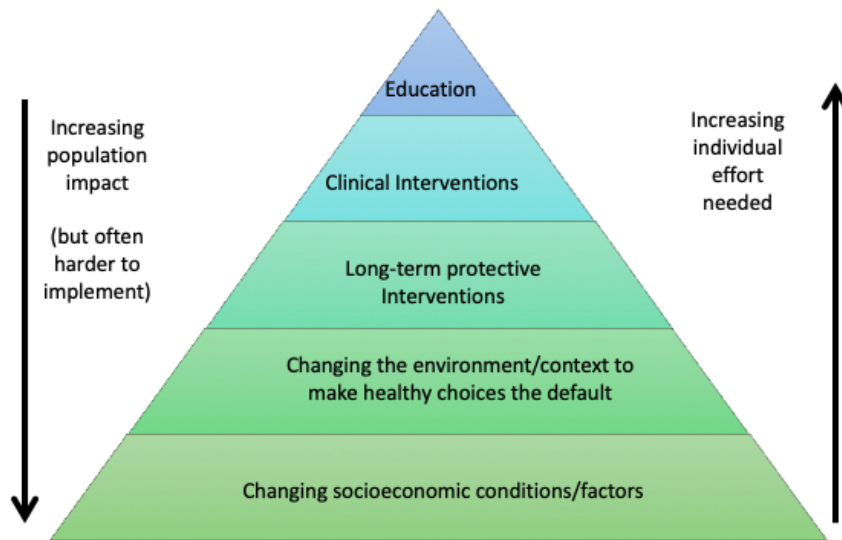


Figure 2. The health impact pyramid (adapted from Frieden, 2010)

Starting with the 5<sup>th</sup> tier, or the bottom of the pyramid, Frieden (2010) outlines interventions that have the greatest potential for impact to the greatest number of people. These interventions focus on changing socioeconomic conditions and factors such as, poverty, education, environmental hazards, often referred to as the social determinants of health (SDoH) (Healthy People, 2020). The World Health Organization (2020) defines the SDoH as:

...the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.

The 4<sup>th</sup> tier of the health impact pyramid includes interventions that focus on changing the environment to support making healthy choices the easy or default

choice regardless of other societal factors (Frieden, 2010). The 4<sup>th</sup> tier is especially relevant as it includes strategies for developing healthier environments, such as designing communities that support increased physical fitness among citizens (p. 591-592). Ascending the pyramid to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 1<sup>st</sup> tier the interventions become increasingly focused on individuals, which are important to address the current health status of people, but are less likely to result in large-scale impact on population health due to the necessity for long-term, individual behavior change at those levels (Frieden, 2010).

Frieden's model underscores the significant role social and structural determinants play in health and health inequities. Exploring the SDoH further, another conceptual framework often referred to as the "health rainbow" (see Figure 3) by Dahlgren & Whitehead (1991), displays the various social determinants, the factors that influence them, and how individual lifestyle decisions are made within the context of these determinants. As previously outlined in its definition, WHO identifies the SDoH as the largest contributor to health inequities. These conditions are socially produced through "...the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels" which is the result of public policies (Knight, 2011). Differences in the SDoH that drive health inequities are socially produced; thus, they are both avoidable as well as unfair and unjust (Whitehead, 1992).



Figure 3. Social determinants of health rainbow (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991).

This conceptualization of health inequities as a result of social determinants, and their structural precursors, is critical in thinking about young people in juvenile facilities, who experience poorer general health than their non-incarcerated peers (Massoglia, 2008). Although physical activity is considered an individual behavior determinant it is often influenced by social and physical determinants of health. For instance, children from low-income families may not have the leisure time to engage in physical activity; or they may not have access to a safe environments to play. Participation in physical activity and sport follow a social gradient, as those who are more socially and economically advantaged are also more likely to be physically active and less likely to experience adverse health outcomes compared to their peers who experience more disadvantage (Ball et al., 2015). A strong linear relationship has been established in the literature between physical activity and income and education (Drenowatz et al., 2010; Shuval et al., 2017; Stalsberg & Pederson, 2010).

One of the most popular forms of physical activity among youth is sport (Casper et al., 2011), with an estimated 60 million young people participating in

organized sport (DiFiori et al., 2014). Sport is one of four subcategories of physical activity, the other three include conditioning exercise, household tasks, and recreation (Casper et al., 1985). Compared to the other three exercise categories, sport has been found to have added health benefits including decreased likelihood to engage in risky health behaviors among adolescents (Pate et al., 2000), has been associated with lower rates of chronic disease (Pharr & Lough, 2017), as well as the positive contributions to youth development that were outlined previously. However, not all young people have the access or opportunity to engage in sport, and thus the potential to acquire these broad health benefits. Similar to physical activity, sport access and participation is influenced by young people's sociodemographic characteristics (Casper et al., 2011; Dollman & Lewis, 2009). Mirroring inequities evident in other SDoH, such as lack of opportunity for quality education, economic opportunity, and safe housing; there is also a lack of opportunity for sport participation. This body of literature, and the conceptual frameworks that help to guide it, are key in highlighting that health inequities are socially produced through socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental conditions which are the result of public policy (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991; Knight, 2011).

This is apparent in a recent study of state's recreation policies in juvenile justice facilities across the United States, in which León et al. (2020) determined that there was not a nationwide consensus on recreation policy in juvenile justice facilities, and an absence of standards for recreation programming. Of the population, only 70% of states had a daily mandatory minimum requirement for recreation, only 44% required youth to be given time outside, and only 56% of states included justification for denying youth access to recreation (León et al., 2020).

The lack of consensus and guidance from state policy could contribute to a lack of access to physical activity through recreation for youth in facilities, as well as contributing to a variability or inequity of programming offerings. León's et al. study specifically analyzed written authorities for recreation, as it is mandated by federal law, but did not review for sport. León and her colleagues are among the first to evaluate recreation policies in juvenile justice facilities in the U.S., and it provides helpful insights into the lack of policy governing this aspect of juvenile programming.

It is apparent from the public health literature that young people who are incarcerated face poorer health upon entering and exiting juvenile facilities (Barnert et al., 2016; Massoglia, 2008). From the literature on PYDS, it is evident that physical activity and sport can have broad benefits to the health of young people (Holt et al., 2017; Pharr & Lough, 2016; Pharr & Lough, 2017). Despite these two large bodies of evidence, there appears to be limited guidance from public policy on physical activity and sport programming in facilities, including recreational requirements and standards.

## **2.5 Sport in Juvenile Facilities**

Considering the potential for sport to support the overall health (including PYD) of youth, and findings that show high levels of sport participation among incarcerated youth in international juvenile justice systems (Lewis & Meek, 2012), sport provides an opportunity for a creative intervention with youth in the justice system here in the US. The existing knowledge on PYDS, has almost exclusively been created through studying school and community settings (Holt & Neely, 2011). Studies focusing on sport in non-traditional settings, such as juvenile correctional facilities, remain limited (Meek, 2014). There is an emerging body of international literature focused on the use of sport with individuals who are incarcerated, but similar

studies in the United States remain sparse (Meek, 2014). The international literature was explored to outline how sport was used in facilities, in order to begin to identify program features, as well as why sport was used in facilities, patterns across juvenile justice and sport literature, and areas that require further inquiry.

In understanding how sport programs are used in facilities, there is a common theme in the literature of using sport as a “hook,” tool, or vehicle for which larger interventions could take place with young people to achieve non-sport outcomes (Meek & Lewis, 2014; Parker et al., 2013; Andrews & Andrews, 2003). For instance, Meek and Lewis (2014) describe how prison-based sporting “academies” in an English prison were used to engage young men in identifying and meeting resettlement needs with the goal of reducing reoffending. Another study by Meek and Lewis (2012), revealed high levels of sport participation and appeal to young people who are incarcerated, which further supports the use of sport as a tool to work with this population. This conceptualization of sport as a hook in juvenile justice programming is a similar concept found in the PYDS literature (Schelinkorf, et al., 2016; Perkins & Noam, 2007; Holt, 2016).

The ways in which sport programs have been designed and implemented in juvenile facilities appears to vary among facilities and across nations, especially when considering the varying purposes of programs and differing social contexts of juvenile justice systems (Meek, 2014). The prison-based academies operating in a young offender institution in England, mentioned previously, operate a 12-15 week academy which includes coaching, training, and matches against visiting teams. The sport program is supplemented by group activities that include themes such as life skills and

team skills training, which are delivered in partnership by prison staff and staff from a community organization (Meek & Lewis, 2014).

The overt infusion of life skills in the sport program mirrors another concept in PYDS literature, which is explicit and implicit transfer (Holt et al., 2017). Explicit transfer refers to the use of pedagogical strategies to teach life skills and an intentional emphasis on transfer in non-sport environments (Holt et al., 2017). Implicit transfer refers to the ways in which coaches, and sport participation, reinforce the application of life skills learned in sport to non-sport environments, without the use of explicit pedagogical techniques (Holt et al., 2017). Program descriptions provide insight into how sport programs are operated in facilities, and the characteristics that were identified as valuable to participants and staff. Yet, across the multiple disciplines, additional research is needed to identify what specific mechanisms of a sport program help to bring about desired outcomes, and empirical support of those outcomes.

Concerning the utility of sport in secure facilities, several themes emerged from the broad literature of sport and prisons including: (1) physical health benefits (Gallant et al., 2015; Meek & Lewis, 2014; Elger, 2009; Nelson et al., 2006), (2) mental health benefits (Gallant et al., 2015; Meek & Lewis, 2014; Buckaloo et al., 2009; Cashin et al., 2008; Woodall, 2010) (3) psychosocial benefits (Draper et al., 2013; Meek & Lewis, 2014, Parker et al., 2014), (4) rehabilitation (Draper et al., 2013; Parker et al., 2014), (5) reentry services (Meek & Lewis, 2014), and (6) facility management (Gallant et al., 2015). In addition, gaps in the literature continue to exist for the role of these six themes exclusively in juvenile correctional facilities.

Previous studies on this topic within juvenile correctional facilities have largely utilized methodologies that have explored the ambiguous nature of sport

programs in those settings. These predominantly case studies, have used qualitative methods; such as interviews with program staff and participants, and observation, which have been mainly descriptive but not explanatory. Analyzing previous research, there appears to be a strong theoretical claim for the positive role of sport with young people who are incarcerated, but less empirical data to support such claims (Gallant et al., 2015). Furthermore, the studies on sport in juvenile correctional facilities have applied juvenile justice frameworks to explore the phenomenon, and the use of the PYD perspective has been limited.

In summary, in converging the knowledge across the various fields several gaps and areas for scholarly contribution have been identified. First, the existing knowledge on PYD and PYDS has almost exclusively been created through studying school and community settings (Holt & Neely, 2011), and studies in non-traditional settings, such as juvenile correctional facilities, are much more limited (Meek, 2014). Second, the studies that exist on sport and correctional facilities have utilized frameworks and theories from criminology and juvenile justice, and have not been explored through a PYD framework (Meek & Lewis, 2014; Parker et al., 2014; Draper et al., 2013); these studies were also conducted internationally and do not account for the unique juvenile justice system in the United States. Third, additional research is needed on the program features of sport programs, especially in non-traditional settings, to lay the groundwork to identify which specific mechanisms of a program lead to PYD outcomes (Brooks-Gunn & Roth, 2014; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Fourth, despite the strong literature base showing poor health outcomes among youth entering and exiting juvenile facilities (Barnert et al., 2016; Massoglia, 2008) and the broad health benefits of sport participation (Holt et al., 2017; Pharr & Lough, 2016; Pharr & Lough,



2017) there is little understanding of program diffusion and how such knowledge and innovations on physical activity are transferred from the literature to real-world settings such as juvenile facilities (Cassar et al., 2019). Fifth, despite the well-founded implications of sport for health, sport has not been well integrated in the research agenda in public health or juvenile justice (Berg et al., 2015; Meek, 2014).

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

Sport programs have been found to be an effective setting for PYD, when they are thoughtfully orchestrated and grounded in a PYD perspective (Coakley, 2011). Considering the appeal of sport among young people, and findings that show the high levels of sport participation among incarcerated youth in international systems (Lewis & Meek, 2012); more research is needed to understand what sport programs currently exist in juvenile correctional facilities in the United States, and how they are implemented in the more unique, secure setting.

The complexity of studying sport programs in the juvenile justice system, with its interdisciplinary nature, requires a conceptual framework that integrates key concepts, variables, theories, and hypothesis across the fields of juvenile justice, adolescent development, PYD, PYDS, and public health to support and inform the research. Ecological Systems Theory (EST) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provides the underlying worldview, and promotes the understanding and recognition of the sport program within the broader environment of the juvenile facility. The recognition of the importance of setting has been explicit in PYD literature, but more primitively explored in the PYDS literature, and thus was made more explicit through EST in the conceptual framework (Holt et al., 2017). In addition, studies of sport programs in juvenile facilities in the United States are much more limited (Meek, 2014), and EST

helps to position the sport program within the larger juvenile justice system, for which there can be social and systemic influences specific to the culture in the United States. The PYD perspective, specifically the model of PYDS (Holt et al., 2017), are used to explore and make sense of the sport program.

EST promotes the recognition of the sport program as just one environment, nested within a larger correctional environment, in which there are reciprocal, influential relationships. EST is also utilized in this study to be attentive to calls in the field to adopt an ecological approach in youth sport research, and take into account the multiple environments that influence both the sport program and the youth participant (i.e., family, school, community, culture) (Agans et al., 2016; Strachan et al., 2009).

On the basis that human development is the product of the interactions between human beings and their environment, Bronfenbrenner's EST speaks to the nature and role of the "environment." Bronfenbrenner (1979) writes, "The ecological environment is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls. At the inner-most level is the immediate setting containing the developing person" (p. 3). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, displaying the nested circles, provides a visual explanation of the influence of immediate and distant ecologies on the development of young people, as well as the importance of the relationship between various ecologies on the development of the child.

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) hypothesized that there are five ecological environments embodying any individual, and these include micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chronosystems. The microsystem is defined as, "...a pattern of activities, role, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.

22). Whereas “setting” refers to, “...a place where people can readily engage in face-to-face interaction- home, day care center, playground, and so on. The factors of activity, role, and interpersonal relation constitute the elements, or building blocks, of the microsystem” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). For purposes of this study, the sport program and the juvenile facility both constitute microsystems, and the settings that holds the complex web of interrelationships for youth (or players) in their immediate environments.

Moving outward, the mesosystem is defined as, “... the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group)...” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). Bronfenbrenner (1979) articulates that the mesosystem is a system of microsystems, and is constructed or expanded when a person enters into a new setting (p. 25). The mesosystem is defined in this study, as the interrelations between the sport program and the juvenile correctional facility for which it is housed.

Beyond the mesosystem, the exosystem is defined as, “...one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). The exosystem in this study is identified as the juvenile justice system, which interacts and influences juvenile facilities and sport programs for which young people are involved.

The macrosystem which encompasses all other ecological environments, is defined as, “...consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies”

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). The macrosystem, for this study, is identified as the “society” in the United States, which has historical traditions and cultural norms relating to the juvenile justice system and the larger correctional system. The society has implications for the various ecological environments for which the developing young person is directly connected or indirectly influenced.

Lastly, the chronosystem accounts for change over time for both individual characteristics and the environmental characteristics for which they live (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Skinner (2012) states, “... the chronosystem is both an individual’s passage through time as well as their position within history” (p. 3). The chronosystem represents life changes (both ‘normal’ and ‘nonnormal’ events [e.g. traumatic events]), and comprises the ways in which these life events impact the individual as well as the other nested systems (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011). The ecological model, as it is applied in this study, is displayed in Figure 4.

An additional component was added to the ecological model to account for the influence and interplay of public policy with the various ecological environments. A more heavily studied topic in public health, Embrett & Randall (2014) outline the influence of public policy on society as it relates to health inequities: “Social, political, and economic conditions in which people are born, live, work, play and socialize are known as the social determinants of health (SDoH). These conditions have been shaped by distributive public policies that allocate financial, human, and physical resources at global, national and local levels (p. 148). Although they are speaking in the context of public health, the influence of public policy in shaping society, culture and its institutions stands relevant in the context of juvenile justice and sport.

EST serves a pivotal function in the study; underscoring both the importance of ecological environments for the development of children, the influence and interplay of the ecological environments on one another, and the ability to view a sport program as its own ecological environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains, “The detection of such wide-ranging developmental influences becomes possible only if one employs a theoretical model that permits them to be observed” (p. 4). This theoretical model provides an important structure to account for and explore a sport program within the unique and highly complex setting of a juvenile correctional facility.

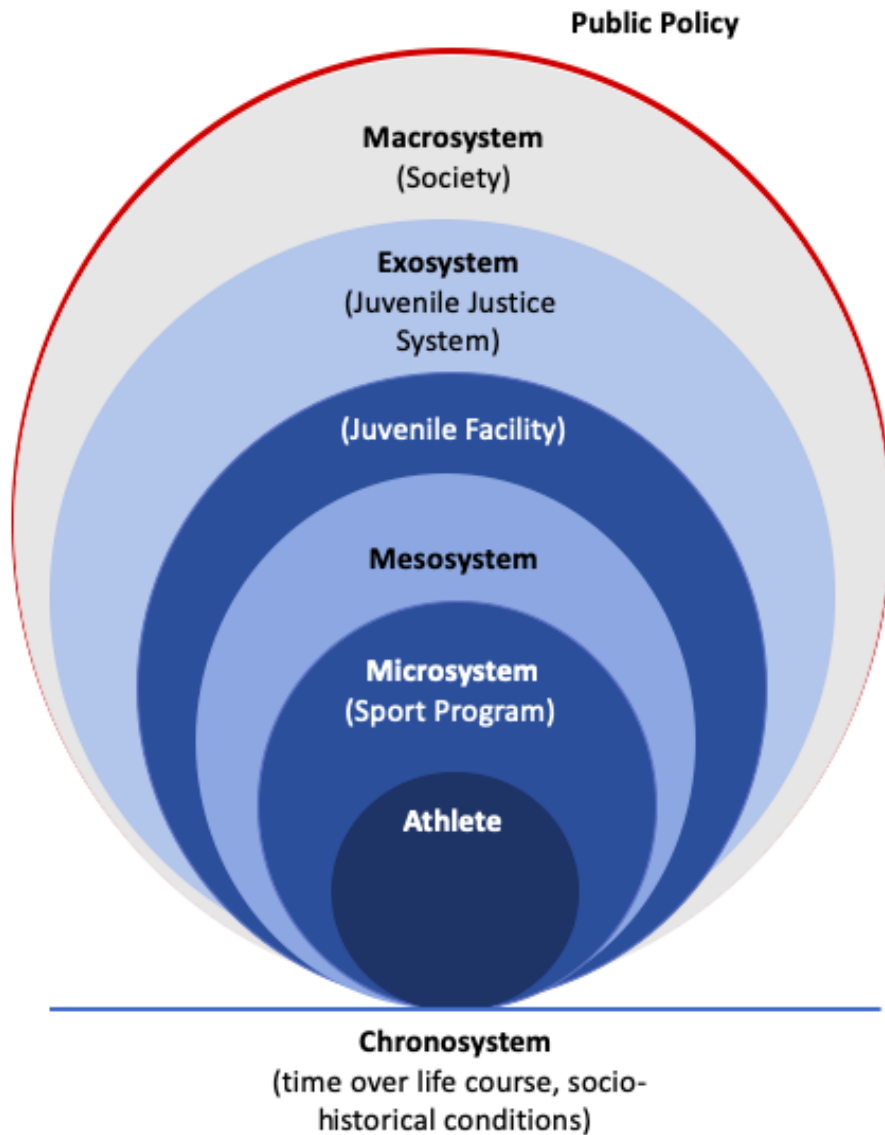


Figure 4. Ecological Systems Theory for a Sport Program in a Juvenile Correctional Facility (Adapted from Duerden & Witt, 2010)

Starting with the microsystem of the sport program, there are concepts and processes that need explicit conceptualization to guide understanding of the phenomenon. The PYD perspective, which will be further extended in to PYDS, is a primary theory for the study. As discussed earlier, the PYD perspective is a strengths-

based theory of adolescent development, which supports that all young people have the potential for healthy development and thriving across the lifespan (Lerner et al., 2005; Geldhof et al., 2013). The PYD perspective asserts that adolescent development is the dynamic process resulting from the bidirectional relationship between individual traits and the multiple ecologies for which young people are embedded (i.e., family, school, society) (Geldhof et al., 2013), and the feature of plasticity allows for change over a lifespan (Geldhof et al., 2013).

Emphasizing the plasticity of human development, the theory of PYD hypothesizes that if young people, with their individual and inherent assets, have mutually beneficial relationships with their ecology, it will lead to their healthy development, thriving (“manifest healthy, positive developmental change”), and allow them to contribute to their self, family, community, and society (Geldhof et al., 2013; Lerner et al., 2005).

The PYD perspective, and its assumptions, are contained under the umbrella of the Process-Relational paradigm and Relational-Developmental Systems theories (RDST). This paradigm and meta-theory provide the theoretical underpinnings for the PYD perspective, and contain assumptions and implications that inform this study. Fundamentally, the Process-Relational paradigm highlights systems thinking and fusion between the components of the ecology of human development (Lerner, 2006).

The Process-Relational paradigm, and related RDS theories, recognize the diversity of human development, individuals’ active agency in their own development, and stress the importance of developing differential laws across the life course (Lerner, 2006). Recognizing the fusion or integration of levels, human development is thus a product of the mutually influential relationships between the individual’s

genetic makeup, their society, their culture, and history (Lerner, 2006). Since these systems are dynamic and constantly changing, there is a plasticity to human development, whereas there is the potential for systematic change across the entire life span (Lerner, 2006). Lastly, if there is a plasticity to development, then there can be a search for the characteristics of individuals and description of their ecologies that promote their positive development (Lerner, 2004). Overton (2015) describes the resulting RDS theories:

Relational-Developmental-Systems characterizes the living organism as an inherently active, self-creating (autopoietic, enactive), self-organizing, and self-regulating, relatively plastic, nonlinear complex adaptive system. The system's development takes place through its own embodied activities and actions operating coactively in a lived world of physical and sociocultural objects, according to the principle of probabilistic epigenesis. This development leads, through positive and negative feedback loops created by the system's organized action, to increasing system differentiation, integration, complexity, directed towards adaptive ends. (p. 4)

RDS theories and PYD perspective provide the grounding principles for the conceptual framework, but they do not account for the sport settings and its nuanced nature. Thus, an adapted version of the model of PYDS provides important concepts relevant to youth sport participation (Holt et al., 2017). Holt et al. (2017) utilized grounded theory to produce a model of PYDS based off of a systematic review of relevant literature, displayed in Figure 5. I adapted and expanded upon this model to include additional literature from PYD and sport for development.



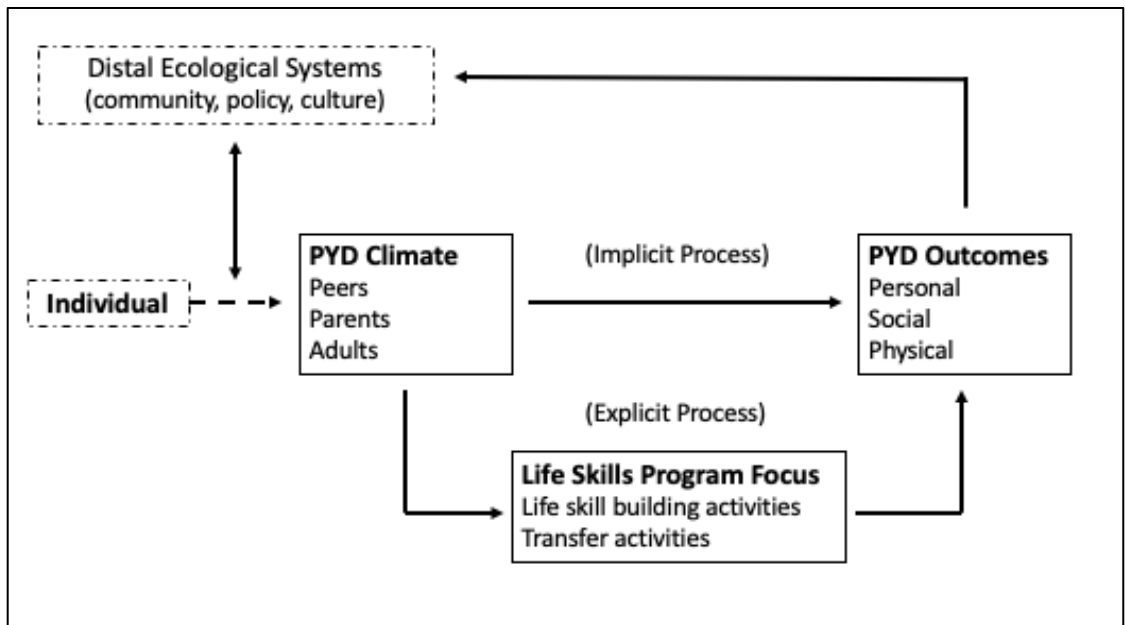


Figure 5. Model of Positive Youth Development through Sport (Holt et al., 2017)

The model of PYDS, displayed in Figure 5, hypothesizes how positive development of young people can occur in a sport setting. The main components of Holt's et al. (2017) model remain, but key features have been adapted for this study based on a more expansive review of literature specific to the phenomenon in this study.

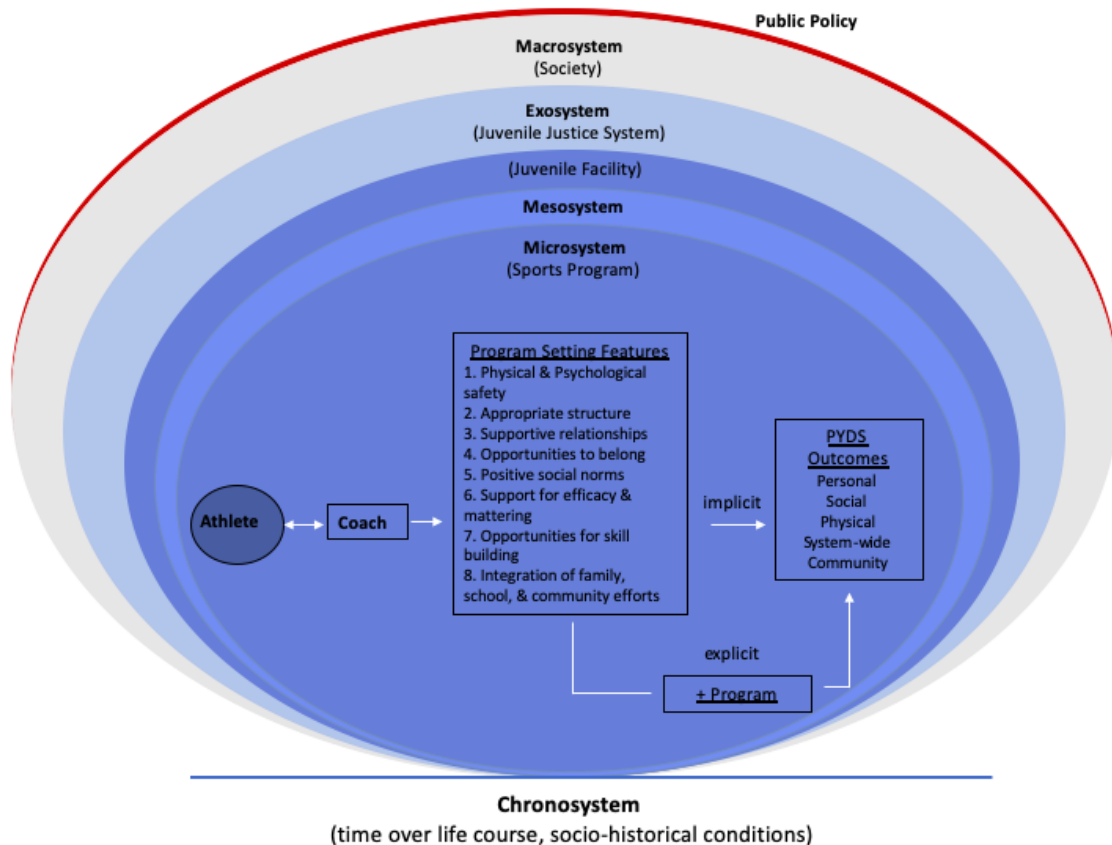


Figure 6. Conceptual Framework

The revised model, guiding this study, was created with an understanding of PYD, PYDS, EST, Public Policy and the areas in which these literature bases converge and overlap to underscore knowledge and reveal gaps. The model commences with the “athlete” on the far left side. The bidirectional arrow between “athlete” and “coach” signifies the active role that athletes play in their own development, with their individual and inherent qualities, and the reciprocal relationship between an athlete and coach. The coach was explicitly identified in this model as playing a significant role in the formation of the sport program setting, and as a broker between the athlete and the program setting. This is because of the critical

role that coaches play in constructing the environment of sport programs, and in providing athletes access to various program environments. This hypothesis is supported in the literature with findings that highlight the importance of the role model relationship, between coaches and players, on athletes' positive development (Armour et al., 2013).

The “program setting features” represent one dimension of a larger concept of “program quality,” and this was expanded upon from Holt et al., (2017) original model. Previously, the category was referred to as “PYD climate” and included coaches, parents, and peers. After a review of adolescent development and PYD literature, it appeared that the PYD climate encompassed more factors than just coaches, parents, and peers and actually may represent a different construct all together.

“Program quality” is a multi-faceted concept for which there is not a universal definition, but has been identified in previous sport studies as involving both the structure and process of a program (Bean et al., 2018). Program structure has been defined as, “...an organization’s capacity to deliver a program to youth (physical space, staffing, funding, community collaborations) (Bean et al., 2018, p. 2). Program process has been defined as, “...how the program is delivered (supportive relationships, opportunities for skill building, autonomy)” (Bean et al., 2018, p. 2).

For purposes of this study, in order to provide even greater clarity and focus, the “program process” will be termed “setting features” and will be represented by the eight program setting features recommended for PYD programs (NRCIM, 2002). This language change is intended to provide explicit clarity on what “process” is being explored in the program. The setting features are not explicitly operationalized but

rather are sensitizing concepts, which are not concrete measures but rather “a starting point” in thinking about an abstract concept with specific attention to the case being studied (Patton, 2015).

These features have been adapted specifically to sport programs (Côté et al., 2007). The eight setting features include (1) physical and psychological safety, (2) appropriate structure, (3) supportive relationships, (4) opportunities to belong, (5) positive social norms, (6) support for efficacy and mattering, (7) opportunities for skill-building, and (8) integration of family, school, and community efforts. These setting features were mentioned earlier in this chapter, but are expanded upon here for greater clarity utilizing additional literature in PYDS.

1. Physical and psychological safety: “Physical and psychological safety in youth sport settings refers to the existence of safe and healthy facilities and practices that encourage secure and respectful peer interactions” (Côté et al., 2007, p. 39). Côté et al. (2007) add that within this concept, youth sport research has revealed the importance of safe peer interactions, that can impact children’s physical self-worth and perceived competence in sport settings (Vazour et al., 2006; Horn, 2004).
2. Appropriate structure: “... the existence of clear and consistent expectations regarding rules and boundaries” (p. 39). In the sport context, this could be translated into clear rules and expectations, set practice plans, and supervision (Strachan et al., 2011). In addition, the intentional structuring of sport programs to support PYD has been found to score higher on PYD outcomes than programs with unintentional structure (Bean & Forneris, 2016).
3. Supportive relationships: “...strong support, positive communication, and connectedness” (p. 39). The research in PYDS places a heavy emphasis on the coach-player relationship, as it has been found that a coach can have an influence on players’ psychological, social, and physical growth (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007).

4. Opportunities to belong: "...meaningful inclusion, social engagement, and cultural competence in youth sport programs" (p. 40). A sense of belonging as well as friendships can help support youth's motivation for continued sport participation (Allen, 2003).
5. Positive social norms: "...development of values and morals rather than antisocial and reckless behaviors" (p. 40). There is research that suggests the association of negative social norms with sport participation (Lemyre et al., 2002), but programs also have the potential to support positive values such as: sportsmanship, responsibility, empathy, and self-control (Côté, 2002).
6. Support of efficacy and mattering: "...empowering youth and supporting their autonomy as they work to build their community" (p. 40). This feature highlights the importance of coaches developing autonomous athletes, which can help aid youths' intrinsic motivation (Mallett, 2005; Vallerand & Rousseau, 2000).
7. Opportunities for skill building: "...the importance of learning experiences" (p. 40). This feature takes on several different forms within a sport context. Research has supported the use of sport programs for physical skill building, life skill building, as well as psychosocial learning (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007).
8. Integration of family, school, and community efforts: "...the melding of the young person's environments to increase communication and lessen conflicts and dissonance" (p. 41). In youth sports this integration of multiple ecologies can help support 'thriving' in youth athletes (Benson et al., 2006).

These eight program setting features have been adopted in the model, and serve as initial concepts to be explored in the sport program. Côté et al. (2007) have helped to move the field along by translating what these setting features can look like in sport programs, but these concepts still remain highly abstract for research purposes.

The model then moves from the sport program setting features, by way of implicit or explicit transfer, to "PYDS outcomes." "Transfer activities" were defined as, "...activities that were perceived to promote the transfer of personal and social skills learned in sport to other life situations" (Holt et al., 2017). Implicit transfer

refers to the ways in which coaches, and sport participation, reinforce the application of life skills learned in sport to non-sport environments, without the use of explicit pedagogical techniques (Holt et al., 2017). There is also explicit transfer, which refers to the use of pedagogical strategies to teach life skills and an overt emphasis on transfer in non-sport environments.

The PYDS outcomes were highlighted in Holt's et al. (2017) PYDS model, and additional outcomes were introduced based upon an extended review of the literature. The outcomes include: personal, social, physical, system-wide, and community. These concepts, grounded in the literature, provide an initial guide for further exploration and validation.

The ecological model in this study is used as an organizing agent for the diverse literature needed for the topic which helps to construct an explanation of the phenomenon, and is critical in supporting an overall systems perspective in the study. Furthermore, the ecological model helps to underscore the importance of the setting on the growth and development of young people and depicts how these settings (microsystems) are influenced and governed by a variety of factors at multiple levels. This recognition of the importance of the microsystem supported adaptations to the study, as data collection was considerably impacted by the Covid-19 global pandemic. Thus, revisions were made to the conceptual framework to support a deeper dive into the microsystem and understand more about its nature, and how it functions. This revision required utilizing an additional framework to guide this more nuanced line of inquiry.

## **2.7 Revised Conceptual Framework**

As outlined in previous sections, there is an extensive literature base on the broad benefits of sport programming for young people, but the realization of such benefits is reliant on the implementation of effective programs. Durlak & DuPre (2008) describe, “Social scientists recognize that developing effective interventions is only the first step toward improving the health and well-being of populations. Transferring effective programs into real world settings and maintaining them is a complicated, long-term process that requires dealing effectively with the successive, complex phases of program diffusion” (p. 327). Program diffusion is made up of multiple phases including (1) how well information about a program’s existence and value is disseminated to communities (dissemination); (2) whether a local organization or group decided to try the new program (adoption); (3) how well the program is conducted or the processes of integrating the intervention with the organization’s setting (implementation); and (4) whether the program is maintained over time (sustainability) (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Casser et al., 2019).

Grounded in the study’s overall pragmatic approach, with an emphasis on building knowledge within a real-world setting and generating useful evidence for practitioners as well as contributing to the existing literature, the third phase of diffusion (implementation) will be the focus for further inquiry. For purposes of this study, implementation is defined as, “...the processes involved in integrating interventions or policy within organizations and settings” (Klein & Sorra, 1996). In order to align with the study’s system’s perspective, an implementation framework that explores multiple ecological levels was critical.

Through a systematic review of factors affecting the implementation process of youth development and health promotion programs, Durlak & DuPre (2008)

constructed an ecological framework for effective implementation (Figure 7). The authors justified the use of a multilevel ecological perspective since “...implementation is a complex developmental process that can be affected by a multiple array of interacting ecological factors present at the individual, organizational and community level” (p. 340). From the review they identified 23 contextual factors which they organized into five categories: (1) community level factors, (2) provider characteristics, (3) characteristics of the innovation, (4) factors relevant to the Prevention Delivery System: Organizational Capacity, and (5) factors related to the Prevention Support System (p. 337-338). See Appendix A for further description of the 23 contextual factors.

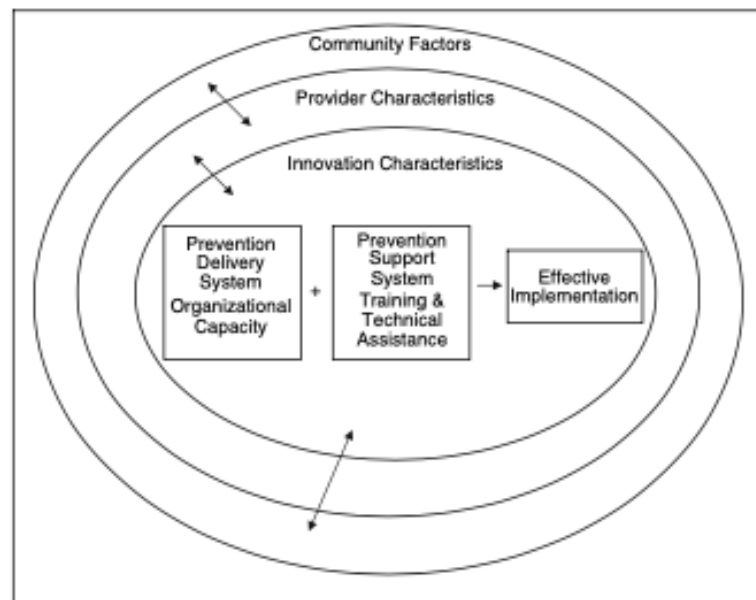


Figure 7. Framework for Effective Implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008)

Utilizing an ecological framework is critical for this study in order to explore the various factors that support or challenge implementation of sport programming in



facilities. These factors can range from the organization's own capacity to implement programming to the influence of community-level factors such as politics. Considering the sociopolitical environment is especially important since the sport programs exist within a juvenile facility, which have historically been influenced by punitive ideologies and policies towards juvenile rehabilitation.

Therefore, a revised conceptual framework (Figure 8), which incorporated the Durlak & DuPre (2008) Framework into the previous conceptual framework (i.e., Figure 6), was adopted to support the study's modification. Not all of the concepts included in the conceptual framework will be studied, due to constraints with resources, but provide a holistic picture of the phenomenon and a systems lens which is pivotal for the study. The specific area of focus for this study will be described in detail in the methodology section.

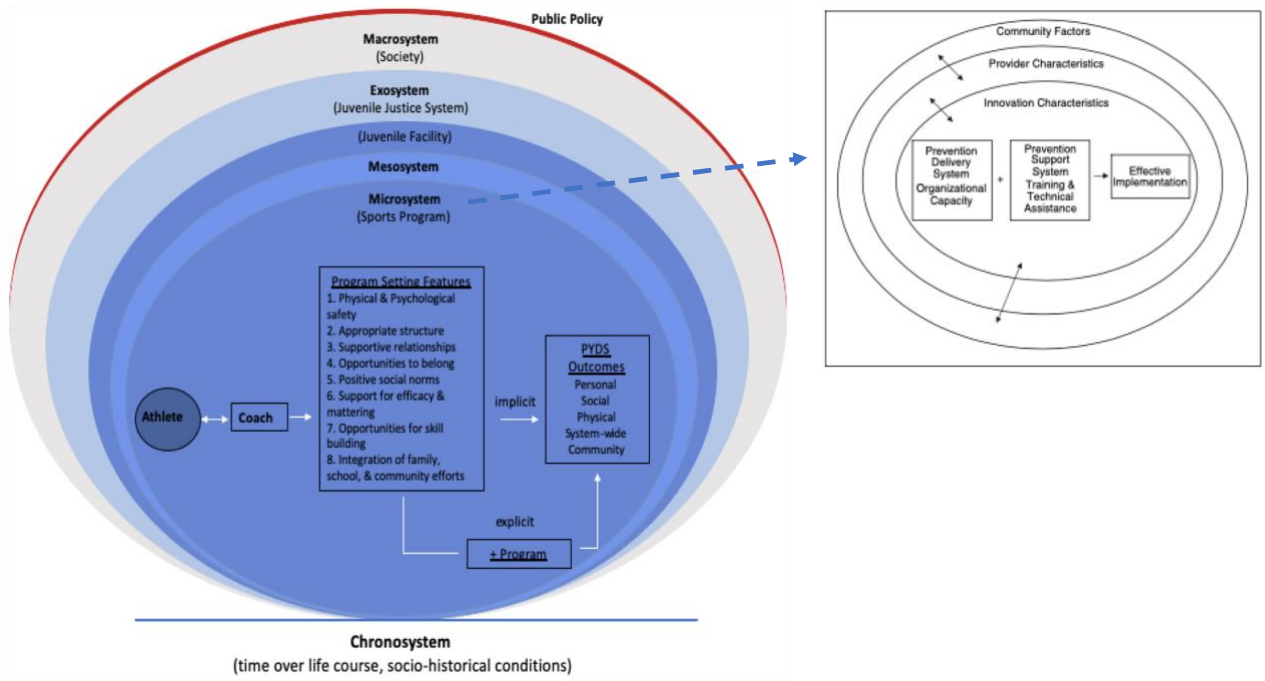


Figure 8. Revised Conceptual Framework

## **Chapter 3**

### **SURVEY**

#### **3.1 Part I Research Questions and Methodology**

In order to address the lack of systematic understanding of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities, and subsequently speak to several gaps identified in the literature, this study was conceived to provide a baseline understanding of the landscape (frequency, type, purpose) of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities across the country. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What is the current landscape of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States?
  - a. What is the frequency of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities?
  - b. What types of sport programs exist in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities?
  - c. What is the identified purpose of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities?

#### **3.2 Study Approach**

To answer these research questions, a survey was used to map and categorize sport programs in facilities across the country. This quantitative data was subsequently

used to adapt a second research question to further explore a key finding from the first set of research questions. These types of research questions are best explored through an explanatory mixed methods design which begins with quantitative research that is analyzed and then expanded upon in more depth through qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2014).

Mixed methods designs are underpinned by a pragmatic approach, which emphasizes the research problem and supports employing all available approaches to build knowledge to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic approach is primarily concerned with solutions to problems and pulls from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when conducting research (Creswell, 2014). The historical roots of pragmatism are born out of the work of Peirce (1984) and James (1907), and later John Dewey and Jane Addams who applied the approach to issues of social improvement (Giacobbi et al., 2005; Legg & Hookway, 2019).

This approach adopts a philosophy of knowledge which asserts that "...truth is verified and confirmed by testing ideas and theories in practice" (Patton, 2015, p 152). In sport research, Giacobbi et al. (2005) recognize that an allegiance to orthodox scientific methods, and an inattention to the unique sport context, has led to divergent fields in applied and academic research (Giacobbi et al., 2005; Martens, 1979). Pragmatism's lack of loyalty to one method, supports researchers in applying multiple methods to enhance the strengths and minimize the limitations of any one philosophy. This approach was critical for the study as it emphasized exploration of the sport program in the real-world setting, stressed utilizing the most effective inquiry tools to answer the research questions, sought practical and useful knowledge to understand implementation of sport programs in secure facilities, built knowledge on the

developing theory of PYDS, and addressed critical issue of programming in facilities (Patton, 2015).

Mixed methods research has been defined as, "...an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 4). Defining features of mixed methods studies include employing both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, as well as mixing, blending or embedding both qualitative and quantitative data, in which the two forms of data are integrated in an intentional manner (Creswell, 2014). A mixed methods approach can enhance a study by using multiple forms of data and analysis techniques to answer research questions, and minimize the inherent limitations in both qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Patton, 2015).

Survey research was conducted in first part of the study, and has been defined as, "...a systematic method for gathering information from entities for the purposes of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members" (Groves et al., 2009). This quantitative method, grounded in a postpositivist approach, supports the systematic collection of large amounts of uniformed data, which was especially important for this study due to the absence of standardized data on sport programs in facilities nationally.

Grounded in the conceptual framework, displayed in Figure 9, Ecological Systems Theory, guided the study's focus on sport programs within the larger social, cultural and political context of juvenile justice in the United States. The national survey of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities speaks to the broader

environment of sport in facilities across the country (exosystem), and within individual juvenile facilities (microsystem).

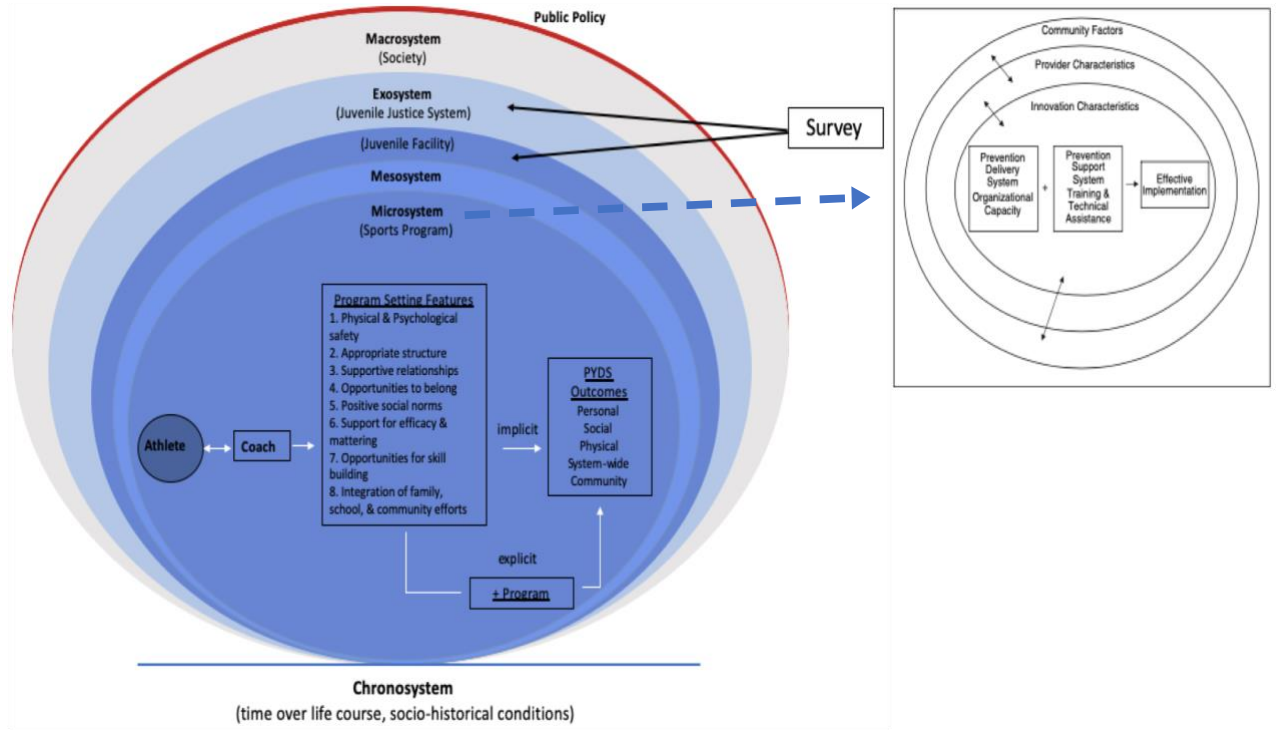


Figure 9. Conceptual Framework and Survey Method

### 3.3 IRB Approval

The national survey of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities was reviewed and approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study was granted exempt status: identification number 1509659-2, see Appendix I.

### **3.4 Population**

The multiphase study began with a survey of the population of administrators, superintendents, facility directors, and wardens of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in all 50 states. Based on the Juvenile Residential Facility Census Databook (JRFCD) (2018) there were 189 of these types of facilities, defined in the glossary of the Databook as: "...a specialized type of facility that provides strict confinement for its residents, including training schools, reformatories, and juvenile correctional facilities" (JRFCS, 2016). Additional steps were taken to clarify the survey population, in order to increase the accuracy of the population and minimize limitations of the survey.

In order to clarify and increase the accuracy of the survey population, the average length of commitment of youth held in the facility and facility security level were operationalized. "Long-term" was operationalized as an average length of stay of 4 months or more. Currently, there is not a standardized definition of "long-term," but Puzanchera & Hockenberry (2019) found that half of committed youth remained after 16 weeks. In addition to average length of commitment, the security-level of the facility was further defined as hardware secure or staff secure, and unsecure facilities were not included.

In order to decrease coverage error, an additional check of website data and follow-up phone calls were used to confirm data from the JRFCD, as the census relies on facility self-classification which can vary between states and their conceptualization of the facility. Through this process, it was determined that there were 211 long-term, secure juvenile facilities operating in the United States at the time of survey distribution. Two questions included in the survey, the average length of

stay of juveniles and security level of facilities, were used as an additional filter to increase the accuracy of the survey sample.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Utilizing Qualtrics the survey, displayed in Appendix B, was designed in partnership with the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA), and loosely modeled after an existing survey on sport in prison establishments in the United Kingdom which was adapted for the juvenile justice and youth sport environment of the United States (Meek, n.d.). The survey was piloted with an administrator of a long-term, secure juvenile correctional facility.

The survey was used to collect data on frequency of sport programs, type of sport programs, and the identified purpose of the sport programs in facilities. The concept of “sport” has several various definitions, but for this study, it was conceptualized as a social and competitive activity that requires both physical skill and exertion and occurs within an institution (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009). Sport programs differ from physical education and/or unstructured recreation due to their competitive nature and their regulated manner within an institution. The research questions for this study were exclusively focused on sport as defined by Coakley and Donnelly (2009), and utilized the term “sport programs” to encompass multiple sport teams within a facility.

The survey was electronically distributed to CJJA listserv by their Executive Director. CJJA is a national non-profit organization that represents youth correctional Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), and at the time of the survey distribution, 47 states held membership in CJJA. Survey requests were sent to the CEOs of state juvenile divisions for the three states that do not hold membership in CJJA. Since the survey



population of interest was long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities, I requested that the CEOs forward the electronic survey link to one administrator, facility director, superintendent, and/or warden (including state-operated or contract providers) at each of the post-adjudicated, long-term secure juvenile facilities in their state. In the case of large states which operate both state and county-level facilities, Chief Probation Officers were contacted with the request to forward the electronic survey. I was included on the recruitment email, which provided the opportunity for follow-up reminders directly to those that were recruited to complete the survey.

### **3.6 Analysis**

After collecting survey data, data cleaning techniques were used to ensure data quality and address duplication, recruitment design challenges, measurement issues, and confidentiality (Chu et al., 2016). In addressing duplication, for facilities in which multiple respondents provided data, the response that was provided by a person with more intimate knowledge of and clinical experience with the sport program (based on title/position) was included and the other response was thrown out, but survey responses were compared to ensure accuracy of responses.

In addressing recruitment design issues, there were a limited number of surveys in which the CEO of the state's juvenile division completed the survey for multiple facilities within the state, instead of forwarding the survey to facility administrators, superintendents, facility directors, or wardens for each facility. In the case where a CEO completed one survey for multiple facilities, I followed up with the CEO to confirm that the programming was identical across state facilities. If so, these responses were duplicated to account for the number of facilities for which the CEO had responded. If the CEO could not confirm that programming was identical across

facilities, then these facilities were not included in the analysis for research questions 2b and 2c which focused directly on sport programming.

Lastly, data were inputted manually when survey respondents were either confused by a question or did not select a response, but provided additional data that allowed the researcher to determine which response was accurate. For instance, a number of survey respondents were confused by the term “hardware,” but replied on the survey that they have “locked doors” which would classify them as “hardware.” In addition, respondents’ title/position were recoded and classified under the given titles in the survey.

In order to maintain confidentiality of respondents and their facilities, the location of facilities was aggregated from individual state to region in accordance with the U.S. Census Bureau’s (n.d.) regional classifications. This action was taken to protect the confidentiality of facilities, especially for states with just one long-term, secure juvenile correctional facility.

The analysis was done using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis of survey data consisted of descriptive statistics to (1) describe this phenomenon nationally, (2) answer the first set of research questions, (3) revise the second research question, and (4) understand the range of programs across the sampling frame in order to create purposeful sampling criteria for the second research question. Initially, descriptive statistics provided an overview of the frequency of facilities with sport programs and without, types of sport programs, and basic characteristics of programs. Data were then collated based on the grouping variable: facility has a sport program or facility does not have a sport program. Among those with a sport program, additional analyses were conducted to ascertain the purpose of

programs. Open-ended responses included in the survey were summarized by relevant themes.

## **Chapter 4**

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

The survey was intended to answer the first set of research questions: (1) What is the current landscape of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States? (1a) What is the frequency of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities? (1b) What types of sport programs exist in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities? and (1c) What is the identified purpose of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities? The chapter will provide an overview of the population demographics for responding facilities, an analysis of survey responses to answer the research questions, including a discussion on the study's survey results, as well as the limitations of the survey.

#### **4.1 Population**

There were 77 survey responses representing 98 facilities in the target population that met the study's classification for "long-term, secure juvenile correctional facility." The 98 facilities were located in 33 states across the U.S. An additional 40 survey responses were excluded from analysis because they did not meet the criteria for inclusion. Overall, there was a 46% response rate.

Table 1 identifies the characteristics of facilities in the sample including: regional location of the facility, facility self-classification, security classification, number of juveniles in the facility, gender of juveniles served at the facility, and average length of stay. The largest percentage of responses were from facilities located

in the South (42.9%), and in descending order, facilities located in the West (34.7%), Northeast (14.3%), and Midwest (8.2%). The largest percentage of respondents who took the survey held the title of “Administrator” (48%), which included various leadership positions: Executive Director, Commissioner, Bureau Chief, Deputy Administrator, Chief of Secure Programs, Deputy Director of Residential Services, and Director of Resident Care & Clinical Services. The second largest percentage were Facility Directors (21.4%) which also included Facility Administrators, and then Superintendents (19%), Athletic/Recreation Department Staff (7.1%), and “Other” (4.1%). Seventy point four percent of respondents classified their facility as “long-term secure,” but as previously described in the methodology section, all of the facilities included in the analysis met the study’s classification for long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities. Nineteen percent of facilities selected multiple facility classifications including: detention center, long-term secure juvenile facility and residential treatment center, long-term secure facility. Since their security level and length of stay were consistent with the study’s definition of long-term secure facility, these facilities were included in the study population. Lastly, 48% of facilities in the study’s population served boys, 5.1% served girls, and 45.9% served both.

Table 1. Facility Characteristics

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>Region</i>		
South	42	42.9%
West	34	34.7%
Northeast	14	14.3%
Midwest	8	8.2%
<i>Facility Self-Classification</i>		
Long-term secure facility	69	70.4%

Residential Treatment Center	22	22.4%
Detention Center	6	6.1%
Ranch/Wilderness Camp	1	1%
<i>Security Classification</i>		
Hardware	57	58.1%
Staff Secure	41	41.8%
<i>Number of Juveniles in Facility</i>		
20 or less	18	18.4%
21-40	24	24.5%
41-60	11	11.2%
61-80	16	16.3%
81-100	5	5.1%
Over 100	24	24.5%
<i>Gender of Juveniles Served at Facility</i>		
Boys	48	49%
Girls	5	5.1%
Both	45	45.9%
<i>Average Length of Stay</i>		
4-6 months	19	19.4%
6 months or more	79	80.6%

## 4.2 Results

To address the lack of systematic understanding of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States, the national survey explored the current landscape of sport programming in these secure settings. The “landscape” included frequency, type, and purpose of the programming.

1. What is the current landscape of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities in the United States?

#### 4.2.1 Frequency of Sport Programs

1a. What is the frequency of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities?

As displayed in Figure 10 below, 55.1% of facilities reported operating a sport program and 44.9% were not.

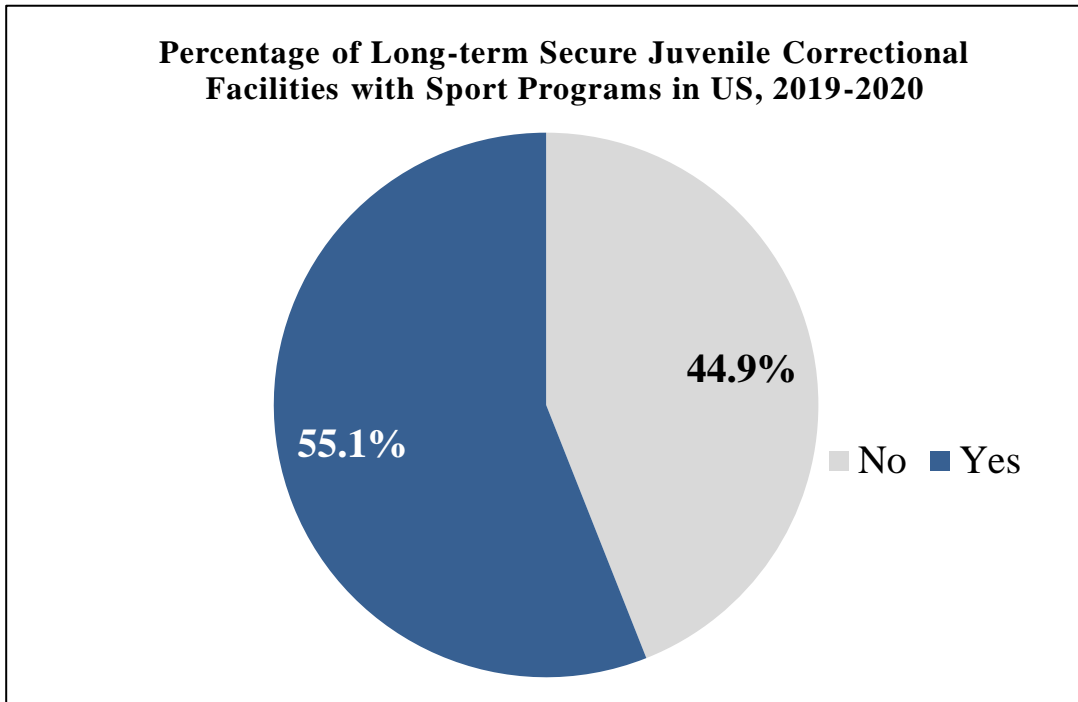


Figure 10. Percentage of Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities with Sport Programs in US, 2019-2020 (n=98)

Figure 11 and 12 below, show the percentage of facilities who offer sport programming by gender served at the facility. Among facilities serving boys, 55% of facilities offered a sport programs, compared to 52% of facilities serving girls.

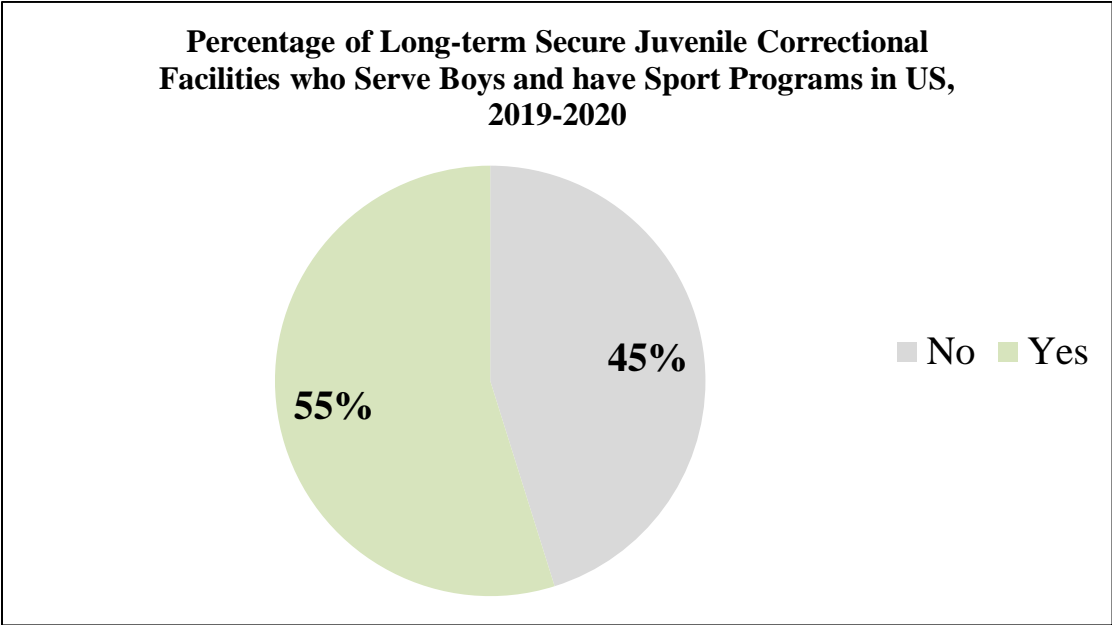


Figure 11. Percentage of Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities who Serve Boys and have Sport Programs in US, 2019-2020 (n=93)

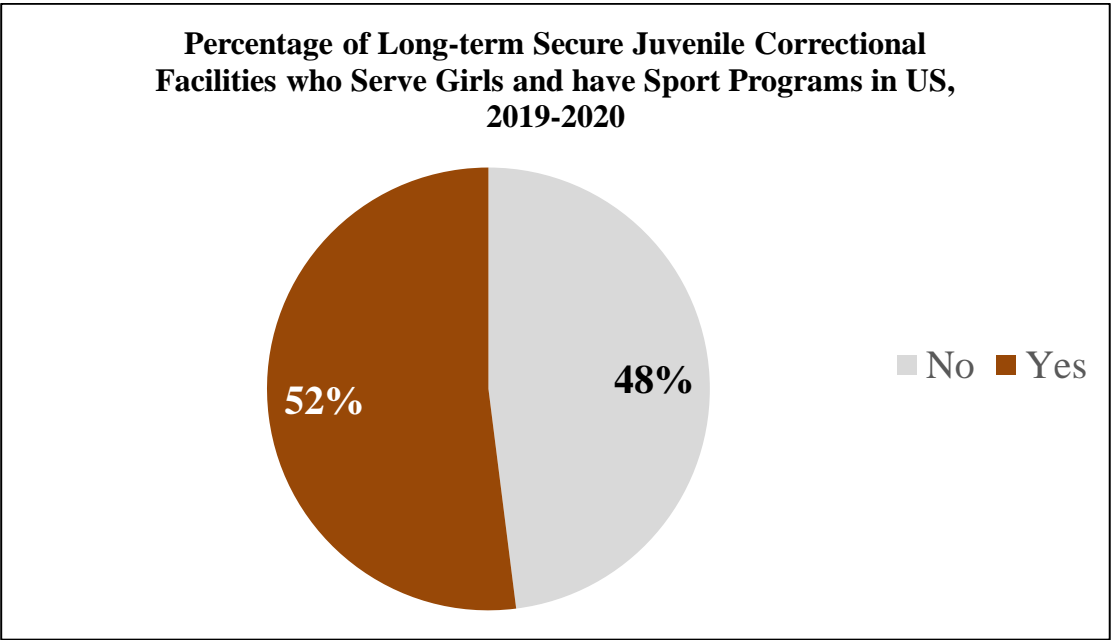


Figure 12. Percentage of Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities who Serve Girls and have Sport Programs in US, 2019-2020 (n=50)



#### **4.2.2 Types of Sport Programs**

1b. What types of sport programs exist in juvenile correctional facilities?

Of facilities who reported operating programming, 21 different sport programs were identified to be in operation. Figure 13 represents the various sport programs and their frequency across facilities. Programs most frequently reported were basketball, football, baseball/softball, volleyball, and soccer. Respondents provided additional sport programs in the open-ended responses which included Native Youth Olympics, pickleball, and kickball.

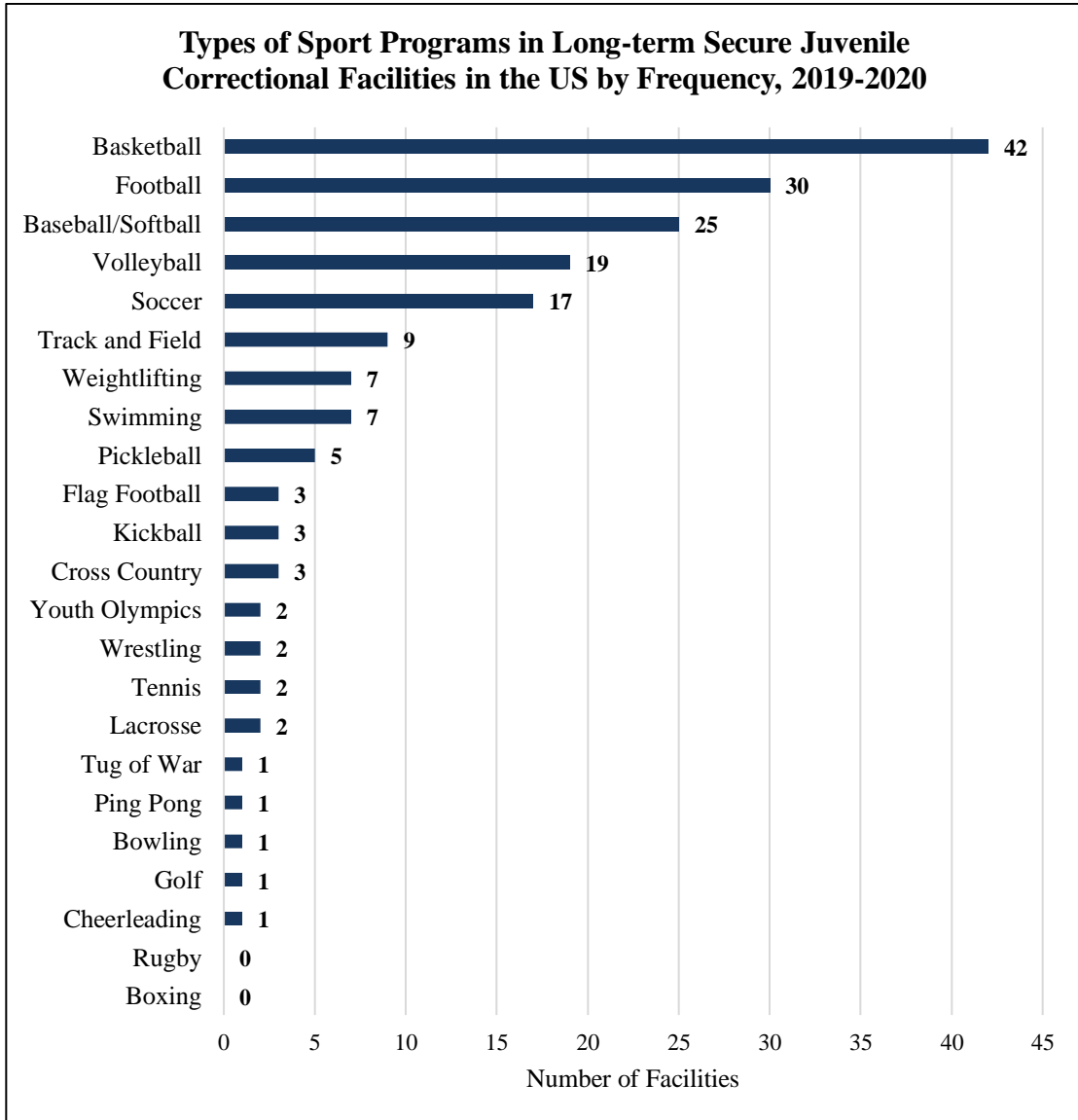


Figure 13. Types of Sport Programs in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US by Frequency, 2019-2020 (n=45)

Figure 14 below shows the types of sport programs that were offered for boys among facilities operating programming. The most frequently reported among facilities serving boys were basketball, football, baseball/softball, soccer, and volleyball. There were two sport programs that were not identified as being offered at any of the facilities serving boys, these included: rugby and boxing.

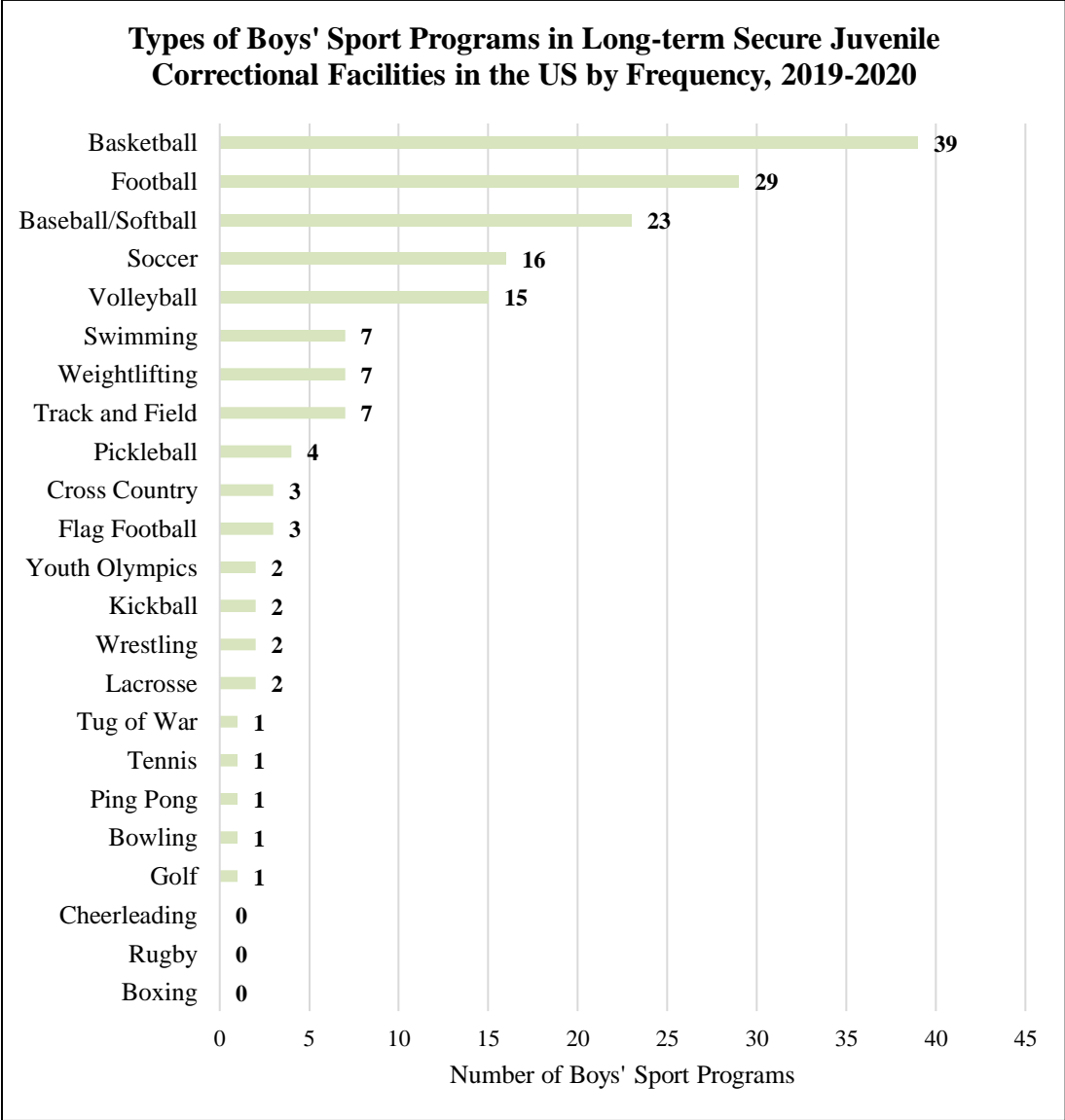


Figure 14. Types of Boys' Sport Programs in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US by Frequency, 2019-2020 (n=42)

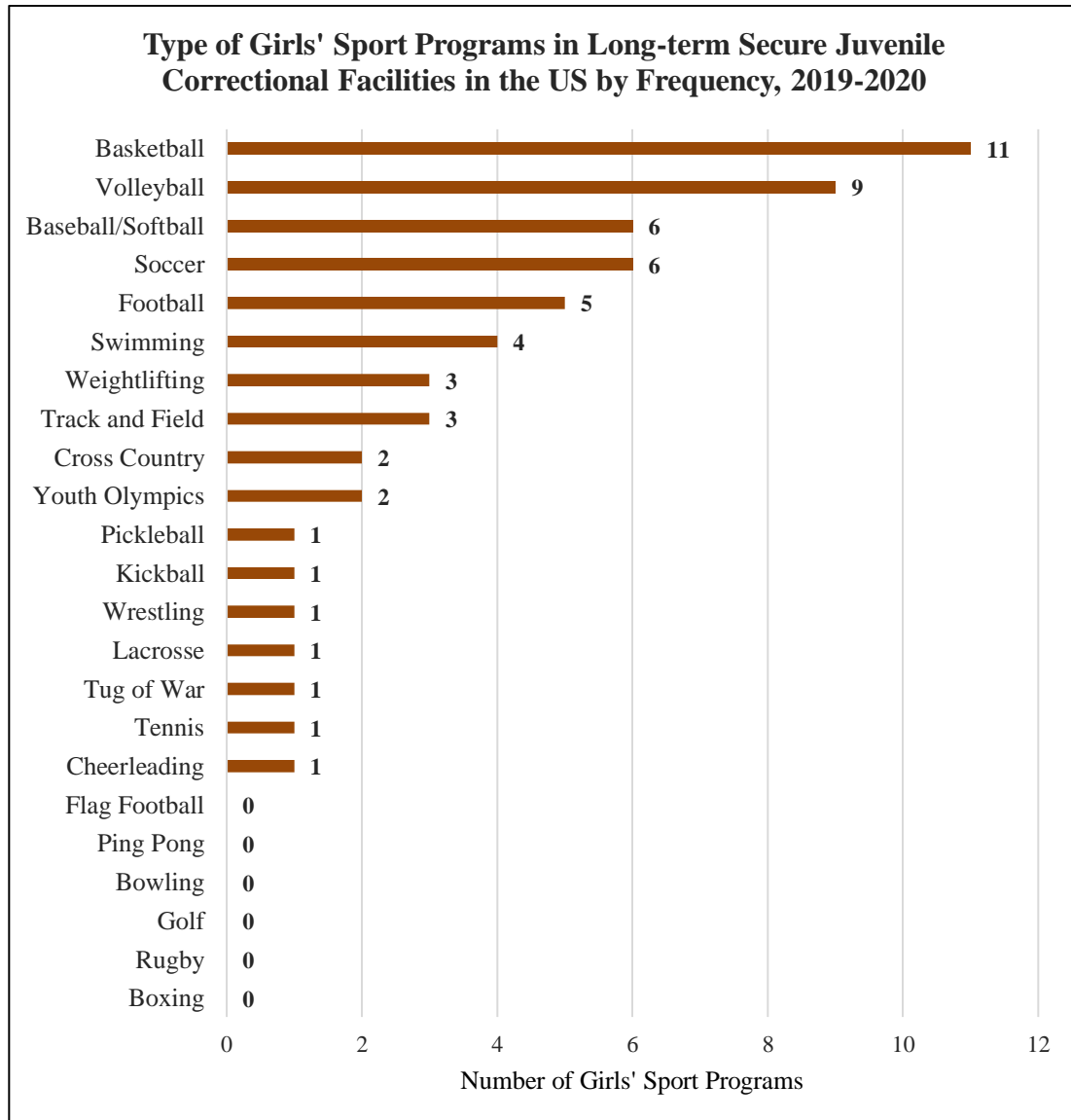


Figure 15. Type of Girls' Sport Programs in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US by Frequency, 2019-2020 (n= 26)

Figure 15 displays the type of sport programs offered for girls among facilities operating programming. The most frequently reported included basketball, volleyball, baseball/softball, and soccer. There were six types of sport programs that were not identified as being offered at any of the facilities serving girls, these included: flag football, ping pong, bowling, golf, rugby, and boxing.

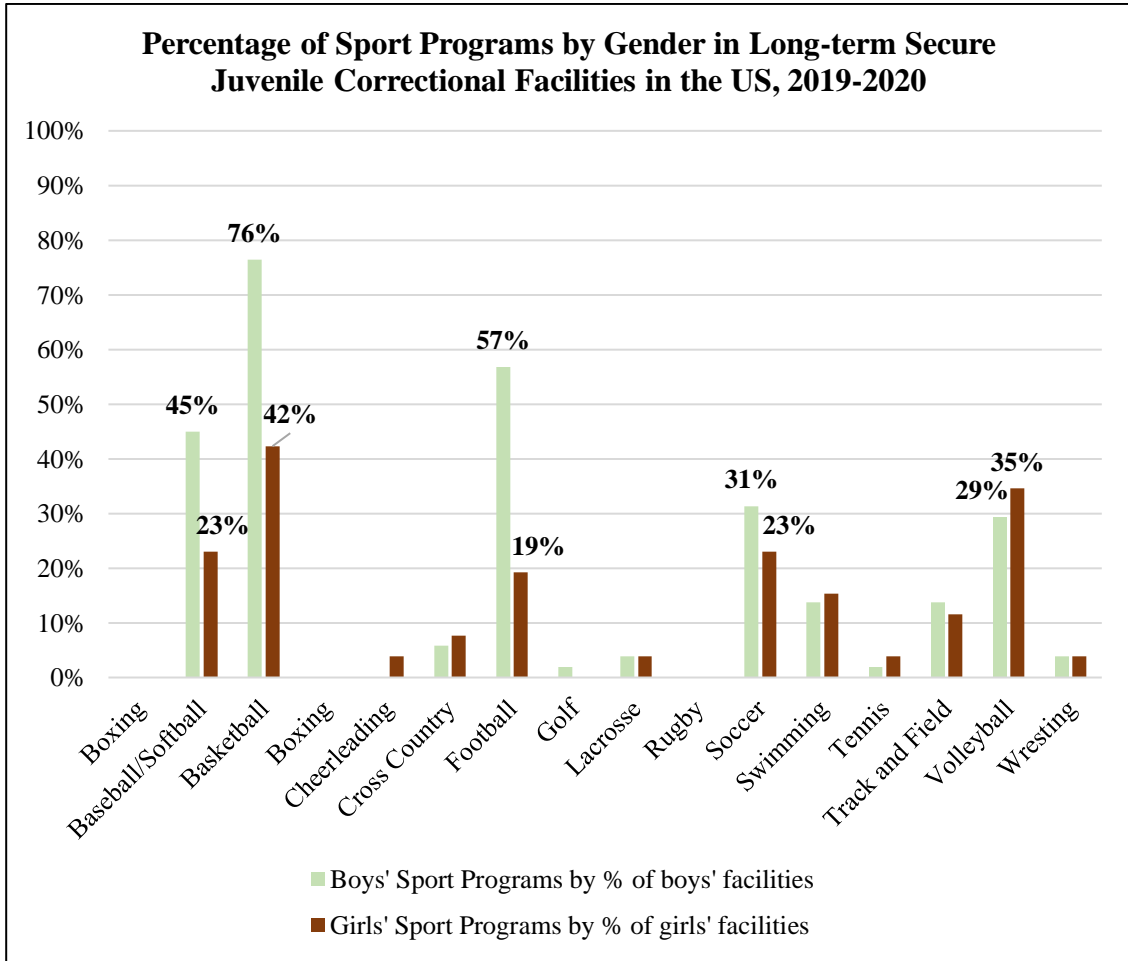


Figure 16. Percentage of Sport Programs by Gender in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US, 2019-2020 (n=45)

Figure 16 displays the percentage of sport program types in facilities offering programs by gender. Of facilities that had programs, 76% of facilities serving boys offered a basketball program compared to 42% of facilities serving girls; 57% of facilities serving boys offered a football program compared to 19% of facilities serving girls; 45% of facilities serving boys offered baseball/softball compared to 23% of facilities serving girls. In contrast, 35% of facilities serving girls offered a volleyball program compared to 29% of facilities serving boys.

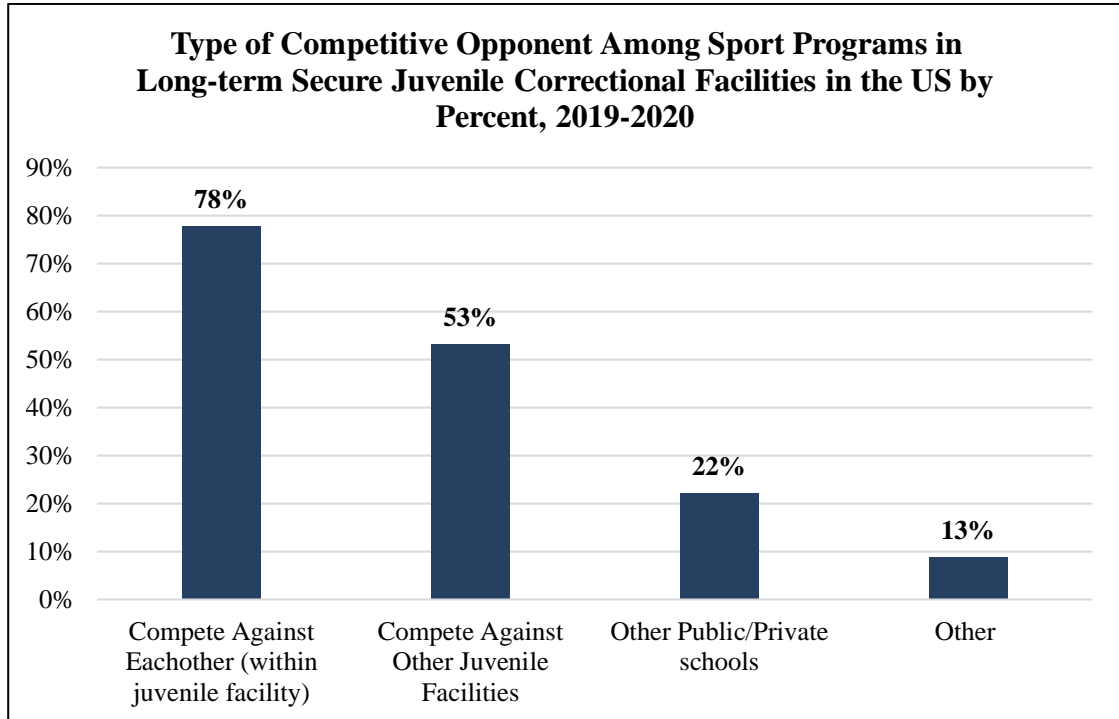


Figure 17. Type of Competitive Opponent Among Sport Programs in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US by Percent, 2019-2020 (n=45)

As displayed in Figure 17, sport programs in facilities most often competed against each other (within juvenile facility) (78%), but also held competitions against other juvenile facilities (53%) and other public/private schools (22%). Thirteen percent of facilities listed “other” which included competitions against a professional and collegiate sport team, a community team, staff at the facility, and a local police department.

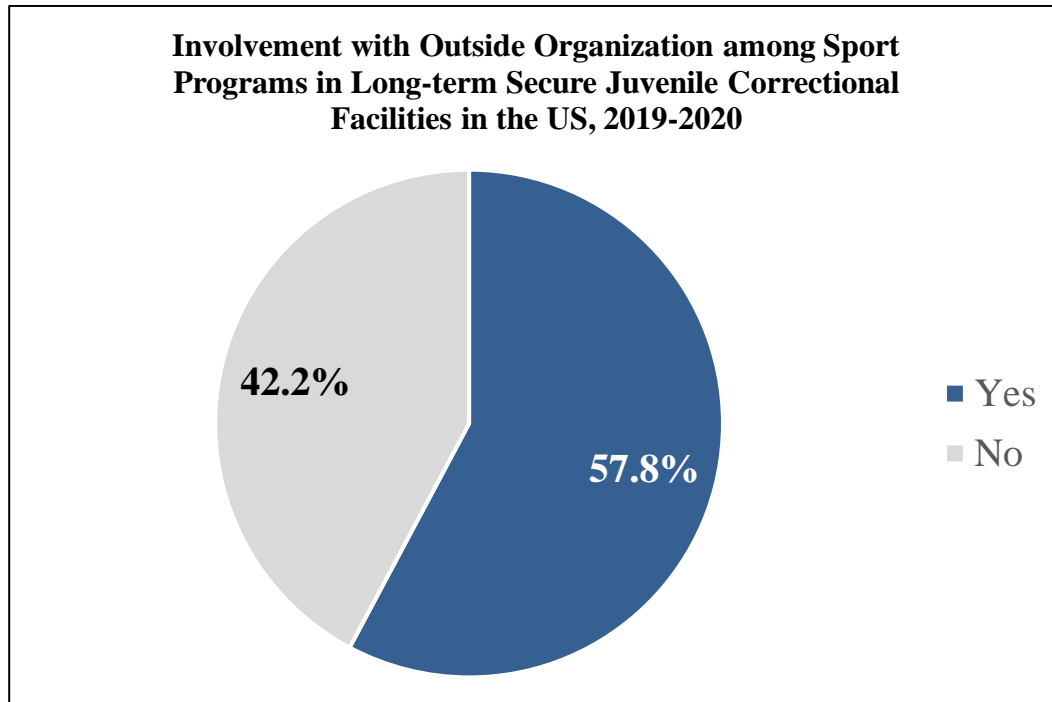


Figure 18. Involvement with Outside Organization among Sport Programs in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US, 2019-2020 (n=45)

As shown in Figure 18, 57.8% of facilities that had a program reported that their sport programs had involvement with an outside organization. Of the 26 facilities that had involvement with an outside organization, this involvement took on different forms including: partnerships with collegiate sport teams and/or athletic departments (n=6), professional teams and/or players (n=5), community-based organizations (e.g. Boys and Girls Club) (n=4), and a local police department to run sport-related camps, clinics, trainings, and competitions (n=1). Respondents also discussed participating in school, church, and/or community sport leagues (n=5) that brought teams in to play at the facility, had involvement of volunteer coaches, referees and fans; and speaking engagements of former professional athletes. In conjunction with sport-specific activities conducted with outside organizations, respondents also reported non-sport

components involved in the programming (e.g. mentoring, motivation and skill building, building character, and providing post-game meals).

**4.2.3 Identified Purpose of Sport Programs**

1c. What is the identified purpose of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities?

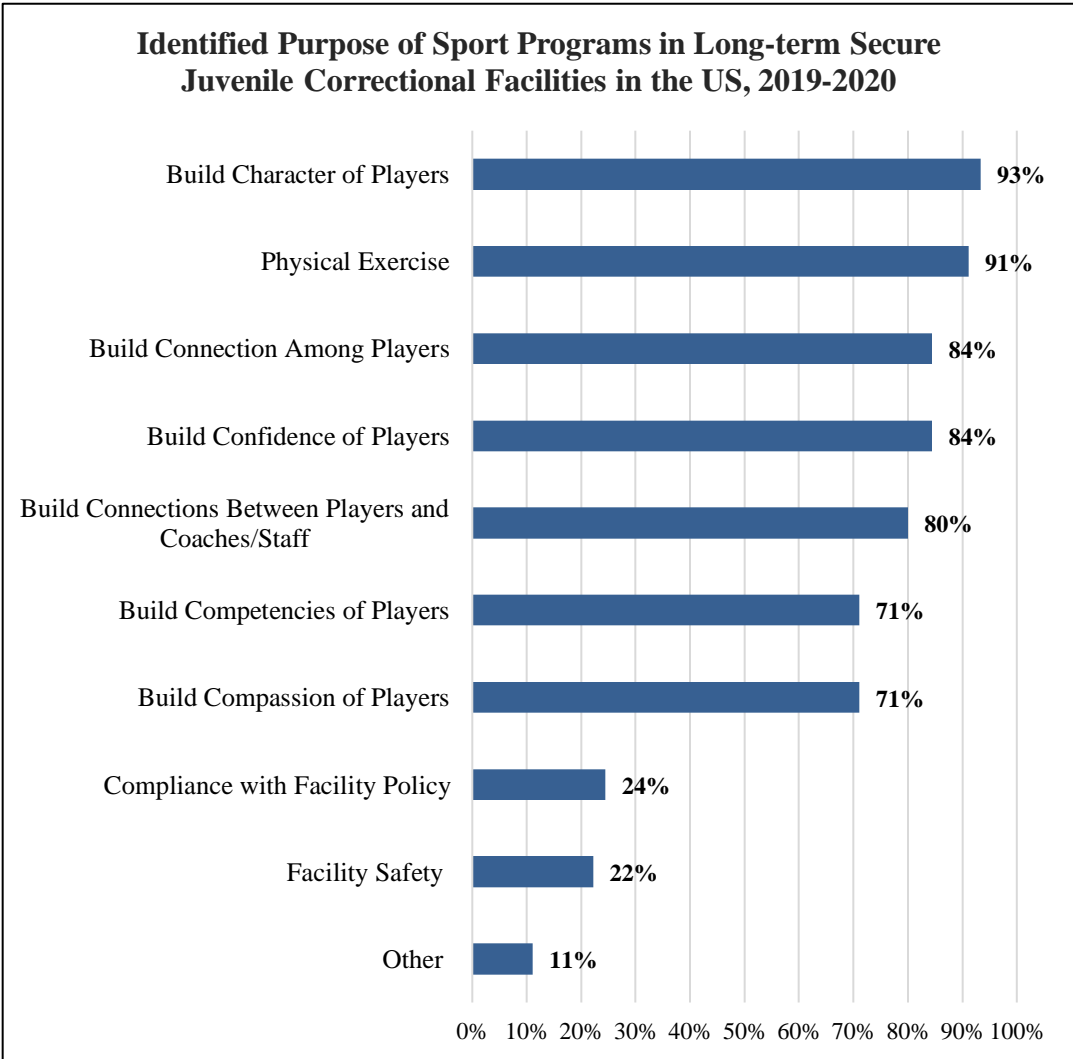


Figure 19. Identified Purpose of Sport Programs in Long-term Secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US, 2019-2020 (n=45)



Among facilities that operated a sport program, respondents identified the purpose of sport programs, displayed in Figure 19. The most frequently identified purposes included: build character of players (93%), physical exercise (91%), build connection among players (84%), build confidence of players (84%), build connections between players and coaches/staff (80%), build competencies of players (71%), and build compassion of players (71%), and to a lesser extent, compliance with facility policy (24%), and facility safety (22%). As noted in the “other” category, 11% of respondents listed additional purposes for the sport including: upholding a cultural tradition, rewarding positive behavior, teaching students pro-social activities and how to be a part of a team, introducing youth to new fun activities, and included as part of an existing framework to promote respect and safety and address bullying in facilities.

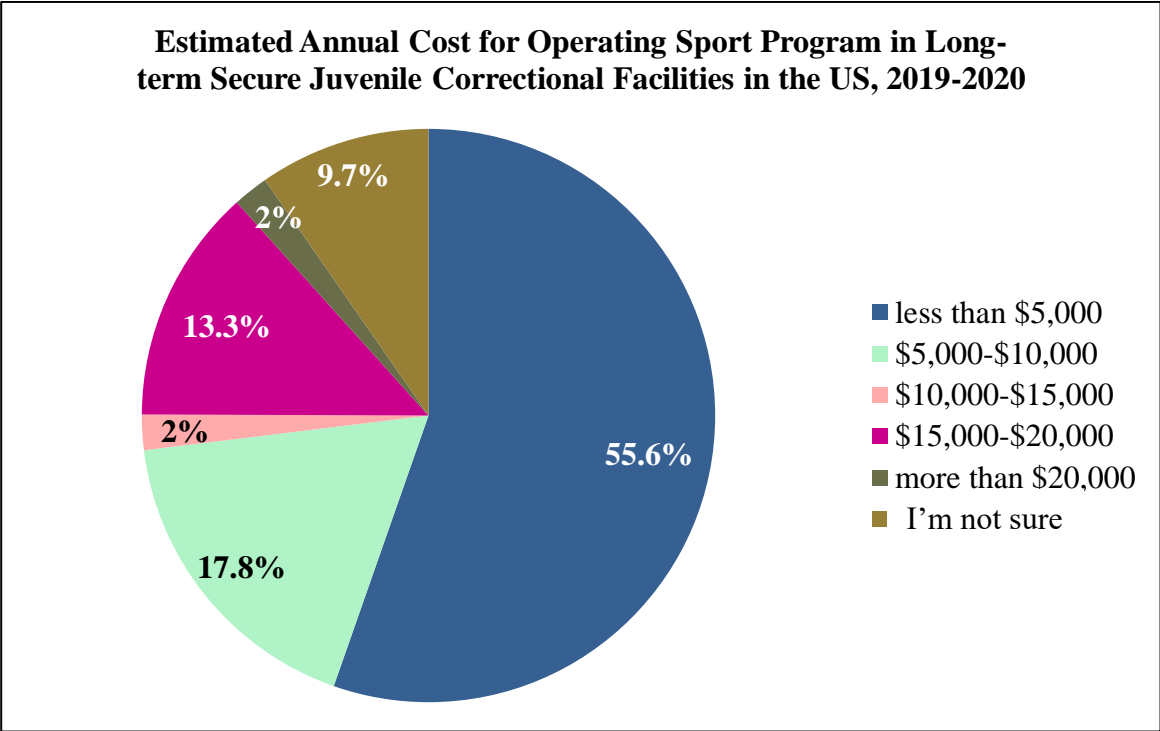


Figure 20. Estimated Annual Cost for Operating Sport Program in Long-term secure Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the US, 2019-2020 (n=45)

The percentages of the estimated annual cost for operating a sport program in a facility (excluding the salaries of recreational staff), displayed in Figure 20, shows 55.6% cost less than \$5,000 per year, 17.8% cost between \$5,000-\$10,000 per year, 2% cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per year, 13.3% cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year, 2% cost more than \$20,000 per year, and 9.7% of respondents were unsure of the program cost.

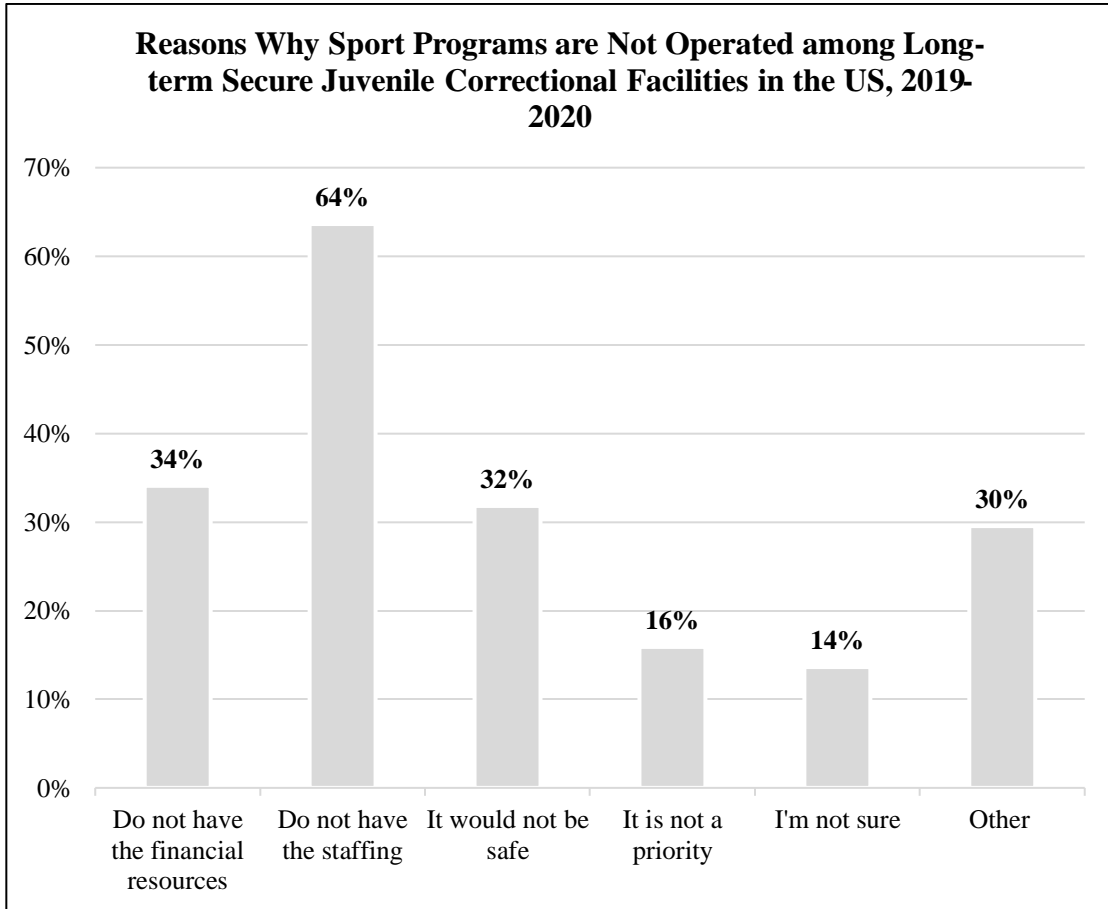


Figure 21. Reasons Why Sport Programs are Not Operated among Long-term Secure Juvenile Facilities in the US, 2019-2020 (n=44)

Figure 21 displays the reasons facilities reported they were not operating a sport program. “Do not have the staffing” was the reason most frequently identified by facilities (64%). Additional reasons included “Do not have the financial resources” (34%), “It would not be safe” (32%), “Other” (30%), “It is not a priority” (16%), and “I’m not sure” (14%). “Other” included reasons such as the population not being large enough to field a team, unsure of what activities would be safe and fun for residents, turnover in students and staff made it hard to compete, inability for students to leave the facility for competitions, bringing in students to play could create a security issue, not having the space/fields to play sports, and confidentiality. When asked if they

would be interested in starting a sport program, 62% of respondents replied “yes,” 11% replied “no,” and 27% replied “I’m not sure” as shown in Figure 22.

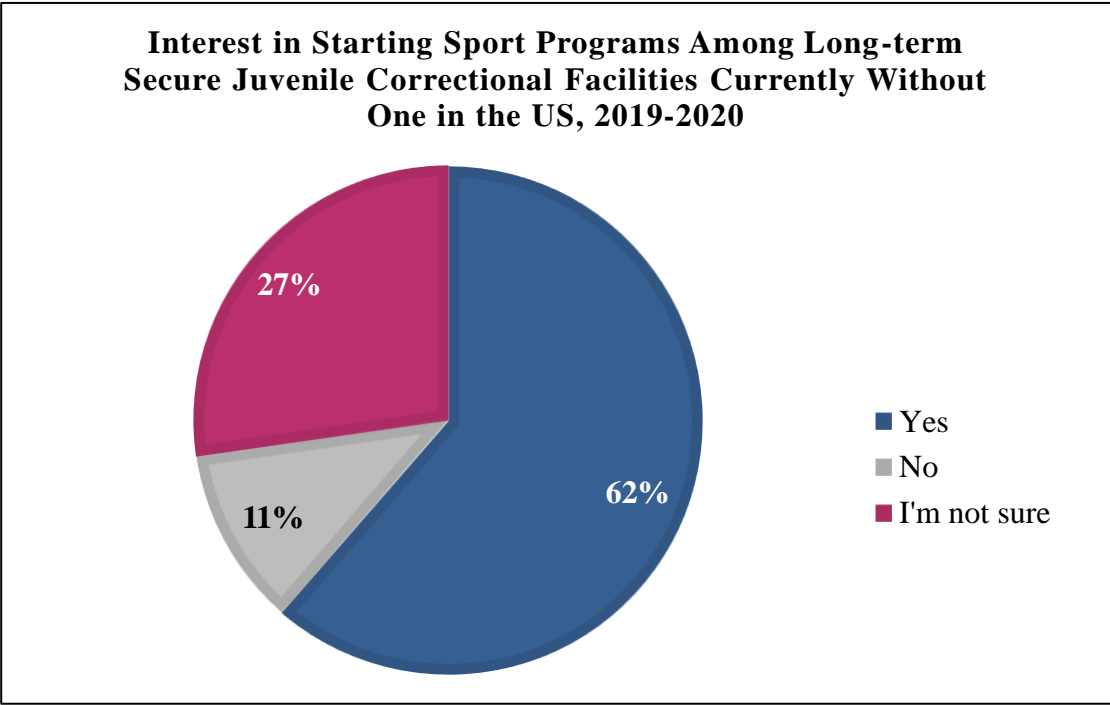


Figure 22. Interest in Starting Sport Programs among Long-term Secure Juvenile Facilities Currently Without One in the US, 2019-2020 (n=44)

**4.3 Limitations**

A limitation of the study came from the definition of the population. Currently, there is an absence of standardized-universal definitions for the varying types of juvenile facilities for which young people are housed. Further, there appears to be significant overlap in the characteristics of facilities, which makes it challenging to define and distinguish. For instance, despite the definitions of residential treatment centers (RCTs) and long-term secure juvenile correctional facilities, which emphasize treatment in RCTs and strict confinement in long-term secure facilities, Sickmund et

al. (2017) found that more than 70% of youth in RCTs are in locked facilities and Puzzanchera and Hockenberry (2018) found that long-term secure facilities are more likely to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment than RCTs. Thus, it was challenging to accurately identify the “type” of facility, as the characteristics of the facility may fit into multiple classifications. I attempted to address this limitation by having two “screener” questions related to the length of stay of juveniles and the security-level of the facility.

In an attempt to increase the response rate, the survey was sent to CEOs of juvenile departments who are members at CJJA, but depending on the size of the state and the number of facilities, it was intended and communicated that facility directors should complete the survey because of their specialized knowledge about the individual facility they oversee. This created a challenge as we had to rely on CEOs to send the survey to facility directors. This was also a challenge with states that contracted a high number of their incarcerated youth to private facilities. It was challenging to ensure that they received the survey, but follow-ups were made to try to address this issue.

## Chapter 5

### SURVEY DISCUSSION

This chapter, organized by major elements of the research questions (e.g., frequency of sport programs, type of programs, etc.), will highlight areas of new and substantial knowledge from the survey findings, integrate findings with what is known in the existing literature, explore findings through the lens of the study's conceptual framework, and discuss implications for the further integration of sport and public health within juvenile justice.

#### *Frequency of Sport Programs*

Among survey respondents 55.1%, or 54 facilities, reported operating sport programs compared to 44.9%, or 44 facilities, who were not. This understanding of the landscape of sport programs among the 98 long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities extends beyond what was currently known in the literature on sport programming in juvenile facilities in the United States. Considering that 'sport' is not federally mandated in juvenile facilities, and there is only a minimum requirement of 1 hour of daily recreation for youth in facilities, it appears promising that just over half of facilities are operating programs due to what we know in the literature on the broad health benefits of sport participation (Holt et al., 2017; Pharr & Lough, 2016; Pharr & Lough, 2017). This finding also highlights considerable variability in the landscape of sport programming in juvenile facilities across the United States, which is consistent with previous findings of variability of sport implementation in similar facilities around the world (Meek, 2014). This finding is important as it suggests inequitable

conditions in access to sport for youth across the juvenile justice system as just over half have access to sport and half without.

Grounding this finding within the study's conceptual framework, there appears to be variability across juvenile facilities (microsystems), and within the juvenile justice system (exosystem) in relation to sport programming. The ecological model, emphasizing the nested structures of its various environments, highlights that such variance in facilities' programming, ultimately equates to inequitable access to sport programming (microsystem) for youth in facilities. While the current study did not examine characteristics of sport programs such as quality or other elements that can be directly tied to positive youth outcomes, one can certainly conclude that to the extent that sports programs have the potential to improve outcomes, disparities in access exist.

These inequitable conditions in sport access, when considered within the lens of social determinants of health and health equity, are socially produced and thus "unfair and unjust" (Whitehead, 1992). Considering the previously outlined literature on sport participation's broad benefits to the health and development of young people (Holt et al., 2017; Pharr & Lough, 2016; Pharr & Lough, 2017), the high number of youth who are incarcerated in the United States (OJJDP, 2018) and their decreased levels of physical activity (Brusseau et al., 2016) and poorer general health (Massoglia, 2008), these findings have implications for public health and the further integration of sport in the public health agenda (Brusseau et al., 2018; Berg et al., 2015).

What cannot be discerned from the survey findings, but is important to understand, is how individual juvenile facilities and the larger juvenile justice system,

made up of their own policies, systems, and structures, influence the existence and nature of sport programming. Beginning to explore this policy area, León et al. (2020) found variance across states related to their written authorities for recreation in juvenile facilities, and only two states had “sport” explicitly included in the written authority. Research questions in this study were particularly concerned with sport, and data were analyzed at the facility-level not the state-level, so a direct comparison between my survey findings and their policy analysis cannot be made. Yet, combined, these two studies are the first of their kind which look at this issue nationally, and they begin to piece together a larger landscape of sport programming in facilities that appears to be continuously marked by variation and inequity.

With an understanding of the influence and interplay of public policies on various ecological environments, and that “conditions have been shaped by distributive public policies that allocate financial, human, and physical resources at global, national and local level” (Embrett & Randall, 2014), further research is needed to better understand why some facilities operate sport programs and others do not. Such research may include attention to if and how written authorities and the allocation of resources influence the existence and nature of sport programming in facilities. Research questions should explore the environment (e.g., ideals, norms, structures, written authorities) of facilities (microsystem) which operate sport programs, how they are able to implement sport in a restricted environment, the nature of those programs, and the implications for policy.

### *Types of Sport Programs*

Survey respondents described a range of sport programs operating in juvenile facilities. Among the most popular at facilities for boys and girls were basketball,



football, baseball/softball, volleyball, and soccer. These sport offerings mirror the most popular sports among youth in school and community settings in the United States (Sabo & Veliz, 2008), which could signify an influence of the larger society (macrosystem) on sport offerings. More specifically, this finding is important as it reveals that facilities are providing sport programs that are of interest to young people. This is not only a factor in participation in the facility, but could be a factor in youth continuing to play when they return home. This continuity of sport access could provide a bridge to reentry, which continues to be critical among justice-affiliated youth (Meek & Lewis, 2014; Calleja et al., 2016).

Another important finding from survey data was the diversity of sport types that were offered in facilities, including less common sport types. Such programs included: pickleball, lacrosse, tennis, bowling, golf, and ping pong. Although they were not as frequent in their existence across facilities, these programs display a potential opportunity to introduce youth to a “new” sport. This could play a role in helping youth to connect with new social networks (Camiré et al., 2009), increased availability to social capital (Broh, 2002), and potentially lead to the spread of the new sport in other communities. The influence and experience of young people’s interaction with more atypical sport types is an area that would need further research to determine its effects.

Analyzing the sport program offerings by gender, there were substantial disparities in sport offerings between facilities serving boys and those serving girls. As displayed in Figure 16, there were considerable disparities in offerings of basketball, baseball/softball, football, and soccer. Although young men have a much larger commitment rate in facilities, the lack of sport programming could lead to additional

vulnerabilities for young women in facilities. Future research questions should explore why this disparity exists, and what are the experiences of young women who participate in sport while in a juvenile facility.

In order to further understand the scope of sport programs, respondents were asked if the program had involvement with an outside organization. Among those with a sports program, 57.8% of respondents reported that the facility had involvement with an outside organization through the sport program. This involvement took on a variety of different forms including partnerships with collegiate sport teams, community-based organizations (i.e., Boys and Girls Club), and a local police department. This finding supports the potential conceptualization in the prior literature of the sport program as a vehicle or tool to reentry, as it could provide resources for continued support to young people when they return home (Meek & Lewis, 2014).

#### *Identified Purpose of Sport Programs*

Since PYD is not an inherent feature of youth sport participation, it was important to begin to uncover the purpose of sport programming in facilities from the perspective of practitioners. This is a way of signaling the rationale for programming as well as an introduction to what the nature of programming may look like. The majority of respondents selected constructs related to the 5C's of PYD, which were six out of the top seven purposes. The 5C's, represented by six constructs on the survey, are listed in the order they were most frequently reported: Build Character of Players, Build Connection Among Players, Build Confidence of Players, Build Connection between Players and Coaches/Staff, Build Competencies of Players, and Build Compassion of Players. This preliminary finding is important as PYD is gaining popularity as a programmatic framework in juvenile justice as the system shifts to a

treatment philosophy (Butts et al., 2018), and this may have an influence on the purpose and the ways in which sport is run in facilities. Since self-reporting may be limited, observational data are necessary to determine if the implementation of sport programs is in alignment with the setting features of PYD identified in the literature review.

Existing outside the originally planned research questions, but having importance for practical application, were findings related to annual cost and rationale or barriers to the absence of sport programming. Potentially playing a role in the feasibility of sport program implementation, survey findings outlined the estimated annual cost for sport programs in facilities. Approximately 73% of facilities reported an annual cost of less than \$10,000. Although there may have been variation in size of facility or other characteristics which could influence the budget, which were out of the scope of this study, this finding reveals a moderate cost of sport programming. Considering the expansive literature base on the broad health and development benefits potential in sport participation, it appears that sport programming is a relatively budget friendly expenditure for facilities.

Respondents who reported their facility did not operate a sport program, elaborated as to the reasons why and their possible interest in starting a program. Among the most reported, 64% identified scarcity in staffing, 34% reported lacking the financial resources, and 32% felt it would not be safe. At the same time, 62% reported being interested in starting a sport program compared to 11% who were not interested. Further research is needed to reconcile the difference between facilities that offer sport and those who do not; and attempt to identify any variables, patterns or themes which could have implications for policy and practice.

## Chapter 6

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

#### 6.1 Part II Research Question and Methodology

Adapting to the unforeseen challenge of the Covid-19 global pandemic, a revised research question was developed to further explore a key survey finding which previously was not known or identified in the literature. Survey findings highlighted variation in sport program offerings across long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States. This finding revealed an inequity in access to sport for youth who are incarcerated based on the facility in which they are committed.

Considering the strong literature base of the broad health benefits of sport participation among youth (Holt et al., 2017; Pharr & Lough, 2016; Pharr & Lough, 2017), decreased levels of physical activity (Brusseau et al., 2016), and poorer general health (Massoglia, 2008) among youth who are incarcerated, this variation in sport programming, including absence of programming, signals a gap between research and practice. Rather, a possible disruption or disparity in the complex phases of diffusion or the process of dissemination, adoption, implementation, and sustainability of sport programs in non-traditional, secure settings appears to exist (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). In the existing literature, there continues to be a gap in the understanding of program diffusion among physical activity programs in real-world settings (Cassar et al., 2019).

Diffusion refers to the spread or transfer of innovative ideas/programs into real world settings (Rogers, 2003; Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This transfer is a complex process which has been identified as having multiple phases including: (1) how well

information about the importance of the program reaches practitioners, organizations, and/or communities (i.e., dissemination); (2) whether they decide to try the program (i.e., adoption); (3) how the program is conducted (i.e., implementation); and (4) if the program is maintained over time (i.e., sustainability) (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

As discussed in chapter 4, among facilities that reported not operating sport programs, 62% responded they were interested in operating sport programming, 27% were unsure, and only 11% were not interested. In order to be responsive to the practitioner community, and cognizant of resource restraints, I identified the process of implementation as the priority diffusion phase for exploration since a large majority of facilities already reported being interested in adopting this type of programming. Thus, a revised research question, guided by the conceptual framework, with both theoretical and practical implications was developed:

2. How are sport programs implemented in a sample of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States?

## **6.2 Study Approach**

As stated previously, a pragmatic approach was adopted for this study, and helped to revise the second research question. Pragmatism has a concern with ‘what works,’ asking questions of “how” and “what,” and solutions to problems (Creswell, 2014, p. 10). The pragmatic approach underpins the study’s mixed methods design, in which qualitative methods will be used to further explore and build upon the knowledge generated from the national survey. This approach highlighted the need to further understand, in-depth and detail, how sport programs are implemented in a real-world setting and what supports and barriers exist.

Guided by the study’s conceptual framework, see Figure 23 below, the research question explored how sport programs (microsystem) have been implemented in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities (microsystem). The interrelationship between the two microsystems, previously identified as the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), will be the focus of inquiry as the uniqueness of the environment in which the sport program is housed is of particular importance for this study. Yet, these research questions require an open-ended inquiry as factors that support and barriers that hinder implementation may come from all ecological levels.

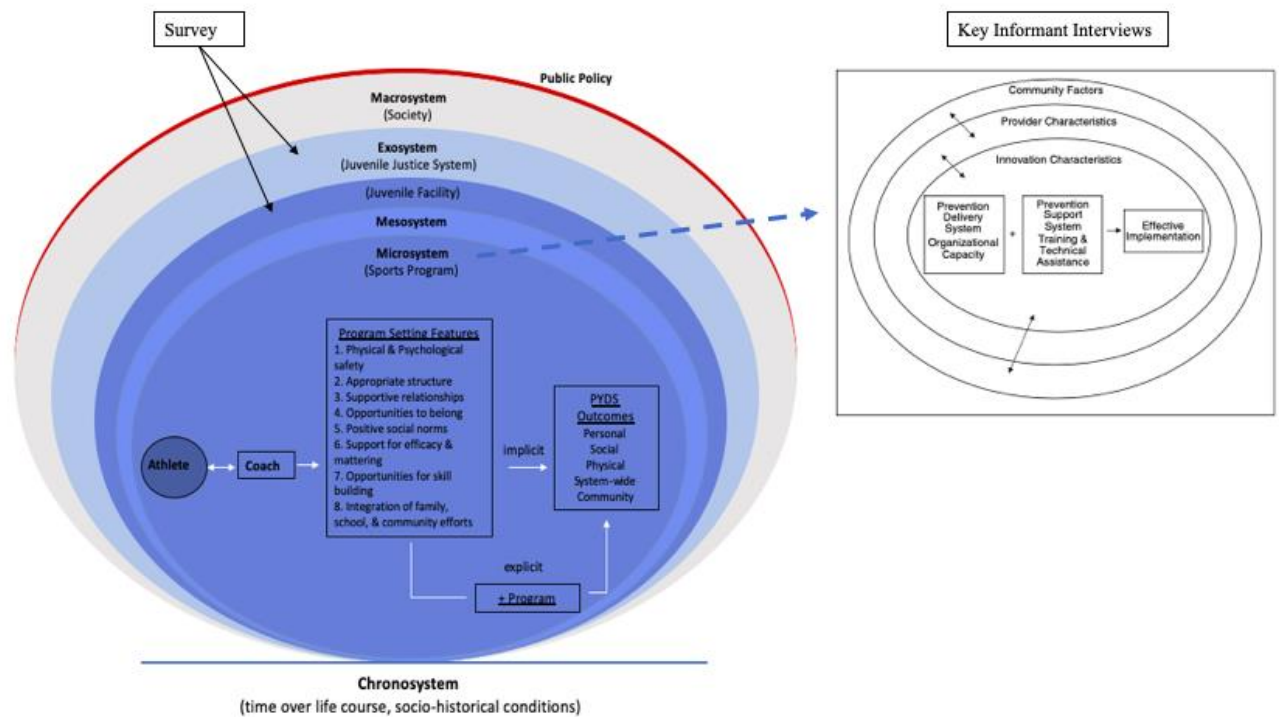


Figure 23. Conceptual Framework and Key Informant Interviews

A qualitative research design is positioned to promote a deep understanding of a phenomenon within its natural setting, allows for an openness to whatever emerges and it emphasizes exploration, discovery, and description (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008;

Patton, 2008). Thus, the qualitative data that is derived from this approach is in-depth, thick with description, and is attentive to the process assuming change is ongoing and being mindful of system dynamics (Patton, 2008, p. 45).

Specific to implementation literature, qualitative methods were postulated as “essential” because of its ability to provide a rigorous and efficient way of answering the key implementation questions of “how” and “why” (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). Qualitative research also helps to discover and document the context and environment for which the implementation occurs, and the process of implementation (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). In existing implementation literature, qualitative methods have also been used to identify contextual elements and provider perceptions that could influence implementation (Aarons et al., 2016). Lastly, qualitative methods in implementation science have increasingly been used to inform problem-solving in practice, which aligns with the overall pragmatic approach of the study (Hamilton & Finley, 2019).

Qualitative interviews were selected as the most appropriate, and feasible, method to answer the research questions based on a variety of factors. First, because of the limited understanding of sport program implementation within the real-world setting of a juvenile facility, it was essential to broadly explore the research question with individuals who have specialized knowledge about the phenomenon. Second, due to the nature of the implementation questions, which explore “how” at the organizational level, and not the sport program-level, interviews were preferred over another qualitative method, such as observation, since the existence of the sport program is a result of historical and current factors which presumably cannot be “observed.”

Specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants which intended to, “Identify people with great knowledge and/or influence who can shed light on the inquiry issues” (Patton, 2015, p. 268). Key informants are an effective way of answering the research question because the question required a level of specialized knowledge related to implementation, required institutional knowledge, and the ability to speak to the multiple ecological levels in which factors of implementation could be at play.

### **6.3 IRB Approval**

The study of sport program implementation in a sample of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities through the use of key informant interviews was reviewed and approved by the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study was granted exempt status: identification number 1686725-1, see Appendix J.

### **6.4 Sample**

In order to identify key informants for qualitative interviews, concept sampling was used to first identify rich cases (e.g. juvenile facility) from which a key informant was recruited. Concept sampling occurs when cases are selected that are, “...exemplar of the concept or construct that is the focus of inquiry to illuminate the theoretical ideas of interest” (Patton, 2015, p. 269). For this study, grounded in the conceptual framework which utilized PYD theory, exemplar cases were those that reported operating sport programs with the purpose of PYD in Question #11 of the national survey, see Figure 24 below. These programs cannot be described as evidence-based, as currently they have not been studied in the literature, but respondents did identify along several constructs, the implementation of the sport program with a focus on



PYD. Based on responses in which four of the six PYD constructs were selected, which was outlined to increase sample size, thirty-three facilities met this criterion to be included in the sample.

What is the purpose of sport programs in your facility? (Check all that apply)

- Facility safety
- Compliance with facility policy
- Build confidence among players
- Build character among players
- Build competencies of players
- Build compassion of players
- Build connections among players
- Build connections between players and coaches/staff
- Physical Exercise
- I'm not sure
- Other

Figure 24. Survey Question #11, Purpose of Sport Programs

Within exemplar cases, key informants were recruited for semi-structured interviews. In order to speak to the breadth and specialized knowledge required to answer the research question, key informants held administrative or recreation positions within the exemplar facility and/or the state’s division of juvenile justice that oversaw the facility. These individuals typically serve as a bridge with knowledge of programming in the facility as well as the organizational environment for which program implementation occurs including, budget, policy, and research.

The sample size of key informant interviews was determined through a process of data or theoretical saturation, or “...the point at which no new insights are obtained, no new themes are identified, and no issues arise regarding a category of data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is a common technique in studies that utilize semi-structured interviews that are analyzed using content analysis (Francis et al., 2010). Saturation is a somewhat nebulous concept which presents challenges in systematically displaying when it has been achieved (Francis et al., 2010). Yet, there appears to be consensus that saturation in thematic analysis occurs within the range of 6-16 interviews depending on the specific characteristics of the research (Guest et al., 2006; Ando et al., 2014; Haganan & Wutich, 2017). More precisely, Guest et al. (2006) identified that 97% of ‘important’ codes were identified within 12 interviews.

Adhering to principles for data saturation offered by Francis et al. (2010), the study started with a sample size of 12 key informant interviews for the first round of analysis (“initial analysis sample”). After 12 interviews, 3 more interviews were conducted and because no new themes emerged this was designated as the point of saturation and the stopping criterion.

## **6.5 Data Collection**

An interview guide for the semi-structured interviews was constructed, see Appendix C, which was designed to broadly explore the factors of implementation. The creation of the guide was informed by contextual factors from Durlak & DuPre’s (2008) Ecological Framework for Understanding Effective Implementation. The framework groups contextual factors related to implementation into five categories which were previously identified in a systematic review of the literature (Durlak and DuPre, 2008). Emphasizing the importance of a multilevel ecological perspective in

understanding successful implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Wandersman, 2003), Durlak & DuPre (2008) identified five categories across three ecologies including: community level factors, provider characteristics, characteristics of the innovation, factors relevant to the Prevention Delivery System (organizational capacity), and factors related to the Prevention Support System (p. 337-338). A flexible interview guide was constructed to probe these three levels and five categories, but also supported respondents in identifying additional factors that may be unique to the juvenile justice environment and sport program (microsystem). In recognition of the unprecedented time in which data collection was taking place, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the interview guide also included questions about how the pandemic had influenced the implementation of the sport program.

Interviews were conducted between December 2020 and January 2021. Due to health and safety restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the national sample of key informants, all fifteen interviews took place over Zoom Conference Software using the University of Delaware's secured platform. Three key informants requested to include additional facility or sport program staff in the interview due to their historical knowledge on program adoption or their significant role in program implementation. Since the request was made by the interviewee and increased the likelihood of obtaining expertise on implementation, the request was granted. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, and permission to record was requested at the beginning of the interview. Interview recordings were not saved to the cloud, but rather a separate, secured drive.

Since obtaining quality information in qualitative interviewing is significantly impacted by the skill of the interviewer (Patton, 2015), immediately following each

interview I completed a Post-Interview Reflection form, Appendix D. This reflection form included logistical details of where the interview took place and a reaction on the rapport during the interview, weaknesses or poorly worded questions, notes on themes or key topics, and emerging insights or ideas which were often noted across interviews. The Post-Interview Reflection Forms not only helped to adapt the interview guide to strengthen and include questions on emerging themes, but was also used as supporting documents to inform data analysis. Following completion of the form, I transcribed all interviews to translate the interview recordings into analyzable data, and also as a means to immerse myself in the data to support a rich analysis moving forward (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

## **6.6 Analysis**

The qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, was used to organize and help facilitate the analysis. Prior to this analysis a codebook, Appendix E, was developed and then refined during analysis, in which codes were assigned a brief definition, a full definition, an explanation of when the code should be used and not used, and an example of a quote from the data (Nelson, 2017). Codebooks help to organize the data and assign it to meaningful codes, which helps to provide clarity to the large amounts of data which will be produced from the interviews (Thyer, 2009).

Guided by the overall pragmatic philosophy of the research study, and the conceptual framework, interview data were analyzed utilizing both an inductive and deductive approach. Originally, it was planned that data would first be deductively analyzed by examining for sensitizing concepts: the five categorical factors, and 23 contextual factors, of the implementation process identified by Durlak & DuPre (2008). A sensitizing concept, as opposed to an operationalized concept, is not a

concrete measure but rather “a starting point” in thinking about an abstract concept with specific attention to the case being studied (Patton, 2015). The five categorical factors are not concrete concepts but are rather emerging, sensitizing concepts with multiple constructs. However, this process proved to be ineffective initially due to its poor fit with the specific context of the data, and after discussions with my committee Chair, I pivoted to analyze the data in a manner which proved much more effective.

Specifically, data analysis commenced with a broad, preliminary analysis in which I read and reviewed all of the transcripts as well as the Post-Interview Reflection Forms to try and get an understanding of the ‘big ideas’ (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Thereafter, I dissected the data and classified it into large categories (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008), these initial categories were the three high-level ecological categories in the Durlak & DuPre (2008) framework. These three levels served as structured codes (i.e., community-level, division/facility level, and sport program level), for which inductive coding ensued to try and understand the deeper meaning.

Both deductive and inductive analysis were used in the process of coding, which was similar to the original intention, but utilized to a different degree. As deductive coding helped to analyze the data by ecological category, inductive coding supported identifying patterns and highlighting themes related to factors of sport program implementation (Patton, 2015). Towards the end of analysis, I again revisited the more detailed Durlak & DuPre framework and made appropriate connections. The combined deductive and inductive approach was intended to apply an EST lens to the data from what is known of the existing implementation literature, but also support

further exploration of concepts that may be underdeveloped or unidentified in the literature.

Through a process of generating memos and weekly conversations with my committee Chair, a coding scheme was developed and revised, see Appendix F. A Coding Scheme Development Chart, Appendix G, reflects the iterations of the coding scheme and justification for the changes. As the coding scheme was finalized, I revisited the Durlak & DuPre framework to make comparisons. A few codes, which were inductively developed, had almost direct translation to concepts within the Durlak & DuPre framework. As such, this was noted in the memos and will be discussed further in the Discussion Section. Additional concepts also paralleled constructs in the Durlak & DuPre framework, but had diverging titles which reflected the nuances of the juvenile justice and sport context. The nuanced titles remained intact, but a larger conversation of the findings will also be included in the Discussion Section.

During coding, a systematic process of analysis was followed in order to strengthen the credibility of the findings. The data underwent constant comparison which has been described as, "...an ongoing analysis of similarities and differences: What things go together in the data? What things are different? What explains these similarities and differences? What are the implications for your overall inquiry purpose and conclusions?" (Patton, 2015, p. 658). In order to support this process of comparison, as well as record hunches and new ideas, memos were used to help identify emerging themes and categories (Bowen, 2008).

Subsequently, data summary tables were prepared for the research question, see Appendix H. This was not used to quantify the data, but rather as a means to

summarize the data, and highlight the concentration of responses for further exploration and meaning-making (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This process also functions to uphold transparency in the interpretation of results.

The analysis served to answer the identified research question, and through this, aimed to help fill gaps in the implementation literature. These gaps include: (1) an understanding of how physical activity programs are implemented in real-world settings (Cassar et al., 2019); (2) a rich description of what affects (e.g., barriers and supports) implementation of physical activity programs in real-world settings (Cassar et al., 2019), and (3) an evaluation of the utility of Durlak & DuPre's model when applied in a real-world setting. This work has implications for both policy and practice, and will help to build upon and refine the ecological model in implementation science.

## **6.7 Data Quality**

In order to ensure data quality, specifically the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the qualitative research, several techniques were utilized for systematic data collection and analysis. These techniques included: purposeful sampling, constant comparison, searching for negative or disconfirming evidence, thick description of data, and keeping an audit trail. Alternative criteria to judge the quality and credibility include the utility of findings to inform decisions in practice and policy (Patton, 2015).

During data collection, the use of purposeful sampling is considered a strength of qualitative methods and supports the identification of information-rich cases that are of critical importance to the research questions (Patton, 2015). As previously described, a strategy of concept sampling was used to first identify information-rich

cases from which key informants, with specialized knowledge of the topic, were identified and recruited.

During data analysis, credibility was upheld through constant comparison of the data and by searching the data for negative or disconfirming evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Constant comparison is used to analyze similarities and differences across interviews within the study as well as from findings from outside studies. This included continually checking the “consistency and accuracy” of code application (Patton, 2015). Similarly, searching the data for negative or disconfirming evidence presents questions or contradictions to the emerging patterns in the data and can be used to refine the analysis until it can account for the majority of cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Thick description is a technique used to establish transferability. A technique which is unique to qualitative data, Lincoln & Guba (1985) emphasize that explaining the phenomenon with sufficient depth and context supports the ability to evaluate if the findings would be transferable across settings, space, and time.

An audit trail is a technique to establish confirmability and includes keeping a detailed record of steps in the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Essential for the audit trail is the construction of a codebook. A codebook, Appendix E, was created prior to data analysis and was adjusted during the coding process and adapted based on emerging themes from the data.

Lastly, an alternative criteria for judging the quality and credibility of findings, informed by the study’s overall pragmatic approach, is that the qualitative data should be focused on informing actions and decisions, and should be judged on its utility for decision-making among juvenile departments and facility administrators (Patton,



2015). Considering the interest in adopting sport programming among facilities currently not operating programming, which was identified through survey data, the study and methods were designed to not only fill gaps in the literature, but also produce practical knowledge on implementation to be responsive to this practitioner community.

## **Chapter 7**

### **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESULTS**

The purpose of the key informant interviews was to explore how sport programs are implemented among a sample of exemplar facilities. Survey findings identified a considerable variation in sport program offerings between facilities, indicating an inequity of access to sport for youth who are incarcerated. Considering the significant literature base on the positive benefits of youth sport participation, and survey findings that showed that the majority of facilities who were not operating a sport program had an interest in starting one; the key informant interviews were focused on answering the following research questions:

2. How are sport programs implemented in a sample of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities in the United States?

This chapter outlines the results obtained from fifteen key informant interviews. Of this sample, over half (67%) were individuals who had completed the national survey, and in a few cases (33%) a second individual participated in the interview because of their more intimate knowledge with the program. Nine (47%) key informants held positions as Facility Administrators including positions such as: Superintendent, Facility Director, and Detention Unit Superintendent. Four (21%) were Facility Staff including: Day Supervisor, Probation Officer, and Program Coordinator. Three (16%) were Athletic or Recreation Department Administration or Staff including: Athletic Director and Recreation Therapist, and three (16%) were

Division Administrators including Commissioner and Chief Probation Officer. Fifty-eight percent of key informants were male and 42% were female. Although I did not specifically ask about key informants' background or experience with sport, when discussing the importance of sport participation for youth, eleven (58%) of the key informants shared that they had a sport background including participating in high school and collegiate athletics, and serving as youth sport coaches.

Results are organized by overarching findings which are grouped in accordance with their respective ecological level. Within each finding is a detailed discussion of the themes that support it. The themes are listed in order of magnitude, which is a subjective concept that I tried to establish by considering both the frequency and intensity with which the theme was discussed across interviews. Data summary tables (Appendix H) were used to highlight frequency, and thus provide support for the results and transparency in the process of interpretation. The results are supported by quotes from interview participants to reinforce the finding as well as provide a more nuanced understanding of the theme. Per the IRB agreement, results are reported anonymously, pseudonyms were used in place of actual participant names, facility names, and additional identifiers such as nearby-cities or schools (Saunders et al., 2015).

Informed by the ecological approach of the theoretical framework, connections and influences across themes, which are grounded within the various ecological levels, will be discussed as they influence the implementation of sport programs in juvenile facilities and provide a more holistic answer to the research questions. This includes both supports and barriers identified in implementation. A more detailed discussion of these interactions is presented in the Discussion Section. Lastly, due to the context in

which the study was taking place, in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic, and the study's larger conceptual framework which highlights the importance of recognizing the phenomenon in time and space, results on the impact of Covid-19 on sport program implementation will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

## **7.1 How Programs are Implemented**

The analysis of the transcripts identified 13 major themes for how sport programs are implemented in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities, and 3 themes related to barriers, which after additional analysis and interpretation contributed to the identification of 5 overarching findings. A few of the themes contributed to multiple findings, which was a product of utilizing an ecological systems lens in which there were implications within an ecological level as well as between ecological levels. The findings are briefly outlined below, followed by a more in-depth discussion of each of the themes and the main findings.

**I. Sport programs in juvenile facilities are largely implemented through factors at the facility-level.**

**II. Implementation of the sport program is reliant on the compatibility and adaptability of sport within juvenile facilities.**

**III. Sport programs in juvenile facilities are implemented with a considerable focus on safety, an influence from its larger correctional environment.**

**IV. Sport programs in juvenile facilities are implemented with features of PYD**

**V. Sport program implementation in juvenile facilities is influenced by community-level factors but they were not found to be critical factors.**

## **7.2 Finding I. Sport programs in juvenile facilities are largely implemented through factors at the facility-level.**

From almost every aspect of sport program implementation, respondents detailed how factors at the facility-level worked to implement the sport program. The organization of these themes at the facility-level was informed by the Durlak & DuPre Framework, but revisions were made to adapt to the juvenile justice setting. A detailed discussion of these revisions is included in the Discussion Section. A detailed dialogue on the themes which support this finding are provided below.

### **7.2.1 Theme 1: Perceived Benefits of the Sport Program: ‘these kids are starting to build themselves, and that’s an experience that is priceless.’**

All respondents (15/15) discussed that sport programs were implemented through a high level of perceived benefit of the program, and that was displayed through the ways in which they talked about the contributions of the program to individual youth, to developing more positive dynamics between youth, allowing ‘kids to be kids,’ facility benefits, providing a setting for further family engagement in the treatment process, and even helping to build a better relationship between youth and law enforcement.

The overwhelming majority of benefits that were expressed were those for youth participants and their development. These benefits were often discussed in tandem with identified needs among the youth population, which will be discussed in Theme 2: Perceived Need. Respondents discussed traits such as teamwork, positive group identity and belonging, competency-building, self-esteem, and pride. Elaborating on the benefits of teamwork one respondent (#12a) said, “...you almost get that sense of camaraderie with those kids and they are building themselves, ya know, these kids are starting to build themselves, and that’s an experience that is

priceless.” Teamwork was often mentioned with conflict resolution, and addressing and breaking down of rival gang affiliations. Respondents stated:

So we know a lot of these kids don’t get along outside of the facility. And they don’t get along in the facility either so we have done a lot of mediation and I think through sports we are able to bring them together for a common goal. So it’s not, we don’t have to fight and shoot, our goal in this setting is to win this basketball game or win a lacrosse game and we have to work together. (#5)

We’ve had youth that are from different gangs, an established different gang, playing on the same team....Like ‘man that’s your enemy over there and now you just assisted him in a goal or you turned a double play with him.’... So yeah, that is a big break through where they have that opportunity to kind of break that barrier down themselves. (#14a)

This opportunity for teamwork was not only expressed as a benefit while youth were in the facility, but respondents noted the potential for this conflict resolution to extend back into the community, stating:

We don’t, we don’t ever segregate by gang so we have rival gang members together all the time. We have always done that, we’ve done that for a couple decades. Just a complete, total, zero tolerance for any gang behavior and we have example after example of what happens when they get out and they are someplace and somebody is about to get jumped and they are like ‘nah man they’re cool, leave them alone.’ And they just go on about their way, it’s not like they are going out to brunch together, but they are keeping each other from getting stabbed so that’s good. So it normalizes. Just like it normalizes other kids. I don’t think its magic I think it’s just opportunities they haven’t gotten. (#8)

Along with breaking down of barriers between gangs, playing on the sports team was also discussed as an opportunity for belonging, positive group identity, and building new relationships with positive adults and peers. One respondent (#10) stated, "I think the feeling of belonging to something that’s not negative and how it makes

them feel when they leave and they express that.” Another respondent noted the positive interactions between youth in the facility and youth from a private high school sport team that volunteered at the facility:

...Almost all of our players were African American and almost all of the [Northeast Region Private School A’s] players were white, privileged. It was fascinating to see the interactions, much more comfortable than I expected...It was really, that was one of the most fascinating things of the whole experience, those barriers being broken down, each side wanted to interact with the other side, you could see it. And all we had to do was stand back. They spoke in the way they did they were kids, and they forgot where each other came from. It was really pretty cool to watch. (#1)

Respondents also discussed competency-building, self-esteem, and the pride that youth exuded from playing on the team and achieving positive success. The building of competencies was, at times, in relation to sport-specific competencies, but more often discussed in regards to building social-emotional competencies. One respondent (#5) explained, “...when I say the sports program teaches kids different skills I see that it teaches patience, it teaches communication skills, it teaches kids to better engage with not only their peers but adults, authority figures.”

In terms of self-esteem and pride, these were often displayed by youth in their excitement to wear their uniforms and display their medals. Multiple interviewees relayed humorously stories of young people wearing their participation medals to school and showing off to teachers and staff. Building these competencies and the resulting feeling of success was described by one Athletic Director and Coach (#14a):

At the start of the season these guys can’t even throw, and I ask them, ‘didn’t you ever throw a rock at something?’ And then at the end, at the end of the season these guys are turning double plays and doing all sorts of stuff, it’s amazing. And they really enjoy it...and then the championship games they get a medal and they get a trophy and all, and you would think they won the Olympics... It is, ya know what, it’s amazing. A 17 year old kid and walking

to class, when we had teachers in the classroom, and kind of floating it so they make sure they saw it. It's a lot of times the first time they felt like they won or they earned...

Multiple respondents noted that youth players had remarked that their participation on the sport program in the facility was the first time they had been celebrated for an accomplishment. One respondent stated:

...and I know talking to the youth, they were like, 'this is the first time I've walked in front of a group of people and people were cheering for us.' And so there is just, there is so many benefits to their overall social, emotional growth that its, it would be, we would be doing a disservice to the youth by not supporting the sports. (#14b)

To a lesser extent, respondents discussed the benefit of the sport program in helping youth reconceptualize their own identity and worth. Specifically, a respondent (#15) described how sport participation had helped young girls in the facility reclaim and reimagine the worth of their bodies, especially as some of the girls had previously experienced objectification and victimization. The interviewee stated:

So many of ours who are objectified, and victimized from a young age or even just fed kind of the wrong messages about what their worth is, what their value is and where that comes from. Not a lot of them have a lot of background, sometimes we do and they are, and it's fun to have that positive influence on the other girls, but a lot of them they don't have that background or even that mentality which is a real shame. But it's also fun to I think for some of our staff when the girls are included to be able to overcome some of that and let them feel more comfortable going out and being an athlete and not just the sides of being a girl that have been driven into them that's been a real positive thing for some of our girls...(#15)

Along with more traditional traits of youth development (i.e., teamwork, competency-building, etc.), just under half of respondents (47%) explained how the sport program allowed 'kids to be kids' and supported normalcy for young people in



an abnormal environment. Respondents described that the sport program provided both an opportunity for young people to have fun, play, and have a necessary break from the strict structure of the facility, while also providing a normalizing experience for their development. One respondent (#10) noted, “I’m impressed every year and overwhelmed by these kids every year because they just want to be kids in the end. They just want, I don’t care, I have worked with some hardcore gang members as a probation officer and in this role, and they just want to be kids.” Another respondent (#4) elaborated on the benefit of the normalizing experience stating, “...the successes were really giving these youth that are in a secure facility the opportunity to be a kid and have some of that normalizing behavior that they would in high school.”

In trying to provide a more ‘normalizing experience’ a number of respondents (6/15) shared that the sport program provided a unique opportunity for their facility to engage parents and families with youth and facility staff, which is a critical principle in the treatment of juvenile offenders. Respondents shared that the sport venue gave parents and families a chance to see their children participating and celebrated in a positive activity, granted a space for parent and child engagement during commitment, and even helped to change and improve family relationships with facility staff who play a central role in treatment programming for youth. One respondent remarked:

I think one of things that was really neat to see was how we involved the parents, the families. And to see the reactions on their faces when their kids, who may have never ever played sports, to see them build these skills with the coaches and with the units and getting the good grades to get there and playing in the big game, and winning and scoring a touchdown. They were in tears. It was a pretty emotional thing to see and witness. You saw that development piece really come to fruition and pay dividends with the family’s interactions with their own kids, so it was pretty neat. And with the family’s interactions with staff and with the division, building that trust and so it was pretty cool, that was a really cool piece. (#12a)

Another respondent elaborated on the family and staff relationships explaining:

...what [Mr. A] talked about is developing that trust, developing those relationships more, a deeper-level of relationship between a staff member and a parent and getting to see them in that different light, right? They see them as the person that is holding their child accountable for their behaviors and that, but also the same person out there has taught them the skill sets to succeed in a different area to be successful and like 'hey they care about how my kid does here, and what's going on there and that relationship, they get excited when my son does well in this' to share the commonality, and through those weekly check-ins being able to have that foundation built as far as, 'how are they doing this weekend in basketball practice?' or ya know 'this is what's going on and this is, got a little frustrated here but was able to handle their emotions here' and those kind of things. (#12d)

Some respondents (5/15) expressed benefits of the sport program to youth reentry. Interviewees shared that youth were able to build and practice skills (both sport-specific and non-sport specific) that help support them in making and staying on a sport team at their mainstream school or in the community. One respondent (#7a) stated, "Some of our kids who leave the program continue with those things because we return them back to the community. So when they go back...they are able to continue with the skills that they acquired while they were here."

Along with their individual skills, through participating on the sport program young people tapped into new networks and thus were connected with community leagues and community volunteers that could help support reintegration back home. One respondent (#8) explained the process, "...cause they have gotten connected with leagues and stuff, and they've gotten connected with community leagues and adults... Yeah it's been an avenue back to mainstream schools for a lot of kids." Another interviewee (#1) described, "...kids that have played lacrosse for the program have

stayed connected one way or the other to people that were either connected to the lacrosse program or people in the lacrosse program connected them to other agencies in the community to help support them.”

Some respondents (5/15) expressed benefits of the sport program that were related to the facility. For instance, some respondents discussed increased job satisfaction for staff that were involved in the sport program, and supporting overall morale at the facility. One respondent (#14b) explains, “The staff that are here and they participate and lead some of these activities they love coming to work, they love participating... are able to see the benefit of job satisfaction that staff are getting out of participating in these programs.” Another respondent (#3) noted, “Definitely think that it has added to the overall morale of the facility.”

Furthermore, respondents expressed that the facility benefitted from the program in that youth behaviors improved and behavior incidents decreased during sport programming. This benefit overlapped with facility-related needs, which is a theme that will be further outlined in the next section. Respondent (#6) stated, “There has been times when we’ve tied it into behavior, and our behavioral issues dropped considerably cause kids want to go to the game.” Another respondent described:

One, we know the research is super clear about pro-social peers, activities, but to actually see it in action. I mean not only did their behavior change drastically on the dates they were participating, but changed drastically on the other dates so that they could participate (#8)

Lastly, a few respondents (3/15) shared that the sport program provided an opportunity to help change negative stereotypes and mend relationships between law enforcement and youth in facilities. One respondent shared:

... in our softball tournament actually any time that I can I'm using probation officers and police officers as referees and umpires and I'm, and with their permission, and they usually all give it, I introduce them as such before the games. I want the kids to know that the guy behind the plate is a cop from his community that's coming out on his own time, usually, and giving time to this program and it makes a huge impact on the kids. They are like 'he's a cop, what? Or he's a probation officer?' Anyway it's really important aspect of it (#10)

Another respondent elaborated on the challenged relationship between the two groups, and how their basketball program has helped to address that strain. The respondent described:

In [Northeast Region City A] at our facilities on Tuesday nights the [Northeast Region City A] Police Department, there is a local precinct, and they come in and play basketball with the kids. I'm a big advocate of that because it's like relationship-building. Cause the kids don't like the police, the police don't like the kids. So as they come in, it's been a really good experience. (#9)

Additionally, respondents further highlighted the benefit as law enforcement get a chance to see youth in a different light through the sport venue. One respondent (#8) stated, "And again having the police come to something like that, and have them just stop by throughout the day not only adds a complete different level of security, it also has the police see the kids in a whole different light."

### **7.2.2 Theme 2: Perceived Need: 'They lose a lot...so I think there is an opportunity with the sports to build some of that back in.'**

The overwhelming majority of respondents (14/15) expressed a high level of perceived need for the sport program to supplement deficient developmental experiences among their youth population, which were often discussed in connection to the perceived benefits of the program (Theme 1). Similarly, respondents shared

needs related to the operation of the facility, which also had associations to facility-related benefits (Theme 1).

The majority of respondents (12/15) expressed a high-level of perceived need for the sport program in order to provide age-appropriate developmental experiences their youth population habitually doesn't receive. Interviewees shared that young people in their facilities had often experienced traumatic incidents in their young lives, one respondent (#7a) expressed, "We definitely don't want, they've already reached places in their lives that some of us never experienced. So we want them to not lose the experience of being a kid." Furthermore, due to length of commitments or the nature of their lives in the community, respondents expressed that youth had missed out on a lot of positive developmental experiences like high school sports, prom, graduation, and the chance to be celebrated throughout these experiences and accomplishments. Respondents shared, "But they don't go to the prom, they don't participate in varsity sports, they don't necessarily get to graduate with their class. They lose a lot of that ya know, so I think there is an opportunity with the sports just to give some of that back and build some of that back in." (#9)

And letting these guys feel like regular kids for a while cause most of them missed out on an awful lot of that in their development. We are sure glad to be able to offer, and always looking for new stuff like I said the running team is brand new, the debate team is coming along and getting some roots and we will look for every other way we have to offer the recreation and healthy competition to these guys. It's just, I just think that there are so many learning and growth opportunities that a lot of kids get the benefit of doing team sports that a lot of these kids miss out on and again we aren't going to get to start over with them but maybe we catch up a little bit and there will be some lessons that stick with them for a while. (#15)

Underscoring this description is an assumed belief in the importance of youth development, and again, was supported by a facility philosophy grounded in treatment and a youth development approach (Theme 5: Facility Philosophy).

A few respondents (5/15) expressed a need for the sport program for facility-related issues which were not as aligned with the youth development approach and more reflective of the correctional environment and philosophy. These respondents shared that they originally decided to implement a sport program due to high levels of assaults or restraints within the correctional-setting. The sport program helped address this need by serving as a behavior-modification technique among youth who were motivated to play, as well as allowing kids to run around and get their frustration out, and build better relationships between young people and between young people and staff. Respondents explained:

Yea so we saw that behavior was better during the seasons we have football and basketball. Like I said sport is a motivation so if they don't conduct themselves properly they don't play. And that's the big carrot before them so you have to think in a correctional setting, they don't like to call it that, there aren't that many incentives. There's food, if its good, but aside from that there is no dances for these kids. So its sports. In the spring there were more write-ups, more restraints that's what they call them. And things like that so we thought there is a need to create this sport team and we know fundamentally blowing off steam helps all of us control behavior. So we were trying to lower the temperature and calm things down. (#1)

...when I first came to [Western Region Facility A], my particular unit we had a lot of physical acting out and intervention right? And going back to the athletic stuff, I'm a wrestler, and wrestlers hardly ever got in trouble because they were always too tired to get in trouble after practice. Taking that theory and taking that information and saying 'okay let's try this let's see what happens.' And to have a reduction in the overall level of physical intervention that was occurring on my unit at the time, cause it was pretty high. (#12d)

### **7.2.3 Theme 3: Staff as Coaches: ‘We want our staff interacting with the kids like a coach would interact with the kids.’**

The overwhelming majority of respondents highlighted the important role of facility staff in day to day implementation of the sport program. Utilizing staff in this manner increased capacity to offer the program, upheld safety and security measures, and helped to adapt and improve the staff-youth relationship.

The majority of respondents (13/15) explained that facility staff played the role of coaches in the implementation of the sport program. From a security stand-point, it was expressed that it was important to have facility staff operate the sport program to uphold safety and security measures. One respondent explained:

The way that we do it is we just do it with in-house staff just for confidentiality reasons and for safety and security and for policy and procedures we need to have our own staff. As well as knowing these kids, having that trust with them, building that relationship and being able to work with them, and support them, and encourage them, but at the same time making sure that safety and security is followed and also kind of knowing some of those trauma past histories so we are not triggering anything... (#4)

Utilizing facility staff who are trained in safety and security measures helped to address, at times, challenging youth behaviors, which will be discussed later as a barrier to implementation (Theme B2: Youth Behaviors).

But what was shared more emphatically from respondents was that staff who served as coaches built a strong rapport with their players, and served as role models for the youth. One respondent explained that coaches were:

...an important figure who is consistent and honest person in their lives. That is really important because the staff have been able to kind of move their positions above and beyond, they become these stabilizing influences to these youth in their lives because they are consistent and as coaches they are straight, direct, and forthcoming with them as well as showing their compassion and giving them the ability to believe that they can overcome anything. Cause like

[Mr. C] said if you can't throw a ball in the very beginning and after spending time with them and coaching them and showing them the mechanics, weeks later they are able to throw a ball and feel that little bit of success, it does have, it does go a long way in their belief of being able to be successful in their lives. (#14b)

In this new and different role as coaches, respondents shared how the relationship changed between staff and youth, which previously had been built on giving orders and directives. The sport program setting helped to adapt the staff-youth relationship to one they described as more productive and healthy. One interviewee shared:

I think it brought out, I don't think I know, it brought out a side of these kids that the staff had never really seen before. And I think it brought out a side of our staff that the kids had never really seen before, so that kind of camaraderie, and, I mean that's what we want right? We want our staff interacting with the kids like a coach would interact with the kids: good boundaries, a healthy amount of tough love, but a lot of care and nurturing. It's hard to train to that, but most of our staff had been trained in sports, that tends to be most of the people that are attracted to this field, and so that comes really, really naturally for them. They become kind of their best selves and so do the kids, and so it really enables them to have a whole different relationship and that carries over and over and over and over again. Because again when you have been a on team with somebody and then something happens and there is a fight or whatever, there is a different response there just is. (#8)

This change in the dynamics of the staff-youth relationship was enhanced by the training staff receive in varying evidence-based practices (i.e., CBT, DBT) and information on trauma-informed programming. According to respondents, training provided staff with skills and new insights which provided them a "compass" for their work. One respondent (#12d) shared that having staff "...in-tune and skilled enough to be able to have those conversations and recognize and see those things" empowered



staff to have more meaningful work with youth in the sport program, which supported overall alignment with the facility's mission. Another respondent explained:

...the staff being able to have that coaching relationship with the kid so it's not always about redirecting and luckily with our DBT program the staff do skills coaching as well, its coaching in a different way but being able to to really show them that we don't just do sports for fun that its purposeful and that everything we do is a part of the kids treatment including running a basketball game. (#3)

Respondents even shared that this evidence and training had helped their staff/coaches to change their own coaching techniques, one respondent (#5) shared, "Coaches are gonna coach how they coach, but now that they have a better understanding of trauma and how that impacts the kids that we have I see that they have been able to change some of their techniques, their style, and their way." This re-training in evidence-informed practices and techniques seemed important, as some respondents (6/15) described that a lot of their staff have athletic backgrounds, so they have an innate buy-in to the program, but training supports them in helping to use the sport program for a treatment purpose versus an overly competitive focus.

Highlighting this further, interviewees shared that many of the facility staff they hire are former scholastic, collegiate, and even professional athletes who have a passion for sport and enjoy the opportunity to share it and use it as a way to connect with the youth. Staff's draw to athletics helped to support buy-in, which will be discussed in a subsequent section as staff buy-in was also identified as a potential barrier to implementation (Theme B1: Lack of Staff Buy-In).

Along with staff who serve as coaches, respondents (6/15) explained that ensuring buy-in and support from the rest of the building staff was important for a successful operation of the sport program. One respondent stated:

Everybody has got to get involved, when everyone sees everyone involved, equally invested in what is going on, then it drives more creativity right? It drives more willingness to be open with your ideas and so it's an amazing thing when it happens and again it's the dividends are worth it. They are worth it to get through some of those hurdles, and it's not guaranteed to be perfect because these kids and people aren't perfect but the dividends that come from the end of it. (#12a)

Multiple respondents described having building staff who were “advocates” for youth and youth sports, one respondent (#15) noted, “This place is chalked full of people just like that.” Often times these staff members were described as volunteering their time to referee games, serve as fans, operate the scoreboard, or provide additional security when needed. One interviewee (#3) said, “We just really have a lot of people, this isn't a part of their normal job duties but they enjoy watching it and participating in it so they make sure it runs.”

The ability to use existing facility staff in the program was also emphasized as helpful in keeping the cost of the program manageable. Respondents shared:

And for the staff we obviously have some staff that really have that sports background, it's a passion for them, they love to coach they love to mentor, they love the sport, and it's really exciting for them to be part of that and it gives them something more to improve their morale as a staff member they look forward to these events. We have one coach that dresses up to the tilt whenever there is a game, he is in full suite and it's just fun. (#4)

Cause I think, and again I think that's the catch of this, there are a lot of athletes that work in facilities like this and it's not just cause they are big and strong it's cause they experienced a lot of the things these kids are going through and every single one of those athletes, I promise you, ‘Hey, what helped?’ and they are going to say, ‘A mentor, a coach, and sports.’ Promise you, 100%, it's the same thing with me. I guarantee you it's the same thing with [Mr. B], and maybe even you, going through, being an athlete. And so it's been getting those people together and saying, ‘Okay what did it look like for

us? What do we want these kids to experience?’ and then working that out... (#12a)

Lastly, a few respondents (5/15) emphasized the importance of thoughtfully selecting the “right” staff to be involved with the sport program. These individuals were described as people that the youth could look up to, who were positive, and who used the sport program to support youth development. One respondent (#10) said, “I wanted to start with the people. That’s my point. The people are imperative. Choosing the right people, having the right people...” Another respondent (#2) stated, “...you have to have the right coaches and the right people heading the program. The kids have to respect and get along with the people in the program...having the right adults in the positions so are like key.”

#### **7.2.4 Theme 4: Juvenile Justice-Specific Practices and Processes: ‘it’s all about how you set it up.’**

The majority of respondents (13/15) shared specific practices and processes to implement the sport program within the juvenile facility. These included coordination and partnerships with outside organizations, logistics and procedures on formulation of tasks and decisions made to accommodate the sport program, and structures in and outside the facility that played a significant role in implementation.

Although staff were described as the core of most programs, majority of respondents (13/15) shared how capacity to run the program was enhanced through collaborations and partnerships with outside organizations. These partnerships included formal and informal agreements with sport-based youth development organizations, youth programs, volunteers from the community, police departments, professional sport teams, university athletic programs, and neighboring high school teams. The utility and benefits of these partnerships were discussed in varying ways

including additional funding, mentorship for youth, curriculum-development, as well as filling unmet needs of the sport program in the facility such as, volunteer coaches and referees. In highlighting several of these roles, one respondent shared the multi-purpose partnership they developed with a group of volunteers on a Ultimate Frisbee team:

We also have a large amount of volunteers that are involved in our programs so I use those a lot so like for my ultimate team all of my coaches for ultimate are volunteers and they are unbelievable. They are passionate about their sport and passionate about helping others so that was like a natural fit. So they continue to do that and uh we've had, um tournaments because they are so passionate about their sport. They have a whole community of people in the ultimate world and they spread the word and we've had some tournaments where people pay to play and they come to [Northeast Region Facility A] and pay \$5 to play in this tournament and so we will get money so we can boost the budget up so if we need to play with, if we need tournament fees, if we went out and joined a tournament, it would pay those fees and pay for all that. (#2)

Another respondent shared how they used a partnership with university women's sport teams to address the challenges of operating a sport program with the low number of young women in the building, stating:

With having 50 girls there, obviously the numbers are low in regards to athletic tournaments, and so the piece that we try and do there as well is we have developed some pretty good relationships with some of the local colleges. So before the pandemic [Western Region University A's] Women's Basketball team came into [Western Region Facility B] to run a clinic. I've had (Western Region University B's) Soccer team go in and do clinics, (Western Region University B's) Basketball team I believe we had them do a clinic. So athletically speaking we try and supplement the tournaments that the guys have access to with more of these clinics that we bring in outside sources for. (#13)

The majority of respondents (11/15) outlined specific logistics and procedures that they undertook to ensure successful implementation, which often centered around ensuring safety and security and adapting what was going on in the building to

accommodate the sport program. Many of these logistics and procedures were put into place through a process of strategic planning, another theme which will be discussed (Theme 8: Strategic Planning), which was done to address challenges related to the correctional setting (Theme B3: Correctional Setting).

Several respondents shared that they established committees that worked within their facility, and at times coordinated with other facilities. These committees were tasked with several responsibilities including: selecting their head and assistant coaches, restructuring the coaches work schedules to allow them time to work with the players, evaluating each player that was on the team to identify any additional security needs or supports and ensure that they would not be competing against co-defendants. One respondent whose facility competed against other juvenile facilities described:

... one of those logistics was, there was monthly meetings that included that you had a supervisor from [Western Region Facility A], and then you had one of the coach or a staff member with that supervisor, and then each facility replicated that same thing, and then on a monthly basis they would get together and they would have the discussions about: 'Okay what are we seeing? What's going well? What are areas do we need to tighten up going into the next sport? What adjustments do we need to make?' There was that logistical meeting on a monthly basis to discuss 'Okay this is how things are going, what's our next sport? What is it going to look like?' those kinds of things. That happened with a representative from each facility. (#12d)

In addition to committees, respondents shared that they often had shift debriefings or meetings after sporting events to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program and event. One respondent shared:

So just being very strategic about policy and procedure in those training, every time we did a sporting event we would come together as a team afterwards and process it. What were the strengths? What were the weaknesses? What can we do better? What did we like that we can maximize on? Let's talk about that.

And we would let the kids be a part of that too. We would have the coaches be a part of that. (#4)

This same respondent also shared a safety travel procedure their facility put into place for away games against other juvenile facilities, which again, individual players' participation was evaluated:

And so those were all things we had to put into place and even so the transport itself we have an itinerary that we do that has to be filled out a week in advance. It goes clear up to my boss and the administration and we look very closely at each of those kids that are eligible, that are traveling, do they have any medications? Making sure those medications go with them at the time and just really watching safety and security to be able to do this. (#4)

The logistics and procedures that respondents discussed were almost always a result of implementing the sport program inside of a secure facility, and thus these efforts were focused on maintaining safety and security. One respondent (#14b) described this relationship, "...That has been my emphasis with them is we should never say we are not going to do something because of safety and security. We should be looking at developing a strategic plan on how we are going to address the safety and security issues for a particular unit."

Several respondents expressed this message that despite being in a secure facility, it did not impede their ability to offer the sport program and they addressed that challenge in strategically and thoughtfully setting up the program. One respondent emphatically asserted:

The one thing that I would just say, underline, circle it, put it in bold, italicize it is the whole idea that you can't do this because it's not safe because of the bats and that kind of stuff, is just bs, it's just bs. And should never not do it because of that because if you can't do it because of that you aren't doing it right. These kids are going to get out anyway, if you can't put a bat in their hand and not have them bash up somebody else with the bat than you shouldn't

be doing it they aren't at that level of healing to be able to do that then. I would just say, it's all about how you set it up, it's all about having the right, like I said you don't have a bunch of police cars around, and you want it to feel like a fun sports event like it was your kid going to a fun sports event. People should really, really do this. It just compared to 'tell me what happened when you were three?' I mean you need that too but you don't just need that. (#8)

Respondents also shared that in meeting these safety needs it was important to get all of the building staff involved and on board. One respondent (#1) shared, "It was a comprehensive effort though, the whole building had to stand up and everyone get involved because kids had to get dressed, you have to walk them out together, it's really heightened security as you would expect in a correctional facility." Despite this additional programming, respondents expressed that they and their staff are well-trained in executing various program needs safely with youth in the building so the sport program was really no different. One respondent stated:

...I mean there hasn't been a lot of hurdles it's just kind of the nature of the environment that we live in, that we work in. That you kind of have to deal with certain things that normally you don't do, but I think we are so accustomed to secure transports, and housing youth, and administering medications, that it's just a matter of fine-tuning all those aspects so that it's done in a way so that everyone feels safe and secure in how we are going about it. (#13)

Within the context of the juvenile facility, respondents shared procedures "...to curtail what was previously going on in the building in the afternoons." (#1). This was often expressed as a very important, and sometimes challenging endeavor, as the facilities ran a very tight schedule with school and other treatment programming. One respondent (#3) shared just how important this procedure was in not only executing the program but in sending a positive message to youth, "...so we don't have other programming that conflicts with that so there isn't anything else that the kids would

get pulled from. Um because we know that that's important to them and it's just as important for their treatment as anything else is."

Lastly, to a lesser extent a few respondents (4/15) outlined structures within the juvenile facility or outside, which influenced the sport program implementation.

Respondents discussed that they were able to implement their program through the structure, support, and resources of public or charter schools within their facility, and engrain these relationships through employment positions such as Athletic Director.

One respondent explained:

...at that time our Youth in Custody Director through the State Board of Education, to really kind of take the lead on that and say 'okay if we want to do this, this is how we can do it' because then the school bought in. So each facility is ran by a school district in the area that they are in and so each school agreed to have it be a part of that...So that was a big part of it, plus they came up with a lot of the funding for the uniforms, and buying the equipment. This is the process that was really a working together between the Division and the State Board of Education and bringing that together and that's really what made it successful. (#12d)

Another respondent elaborated on their relationship with their charter school:

What happens is our, at [Northeast Region Facility B], our educational program comes through our school which is [Northeast Region Academy B] and [Northeast Region Academy B] is our charter school that is on campus. And so we run a full recreational program through them, so Monday thru Friday the youth attend what we will call PE, Physical Education, so each youth, because it's a school, we run it like a school. So with that being said, [Northeast Region Academy B] reaches out to other schools, other charter schools, and we compete with other charter schools. So we are a full functioning school, and our sports programs runs as a full-functioning school program. (#7a)



Other respondents described how these structures provided opportunities for employment positions within the facility which focused on the sport program. One respondent shared,

... we have a high school inside [Northeast Region Facility A] an accredited school and its recognized by [Northeast Region State A] and they didn't have an athletic director so as a part of my recreation department I wanted to start that program so um I just unofficially became the Athletic Director .... Like I said, we have a sanctioned high school within here and that's what I used to um participate with other high schools in [Northeast Region State A]. (#2)

Finally, structures at the facility or within the juvenile division, such as Chief of Volunteer Coordinators, helped to link community volunteers with the sport program to enhance capacity especially for sport-specific knowledge.

#### **7.2.5 Theme 5: Facility Philosophy: 'not to be afraid of being creative to overcome the obstacles.'**

The majority of respondents (13/15) shared an overarching philosophy at the facility around implementation, which was aligned with general organizational factors related to change, integration of new programming, and an overall treatment approach to programming with youth in the facility.

When it came to the overall philosophy of operating the facility, and specifically the implementation of the sport program, just over half of the respondents (10/15) displayed innovating thinking, problem-solving, and calculated risk-taking. Respondents shared that they continually worked to identify 'creative' and 'bold' programming strategies to work with young people in the building, and try different approaches when what they were currently doing was not working. Often this overarching philosophy was championed and reinforced by leadership and

administration, which is discussed in more depth in Theme 7: Leadership and Administration. One respondent shared:

It's great to see, I saw where we were at when I started there and to see where we are at now. If someone has told me 10 years ago you will be doing a lacrosse program, you are gonna be doing that, I wouldn't have been a believer. But I think seeing some of the issues that I was having in the building, I knew I had to do something different because obviously what I thought was gonna work wasn't the answer and with any intervention I came up with it didn't fix the issues that I was trying to fix. I would say be open-minded because I think, I think that's very important. Like I said if anybody would have told me 10 years ago that this is where I would be I wouldn't have believed it myself but just being open-minded and not feeling like as an administrator that you have all of the answers. Listen to your team, look around, see what other facilities are doing and I think you just have to try some things out. (#5)

This philosophy of innovation was matched with an attitude of problem-solving and working to identify and overcome barriers. Respondents discussed how a collective effort helped to drop barriers, drop territorialism, and make sure that whatever needed to be done to make the program successful was done. One respondent shared:

Just that its, there is always a few people who are shaking their head and worried because it is outside the norms of what we do or 'what about this and what about that?' with security or other issues and, but it's far, that voice, that small group of voices is far overwhelmed by the folks that want to do the problem-solving and know the value of this sort of participation. (#15)

Another respondent detailed this can-do attitude more specifically stating:

... I think the problem is trying, ya know, don't find so many reasons not to do it, find the reasons, 'yeah we can do this, yeah we can do this, it's no problem!' and I think that's, I think that's what is good about it and you just find the reasons 'yea we can make this work.' Cause a lot of times, even with the school department I hit a lot of roadblocks like 'oh no we can't do that, oh that's not right.' And I say 'wait a minute, if we did this, that would solve that

problem, and if we do it will solve that problem, so yeah we can do this.’  
(#14a)

In addition, respondents displayed an attitude of calculated risk-taking when it came to implementing new programming like the sport program. Multiple respondents expressed that you cannot allow fear to hold you back from providing programming and opportunities for facility residents. These comments were always expressed with a clear understanding that safety and security were paramount. One respondent (#15) expressed, “... to continue to understand the foundation of what we are doing which for us is simply safety and security, but to then not be afraid of being creative to overcome the obstacles to that, potential obstacles to that safety and security.” Another respondent explained:

...but from my perspective and the perspective of a lot of the staff is that we shouldn't be afraid to do something because something bad might happen. I just feel like that's a hard way to live your life and a poor expectation that we are putting on youth. Every day we are coming here telling them we are trying to change their lives but we are not providing them with the best opportunities, with ample opportunities to show us what they can do, and to prove to themselves that they can do it as well. (#11)

Several respondents shared their philosophy on how safety was the primary goal and basic necessity of the facility, and offered their viewpoints on how sport could be operated safely in secure settings. One respondent (#15) explained, “Security is always our premium its, we've got all the programming and everything else but ultimately, bottom-line is keeping all these kids and the community safe. And everything else, although we see a lot of other things as essential, that's the essential.” In specific regards to the sport program, a respondent (#5) shared, “I think, the most important thing is always safety. When we talk about running a program we are introducing a new sport and we are introducing new sports equipment. There is always

a fear that staff might get assaulted, kids may assault other kids, and safety just has to be your number one priority.”

In addition to innovative thinking, problem-solving, and calculated risk-taking, around half (7/15) of respondents portrayed a facility approach of youth development in programming, which highlighted an underlying philosophy of treatment. One respondent (#12a) explained, “I think its creating that this piece of an environment, where its education, this is athletic-based, this is the focus of, if we can help kids experience this as close as we can that it’s going to be a big win versus experiencing it through a facility lens or punitive lens.” Another (#7a) stated, “...And they understand that the goal is to provide our kids with everything they need to be able to adequately re-integrate back into the community which is our goal.”

Respondents continually discussed how they used the sport program to provide youth with development opportunities and experiences, again, reflecting a youth development and treatment approach. One respondent (#13) described, “It’s just youth programming, youth engagement. Ya know what are the best opportunities that we can provide these youth to progress and get the skills that they need so that when they leave our custody we have done everything possible to help them be successful?” Another respondent stated:

...these kids that got themselves here we have to think about what they needed and didn’t get. For them to get here, and we want to provide that for them. So if I were to say three things and this is something that this helps any kid no matter where their background is, if you have an adult role model outside of the home that takes you under their wing that’s huge for kid’s success, a sense of belonging whether in the community or on a team... if you have adults and peers with the same and similar interests those things will help anybody succeed. So that should be the focus of providing, those three things. (#2)

This philosophy helps to underpin the compatibility of sport programming with the facility's mission of rehabilitation and reentry (Theme 10: Compatibility).

Similarly, respondents shared how they used the sport program to help shift how the division or community viewed young people in the facility, supporting a transition from a punitive lens to a treatment lens. One respondent shared:

So I think we had an ROTC program from [Northeast Region State B] and [Northeast Region State C] and playoffs and that was the beginning for people to see that these kids are fine and they will be fine when they are with other people it's not like they need to be locked up and away from everybody. (#2)

#### **7.2.6 Theme 6: Program Champion: "You need a champion."**

The majority of respondents (12/15) discussed that having a program champion was critical to implementation. They talked about the role of the program champion as a central person to handle logistics of the sport program, and in a few cases contributed to the original adoption of the program. These individuals were described as passionate about sport and its benefits, and at times were individuals outside of the division and facility that advocated for the program.

Just over half of respondents (9/15) highlighted the importance of having an internal advocate for the program, a central person who handled the logistics, helped to identify and overcome barriers, and built relationships with the staff and the youth to help advocate for the program. One respondent stated:

But the success is, you look at a guy like [Mr. E] and I think he's a young guy, he hits the door everyday trying to figure out 'okay how are we going to get this, how am I going to do this.' Whereas everybody else is hitting on the door thinking about other things. So phys. Ed. [physical education] is number one on that person's agenda every day and that's the difference. It's like if you don't have an art teacher or a music teacher and your teacher is a math teacher, but you want a really good art program it's going to be hard to get there you have to have a program champion. And that's where I think a lot of the sports

stuff that we have done it's faded as the champion left... It's like the daily logistics where as if you have a guy like [Mr. E], who is hitting the door every day, he is able to scramble the resources and make sure that 'no, no we are going to make this happen.' It's like the little engine that goes up the hill that can, you need that person that is going to do that for this... You need a champion. (# 9)

Underlying this statement is that implementing the sport program is a large undertaking in the facility, and there are barriers especially related to other competing treatment programs. Thus, respondents shared that it was important to have someone that orchestrates all of the pieces and logistics. In addition to managing the program, it was continually shared that this person needed to build relationships with staff and youth to execute their job successfully. One respondent, who was a program champion at their facility, described this dynamic:

Yeah so in the beginning I would spend hours on my first day of the week I would come in and create a schedule. So I would get the program schedule whenever I saw any type of gap in any type of programming, I would create a schedule like 'here are some recommended things that you could do for this timeframe' and I would spend three or four hours every Tuesday on that, my first day of the week. And I would go to the units, post that, very centrally for both youth and staff to see. And I'm only on one floor at a time, there is only one of me. So when I'm on the floor that stuff's happening, and then I would go to the other floors and nothing was happening so the obstacle again was buy-in. Creating the relationships with staff, having them understand how important that it actually is that this stuff happens. And that takes time... (#11).

In helping to deal with logistics, finding time in the schedule against competing treatment programs, and rallying both staff and youth, display how the program champion addressed several barriers to implementation in the correctional setting (Themes B1: Lack of Staff Buy-in, B2: Youth Behaviors, and B3: Correctional Setting).

Many of these program champions were also described as people who had a passion for sport and believed in its benefits to young people, and this passion became contagious in the program and the facility. One respondent explained:

I think that you have to have that passion. You can, you have to have that passion and be able to, we can talk about all of the success that we've had in [Western Region State A], but you have to be able, you have to create and you have to invest to create that level of passion...that's really the secret sauce in this thing is being passionate about it and having enough flavor in it to where you own it...you have to put in your own passion and desires and that's when the real magic happens... the component that you're going to have to add to whatever we share is just that passion, drive, and personality that you put to it for it to be successful. (#12d)

In a few cases (4/15), the program champion was the individual that contributed to the original adoption of the sport program at the facility. Respondents described how either themselves, or another individual, brought the idea of starting a sport program to the administration, created a plan for implementation, and were resilient in making the plan come to fruition. One interviewee described:

I'm the recreation and athletic director here, and I've been working here for 27 years (laughs) so and, before that I was an athlete and thus my reason for wanting to start a program like this for kids here at [Northeast Region Facility A]. So I pitched my idea to the administration and they were like nope no way, these kids are going to be put on display and they just couldn't fathom doing it. And I'm like well that's not going to stop me. I went to the main principals association which is the organization that sanctions all of our sport programs in [Northeast Region State A]. So I went to them and I said 'What do I have to do to be a new athletic director?' And they explained it to me. And I'm like fair enough, and then I went back to the administration and I told them I will do all the leg work I will make it happen you won't have to do anything and when it's done I will let you know. You can give me your answer then...So there was a lot of people that were like nope we aren't going to do that and I didn't give up because I knew it was important. Thank god I didn't if it was that easy to give up on, it would never have happened. So it took me about 10 years to

get the programs up and running because it took that long for the current administration back then to wrap their arms around it and say yes. (#2)

Many of these individuals discussed doing work outside of their job responsibilities, and volunteering their time to get the program off the ground. One respondent (#10) reminisced, "...so at that time it was literally something I did and everybody did on the side I mean I had a full caseload, everybody had a full-time job. We were allowed to do it but we were doing it on the side...we just threw together. I mean we like begged, steeled, and borrowed for uniforms and we refereed the games."

Lastly, to a much lesser extent, a few respondents described program champions that existed outside of the division and facility. In these cases, individuals served as external advocates for the sport program and mainly helped to rally support for the program in the community by encouraging other schools to schedule games against the juvenile facility. In one case an external advocate helped to support adoption of the program by increasing the facility's capacity to offer the program, and serving as the coach with sport-specific knowledge and skills.

#### **7.2.7 Theme 7: Leadership and Administration: 'with everything, it starts with administration.'**

The role of leadership and administration in supporting program implementation was discussed by 9/15 respondents in a variety of ways. Respondents described the importance of leadership and administrators prioritizing, and valuing the program. This prioritization came in the form of allocation of financial resources, staffing, and space in the schedule to run the program. In addition, administrators valuing the program not only contributed to better programming but also permeated to staff and helped garner more staff buy-in. One respondent (#3) stated, "Having our facility administrator, and our deputy chief and chief see the value in that and really



encourage programming is really what helps drive it and helps it feel safe as well as enjoyable.” Additional respondents explained:

... just, with everything, it starts with administration. You set the tone for your staff. Everything trickles down. If you are excited about it, if you have passion about it, if you support it, if you make sure you’re there for those games and you’re doing everything you can to set things up and plan and prepare and get your staff excited about things, that’s key in my mind too... So that would be my second thing just really making sure that it starts with administration and really that that kind of synergy is ignited amongst the team. (#4)

Having supportive leadership, I think is really important because people generally fall in line if they know people at the top support it. So those leaders I think should be visible, to the extent they are able to participate, or at least just be there... What is really important is a strong indication from leadership that they believe in this program, that they support this program and if nothing else, be there so people can see you there and if you can interact better yet... But I think there has to be a strong indication of commitment and that it’s not a whim or half-way effort, there has to be passion... So that’s what I would say, strong commitment from the top. (#1)

Respondents also described that it was important for administrators to have open-communication with their staff, listen and work to address concerns around the sport program, and encourage everyone to get involved in the effort. Respondents shared how administrators can serve a vital role in not only supporting this open dialogue, but modeling a problem-solving attitude, highlighted in the previous theme on facility philosophy (Theme 5: Facility Philosophy). One respondent shared:

But one thing that I saw that was really cool, again I was a supervisor at the time, and I was doing detention but I saw the program administrators being involved meaning the guys that are in the front offices that have the interactions with the kids and go down, they were there at the games, and they were helping with the safety and security piece and so it wasn’t ‘hey supervisors and staff you’re on your own’ it was the whole facility is really focusing on this event and making sure it’s safe for everyone. So I think everyone’s got to be involved and everyone’s got to be participating and in working through, troubleshooting through those logistical things. (#12a)

### **7.2.8 Theme 8: Strategic Planning: ‘have your game plan.’**

These (6/15) respondents continually emphasized the need to have a plan, and to be very strategic and thoughtful in the execution of the plan. This process of planning was often discussed in terms of how it aided Specific Practices and Processes of the program (Theme 4: Juvenile Justice-Specific Practices and Processes). Along with planning logistics and procedures, respondents explained that the plan should include the student to staff ratio, have all protocols listed out, and include any emergency actions should something happen. One respondent (#2) stated, “I think the most important things is to have your game plan on everything you want to do all upfront with all scenarios taken care of...” Another respondent further detailed:

...Ya know, I think you’ve got to have a plan. You’ve really got to, whether it’s the administrative team or whoever you have to figure out...The most important thing we can do for these kids is make them feel safe so they can ya know flourish, and they can risk and have that opportunity to stretch and grow. That can’t be done without a certain part of planning, so it’s not just shooting from the hip like, ‘hey lets go play this team or let’s do that.’...In my mind, those things are kind of pre-planned in advance and again you are being thoughtful, deliberate... (#4)

Furthermore, this strategic planning was often referenced as means to overcome barriers related to the correctional setting (Theme B3: Correctional Setting).

One respondent explains:

I think because we work in this correctional setting we are always thinking worst case scenario. ‘What if this happens, what if that happens?’ Well a lot of times things can go wrong at any given time and I think that’s just, if you have things setup, and you have a clear plan, and you are able to communicate with your staff I think you just need to be able to prepare for, what happens if this does happen? We just need to make sure we have an appropriate response to that. (#5)

### **7.2.9 Theme 9: Seeing is Believing: ‘it didn’t really I think get the buy-in until they actually experienced it and saw it.’**

A few respondents (4/12) described a phenomenon in which staff and administrators fears were placated and buy-in increased around the sport program once people saw it in action. One respondent (#12a) shared, “I mean when you see it work and you see it happen you’re like ‘holy cow this is a really, really positive thing.’ So it’s amazing...And really, again, it didn’t really I think get the buy-in until they actually experienced it and saw it.” Underlying this message is the actualization of perceived benefits (Theme 1).

Respondents also described that seeing the sport program helped people to expand or adapt their view of what is possible in a correctional setting, stating:

To just kind of build, to come up here and see what’s happening in a gym with our particular population I think really opens the eyes to a lot of staff. Cause sometimes we will have new staff that are coaches and so they’ll walk in the gym and we got 60 plus youth in here and 20 staff and some refs and some family members and it’s just like ‘wow this is not a correctional facility.’ So just opening their eyes and be able to see that is really huge. (#13)

This support spoke to barriers related to the correctional setting and ideals around what should exist in that environment, as well as lack of staff buy-in (Themes B3: Correctional Setting and B1: Lack of Staff Buy-in).

Along with barriers related to the correctional setting, which will be elaborated on in a later section, a lack of staff buy-in as well as youth behaviors were identified as barriers to sport program implementation that existed at the facility-level.

### **7.2.10 Theme B1: Lack of Staff Buy-in: ‘What’s the biggest challenge? My answer is people.’**

Respondents (6/15) shared that a lack of buy-in from staff impacted implementation on several levels. If staff did not have the motivation to get the youth

off the unit or outside, it could mean that the sport program was not run that day. Also, a lack of staff buy-in was discussed as contagious, and at times, impacted how youth in the building viewed the program. Finally, if staff did not buy-in to the youth development philosophy, respondents described that sometimes in their involvement in the program they were overly competitive with the kids and ultimately impacted what the program was trying to accomplish. Respondents shared:

So maybe the person under her thinks it's the greatest thing since slice bread but the person running the facility that day that I have a game thinks its lame, is more that correction mindset. 'Yeah [Coach A] I don't know what to tell you it's [obscenity] sports, we have this to deal with, not happening.' They don't care...So I think it's funny, its earlier 'what's the biggest support?' and my answer is 'people' and 'what's the biggest challenge?' my answer is people. And when your department is big not everyone is on the same page philosophically. So that's difficult, that's a difficulty. (#10)

Staff. That's, at the end of the day if if you have six staff on a shift, right? And two of them are saying 'ah why are we doing that?' the kids are going to feed right into that every single time. So having the backing of the staff is the A1 most important thing to having the program be successful on a day to day basis. Which is why that first six months I was looked at ya know skeptically from both staff and residents so that was a hurdle, so I focused more on the youth because that's why I was there, obviously, and then once they saw me interact with the youth they would understand. (#11)

#### **7.2.11 Theme B2: Youth Behaviors: 'you are gonna have some youth that aren't as emotionally regulated.'**

According to respondents (6/15), behaviors among some of the young people in facilities, specifically challenges to regulating their emotions and working with other youth in the sport program, had created some barriers. In addition, multiple respondents shared that many of their youth had not played organized sport before

coming to the facility so learning how to be a part of a team and the expectations were difficult. In regards to youth behaviors, one respondent explained:

I think some of the challenges are at times you are gonna have some youth that aren't as emotionally regulated and I think that's the best way to put it. Um ya know, if there are incidents in the building or in the program a lot of times it's during a sporting event when they get very competitive. Things get high and they aren't able to stay balanced, and regulate that, and you worry about that when you're taking these youth to another facility and having them be involved with other youth who aren't as emotionally regulated and hoping that there isn't gonna be a fight, an assault, or an incident, or gang issues or things that are said. So there are some barriers there but I'll tell you for the most part our kids have always been on their best behavior... (#4)

When emotions have boiled over, respondents did describe that altercations occurred during the sport program:

Definitely fights, we have definitely had our fair share of fights like when someone gets fouled too hard. Again they are not used to that kind of contact in a sport that, arguing with the referee over calls and being able to redirect. Have them kinda express their disagreement without being disrespectful, cursing at people and those kinds of things. (#3)

In addition to challenges regulating emotions, this respondent is also highlighting that many of these young people have not typically been involved in organized sport and thus there are sport norms that they struggle with. One respondent explained:

Like our kids, you got kids who have been playing in the community, we'd be playing schools where kids have played baseball since tee ball when they were little kids. If you watch our kids play softball or baseball they don't have those kind of skills. Often, they are not, generally our kids have not played on organized sports teams. Often it's this is their first time ever doing this being on a sports team, so for them it's getting used to it really. (#6)

Finally, a few respondents shared that the limited number of youth in facilities, which was identified as product of juvenile justice policy reform, has been a barrier in fielding teams. One respondent (#7b) stated, "...we've had some challenges we were going to start a football team a few years back but our population dipped. We didn't have enough kids, everybody would have had to play and not everybody was interested."

### **7.3 Finding II: Implementation of the sport program is reliant on the compatibility and adaptability of sport within juvenile facilities.**

In exploring the characteristics of the innovation (i.e., sport program) that played a role in implementation, compatibility and adaptability of the sport program with the juvenile justice system were revealed as themes for innovation-specific factors for effective implementation. This finding is supported by the following themes.

#### **7.3.1 Theme 10: Compatibility: "It's purposeful and it's practice."**

Almost all respondents (14/15) discussed how the implementation of the sport program was highly compatible with their organization's mission, and described how the sport program was used to reinforce skills that young people were learning in treatment programming and as part of a larger rehabilitative approach. The program was also compatible with the various behavior systems they operate in the building, and was appealing to the population they serve.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (12/15) discussed how the sport program was used to reinforce skills that youth were learning in treatment at the facility, and provided them a space to practice those skills. One respondent (#14b) shared, "...it's important that its purposeful, you are not playing sports just to play

sports but your using those as opportunities to reinforce some of the skills that you're working with them on in the CBT [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy].”

Similarly, respondents discussed how the sport program served as a setting for staff to reinforce treatment modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectal Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Restorative Justice through language and structures. For example, one respondent described the sport program as:

... an opportunity to utilize a restorative, one of the restorative practices, whether it's a mediation or circle. We do a lot of one on one restorative mediation but we also do circles. Like if we feel like the situation impacted the rest of the unit or the rest of the team then we will invite everybody because they are a part of that community, their team is a community. So if one person spazzes out during a game and it causes them to forfeit the game, everybody was impacted by that one person's actions and so we bring them to the circle and we use the talking piece as a way for people to express how your action's impacted me. (#7b)

Similarly, another respondent explained:

Our program uses a DBT model, dialectical behavioral therapy model, and one of the skills for emotion regulation is called A,B,C please. The A is accumulating positive experiences and the B is building mastery. We really emphasize sports and athletics and recreation as ways to accumulate positive experiences. (#3)

The sport program was highlighted as a particularly helpful space to identify behaviors and reinforce treatment skills because of the heightened emotions and potentially triggering competitive nature of sport. One respondent (#1) stated, “... those kids would bring along the others who were frustrated maybe causing trouble. But again we want to identify these criminogenic triggers and work with them.” In providing this opportunity, respondents explained that kids could practice the skills

they were learning in a safe and controlled environment with the support of trained staff. One respondent described this process:

In the CBT programming we go over those skills and in a reflective way of kind of past behaviors, but when you add the sports programming in and you have your staff trained in those skills, they are able to reinforce it. And so we have youth who has got anger issues and have difficulty when they are like the 'poor sport' when a staff work with them on it they are able to reinforce some of the skills that we go over in CBT... for instance we actually had a staff versus youth basketball game and we had a youth who had really a difficult time regulating his emotions cause he was, he just had some anger issues and that was triggering for him. So staff pulled him aside and they talked to him about 'What is your bubble talk? How can you handle this situation better?' and he was able to use those skills to be able to pull himself back and get back into the game and so remember I said it has to be purposeful so that you're not missing those opportunities to reinforce those skills that they need to make better choices. (#14b)

Along with practicing treatment skills, respondents shared that the sport program allowed youth to practice life skills to help them better reintegrate when they return home. The sport program provided them sport-specific skills that could support them in trying out for high school and community teams, but more importantly, provided them a space to practice what it means to be on a member of a sport team. This includes teamwork and learning to positively engage with peers and adults, showing up regularly for practices, handling disappointment, and persevering through challenges. Respondents depicted their sport programs as mock or trial programs to prepare youth for the real thing and increase their chance of success.

To a lesser extent, respondents made direct links between the sport program and evidence-based treatment practices. Acknowledging that they need more research to support claims of evidence-based practice, interviewees shared how the sport



program fit into the buckets that they know of from CBT, DBT, and Restorative Justice. One respondent shared:

...I did evaluate our sports program when I first became the Superintendent here about 3 ½ years ago, and in evaluating it I just was looking at how does it align with evidence-based practices? Are we playing sport just to play sports, or is there some way that we can connect it to criminogenic needs and in assessing the sport program that they have. What I learned was, one, the youth are learning mastery so that the first time they actually are able to feel accomplished in something, two, it gives the youth an opportunity to build relationships with the staff and see them as something else besides officers and so there is a lot of mentoring that happens and coaching that happens within the game and the practices and also the emotional regulation. We have youth who have difficulty dealing with their emotions for them to go out and hit a softball it's a way for them to kind of let some of that trauma out, without it being something that completely breaks them down. So there are just so many benefits that align with what the best practices were so it was an easy, it was an easy, activity to get behind for our department and kind of like re-evaluating what is best and what is best practices. (#14b)

The way in which respondents shared how the sport program was used as a setting to reinforce and practice treatment, was underpinned by facilities' overarching philosophy of treatment and a youth development approach, which was described in facility philosophy (Theme 5: Facility Philosophy).

In the logistical implementation of the sport program, 87% of respondents shared that the program was aligned with the behavior system at the facility, and this compatibility helped to decrease behavior issues among youth and supported buy-in to other treatment and school programming. The overwhelming majority of facilities treated the sport program as a privilege, and thus required that youth be of a certain behavior level, tag system, or status to participate. Along with participation requirements, respondents continually remarked that sport was a big motivator for kids to conduct themselves appropriately in the building, but also encouraged buy-in for

other programming in the facility. One respondent explained, “I would definitely recommend it for any facility, particularly if you want young people to buy-in to the treatment and the program. You got to give them something that they are also interested in.” (#7b)

Finally, a simple concept but not to be overlooked, was the idea that many kids are drawn to and enjoy sports, and this aided in the compatibility of the programming with youth in the building. 10/15 of respondents shared how the majority of the youth in their facilities enjoyed the opportunity to play and compete, many were natural athletes, and that garnered continued buy-in for the program and the various expectations to compete in the program. One respondent (#4) explained that it was the youth in their facility that advocated for the sport program stating, “Ya know I think we were just giving the youth a voice at that time and our secure youth were really wanting to compete... So we were giving the youth a voice and that was something that was important to them that they were sharing with us.”

Although not common, one respondent even shared how youth who had been released from their facility would come back to compete on the sport team, and if the game was far away they would ask facility staff for help with transportation. The respondent shared:

The midnight basketball we have youth that graduates from the program and come back to play on that team, which is a rarity when, if you think about it, this kid has been, I don't want to say incarcerated but the kid was here, incarcerated, for 8-9 months and yet he wants to come back and play on that team that's a pretty strong bond of what the staff and the other kids and everything... the kids don't really want to volunteer to come back in here, for them to want to do that (#14a). They come back they will actually come back on, so it was every Friday night they would show up on Friday night so they could play on our team. (#14b) We even, I mean they would take, they would take Uber to get there. We've had situations where they have called and asked if we could pick them up to participate on the team. It's not even just being

able to participate on a community team they become so attached to the staff here that ya know are also their coaches, they do, they want to come back and participate with them. (#14a)

**7.3.2 Theme 11: Adaptability: ‘the sport part is 10%, and the sportsmanship, and the comradery, and the teamwork, and the learning skills is 90%.’**

In talking about the sport program, the majority of respondents (12/15) shared how they were able to adapt various components of the sport program to better fit their population and their needs. The interpretation of adaptation was kept quite broad and included adapting the philosophy of the sport program to one that valued youth development over competition, changing structures in the sport program as a result of this philosophy, activities to “prep” youth for participation in the sport program especially when competition was involved; and concrete changes to the sport structure to help accommodate challenges their youth population faced, and explicitly building in treatment principles to the sport program.

According to over half of respondents (10/15) they intentionally worked to implement a youth development philosophy in their sport programs, which they described as a better fit for their program’s purpose. Unlike their counterparts in mainstream schools, whose sport programs by high school emphasize a competitive model, respondents shared an emphasis on youth development. This youth development philosophy in the sport program mirrored the youth development approach of the facility (Theme 5: Facility Philosophy). One respondent stated:

For me it’s like, it’s the same thing as the tenth kid on your bench in basketball in 3rd grade. You want to teach him, and you want him to be part of the process, get the physical benefit of participating in a sport, get the social benefit of participating in the sport... So I think the juvenile justice phys. Ed., sports thing is probably more akin to youth sports than it is to high school sports. (#9)

This youth development approach was often discussed with an emphasis on sportsmanship, and helping youth to develop positive social skills through being a good sport. One respondent (#8) shared, “I know for [Coach A] tons and tons of, the sport part is 10%, and the sportsmanship, and the comradery, and the teamwork, and the learning skills is 90%. It’s really about sports as kind of symbol of life and how you navigate and how you get better and how you know when to call it a day or whatever.”

This value on sportsmanship translated into specific structures and actions that were integrated into the sport program. A few respondents shared how they would have a ‘sportsmanship talk’ before every competition. One interviewee described:

So during like the basketball season for example after they are done warming-up I go out to the center of the court and I bring out both teams, all the coaches, the scorekeepers, everyone, and we have a little talk and it’s just, it started out as it felt necessary with this population of kids to remind them of what is expected because this is not a culture, this sports culture is not what they are used to... And it started out as feeling it was necessary...It’s just a reminder of like ‘we are not going to use foul language, we are not going to disrespect the referees, we are not going to disrespect each other, our coaches, we are going to be respectful and we are going to have fun, because this is about fun.’ (#10)

This emphasis on sportsmanship even adapted how some facilities celebrated their players, one respondent explained this relationship further stating:

So what’s the ultimate goal here? The ultimate goal that we felt like was be competitive, compete, do all those things that are natural and healthy, but at the end of the day we decided like a sportsmanship trophy to the winner of the tournament. Not necessarily the team with the best record but that’s how we decided to go about it. As a coaching staff from all of the facilities, we would vote on a sportsmanship winner and if it happened to be the team with the best record then so be it and if it happened to be the team with the worst record then so be it. But that was the ultimate goal was to to convey we are looking for

certain behaviors, and certain things that while you're competing you can continue to move forward with. So that's how we started it. (#13)

Focusing on youth behaviors more specifically, (9/15) of respondents shared how they prepared young people to participate in the sport program. This preparation took on a range of casual to more formal activities that were focused on decreasing the possibility of an incident between youth during the sport program and increasing young people's commitment to act appropriate during programming. Casual activities involved conversations with players about what might go on at practice and in games and how coaching them through how they would respond appropriately. One respondent shared:

We have adapted in ways like, like I said, the daily communication with the players to make sure that they are mentally prepared for whatever they might see, whatever might happen to them. So that's an adaptation that we have to have, that other people wouldn't consider. Like we have to run through scenarios with these kids and tell them you are going to have somebody who is going to try and make you angry, they are going to say stuff on the field just to bait you because you are from [Northeast Region Facility A]. What are you going to do? What's your plan? And that's what we have to do every day for every season which is not a bad thing, its good practice for them. (#2)

This preparation also occurred to support team dynamics, especially when facility staff and coaches were aware that two young people did not get along. This was described as either issues they had in the building, or issues that stemmed from a history in the community. One respondent walked through the type of conversations he has with youth:

...if we know that two youth have a history with each other we simply just speak with them because we don't want the possibility of something bad happening prevent us from doing something...Say, 'I know x,y,z is going to be down there and I know that you do not get along with x,y,z if something were to happen down there you are never going to participate in the inter-unit thing

again, just please understand that, and you being here for x amount of months that's a long time of you going without something you actually enjoy.' So it's asking them to do a favor for themselves at the end of the day, which again that comes down to the relationships you're able to create with the youth so yeah it's a lot of moving parts always, but being straight-forward with them is the best thing that you can do always even if you're giving them bad news or negative news or something they may not like. If you are straight-forward and direct they will understand, they'll respect it, and they'll be able to move on. (#11)

In a more formal manner, respondents utilized staff specialized in conflict resolution to help young people work out their differences, or at least come to an agreement of non-violence, before their participation. One respondent explained:

...on the frontend of that, there was a lot of work that was done with conflict resolution. So a lot of our, I shouldn't say a lot, some of our youth have some issues with other youth inside of our system. We had to develop a process where we would outline if a youth had a conflict with another youth that was severe enough...one, would we even allow those youth to come together, and two, if we did allow that what work were we going to do ahead of time to make sure they were prepared to be there? So our Conflict Resolution Coordinator, who is a very big part of this program that we run, she would do some mediations so ya know we would get youth a and youth b in, say, 'You guys have a pretty substantial issue are you willing to talk and basically commit to no problems while you participate in this event?' And 99% of the youth choose to do that, we have only had a couple youth who have said 'I don't really want any part of that and I don't want to put myself in the position where I'm going to make a bad choice.' So the frontend of these tournaments that's a really big part of it, outlining what youth from what teams and what issues could occur when we bring these youth together.... And I think the work ahead of time is really key especially when you're talking about the internal stuff. The conflict resolution piece in setting those standards and being clear with those standards to the youth. (#13)

Respondents shared that if the dispute felt that it might rise to a more substantial issue they would ensure that more staff were in attendance at the sporting event or even use a buddy system where one staff member is explicitly assigned to a youth.

Several respondents explained that they also created a Code of Conduct that they required their players to sign before participating in the sport program. The Code of Conduct was described as a behavioral contract which clearly laid out expectations for appropriate behavior and consequences if the contract was not upheld. These additional actions to prepare the young people again displayed the problem-solving and innovating approach many facilities displayed in their implementation (Theme 5: Facility Philosophy).

Finally, 7/15 of respondents discussed how adaptations in coaching, expectations for behavior, and decisions around what youth get to participate were adapted to accommodate the youth population they were working with. Several respondents shared about the incredible challenges that many young people in facilities face before being committed (i.e., poverty, homelessness, violence), the impact that this has on them, and how coaches and administrators adapted what would be typically expected to accommodate those needs. For instance, what interviewee shared:

Yea, these kids, like a kid could get a bad phone call, I mean we've had kids whose parents have died and then end up off the phone in a miserable mood and do something dumb and it's a direct result of the phone call he had and we are going to take that into consideration of whether he plays a game or not because that could be the one thing that pulls him right out of that swamp. So we will use that and talk to the program manager and we will come up with an agreement and maybe if he sits for a quarter and he's the star player. And its gonna kill him to sit on the bench for that long and it's probably more of an impact than him staying back in the unit and not playing the game at all. (#2)

Another respondent shared about how short-term goals and adapting academic requirements for participation were critical to support kids involvement in the program and ultimately the implementation of the sport program:

This was another thing that was hard for people to grasp that when you're dealing with this population of kids, we have to focus on short-term goals and small goals, and not overwhelm them for whatever reason. And every kid's story is different, but some kids whatever their home is violent, difficult, stressful, poor, they are hungry. Right? Some kids have been abused, some kids are living a gang lifestyle and they are into immediate gratification, so whatever is going on we just learned that. ...So I go to the schools and I do not require a certain GPA, I do not require we don't require that...and here's my opinion: we can't and we don't expect perfection we expect progress. And so I've told principals if you have a kid who's failing every class and comes to school one day a week, and he shows up for the basketball meeting or the football meeting or whatever...and the next week he comes to school every day, and by Thursday he has 3 F's and 3 D's instead of 6 F's you better damn well make sure that kid is on that basketball court...(#10)

To a lesser extent, a few respondents described how they adapted the structure of sport by intentionally building in treatment principles (i.e., DBT, Restorative Justice). One respondent explained:

...so we do dialectical behavioral therapy in our facilities. So um we, one of our Supervisors who was getting his Master's degree at the time, his name is [Mr. D], he said you know what [Mr. B] I got this great idea let's take the tip skill and I'm going to put it inside Spark so not only are we teaching them exercise but I'm going to use this DBT skill set within the activity... and I think really this tip skill being introduced now is just reiterating more of that kind of thing so that evolution has been cool to see from traditional sport to also now 'hey we are using DBT treatment lets teach these kids this skill set within that 30 minute timeframe.' (#12d)

#### **7.4 Finding III: Sport programs in juvenile facilities are implemented with a considerable focus on safety, an influence from its larger correctional environment.**

Intertwined through several themes was an emphasis on safety during implementation, and at times, the obstruction of implementation which were both the result of influences from the correctional environment in which the program was



housed. As previously discussed, the overwhelming majority of respondents outlined how they utilized their own facility staff as coaches for the sport program (Theme 3: Staff as Coaches), and that this helped to uphold safety and security measures within the facility. Furthermore, the majority of respondents shared specific practices and processes, mainly related to logistics and procedures (Theme 4: Juvenile Justice-Specific Practices and Processes), which were created to implement the sport program within the secure environment. These logistics and procedures entailed the creation of committees to plan sporting events, coordinate additional security, and evaluate each player who participated to ensure they would not be facing off against co-defendants and that the committee was confident the young person could participate safely.

Underpinning many of these decisions was a facility philosophy that held safety as its main priority (Theme 5: Facility Philosophy). Respondents reflected on a philosophy of calculated risk-taking in implementation of this new programming, but repeatedly stressed that the main priority of the facility was always safety of its youth, staff, and the community. There were times when this interfered with the ability to implement the sport program. Identified in more detail later, the majority of respondents shared how challenges related to the correctional setting (e.g. lockdowns, behavior sanctions, logistical issues related to security) at times, led to cancellations or significant modifications of the implementation of the program on a day-to-day basis.

What is reflected in a deeper interpretation of these themes collectively, and with the support of the conceptual framework, is an influence and interaction between the two microsystems (sport program and juvenile facility). These themes reveal how the juvenile facility, with its secure nature, influences the sport program and

contributes to a greater focus on safety, and at times, impedes implementation. This impediment, at times, rose to the level of an identified barrier to implementation.

#### **7.4.1 Theme B3: Correctional Setting: ‘the facility comes first.’**

Several respondents (11/15) discussed challenges which were related to being in a correctional setting and working with an adjudicated population. These challenges included concerns over safety and security and potential liability issues, trying to work within a correctional institution where the operation of the facility comes first, and to a lesser extent, a concern about feeling less in control over security during large sporting events and transports, and finally competing with other programming priorities.

In regards to the influence of liability, one respondent shared that this concern among the division has stifled the growth and varying opportunities that they hoped to implement in the program, stating:

...kind of the red tape where I’m pretty much more than, I have 100% reign of how I operate day to day within my bounds but when I try to really do something extra there is always an eye scene out for safety and security more so than cost. Because it’s really never a cost issue, it’s more of a logistical and safety and security concern when it comes to bringing people in. I’d say the biggest obstacle for administration is obviously liability. (#11)

Respondents also shared the challenge of operating the sport program within the institution of a correctional facility, which has specific and unique rules and norms for operation. That not only impacted day-to-day operations, but at times led to cancelled practices or competitions. One respondent explained:

So specifically with facilities, probably the biggest thing that’s hard for me is the facility comes first. So like what’s going on at the facility comes first. So I mean there are days when there will be a fight maybe in a totally different unit or pod and maybe there is only one kid on the team from that unit but they lockdown the facility so no one gets to go. That just didn’t, this is again where

the difficulty comes with this being law enforcement and being correctional and being, it's like when we lock down the facility all movements stop and they don't get to go. In my world, wait, I have this other school at the gym right now warming-up, waiting to play and now these kids lose out cause. And you know they don't care, they don't care what I think. (#10)

One respondent elaborated that there was always an 'eye scene out for safety and security' that increased structure and order in the correctional setting. This posed barriers to not only the day to day programming, but also the compatibility of the sport program in the facility (Theme 10: Compatibility), which was not always able to accommodate sport programming activities. A resolution to this barrier was often outlined as strategic planning to put specific practices and processes in place to meet increased safety needs (Themes 4: Juvenile Justice-Specific Practices and Processes and 8: Strategic Planning). Similarly, this increased correctional structure at time caused friction with the youth development philosophy utilized in the sport program.

Similarly, with the very structured environment of the facility, 6/15 of respondents described how the sport programs often had to compete for scheduling with a variety of other programs. And at times, would not be run if the appropriate staff and processes were not in place for that day. Respondents shared that this created a barrier for implementation if the sport program was not designated as a priority by administration and facility staff. One respondent stated:

I just think the business of the day is going to push back against anything that's not declared as a priority and it's like 'okay we are going out in the yard, okay well we need two additional people for perimeter security.' Like in the old days we would get a janitor and a teacher and a clinician. People that are not in the direct care mix and have them sit on chairs outside. The security layout says you have to protect that particular fence because kids have gone over that fence so you need to have people there. And just getting organized, it's so easy, it's like okay this kid has to get, he has an abscess tooth he has to leave the facility, I have to send two staff with him, that kills the outside activity

because you don't have the staff to take the kids out back. It's like the daily logistics... (#8)

One respondent (#12d) elaborated on the schedule at the facility explaining, "A constraint that I guess you'll see is we run a very tight schedule and a very tight ship as far as what a day looks like, so ya know trying to fit everything in in that timeframe is pretty stringent with groups and all those expectations." With this tight schedule, the sport program was not always prioritized, especially in a growing field emphasizing evidence-based practices. One respondent shared:

...I know that when I became the Superintendent here that there was a lot of concerns that I didn't see the value of the sport program... it took a long time for me to get them to recognize that I wasn't trying to take the sport program from them. And it's a realistic fear um because ya know our industry has moved in a direction where we have certain like ya know lingo, trigger words as far as evidence-based practices, best practices, cognitive behavioral, and the sports terminology doesn't necessarily align with it. So definitely that has been an obstacle for the sports program. (#14b)

#### **7.5 Finding IV: Sport programs in juvenile facilities are implemented with features of PYD.**

Several themes provided an understanding that sport programs were implemented with features of PYD, the identification of these PYD program features was supported through the conceptual framework, and comes from the existing literature (Lerner, 2004). First, respondents described how staff in the facility served as coaches and although this was most often cited as necessary to uphold safety and security, several respondents shared about how their staff who served as coaches built strong rapport with their players and served as role models for them (Theme 3: Staff as Coaches). Although the sustainability of the relationship is questionable considering

the length of commitment, the presence of positive adult-youth relationships were outlined in the implementation of the program.

Second, almost all of the respondents shared how the sport program was compatible with the facility's mission and used to reinforce and practice treatment (Theme 10: Compatibility). Although respondents were specifically referring to treatment skills, in which this terminology may be largely influenced by the juvenile justice setting, I believe it is reasonable to draw a connection between treatment skills and life skills. Representing, to a degree, the presence of life-skill building activities within the program.

Third, the presence of the sport program and the opportunity to participate within a juvenile facility signals the existence of opportunities for youth to participate in leadership of family, school, and community activities (Lerner, 2004), although at its most basic-level. Yet, many respondents did share the inclusion of family and community partners in the implementation of the program. These three components represent features of PYD programs.

#### **7.6 Finding V: Sport program implementation in juvenile facilities is influenced by community-level factors but they were not found to be critical factors.**

The following themes contributed to the finding that sport program implementation was influenced by community-level factors but they played a more limited role than factors at other ecological levels. In addition to the themes on funding and research, the absence of discussions around policy in interview data further contributed to the understanding of the limited role of community-level factors.

### **7.6.1 Theme 12: Funding: ‘this is less expensive than anything else we do here.’**

The majority of respondents (12/15) highlighted the role that funding played in the implementation of the program, but this role was described in various ways including that funding was a non-issue, that the sport program was very inexpensive to operate, that staffing was the most important budget item, and that funding was supported through structures inside and outside of the division/facility.

A few respondents (5/15) indicated that funding was a non-issue and acquiring funding had never been a challenge. These respondents described that they were always able to access funding through budget operating accounts within the division or state. It is important to remark that these respondents were not indicating that funding was not important, but its role was more covert because it had always been present.

Twenty-seven percent of respondents shared that funding was not a critical issue because the sport program was very inexpensive. One respondent (#14b) joked, “It’s the least expensive, this is less expensive than anything else we do here (laughs).” Interviewees reflected on the materials that were needed for the program, and many identified that because they ran the sport program “in-house” it was not a large added cost. One respondent thoughtfully reflected on how the sport program had survived for twenty-years despite varying financial influxes and outflows in the department, signaling that it did not take a lot of money to run the program and funding was not imperative to operation. The respondent (#14a) shared, “Well they have had the sports program for what, 20 years? And budgets, and budgetarily we have gone from sections where we did not have a lot of money or resources to when we did have a lot of resources and our sport program continues regardless of the impact of, the fiscal impact that we have in the department.”

Identified by multiple respondents (4/15) was that the most expensive part of running the sport program was staffing. Respondents talked about funding staff positions that could manage the sport program, and also ensuring enough staff were at events to make sure it ran safely. A respondent shared:

I mean currently right now, for me, it was really just getting the positions carved out and funding the two positions... I think it's, for the most part, I think you're talking staffing resources. Think about it lacrosse, soccer, basketball, football, as long as you're playing flag football, there is no cost to the equipment. It's a couple of decent balls and a little bit of an investment in prepping the field, it's a very low cost, it's a staffing resource. (#9)

One respondent did express that funding a position to manage the sport program was essential and helped to certify the sustainability of the program, stating: "...But but we had it resourced and that makes all the difference in the world because otherwise it's just a really great idea and when the staff leaves the program dies."

Finally, a few respondents (4/15) outlined how structures inside and outside of the facility, outlined in Theme 4: Juvenile Justice-Specific Practices and Processes, helped to provide resources to support implementation of the program. Respondents shared how the public or charter school, and the larger school district that they were affiliated with, paid for equipment, uniforms, and league fees.

#### **7.6.2 Theme 13: Research: 'there are more than enough studies out there to show you why that's important for a young person especially in a long-term facility.'**

Respondents (10/15) used the term "research" to refer two different processes. First, respondents referenced the use of juvenile justice and youth sport literature to support their decision to implement the program, and described how research influenced the way in which the program was implemented. One respondent (#11)

shared, “Obviously, there are more than enough studies out there to show you why that’s important for a young person especially in a long-term facility...” Another stated:

Ya know, the research, the research is out there right? And we all know it, being a part of athletics, athletics is just a really common ground a lot of people can excel in whether you’re the best athlete or not just that team formation, the ability to take coaching, the ability to fail but then ya know not sit on that failure but come back and be part of that team still and keep progressing. Just all those things that athletics provides that are ya know that are a little specific to that environment. (#13)

One respondent spoke specifically about the research around girls’ sport participation stating:

...we want to make sure that we are doing something that works as we look at the evidence and this research- based groups and programs, on those same lines, looking to increase on the physical activity and the participation with girls because when you look at the statistics on that kind of thing; young ladies who do sports in general, activities in general, and team sports in general. Team sports more specifically some of the likelihoods then when they are doing these things versus not of abusive relationships, early pregnancy, unwanted pregnancies, graduating, the likelihood of living in poverty, all kinds of different metrics that’s true for boys for lots of negative markers there but for girls is just overwhelming... (#15)

Respondents also shared how the research influenced their coaches and helped to adapt the ways they engaged with their players, stating:

I think something that has been very big for us is just coaching through some of the trauma. Getting our coaches to understand, some of the trauma that our kids have experienced so maybe when you are yelling at a kid during the course of the game or a play it gives coaches time to think about how they are communicating with the kids and what kind of response you may see as a result. I think that was very eye opening for our coaches. (#5)



Second, respondents used the term “research” to refer to how they gathered information on practical implementation from other juvenile facilities and public and charter school districts. This helped provide a picture of what could be implemented, and showed that others had done it successfully. One respondent shared:

...I had previously worked at a residential treatment facility when I was in graduate school and they had a recreation program so I kinda had an idea of how things could run. We looked at what school districts do, what our state does, our state facilities they run sporting programs. So we just took bits and pieces from what other people were doing. (#3)

### **7.7 Impact and Response to Covid-19**

The majority of respondents (13/15) shared that the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions had completely halted or severely impacted implementation of the sport program. One respondent (#8) explained, “Shutdown, everything is shutdown. It’s horrible, it’s horrible. Our kids, it’s horrible...Everything came to a screeching halt especially sports because of the contact. It’s horrible.” Respondents not only discussed the cancellation of practices and games, but also the facility’s limited capacity to adapt due to the immense strain on all parts of facility programming. One respondent stated:

Yeah, so I think Covid has definitely affected everything in the program. It’s one of those things where we have to put different restrictions in place just trying to keep the students and the staff safe so that means, we had to restrict our visitors, we had to restrict families and once we stopped allowing folks to come in it impacts our programming and the kids are ultimately affected. So I think it’s been ya know very disappointing for the kids. I think at times it’s been very frustrating for staff because now we are, we are everything, we are now the teachers, we are now the entire sports program, we are the custodians some days. We are wearing so many hats that um we know the kids are frustrated. (#5)

Along with burnout of staff, and challenges related to isolation, respondents shared additional impacts of the cancellation of sport on youth specifically mentioning the mental health challenges that emerge as a result of not being able to run around and compete.

Some respondents (7/15) shared adaptations they made to the program to continue to run a form of sport programming that met Covid-19 safety protocols. These adaptations included dropping competitions, but continuing to run drills at practice. This also included introducing e-games (e.g. video games) to help support staff and youth interactions, and rolling out ping-pong where each kid had their own paddle and the ball was sanitized in between games. One respondent described a particularly creative response:

We decided to not do a basketball season so we did a volleyball season instead because everyone is all spaced out. At every timeout we wiped the ball down, disinfected the ball. We were able to do a volleyball season. Then one of our officers came up with a basketball shoot-out game cause the kids really wanted basketball. So it's an ultimate basketball shoot-out and the teams still compete against one another, but they are playing on opposite ends of the court. And so they shoot 1 point shots, 2 point shots, and 5 point shots. The 1 point shots are like right under the basket, 2 points are by the free throw line and 5 points are out behind the 3 point line. So you got two teams on opposite ends and they can have 3 players so it's really about strategy... (#3)

Lastly, a few respondents (3/15) commented that both the kids and the facility staff are looking forward to when they can get back to playing sports. One respondent (#4) shared, "The kids keep asking, the kids want to, they look forward to it."

## **7.8 Summary of Results**

This chapter presented the five major findings and their supporting sixteen themes which revealed how sport programs are implemented in long-term, secure

juvenile correctional facilities including barriers to implementation. The chapter was organized by overarching finding, but linkages across themes were highlighted. Analysis tools such as the data summary tables were included to help provide transparency in the research process, and the use of thick description from key informant quotes was used to build confidence in the findings and support their transferability across contexts. The following chapter will ground these findings in the existing literature, highlighting similarities, differences, and new knowledge. Including, the utility of the theoretical framework, and where the findings support or diverge from the Durlak & DuPre Framework. Lastly, a discussion on the implication of the findings for policy and practice.

## **7.9 Limitations**

As with any methodology, there are limitations to the study's design which need to be highlighted and, if possible, addressed in order to strengthen the quality of the study. First, due to a lack of prior research on sport programs in facilities, it could not be definitively determined that exemplar cases were operating sport programs with PYD principles. Rather, criteria for sampling outlined that facilities would fit inclusion criteria if they reported a purpose of PYD, selecting at least four of six constructs representing PYD on the survey. Second, a weakness of qualitative interviews includes a reliance on respondents' ability to accurately recall pertinent information (Alshenqeeti, 2014). In addition, by only conducting qualitative interviews this does not allow for the opportunity to triangulate data generated from multiple methods or sources. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, observations were not feasible, and it is currently unknown in the literature of the existence of any documents related

to governance of sport programs at the administrative level, so a plan for document analysis was not possible.

## **Chapter 8**

### **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the key informant interviews was to build knowledge on sport program implementation in a sample of long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities. As such, the themes that emerged from these interviews have been coalesced to represent main, overarching findings on how these programs are implemented. Along with answering the research question, the findings help fill previously identified gaps in the literature, including: (1) how physical activity programs are implemented in real-world settings (Cassar et al., 2019) and (2) a rich description of what affects implementation of physical activity programs in real-world settings (Cassar et al., 2019), and (3) evaluating the utility of Durlak & DuPre's framework when applied in a real-world setting. A discussion of the findings and their contribution to the identified gaps in the literature will be included in the chapter.

In evaluating the utility of the Durlak & DuPre Framework, this framework was mainly used as an analytical tool for coding and helped to interpret findings for the study specific to implementation. This chapter will begin with a discussion on the utility of the Durlak & DuPre Framework in this study, and where there was alignment, divergence, or extension beyond their framework. The study's conceptual framework was used in conjunction with the Durlak & DuPre Framework to evaluate the themes from a more expansive view, recognizing their existence and interplay within the juvenile facility and juvenile justice system in the U.S. Additionally, the conceptual framework provided a lens to understand PYD influences within the sport

program implementation. A discussion of the findings of the study through the lens of the conceptual framework will also be included in the chapter.

The chapter will also include a discussion of the main, overarching findings and the themes that support these findings as they are integrated within the existing implementation literature as well as within juvenile justice and PYDS literature when appropriate, and implications for future research. Lastly, recommendations for policy and practice will be provided based off of the conclusions.

### **8.1 Durlak & DuPre Framework**

Overall, the Durlak and DuPre Framework, see Appendix A, served as a helpful guide to the study, specifically the utility of the ecological model which helped to position the implementation of the sport program within the larger juvenile correctional facility and correctional system. Findings of the study support the use of a multi-level ecological approach to studying implementation and supported several of the constructs in the framework including: ‘Perceived Benefits of the Innovation,’ ‘Perceived Need for the Innovation,’ ‘Specific Practices and Processes,’ ‘General Organizational Factors,’ ‘Program Champion,’ ‘Compatibility,’ ‘Adaptability,’ and to a lesser extent, ‘Funding,’ ‘Administrative Support,’ ‘Research,’ and ‘Strategic Planning.’ A more detailed discussion of the nuances of these findings within the framework will occur in the sections to follow.

Although the framework was a starting point for analysis, and is largely supported by the findings in this study, there were some challenges and deviations from the framework. Currently in the framework, the ‘Provider Characteristics’ which includes ‘Perceived Need for Innovation,’ ‘Perceived Benefit of Innovation,’ ‘Self-efficacy,’ and ‘Skill Proficiency’ is separate from both ‘Factors Related to the

Prevention Delivery System: Organizational Capacity’ which largely reflects organizational factors, capacity, as well as staffing and leadership the ‘Factors Related to the Prevention Support System’ which includes ‘Training’ and ‘Technical Assistance’. In the case of this study, the ‘Provider Characteristics,’ or rather the facility characteristics, were closely intertwined with the organizational capacity and the support system to implement the program. During the coding process, it was not helpful nor accurate to parse out these three categories, and thus they were combined to one ecological level of Facility Characteristics. Due to the unique nature of the correctional setting in which implementation of the program occurred, I recognize that this may have contributed to the collapsing of the multiple codes to make-up Facility Characteristics. Juvenile correctional facilities have heightened security, and as such, this contributes to a more closed system in which there is less involvement with the “outside.” This may be the reason that additional ecological levels were not as present since much of the capacity to operate the program came “in-house” to meet safety and security needs. Thus, this reveals that the setting of implementation, or the context within which the study occurs, is important and may require adaptations to the framework to account for unique settings and setting characteristics. If ‘Provider Characteristics’ is intended to represent an individual provider, although ‘Staffing’ and ‘Leadership’ exist within ‘Organizational Capacity,’ I would recommend adapting the name to promote greater clarity, or collapse to represent one ecological level.

Lastly, the existing framework represents ecological levels across macro-, exo-, meso-, and micro-ecologies, but does not include participants. I believe this to be a significant oversight as participants are active agents in the program and can both facilitate and create barriers to effective implementation. As was found in this study,

youth behaviors within the juvenile facility created challenges for implementation. This is consistent with existing literature which has found participants, or patients, play a role in implementation including their level of buy-in, and their individual determinants which influence both the process and outcomes of implementation (Chaudoir et al., 2013). Recommendations would be to include individual-level factors within the Durlak and DuPre Framework for Effective Implementation, which can empower future research to define, account for, and measure constructs at that level.

## **8.2 Finding I: Sport programs in juvenile facilities are largely implemented through factors at the facility-level.**

As was described earlier, the Facility Characteristics in this study encompassed what Durlak & DuPre's Framework labeled as 'Provider Characteristics,' 'Factors Relevant to the Prevention Delivery System: Organizational Capacity,' and 'Factors Related to the Prevention Support System.' With the closed nature of juvenile justice facilities, respondents reported that implementation of the sport program largely occurred within the facility, and as such, the facility was really the sole factor in implementation of the program. There were seven themes that emerged from interview data with direct alignment with Durlak & DuPre's Framework, a discussion of these themes, and ones that extend beyond, will outline the critical role of the facility and its capacity to implement the program and provide an integration with existing literature.

From almost every aspect of sport program implementation, respondents detailed how facets of the facility worked to operate the program. From the facility staff serving as coaches, Theme 3, to specific practices and processes undertaken by the facility to incorporate the sport program, Theme 4, as well as the overarching philosophy at the facility to encourage innovative programming, Theme 5, much of



the process of implementation occurred at the facility-level. Even the program advocates including the ‘Program Champions’ and ‘Leadership and Administration,’ Themes 6 and 7, existed within the facility or larger division.

This finding is consistent with the existing implementation literature which highlights the integral role of an organization’s capacity to implement programming (Cassar et al., 2019; Locke et al., 2019; Thaker et al., 2007). It should be noted that much of this literature is in relation to effective implementation, and since this study focused on description of factors rather than assessing effectiveness, more research is needed to understand the connection between organizational factors and effective implementation of sport programs in the juvenile justice system.

Furthermore, deviating from the Durlak & DuPre Framework, the conceptualization of facility characteristics as organizational capacity is more in line with Hall’s et al. (2003) multi-dimensional approach to capacity, which includes human, financial, process and infrastructure, relationships and network, and planning and development capacities. This represents a helpful merger of Durlak & DuPre’s ‘Provider Characteristics’ with that of ‘Factors Relevant to the Prevention Delivery System: Organizational Capacity’ and ‘Factors Related to the Prevention Support System.’

Exploring the implementation literature by specific study themes, there were several areas of overlap, although classified using different terminology. In a study utilizing a panel of experts on factors of implementation of physical activity programs in youth-serving settings, Lau et al., (2016) also identified the importance of engaging staff in implementation, leadership motivation and engagement, and program champions. Furthermore, the importance of specific practices and processes,

administration support, and strategic planning was also identified in the existing literature (Naylor et al., 2015; Riley et al., 2001; Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

A challenge that exists as we continue to build this knowledge base is the use of different terms, and a lack of consensus on their placement in varying ecological levels. For instance, although findings in this study found support for the importance of ‘Perceived Need for the Innovation’ and ‘Perceived Benefit of the Innovation,’ in alignment with Durlak & DuPre (2008) and others (Naylor et al., 2015; Lau et al., 2016), questions arose about which ecological level these concepts represented. For this study, perceived needs were closely tied to a lack of youth development experiences that the sport program helped to address, and then the benefits of participating in a sport program, which were unique to the innovation of sport. Thus, it seems that many of these factors are more related to the innovation, but the perception of the value of the innovation is a critical component which should remain within the provider characteristics. Future research would benefit from standardizing concepts within implementation science in order to more clearly and effectively assess alignment and divergence between study findings, as well as greater attention to the ecological placement of factors of implementation.

Within juvenile justice literature more specifically, the role of staff as sport coaches is of particular importance when considering the significant role of staff in the treatment process (Taxman et al., 2014). Respondents shared that staff’s involvement in the program helped support job satisfaction and adapted the relationship between staff and youth from one built on directives to one grounded in mentorship and youth development. This could potentially have an impact on the overarching philosophy of treatment at the facility and continue to encourage a movement towards youth

development rather than retribution and punishment. Future research should explore the role of staff in the implementation of sport programs within juvenile justice settings to more closely evaluate the staff-youth relationship and implications for youth development.

Finally, within juvenile justice and sport and physical activity literature, findings around the perceived benefits of the sport program and the way in which it provided normalcy to youth was in alignment with previous findings from Hilgenbrinck (2003). In a study of the administration of physical education programs within ten, male secure juvenile justice facilities in Texas, Hilgenbrinck (2003) found that the terms physical education, recreation, and sport were used interchangeably, but respondents expressed a belief in utilizing sport to normalize, socialize, and transition youth back to the community.

### **8.3 Finding II: Implementation of the sport program is reliant on the compatibility and adaptability of sport within juvenile facilities.**

In exploring characteristics of the innovation which hold importance for implementation, results identified that the compatibility and adaptability of the sport program to the juvenile justice setting was found to be instrumental for implementation. This finding is consistent with the existing literature in implementation science which has previously identified these two factors, although adaptability has a more complicated relationship with implementation, which will be discussed further (Mihalic et al., 2004; Richard et al., 2004; Rogers, 2003, Naylor et al., 2015; Lau et al., 2015).

Almost all respondents (14/15) shared that the implementation of the sport program was compatible with the facility's programming and the population they

serve. This compatibility came in the form of using sport to reinforce and practice skills that youth were learning in treatment programming, which was a part of a larger rehabilitative approach at the facility. This finding is consistent with existing literature on the use of sport as a hook, tool, or vehicle for which larger interventions take place with individuals who are incarcerated (Meek & Lewis, 2014; Parker et al., 2013; Andrews & Andrews, 2003). Yet, this study extends beyond this understanding to outline a more nuanced depiction of using sport to practice these skills.

Respondents shared how the sport program was a particularly helpful space to identify behaviors and reinforce treatment skills because of the heightened emotions and potentially triggering competitive nature of sport, which is more akin to real-world scenarios where the ability to retrieve and utilize treatment skills is critical. Within experiential learning and wilderness therapy literature, there has been ongoing dialogue about the value of practicing skills within more high stress environments, which can also support transferability of life skills to real-world contexts (Tucker et al., 2015). This transferability of life skills, when considered again within the youth sport literature, is an area that continues to lag behind in its understanding of how, and to what extent, youth transfer skills they learn in sports to non-sport settings (Pierce et al., 2017). This has considerable implications for the juvenile justice population, in which the concept of transferability is vital for successful reentry. Finally, this finding highlighted the opportunity to couple physical and mental health interventions together, addressing one without the other, typically addressing mental health while ignoring the importance of physical health, has been shown to be problematic (Tucker et al., 2015).

In addition to being compatible with the facility's mission, the sport program was also found to be compatible with the youth population they serve. Respondents shared how many of the youth enjoyed the opportunity to play and compete, and it helped support buy-in with other programming in the facility. Lau et al. (2016) reported a similar finding around the importance of "fun" in regards to program characteristics which influence implementation of youth physical activity interventions.

Another characteristic of the innovation revealed as integral to implementation was adaptability. The majority of respondents (12/15) discussed how they adapted the sport program to fit their youth population, this included: adapting the philosophy of the sport program to one that valued youth development over competition; changing structures in the sport program as a result of this philosophy; activities to "prep" youth for participation in the sport program especially when competition was involved; concrete changes to the sport structure to help accommodate challenges their youth population faced; and explicitly building in treatment principles to the sport program. This finding is particularly important for the ongoing debate between adaptability and maximum fidelity in implementation science and offers support for the former.

Adaptability of the sport program was highlighted as critical to the implementation in this more unique environment, and without such adaptations, it may restrict the feasibility of implementation. Recognizing that implementation occurs in the real-world, it supports the opinion that some level of adaptation is necessary (Ringwalt, 2003). Furthermore, recognizing the unique expertise of practitioners, adaptations to fit the organization and population's needs could help support improvements in implementation and potential effectiveness (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

More research is needed on what aspects of implementation are required for fidelity in sport programs, which could be adapted to fit organizational needs, and the role of practitioners in decisions to adapt.

#### **8.4 Finding III: Sport programs in juvenile facilities are implemented with a considerable focus on safety, an influence from its larger correctional environment.**

Supported by the use of the ecological lens in the study, several themes revealed that the implementation of the sport program was greatly influenced by its correctional environment. These themes included Theme 3: ‘Staff as Coaches,’ Theme 4: ‘Juvenile Justice- Specific Practices and Processes,’ and Theme 10: ‘Compatibility.’ Respondents shared how it was important to use facility staff as coaches to help meet safety and security needs, discussed various logistics and procedures related to upholding safety during practices, games, and travel, and the sport program’s alignment with their facility’s behavior system. Specifically, this alignment with the behavior system reinforced a more punitive approach to implementation where the sport program was treated as a privilege instead of a right. At times, this correctional environment was even identified as a barrier to implementation, Theme B3: ‘Correctional Setting.’ Respondents explained that the needs and safety of the facility come first, and that concerns related to liability, and safety would at times put a halt to the day-to-day operation of the sport program.

Woven through several of the themes was the considerable focus on safety due to the nature of the correctional setting and the population they were working with. This was particularly evident in Theme 5: ‘Facility Philosophy’ in which several respondents identified that foundational to everything that they do at the facility is safety, and that safety and security were paramount. This overarching philosophy at

the facility was influential in the implementation of the sport program, and clearly signaled an interplay and influence between the two ecologies of facility (microsystem) and sport program (microsystem), which is referred to as the mesosystem.

This finding speaks to the call for more research on the influence of different variables across ecological levels in real-world program implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This is especially important in the juvenile justice system where “treatment” programs are continually implemented within the larger correctional setting. Abrams et al. (2005) reported similar findings in their study of how psychological treatment strategies were implemented into a traditional correctional model in a juvenile justice setting. Through field observation and semi-structured interviews, the researchers identified several “paradoxes of treatment” with the blending of treatment, behavioral, and correctional approaches, which can have implications for program and youth outcomes. This line of inquiry will be elaborated on in a later section, due to its implications for positive youth development programming.

Finally, the findings of the study give support to the use of a multi-level ecological framework for understanding implementation which is not only in alignment with Durlak & DuPre (2008), but consistent with the existing literature on implementation science (Fixsen et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2005; Stith et al., 2006). Specifically, it recognizes the important role of the mesosystem, and the ways in which implementation occurs and is influenced across various ecologies.

### **8.5 Finding IV: Sport programs in juvenile facilities are implemented with features of PYD.**

Evident through several themes in the results, sport program implementation was described as having features of PYD programming. The development of this finding was supported by the study's conceptual framework which is informed by PYD and PYDS literature. The Durlak & DuPre Framework speaks to program implementation, but this was one of those instances where the development of the finding was supported by use of the conceptual framework. Considering the prior literature on the importance of purposefully constructing, and implementing, sport programs with a focus on PYD (Holt & Neely, 2011), this additional analysis was critical.

Prior research has outlined three large categories for PYD program features, often referred to as the "Big 3," which include (1) positive and sustained adult-youth relationships, (2) life-skill building activities, and (3) opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of family, school, and community activities (Lerner, 2004). Presence of all three themes in the implementation of the sport program was discussed among several of the respondents and represented in the themes: 'Staff as Coaches,' 'Compatibility' and 'Perceived Benefits' (Themes 3, 10, and 1).

This finding is important as the juvenile justice system continues to transition away from a punitive philosophy and towards a treatment philosophy utilizing positive youth development programming (Butts, Pelletier, & Kazemian, 2018). Furthermore, it potentially provides a very unique opportunity within a juvenile justice setting to incorporate family and community, which has been identified as a key component in positive youth development programs (NCRIM, 2002; Lerner, 2004) as well as supporting successful reentry (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014).



Although several themes provide support for the presence of the Big 3 PYD features in sport program implementation in the juvenile justice system, more research is needed to establish if sport programs in juvenile facilities can be recognized as PYD programs. This is important as PYD programming is gaining popularity as the juvenile justice system shifts towards a treatment philosophy (Butts et al., 2018). Future studies that more explicitly focus on the setting features of the program, and explore their connection with the eight promising setting features of PYD programs established in the literature (NCRIM, 2002), will be better positioned to make this determination. As such, this will be a critical next step to understanding the setting features of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities and their empirical ties with PYD features.

#### **8.6 Finding V: Sport program implementation in juvenile facilities is influenced by community-level factors but they were not found to be critical factors.**

Within community-level factors, previous implementation literature has outlined differing roles that funding, research, policy, and politics play in either supporting or creating barriers to effective implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2005; Stith et al., 2006). Findings from this study reveal an influence of these community-level factors, but found that they currently do not play a critical role in implementation in this context. In terms of funding, 12/15 of respondents shared that it was important but there was varying consensus on its essentialness; with a notable number of respondents identifying that it was either a non-issue or very inexpensive. This description of a more nuanced understanding of the degree to which funding influenced implementation is consistent with existing literature which found that “funding is a necessary but insufficient

condition for effective implementation” (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This sentiment was also supported by Naylor and colleagues (2015) in a systematic review of factors affecting implementation of physical activity programs.

Ten of fifteen respondents did indicate the role of research in supporting implementation, but often described a piecemeal process where evidence from two separate bodies of literature (i.e., juvenile justice and youth sport) had to be combined by practitioners to make a case for implementation or inform implementation because of a gap in knowledge and evidence on sport programs in juvenile facilities. To a lesser extent, some respondents even described this lack of evidence as a barrier to implementation in a field with a growing dedication to evidence-based practices. At times, this meant the sport program could not compete for scheduling needs with other evidence-based treatments. This finding has two important implications for future research.

First, there is a need for more research on sport programs in juvenile facilities. Second, is the insight into how such research could be more effectively built in real-world settings. Recognizing both the research and practice challenges of a treatment or program achieving the level to be considered an “evidence-based practice,” there is a movement towards “practice-based evidence.” Practice-based evidence recognizes the considerable lag in dissemination of evidence, the challenges of implementing a program in a real-world setting, and the barriers to evaluating such programs; and thus works to address this by partnering researchers and practitioners to conduct formative work in real-world settings and design and test feasible evidence-based programs (Ammerman et al., 2014). Considering the unique challenges in the juvenile justice setting, practice-based evidence is a suitable way forward to design and implement

studies on sport programs within the justice system and help create evidence on these programs which can help support more effective implementation on a broad scale.

Recognizably absent from the data were the mention of the role of policy or politics in implementation, which could be a result of lack of policy in this area. Currently, along with inadequate dissemination and diffusion of evaluation research and policy advocacy for physical activity programs (Owen et al., 2006), there continues to be limited policy on recreation, physical activity and sport in the justice system at both the federal and state-level. In a review of states' written authorities for juvenile justice facilities, Léon et al. (2020) found that there was not a shared definition of recreation, only 70% of states had daily mandatory minimum requirements; the language of sport was not included in any of the written authorities; and only 10% of facilities included "games", of which 4% included competitive and 4% included non-competitive games. Currently, the absence of the role of policy in implementation, coupled with the lack of policy to promote sports programs in juvenile justice, highlights an existing gap in the potentially important role policy can play in effective implementation. This is especially important when considering the contribution policy has been found to play in institutionalizing new procedures and practices and supporting both administrative and financial infrastructure in implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). The findings of my study coupled with those in the existing literature provide support for the development of policy in the area of recreation and sport in the juvenile justice system.

## **8.7 Implications for Overall Study and Conceptual Framework**

Returning to the purpose of the key informant interviews within the larger dissertation; research questions were guided by the conceptual framework to explore

how sport programs (microsystem) have been implemented in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities (microsystem). The interrelationship between the two microsystems, previously identified as the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), was the focus of inquiry as the uniqueness of the environment in which the sport program is housed was of particular importance for this study. Findings showed an interrelationship between the sport program (microsystem) and facility (microsystem) in which there were reciprocal influences between the two: sport program influence on facility, and facility influence on the sport program.

This interrelationship was revealed in how the facility adjusted to adopt the new programming in the facility. Also, how implementation of the sport program adapted the staff-youth relationship, helped support youth buy-in to facility programming, and supported overall morale at the facility. This finding has particular importance for the potential ability of the sport program to support a transition from a more punitive environment to one that is more aligned with positive youth development principles, but more research is needed to support and clarify that connection.

It was also found that the sport program was influenced by its larger correctional environment of the juvenile facility, and as such, there was a particular focus on safety in the program. This finding is important as prior research has found the important role of setting and the degree to which they foster PYD with youth offenders in a community context (Smith et al., 2007). Furthermore, this finding addressed calls in the youth sport research arena to recognize and evaluate the larger ecological environments for which youth and sport programs are immersed (Coakley's, 2011).

The reciprocal influence that was found between sport programs and the juvenile facility for which it was housed is consistent with literature recognizing the nature of the mesosystem and further supporting an ecological perspective recognizing the importance of interconnections and influences between ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Smith et al., 2016).

Finally, the focus of the interview study was influenced by findings from the survey, which showed considerable variance in sport program offerings across the country. Based on the results from key informant interviews, the role of policy was recognizably absent in sport program implementation. Through the lens of the study's conceptual framework, this finding helps to provide a better understanding of why such variance may exist and why implementation currently occurs largely at the facility-level. A more in-depth discussion into this finding will occur in the conclusion chapter as findings from the survey and key informant interviews are merged to discuss their combined meaning for our understanding of sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities, and specifically, implications for policy.

## **8.8 Recommendations for Policy, Practice, and Future Research**

The lack of policy utilized for sport program implementation in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities is potentially tied to the limited policy on sport, recreation, and physical activity in the juvenile justice system at both the federal and state-level, and a dearth of policy advocacy of physical activity programs more broadly (Owen et al., 2006). Increased policy advocacy and policy development around sport, recreation, and physical activity in the juvenile justice system is warranted at both the federal and state levels to support the institutionalization of programs in facilities and actualize the potential benefits of such programming.

Increased advocacy and policy development can help to institutionalize and expand this type of programming across the states, and empower practitioners, but based on the study's findings there are also implications for practice that have immediate relevance. Despite the larger correctional environment, findings showed that administrators and practitioners in facilities were developing ways to integrate sport programming into the non-traditional environment of the facility. This was often executed through logistics and procedures that were adopted as a result of strategic planning. These are critical elements facilities should consider when trying to implement this type of programming.

Potentially a function of the closed nature of juvenile facilities, findings revealed that sport programs were mainly operated "in-house," with division's utilizing their own staff to serve as coaches. This was found to be particularly helpful in building positive relationships between staff and youth. Based off of this finding, it is recommended that staff within facilities take leadership roles within the sport program to help support rapport-building with youth in the facility, as well as uphold standards for safety and security.

Furthermore, findings around the reported benefits of operating the programs for youth and the overall operation of the facility were substantial. Particularly, the opportunity the sport program provided to reinforce and practice treatment skills among youth residents. Administrators should consider the potential that sport programming could have in the juvenile justice system, and its potential to create synergy with other treatment programs to support improved outcomes for youth.

For future research, beyond specific recommendations given within each of the findings discussed previously, an emphasis should be placed on practice-based

evidence in this area. Considering findings on the use of a piecemeal process around evidence-use in implementation, due to a lack of evidence on this specific topic, there is need for more research on sport programs in juvenile facilities, which could be most efficiently and effectively constructed by utilizing practice-based evidence. This has implications for practice, research, and the gap between them.

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The rationale for this study was the result of parallel gaps in existing policy and academic literature on sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities in the United States. As such, this was the first study undertaken in the United States to explore sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities on a national scale. The significance of the study's findings have implications for policy and practice in juvenile justice, theoretical contributions to the literature on PYDS and implementation science, and ultimately, contributes to potential improvements in the long-term health and outcomes of youth who are incarcerated. This chapter will provide conclusions and recommendations based on a unified assessment of the survey findings and key informant interview findings. The synthesis of these two studies increases our overall understanding of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities from multiple lenses.

#### *Inequity in Access to Sport*

Based on survey findings, 55.1% of respondents reported operating sport programs in long-term, secure juvenile correctional facilities compared to 44.9% who were not. This finding reveals considerable variability in the landscape of sport programming across the United States. This finding is the first glimpse we have had into the overall landscape of this type of programming, and is important as it suggests



inequitable conditions in access to sport for youth who are incarcerated. Among facilities that were operating sport programs, findings also identified disparities in sport program offerings by gender.

Considering these findings in the context of the interview study, which found that sport program implementation largely occurred at the facility-level and that community-level factors, specifically policy, were absent from any role in implementation, reveals the inadequacy of existing policy in upholding equitable conditions across facilities. Viewing these findings through the lens of the conceptual framework, we can see that public policy overlays or encompasses all of the ecosystems. As it stands now, the limited federal policy and varying state policies on recreation in juvenile facilities fall short of supporting facilities and administrators in implementing this type of programming consistently across all facilities and thus contributes to inequitable conditions for youth in the juvenile justice system.

Based on this conclusion, and prior knowledge that public policy plays an important role in institutionalizing new procedures and practices (Durlak & DuPre, 2008), I recommend that revisions are made to the federal policy on recreation in juvenile facilities to extend it to include sport programming as a way to recognize and uphold this valuable programming across all facilities and for all youth. Similarly, policy development and revisions need to occur at both the state and facility level to include sport programming and the infrastructure necessary to implement it. In order to support such development and revisions, I recommend increased policy advocacy at the intersection of juvenile justice, health, and sport, physical activity, and recreation.

### *Inequity in Access to Sport is Socially Produced*

Considering the number of youth who are incarcerated in the United States, their poor health upon entering and exiting juvenile facilities, and the strong literature on the broad health benefits of youth sport participation, I recommend that this requires a reconceptualization of juvenile incarceration as a public health problem, and a greater recognition of sport as a social determinant of health. When considering the inequity in access to sport programs for youth who are incarcerated through a lens of public health, and more specifically the social determinants of health (SDoH), we can understand that these inequitable conditions are socially produced. This occurs through, "...the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels" (WHO, 2020), which is the result of public policies (Knight, 2011). Again, the gap and variance in public policy contributes to varying sport access, and conditions, for youth in facilities. This inequity in access to sport for youth in facilities is socially produced and thus unjust, unfair, and avoidable (Whitehead, 1992). This not only requires a further integration of public health, juvenile justice, and sport literature, but also requires greater reflection on the utility of PYDS especially within juvenile justice settings.

### *A Transition from PYDS to SJYDS*

Findings from the survey and the key informant interviews identified that sport programs in the juvenile justice system are implemented with a purpose and features of PYD. Due to the focus and nature of the study, these programs cannot be sanctioned as PYD-programs, but rather that they have features of PYD principles. This finding is important as it does show support for programming in juvenile facilities that is

adopting a strengths-based approach, which is in opposition to the prior deficit and punitive approach historically adopted in the system. Yet, when we reconceptualize the problem as one involving public health, it shows that we need to take this one step further and move away from the individualistic nature of PYD.

With an increased recognition of the importance of social conditions, including access to sport, I recommend a transition from PYD and PYDS in the juvenile justice system to one of Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD). SJYD incorporates many of the strengths-based principles of PYD, but also acknowledges and works to address the social and economic forces that oppress young people (Ginwright & James, 2002). Practitioners and future researchers should focus on how integration of SJYD and sport (SJYDS) can further support both young people and the environments for which they live in order to thrive.

#### *Sport Programs are Feasible and Important in Juvenile Facilities*

Although the study did not look at youth outcomes from participation, based on findings from the survey and key informant interviews, when integrated with prior literature, it shows that sport programs are both feasible and important for juvenile facilities and the youth within them. Findings from the interview study revealed that sport programs are currently being implemented in a variety of secure settings, are done in a safe manner, and have reported benefits for youth participants as well as for the overall operation of the facility.

This conclusion contributes to several recommendations. First, it again supports the expansion of public policy to support sport program implementation in the juvenile justice system. This expansion can be, and should be, supported by well-

informed policy advocacy on the thoughtful construction of sport programs informed by SJYD and SJYDS. Furthermore, this expansion of policy and policy advocacy is dependent on increased research and knowledge on sport in the juvenile justice system, which should be created through an understanding of the larger correctional environment, would benefit from the use of SJYDS, an understanding of SDoH, and further integration with a public-health perspective. This research could be most efficiently and effectively produced through practice-based evidence.

Lastly, I recommend that administrators and practitioners in the juvenile justice system adopt and implement thoughtfully constructed sport programs for youth in their facilities, of which the implementation can be informed by the findings of this study. The findings of this study show that sport program implementation can be done in a safe manner in the juvenile justice system, and providing such programming upholds the equity of access to sport that all youth deserve.

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## Appendix A

### FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS (DURLAK & DUPRE, 2008)

<p><b>I. Community Level Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Prevention Theory and Research<sup>c</sup></li><li>B. Politics<sup>a,b</sup></li><li>C. Funding<sup>a,b,c</sup></li><li>D. Policy<sup>a,b</sup></li></ul>
<p><b>II. Provider Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Perceived Need for Innovation<sup>b,c</sup> Extent to which the proposed innovation is relevant to local needs</li><li>B. Perceived Benefits of Innovation<sup>b</sup> Extent to which the innovation will achieve benefits desired at the local level</li><li>C. Self-efficacy Extent to which providers feel they are will be able to do what is expected</li><li>D. Skill Proficiency<sup>a,b,c</sup> Possession of the skills necessary for implementation</li></ul>
<p><b>III. Characteristics of the Innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Compatibility (contextual appropriateness, fit, congruence, match)<sup>b,c</sup> Extent to which the intervention fits with an organization's mission, priorities, and values.</li><li>B. Adaptability (program modification, reinvention)<sup>b</sup> The extent to which the proposed program can be modified to fit provider preferences, organizational practices, and community needs, values, and cultural norms</li></ul>
<p><b>IV. Factors Relevant to the Prevention Delivery System: Organizational Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. General Organizational Factors<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Positive Work Climate<sup>a,b,c</sup> Climate may be assessed by sampling employees' views about morale, trust, collegiality, and methods of resolving disagreements</li><li>2. Organizational norms regarding change (openness to change, innovativeness, risk-taking)<sup>b</sup> This refers to the collective reputation and norms held by an organization in relation to its willingness to try new approaches as opposed to maintaining the status quo</li><li>3. Integration of new programming<sup>b,c</sup> This refers to the extent to which an organization can incorporate an innovation into its existing practices and routines</li><li>4. Shared vision (shared mission, consensus, commitment, staff buy-in)<sup>b</sup> This refers to the extent to which organizational members are united regarding the value and purpose of the innovation</li></ul></li></ul>

**B. Specific Practices and Processes**

1. Shared decision-making (local input, community participation or involvement, local ownership, collaboration)<sup>a,b,c</sup>

The extent to which relevant parties (e.g., providers, administrators, researchers, and community members) collaborate in determining what will be implemented and how

2. Coordination with other agencies (partnerships, networking, intersector alliances, multidisciplinary linkages)<sup>a,b,c</sup>

The extent to which there is cooperation and collaboration among local agencies that can bring different perspectives, skills, and resources to bear on program implementation

3. Communication<sup>b</sup>

Effective mechanisms encouraging frequent and open communication

4. Formulation of tasks (workgroups, teams, formalization, internal functioning, effective human resource management)<sup>a,b,c</sup>

Procedures that enhance strategic planning and contain clear roles and responsibilities relative to task accomplishments

**C. Specific Staffing Considerations**

1. Leadership<sup>a,b,c</sup>

Leadership is important in many respects, for example, in terms of setting priorities, establishing consensus, offering incentives, and managing the overall process of implementation

2. Program champion (internal advocate)<sup>a,b,c</sup>

An individual who is trusted and respected by staff and administrators, and who can rally and maintain support for the innovation, and negotiate solutions to problems that develop

3. Managerial/supervisory/administrative support<sup>a,b,c</sup>

Extent to which top management and immediate supervisors clearly support and encourage providers during implementation

**V. Factors Related to the Prevention Support System**

**A. Training<sup>a,b,c</sup>**

Approaches to insure provider proficiencies in the skills necessary to conduct the intervention and to enhance providers' sense of self-efficacy

**B. Technical Assistance<sup>a, b, c</sup>**

This refers to the combination of resources offered to providers once implementation begins, and may include retraining in certain skills, training of new staff, emotional support, and mechanisms to promote local problem solving efforts

## **Appendix B**

### **NATIONAL SURVEY OF SPORT PROGRAMS IN JUVENILE FACILITIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this national survey on sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities in the United States. This survey is part of a research project being conducted by a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Delaware. The survey is focused on understanding the landscape of sport programs in post-adjudicated, long-term secure juvenile facilities. To achieve our goal, it is important to hear from administrators and staff, like yourself. This survey should only take 3-5 minutes. It asks about general characteristics of your facility, whether your facility has a sport program, how many programs (if applicable), and the purposes for the program(s).

Your participation is voluntary and there are no consequences for you if you choose not to participate. You may also stop the survey at any time.

If you do choose to participate, the University of Delaware has strict guidelines to ensure the confidentiality of your responses. Your responses to the survey will remain confidential, and will never be linked to you in any data products, reports, or other publications. Your responses will be combined with others' responses to allow for aggregate statistical analysis and to ensure confidentiality of individual respondents.

If you have questions about the purpose, procedures, or any other issues related to this research study you may contact the Principal Investigator, Kalyn McDonough at (610)-324-5089 or [kaymcd@udel.edu](mailto:kaymcd@udel.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB), at [hsrb-research@udel.edu](mailto:hsrb-research@udel.edu) or (302) 831-2137.

Your responses will help researchers and policymakers to understand the current landscape of sport in juvenile facilities, and identify ways to better support facilities in their programming for youth. You may also receive resources (i.e., research, reports, examples) related to sport programs in facilities as well as a final report of the results from this survey, if you choose.

If you agree to take this survey please hit the arrow below.

Q1 What is your title/position at the facility?

- Administrator (1)
  - Facility Director (5)
  - Superintendent (2)
  - Warden (3)
  - Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q2 How is your facility classified? (hover over choices for definition) (if you oversee more than one, please select your longer-term, higher security facility and answer the proceeding questions for that facility)

- Detention Center (1)
  - Shelter (2)
  - Reception/Diagnostic Center (3)
  - Group Home (4)
  - Ranch/Wilderness Camp (5)
  - Residential Treatment Center (6)
  - Long-term Secure Facility (7)
-

Q3 How is security classified at your facility?

- Hardware (1)
  - Staff secured (2)
  - Unsecured (4)
  - Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q4 What state is your facility located? (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019)

▼ Alabama (1) ... Wyoming (50)

Q5 Approximately how many juvenile offenders are at your facility currently?

- 20 or less (1)
  - 21-40 (2)
  - 41-60 (3)
  - 61-80 (5)
  - 81-100 (6)
  - Over 100 (7)
-

Q6 Who does your facility serve? (Check all that apply)

Boys (1)

Girls (2)

---

Q7 What is the average length of stay for juvenile offenders at your facility?

less than 1 month (1)

1-3 months (2)

4-6 months (3)

6 months or more (4)

---

Q8 Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the supervision of a coach that involves competitions. e.g. football, basketball, track, etc.)? (Please exclude recreation and physical education class)

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = Yes*

Q9 What sport program(s) are offered at your facility? (Check all that apply)



	Boys' Team (1)	Girls' Team (2)
Baseball/Softball (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basketball (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boxing (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheerleading (19)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cross Country (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Football (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Golf (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lacrosse (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rugby (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soccer (9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Swimming (10)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tennis (11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track and Field (12)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Volleyball (13)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weightlifting (14)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wrestling (15)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (16)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (17)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = Yes*

Q10 Who do team(s) compete against? (Check all that apply)

- Each other (within juvenile facility) (1)
- Other juvenile facilities (2)
- Other public/private schools (3)
- I'm not sure (4)
- Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = Yes*

Q11 What is the purpose of sport programs in your facility? (Check all that apply)

- Facility safety (1)
- Compliance with facility policy (2)
- Build confidence among players (3)
- Build character among players (4)
- Build competencies of players (5)
- Build compassion of players (6)
- Build connections among players (7)
- Build connections between players and coaches/staff (11)
- Physical Exercise (8)
- I'm not sure (9)
- Other (10) \_\_\_\_\_

Display This Question:

If If What is the purpose of sport programs in your facility? (Check all that apply)  
q://QID14/SelectedChoicesCount Is Greater Than or Equal to 1

Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "What is the purpose of sport programs in your facility? (Check all that apply)"



Q12 Of those you identified previously, please rank the top purposes of a sport program in your facility (Drag and Drop)

Ranked Purposes

- \_\_\_\_\_ Facility safety (x1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Compliance with facility policy (x2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build confidence among players (x3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build character among players (x4)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build competencies of players (x5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build compassion of players (x6)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build connections among players (x7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build connections between players and coaches/staff (x11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Exercise (x8)

\_\_\_\_\_ I'm not sure (x9)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (x10)

*Display This Question:*

*If If What is the purpose of sport programs in your facility? (Check all that apply)  
q://QID14/SelectedChoicesCount Is Greater Than or Equal to 1*

*Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Of those you identified previously, please rank the top purposes of a sport program in your facility (Drag and Drop)"*



Q13 For the following question, if your facility has more than one sport team please respond based on the team for which you are most proud.

How effective do you think your sport team is in accomplishing the purposes you identified?

	Extremely effective (1)	Very effective (2)	Moderately effective (3)	Slightly effective (4)	Not effective at all (5)
Facility safety (xx1)					
Compliance with facility policy (xx2)					
Build confidence among players (xx3)					
Build character among players (xx4)					

Build  
competencies  
of players  
(xx5)

Build  
compassion  
of players  
(xx6)

Build  
connections  
among  
players (xx7)

Build  
connections  
between  
players and  
coaches/staff  
(xx11)

Physical  
Exercise  
(xx8)

I'm not sure  
(xx9)

Other (xx10)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = Yes*

Q14 What is the annual cost of operating the sport program(s) at your facility?  
(exclude salaries of recreational staff)

- less than \$5,000 (1)
- \$5,000-\$10,000 (2)
- \$10,000-\$15,000 (3)
- \$15,000-\$20,000 (4)
- More than \$20,000 (5)
- I'm not sure (6)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = Yes*

Q15 Do your sport program(s) have any involvement with external organizations?  
(e.g. non-profit organizations, coaching programs, college teams, volunteer groups, etc.)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I'm not sure (3)

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Do your sport program(s) have any involvement with external organizations? (e.g. non-profit organ... = Yes*

Q16 Please detail the involvement, and the type of external organization:

---

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = No*

Q17 Why does your facility currently not offer a sport program? (Check all that apply)

- Do not have the financial resources (1)
- Do not have the staffing (2)
- It is not a priority (3)
- It would not be safe (4)
- I'm not sure (6)
- Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_

---

*Display This Question:*

*If If Why does your facility currently not offer a sport program? (Select all that apply) q://QID6/SelectedChoicesCount Is Not Empty*



Q18 Would you be interested in starting a sport program in your facility?

- Yes (1)
  - No (2)
  - I'm not sure (3)
- 

Q19 For classification purposes, what is the name of your facility? (Responses will remain confidential, facility names will not be linked to data, and responses will be reported out in the aggregate).

---

*Display This Question:*

*If Would you be interested in starting a sport program in your facility? = Yes*

Q20 Would you like to be sent resources (e.g. research, reports, examples) that could help support the development/implementation of a sport program in your facility?

- Yes (1)
  - No (2)
- 

*Display This Question:*

*If Does your facility currently offer a sport program (i.e., structured physical activity under the s... = Yes*

Q21 Would you like to be sent resources (e.g. research, reports, examples) that could help support the improvement of sport program(s) in your facility?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

Q22 Would you like to be sent a final report of aggregated data from this national survey?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

Q23 If you would like to receive the final report and/or resources (e.g. research, reports, example) please list your email address.

---

Q24 If you would be willing to be contacted for future research questions, please list your email address.

---

## Appendix C

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Kalyn McDonough, I am a PhD student at the University of Delaware, and I'm currently working on a study of sport programs in juvenile facilities. I previously coached in a long-term, secure juvenile correctional facility for about four years, so I'm really excited to get the opportunity to speak with you and learn more about how you and your team were able to implement this type of programming in your facility.

Just to provide a bit of background, this study started with a national survey of sport programs in juvenile correctional facilities across the country. We found that 55% of facilities who responded were operating sport programs and 45% were not. Of the facilities who are not operating sport programs, the majority reported having an interest in starting a program. In order to learn more about how these programs are implemented, and help serve as a guide for other facilities interested in this type of programming, we wanted to identify exemplar cases who reported operating sport programs with a focus on positive youth development among their young people. [Facility name] was identified as an exemplar case, and we are very excited to learn more about the supports and challenges of implementing the sport program.

My questions are related to how your facility has implemented this type of programming in a secure facility, but they are just starting points so please feel free to elaborate on what you think is most important. I know that operating a team in a facility can be very challenging, so please don't feel that there are any right or wrong

answers, we just want to hear from you about the experience and what made the sport program possible and what challenges you've experienced. We know that COVID-19 has led to a number of disruptions in programming, so the majority of my questions are related to pre-COVID programming, but at the end I will ask how the sport programming in the facility has been influenced by the pandemic.

***Background (background of the person)***

As you know, juvenile departments and facilities are set up very different between states, so to get to know yours a little...

1. Could you tell me about your position in the [department/facility], what are your key responsibilities? (If they are administration of more than one facility) What is the nature of your work as it relates to [facility name]?
2. What role do you play in the implementation of the sport programming in [facility name]?

***Sport Program Implementation***

***[Existing survey data will be integrated into questions in order to tailor to the specific facility (i.e., Exact Sport Program (basketball, etc.), Outside Organizations they reported involvement with, etc.)]***

3. How did the sport program come to be at [facility name]? (Potential Probes: Why did they want to implement, Who was involved in this decision, Why sport, Research/Evidence?)
4. What has the experience been like of implementing the sport program in a secure facility? Success? Challenges? Adaptations to the Program? (Potential Probes: Organizational norms around change/barriers)
5. What has supported the operation of the sport program? What has made it challenging to operate the sport program? (Potential Probe: Organizational Culture, Policy, Funding, Surrounding Community)

6. Who is involved in the operation of the sport program? (Potential Probes: Decision-making, Training/Technical Support; Community Involvement)
7. What resources are needed to run the sport program? (i.e., Financial, Staff, Equipment, etc.)
8. What do you hope the sport program will accomplish?
9. For other facilities that want to implement sport programs, what would be your advice to them? What has been the most important part of operating the sport program?
10. How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the implementation of your sport program? How have you adapted?
11. Are there any written policies and/or procedures on the sport program at the facility, and if so, would you be willing to share with me?
12. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experience of the implementation the sport program or anything else I should have asked?

## **Appendix D**

### **POST-INTERVIEW REFLECTION FORM**

Interview Id and Date:

Interview Logistics and Feedback (Where did interview take place? Under what conditions? How did the interviewee react? How well do you think you did asking questions? How was the rapport?)

Weaknesses/Problems (Poorly worded questions, wrong topics, poor rapport?)

Interview Notes (Themes, key topics)

Insights/Emerging Ideas

## Appendix E

### CODEBOOK

Code Name	Description/Examples
Barriers	What barriers are there to implementation?
Community-level	Community-level Factors Community (outside the division or facility) that have created barriers to the implementation of the sport program in the facility. This could also include the larger juvenile justice system. (E.g. historic, punitive nature of juvenile justice system)
Funding	Any mention of lack of funding from the division or facility for the sport program. Any mention of cost of sport program being a barrier to implementation.
Societal Ideology/Values	Social Values, ideologies about juvenile justice, youth that are there, that are significant barriers to implementation of the program. (E.g. Couldn't schedule games cause teams didn't want to play us; Negative view points of the facility or kids in the facility, gang affiliation)
Policy	Any mention of federal, state, local policies that are significant barriers to implementation of the sport program in the facility. (E.g. "Government red tape")
Research	Mention of research (or lack thereof) that is a barrier to implementation of the program. (E.g. "So that is my hope, my hope really is, I think more research needs to be done because I think sports, run properly, in the essence of sport, could be an evidence-base practice. I can't back that up right now...")
Facility Characteristics	Division or facility-level factors that are barriers to the implementation of the sport program in the facility.
Ideas and Logistics on Safety	Any mention of ideas or logistics about trying to maintain safety during implementation of the sport program and the barriers that this may have caused. (E.g. rival gang affiliations, time-consuming safety procedures).
Org-schools Unwilling to Partner	Any mention of having trouble scheduling games, teams being unwilling to play them and this causing barriers to implementation. (e.g. Can't have parents come to watch games because of gang-affiliations, Not able to bring in teams

Code Name	Description/Examples
	from outside because wasn't a good experience. Couldn't schedule games cause teams didn't want to play us.)
Other Treatment Priorities	Any mention of a "tight schedule," trying to fit in all programming, sport program getting cancelled or pushed aside. (E.g. We run a tight schedule in the building, sport program is on an island)
People	Anyone that has created challenges to the sport program implementation that is within the division/facility or outside. (E.g. Facility staff, sport program staff, youth (Key informant characteristics should go in that code))
Staff	
Staff Buy-in	(E.g. Cause if you don't do that with the staff you wind up with some staff that are going to be overly competitive with the kids, obvious right? Argumentative with the kids. Other staff that just don't care. So I think there is just a lot of like, lower level logistical issues that will get in the way and I've seen it.)
Youth	Youth behaviors, gang issues, small population
Covid-19	
Adaptations	Any changes or innovations they made to play sports while maintain safety regulations (E.g. basketball shootout)
Excited for Re-Start	Any mention of their or young people's excitement to start back up
Halted	Cancellations of sport program activities.
How	How is the sport program implemented?
Community-Level factors	Community (outside the division or facility) that impact, influence, play a role in the implementation of the sport program in the facility. This could also include the larger juvenile justice system.
Funding	Any mention of funding from the division or facility, or outside organization for the sport program. Any mention of cost of sport program.  (E.g. Funding Rec Positions, "we had no money to do this, we were buying uniforms and trophies ourselves." league fees, uniforms, trophies, food) Grants from outside



Code Name	Description/Examples
	organizations, pay to play tournaments at their facility, non-profits that raise money for the facility.)
Inexpensive	(E.g. “this doesn’t cost a lot”)
Linked to a Structure, Community	(E.g. using the public or charter school to pay for sport program)
Nonissue	(E.g. “funding has never been a problem”)
Staffing	(E.g. “it’s mainly a staffing resource”)
Policy	Any mention of federal, state, local policies that influence, impact, play a role in the implementation of the sport program in the facility. (E.g. Title IV, 1 hour of recreation/large muscle activity)
Research	Mention of research that informed the adoption of the program or implementation of the program, or mention of looking around at other facilities to see what they have done. (E.g. Criminogenic Needs, Research on Sport benefits, pro-social activities, "just started looking around to see what other people were doing")
Societal Values/Ideology	Social Values, ideologies about juvenile justice, youth that are there, or about sport programs that are coming from outside of the facility. (E.g. “Some schools don’t want to play us” “People think this is where the bad kids go”)
Facility Characteristics	Division or facility-level factors that impact, influence, play a role in the implementation of the sport program in the facility.
Benefit	Any mention of the benefits of running the sport program E.g. This provide normalcy for our kids, kids want to be kids, conflict resolution, gang issues, relationships with cops
Law Enforcement	Any mention of the benefits of changing stereotypes, building relationships between youth and law enforcement (E.g. “it changed how the cops viewed the kids and the kids the cops”)
Facility	Any mention of the benefits to the facility (E.g. less restraints, etc.)
Normalcy, Kids want to be kids	Any mention of the benefits in providing normalcy, allowing ‘kids to be kids.’
Parents	Any mention of the benefits of engaging parents through the

Code Name	Description/Examples
	sport program.
Physical Health Benefits	Any mention of the benefits to physical health.
PYD Benefits	Any mention of the benefits to youth development (E.g. character, teamwork, include conflict resolution here).
character	(E.g. “it teaches character)
competency, successes	(E.g. “you see how it builds them up)
teamwork-conflict resolution	Any mention of how it supports teamwork and conflict resolution between youth.
Reentry	Any mention of the benefits to reentry.
Need	Any mention of why division/facility wanted to do this. This can be either reasons or needs of the facility operation or reasons or needs related to the population of kids they have. (E.g. These kids don’t get prom, don’t get many activities, not used to playing organized sports; restraints were high).
Facility Need	Implemented program because of a need at the facility related to restraints, assaults, etc.
Youth Need	Implemented because the kids need it. (E.g. our kids don’t get to play organized sport, don’t get a prom).
Philosophy	The philosophy of facility (“We statements”) in regards to making decisions about programming, or how they want to work with youth. (E.g. We try to be innovative, risk-taking, bold move, we felt they needed to learn skills, use sport as a way to teach (but any specific mention of what sport program will teach-sportsmanship, teamwork should go in sport program philosophy).
Innovative, Risk-taking, Can-do attitude	(E.g. be creative, we try to say ‘yes we can do this.’)
Safety	Facility’s philosophy on safety.
Self-efficacy	Any mention of their ability to execute and implement programming.
Shared vision	If administrators and staff have a shared vision on the

Code Name	Description/Examples
	program.
Treatment, Youth Development	If they discuss a treatment and/or youth development approach at the facility.
Specific Practices and Processes	This refers to any decisions, actions, procedures related to how the facility has adapted to accommodate the sport program, or facility-level decisions that influence the sport program. This is related to how facility has changed or adapted, but decisions about who participates on the team should go at sport-program level.
Coordination with Outside Org-Partnerships	Partnerships, Organizations, Volunteers, Teams, Colleges that support capacity for facility to offer program.
Logistics, Procedures	Logistics they have put into place to operate program including Work Groups, Committees, Teams, Procedures that enhance the strategic planning. (E.g. Security clearances, decisions about which kids could participate)
Structures	Any established entity, organization, position that exist in the facility or in between the facility and the community that influences, impacts, or plays a role in the implementation of the sport program. (E.g. We have a charter school inside the facility and that's how we compete against other teams, Volunteer Coordinator position in the division that recruits/manages volunteers and directs them to sport program, belonging to state's scholastic sport league.)
People	Anyone that contributes or is involved in the program that works within the division or facility, or outside of it. "An individual who is trusted and respected by staff and administrators, and who can rally and maintain support for the innovation, and negotiate solutions to problems that develop" (D&D)  E.g. Facility staff, sport program staff, program champions  (Key informant characteristics should go in that code)

Code Name	Description/Examples
Program Champion	An individual who is trusted and respected by staff and administration, and who can rally and maintain support for the innovation, and negotiation solutions to problems that develop (Durlak & DuPre)
Adoption	If mentioned that program champion was the person who led to adoption of the program at facility.
Central person	Handles logistics, works to overcome barriers, build relationships with youth and staff to do that.
External Advocate	If the program champion specifically is in the community and doesn't work at the division or facility.
Passionate	Any mention of the passion of the program champion.
Staff-Coaches	
Athletic Background	Have an athletic background, are passionate about it, already bought-in
Building staff	Other building staff who help (E.g. "getting everyone involved")
Right Staff	(E.g. "Very important to pick the right staff")
Staff as Coaches	If they are using building staff as coaches (E.g. these staff are building relationships with kids, and its changing the dynamics of the typical staff-youth relationship)
Staff Training	Any mention of DBT training, trauma training, being trained to work with youth on issues that come up in sport program.
Sport Program	Characteristics of the sport program that impact, influence, play a role in its implementation in the facility.
What is Run	Description of what programming they are running (E.g. practices, who are they playing, award banquets).
Adaptability	How has sport program been adapted to fit here. (E.g. Creating juvenile justice leagues, giving trophy for sportsmanship winner, adapted to include DBT, Planning/actions to mediate any issues, make sure kids are okay to play together, preparing kids, having conversations with them about how to handle conflicts. Operating a sport program in a way that doesn't look like traditional sport.)
Changing Sport	Decisions to adapt to your context or population. (e.g. Putting DBT in sport, not having winners, doing clinics instead of

Code Name	Description/Examples
	competitions, being flexible to accommodate issues kids are going through)
Juvenile Justice Leagues	Any mention of starting or playing within a league that is just for juvenile facilities.
Preparation	Any mention of preparing youth to participate on the sport team (E.g. Conversations with youth, conduct agreements, and staff detail around safety)
Sport Program Philosophy	Description of the philosophy or values of the sports program (E.g. Winning/losing doesn't matter; kids will be fine playing; sportsmanship, a youth development model)
Start small	Any mention of how the implementation progressed.
Compatibility	How the program is compatible with or run in combination with their treatment or facility programming. (E.g. Behavior Incentive System, Kids like Sports, Reinforcing treatment goals, Levels System (can only play if you are at certain level).
Behavior Incentive, Level System	Buy-in to programming, meshing with their facility expectations (level system), and school expectations
Kids like sports	Compatible because kids are naturally drawn to playing sports.
Practicing-Reinforcing Tx	Any mention of how the sport program provide a setting for practicing and reinforcing treatment.
Equipment-Facilities	Any mention of the equipment or facilities needed to implement the program.
Key Informant Characteristics	Position, Background, Personal Philosophy
Sport Background	Any mention of their own personal sport background which contributed to how they viewed its implementation (or importance or lack thereof).
Supports	Supports for implementation (not what sport supports) - Whenever someone specifically remarks what has been a support, benefit to implement/run program.

Code Name	Description/Examples
Community-level	Factors in the Community (outside the division or facility) that have significantly supported the implementation of the sport program. This could also include the larger juvenile justice system.
Research	Mention of research that significantly supported the adoption of the program or implementation of the program, or mention of looking around at other facilities to see what they have done. (E.g. Criminogenic Needs, Research on Sport benefits, pro-social activities, "I'd recommend, if I had advice I'd look to what other programs have done.")
Facility Characteristics	Division or facility-level factors that that have significantly supported the implementation of the sport program.
Seeing=Believing	(E.g. "What helped administration, staff to get over their concerns was seeing the program actually work." "...it didn't really get buy-in until they actually experienced it and saw it."
Planning	(E.g. "you need to have a game plan.")
People	People Anyone that has significantly supported the sport program implementation that works within the division or facility or outside (E.g. Administration, Facility staff, sport program staff, program champions (Key informant characteristics should go in that code).
Administration	Any mention of the role administration played in supporting implementation.

## Appendix F

### CODING SCHEME MATRIX

<b>Coding Scheme: How</b>		
<b>High-level Ecological Category</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>	<b>Child Code</b>
<p><b>Community-level factors:</b> Community (outside the division or facility) that impact, influence, play a role in the implementation of the sport program in the facility. This could also include the larger juvenile justice system.</p>	<p><b>Societal Values/Ideology:</b> Social Values, ideologies about juvenile justice, youth that are there, or about sport programs that are coming from outside of the facility.</p> <p>E.g. “Some schools don’t want to play us” “People think this is where the bad kids go”</p>	
	<p><b>Policy:</b> Any mention of federal, state, local policies that influence, impact, play a role in the implementation of the sport program in the facility.</p> <p>E.g. Title IV, 1 hour of recreation/large muscle activity.</p>	
	<p><b>Funding:</b> Any mention of funding from the division or facility, or outside organization, or lack thereof, for the sport program. Any mention of cost of sport program.</p> <p>E.g. Funding Rec Positions, "we had no money to do this, we were buying uniforms and trophies ourselves." league fees, uniforms, trophies, food) Grants from outside organizations, pay to play tournaments at their facility, non-profits that raise money for the facility.</p>	Non-Issue
		Inexpensive
		Linked to Structure
		Staffing

	<p><b>Research:</b> Mention of research that informed the adoption of the program or implementation of the program, or mention of looking around at other facilities to see what they have done.</p> <p>E.g. Criminogenic Needs, Research on Sport benefits, pro-social activities, "just started looking around to see what other people were doing"</p>	<p>Research Connected to need</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Division/Facility Characteristics:</b> Divisions or facility-level characteristics that impact, influence, play a role in the implementation of the sport program in the facility.</p>	<p><b>Facility Philosophy:</b> The philosophy of facility (“We statements”) in regards to making decisions about programming, or how they want to work with youth. The treatment approach they use (DBT, CBT, PYD), priorities around safety.</p> <p>E.g. We try to be innovative, risk-taking, bold move, kids will be fine playing use sport as a way to teach (but any specific mention of what sport program will teach-sportsmanship, teamwork should go in sport program philosophy)</p>	<p>Innovative/Risk-taking/Can-do Attitude</p>
		<p>Treatment, Youth Development Approach</p>
		<p>Safety</p>
		<p>Self-efficacy</p>
	<p><b>Need:</b> Any mention of why division/facility wanted to do this. This can be either reasons or needs of the facility operation or reasons or needs related to the population of kids they have.</p> <p>E.g. These kids don’t get prom, don’t get many activities, not used to playing organized sports; restraints were high. "I can tell you where most incidents occur, they occur in the gym"</p>	<p>Youth Need</p>
	<p><b>Benefit:</b> Any mention of the benefits of running the sport program</p> <p>E.g. This provide normalcy for our kids, kids want to be kids, conflict resolution, gang issues, relationships with cops, getting connected so they continue to do this on the outside, involving parents</p>	<p>Facility Need</p>
	<p>PYD Benefits</p>	
	<p>Physical Health Benefits</p>	
	<p>Normalcy/Kids want to be Kids</p>	
	<p>Parents</p>	
	<p>Facility</p>	



		Reentry
		Law Enforcement
		Logistics and Procedures
		Structures

	<p><b>Specific Practices and Processes (including structures and coordination with outside organizations/partnerships):</b> This refers to any decisions, actions, procedures related to how the facility has adapted to accommodate the sport program, or facility-level decisions that influence the sport program. This is related to how facility has changed or adapted, but decisions about who participates on the team should go at sport-program level.</p> <p>E.g. “had to change what was going on in the building” “those were all the things we had to put into place” Security clearances, decisions about which kids could participate. "had to change what's going on in the building in the afternoons" "they were given time to work on the program" Facility planning for safety (And so those were all things we had to put into place and even so the transport itself we have an itinerary that we do that has to be filled out a week in advance. It goes clear up to my boss and the administration and we look very closely at each of those kids that are eligible, that are traveling, do they have any medications?). Decisions around who is involved with the team or structures set up for that.</p> <p>Structures- Any established entity, organization, position that exist in the facility or between the facility and the community that influences, impacts, or plays a role in the implementation of the sport program. e.g. We have a charter school inside the facility and that's how we compete against other teams, Volunteer Coordinator position in the division that recruits/manages volunteers and directs them to sport program, belonging to state’s scholastic sport league.</p> <p>Coordination with outside org/partnerships: Anyone that is outside of division/facility that</p>	<p>Coordination with org./partnership</p>
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	<p>plays a role, is involved, or interacts with the sport program in the facility.  e.g. Community Volunteers, Pro Teams, Colleges, Cops, Probation Officers, Parents coming in to see games, outside teams that they play code as both this and operation</p>	
	<p><b>People:</b> Anyone that contributes or is involved in the program that works within the division or facility, or outside of it. "An individual who is trusted and respected by staff and administrators, and who can rally and maintain support for the innovation, and negotiate solutions to problems that develop"  (D&amp;D)    E.g. Facility staff, sport program staff, program champions    (Key informant characteristics should go in that code)</p>	Staff-Coaches
		Program Champion
<p><b>Sport Program:</b>  Characteristics of the innovation (sport program).</p>	<p><b>Compatibility:</b> (contextual appropriateness, fit, congruence, match)  Extent to which the intervention fits with an organization's mission, priorities, and values (D&amp;D) How the program is compatible with or run in combination with their treatment or facility programming)  E.g. Behavior Incentive System, Kids like Sports, Reinforcing treatment goals, Levels System (can only play if you are at certain level)</p>	Practicing/Reinforcing Tx
		Kids like Sports
		Behavior Incentive
		Sport Program Philosophy
		Preparation

	<p><b>Adaptability:</b> (program modification, reinvention)</p> <p>The extent to which the proposed program can be modified to fit provider preferences, organizational practices, and community needs, values, and cultural norms(D&amp;D). How has sport program been adapted to fit here. E.g. Creating juvenile justice leagues, giving trophy for sportsmanship winner, adapted to include DBT, Planning/actions to mediate any issues, make sure kids are okay to play together, preparing kids, having conversations with them about how to handle conflicts. Operating a sport program in a way that doesn't look like traditional sport.</p>	Juvenile Justice Leagues
		Start Small
		Changing Sport
	<p><b>What is Run</b></p>	
<p><b>Equipment/Facilities</b></p>		

<b>Coding Scheme: Barriers</b>	
<b>High-level Ecological Category</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<p><b>Community-level Factors:</b> Community (outside the division or facility) that have created barriers to the implementation of the sport program in the facility. This could also include the larger juvenile justice system.</p>	<p><b>Societal Values/Ideology:</b> Societal Values, ideologies about juvenile justice, youth that are there, that are significant barriers to implementation of the program.</p> <p>E.g. Negative view points of the facility, kids in the facility. Gang affiliation</p>
	<p><b>Policy:</b> Any mention of federal, state, local policies that are significant barriers to implementation of the sport program in the facility.</p> <p>E.g. "Government red tape"</p>
	<p><b>Research:</b> Mention of research (or lack thereof) that is a barrier to implementation of the program.</p> <p>E.g. "So that is my hope, my hope really is, I think more research needs to be done because I think sports, run properly, in the essence of sport, could be an evidence-base practice. I can't back that up right now..."</p>

	<p><b>Funding:</b> Any mention of lack of funding from the division or facility for the sport program. Any mention of cost of sport program being a barrier to implementation.</p>
<p><b>Division/Facility Characteristics:</b> Divisions or facility-level factors that are barriers to the implementation of the sport program in the facility.</p>	<p><b>Ideas and Logistics Related to Safety:</b> Any mention of ideas or logistics about trying to maintain safety during implementation of the sport program and the barriers that this may have caused.</p>
	<p><b>Other Treatment Priorities:</b> Any mention of a "tight schedule," trying to fit in all programming, sport program getting cancelled or pushed aside.</p>
	<p><b>Organizations and Schools Unwilling to Partner:</b> Any mention of having trouble scheduling games, teams being unwilling to play them and this causing barriers to implementation.</p>
<p><b>People:</b> Anyone that has created challenges to the sport program implementation that is within the division/facility or outside.</p> <p>E.g. Facility staff, youth</p>	

<b>Coding Scheme: Supports</b>	
<b>High-level Ecological Category</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>
<p><b>Community-level Factors:</b> Factors in the Community (outside the division or facility) that have significantly supported the implementation of the sport program. This could also include the larger juvenile justice system.</p>	<p><b>Research:</b> Mention of research that significantly supported the adoption of the program or implementation of the program, or mention of looking around at other facilities to see what they have done.</p> <p>E.g. Criminogenic Needs, Research on Sport benefits, pro-social activities, "I'd recommend, if I had advice I'd look to what other programs have done."</p>
<p><b>Division/Facility Characteristics:</b> Division or facility-level factors that have significantly supported the implementation of the sport program.</p>	<p><b>Planning:</b> Any description of creating a plan, strategically planning E.g. "You've got to have a plan." " Go all in, do it right"</p>
	<p><b>Seeing=Believing:</b> What helped adm, staff to get over their concerns was seeing the program actually work. E.g. "...it didn't really get buy-in until they actually experienced it and saw it."</p>
<p><b>People:</b> Anyone that has significantly supported the sport program implementation that works within the division/facility or outside.</p> <p>E.g. Administration, Facility staff, Sport Program Staff</p>	

## Appendix G

### CODING SCHEME DEVELOPMENT CHART

Development Phases of Analytical Framework	Explanation and Description of Resulting Changes to Coding Scheme
<p>(1) Coding Scheme Version 1: November 2020. After conducting a literature review on the implementation of health-focused youth programs a framework was identified from the literature that would serve as the initial coding scheme.</p>	<p>The Durlak and DuPre (2008) framework, <i>Factors Affecting the Implementation Process</i>, was created through a systematic literature review and identified 23 factors affecting the implementation process which were constructed within the ecological framework. Based on this framework a coding scheme was created with three levels (Community, Provider, and Innovation) and 23 contextual factors.</p>
<p>(2) Coding Scheme Version 2: January 2021. After conducting trial runs with the coding scheme version 1 and conversations with my Chair, a revised coding scheme was created through more inductive coding than was previously planned.</p>	<p>Applying the Durlak &amp; DuPre framework directly as a coding scheme proved to be very challenging and at times data did not seem to fit. Revisions were made which included keeping the three levels (Community, Provider (renamed Division/Facility), and Innovation (renamed Sport Program), but inductive coding was performed to create codes that would fall within these categories. A few of the Durlak &amp; DuPre concepts directly translated such as Program Champion, Adaptability, Compatibility, Perceived Need, Perceived Benefit.</p>
<p>(3) Coding Scheme Version 3: February 2021 Codes that were very large and used as “catch-alls” were further broken down.</p>	<p>Sport program operation was a very large code and after reading through the data it was further broken down using Durlak &amp; DuPre’s compatibility and adaptability concept as well as a “what is run” code.</p>
<p>(4) Coding Scheme Version 4: February 17, 2021 Based on data summary tables some codes were</p>	<p>Funding was originally divided between community-level and facility-level but looking at data summary tables and</p>

<p>combined, and others; due to their lack of frequency and the fact that they were not mentioned extensively across interviews will not be furthered explored, but will not be deleted.</p>	<p>looking at the data this distinction is not helpful. These codes were combined and placed under Community-level. Based on data summary tables and a review of Durlak &amp; DuPre's framework I moved Structures to the Facility-level Logistics, Procedures, Structures code.</p>
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In studying youth and adolescent development you gain a keen understanding into the profound truth of the proverb 'it takes a village.' I have been fortunate to experience this firsthand, and although there are too many to include in writing, I thank them quietly in my heart and hope to provide the most appropriate thanks through passing along such compassionate support to others. In the limited space I have there are a few people I'd like to recognize as their role in both my personal and professional development, and the development of this work has been significant.

I'd like to thank my committee for their tireless guidance in this process. Their collective passion and intelligence coupled with their unique gifts has served to show me what I'd like to aspire to be one day. I especially would like to thank my Chair, Erin Knight, who is among the most thoughtful, kind, and fierce academics I have come to know and all of her students are for the better because of it.

I'd like to thank my friends, staff, and faculty at the Biden School who have supported me, pushed me, and left me in awe over their unwavering commitment to their work in the betterment of society. I also want to thank my friends, particularly my best friend, who after listening and contributing her exceptional insight should be named a co-author. She is a gift to all that are lucky to know her. Another co-author is undoubtedly my partner whose kindness, humor, wit, and intuition make life so much more rich and fun. You're a blessing, and I am eternally grateful.



I'd like to thank my parents who embody unconditional love, and who continue to serve as the best role models for living a life of service, purpose, and joy. There are no words that I can find to truly represent what it has meant to be your daughter, so just take my word for it, it's meant the most!

Finally, to the young men of the Ferris School for Boys, thank you for allowing me to be your coach and bear witness to your resilience, your humor, your struggles, and your successes. You will continue to serve as the inspiration for the necessity of this work, until it is no longer necessary.



Appendix H

**DATA SUMMARY TABLES**

HOW- Community-level Factors				
Participant ID	Funding	Societal Values/Ideology	Policy	Research
<b>1</b>	x			x
<b>2</b>	x	x	x	
<b>3</b>	x			x
<b>4</b>	x			x
<b>5</b>				x
<b>6</b>	x	x	x	
<b>7</b>	x		x	
<b>8</b>	x			x
<b>9</b>				
<b>10</b>	x	x		x
<b>11</b>	x			x
<b>12</b>	x			x
<b>13</b>			x	x
<b>14</b>	x			
<b>15</b>	x			x
<b>Total</b>	12	3	4	10
<b>Percent</b>	80%	20%	27%	67%

HOW- Division/Facility Characteristics				
Participant ID	Specific Practices and Processes (Structures, Logistics, and Coordination with other outside org.)	Facility Philosophy	Need	Benefit
<b>1</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>2</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>3</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>4</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>5</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>6</b>	x		x	x
<b>7</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>8</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>9</b>			x	x
<b>10</b>		x	x	x
<b>11</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>12</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>13</b>	x	x		x
<b>14</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>15</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>Total</b>	13	13	14	15
<b>Percent</b>	87%	87%	93%	100%

HOW- People		
Participant ID	Staff-Coaches	Program Champion
<b>1</b>	x	x
<b>2</b>	x	x
<b>3</b>	x	x
<b>4</b>	x	
<b>5</b>	x	x
<b>6</b>	x	
<b>7</b>	x	
<b>8</b>	x	x
<b>9</b>	x	x
<b>10</b>	x	x
<b>11</b>		x
<b>12</b>	x	x
<b>13</b>	x	x
<b>14</b>	x	x
<b>15</b>	x	x
<b>Total</b>	14	12
<b>Percent</b>	93%	80%

HOW-Sport Program				
Participant ID	Equipment/Facilities	What is Run	Adaptability	Compatibility
1		x	x	x
2		x	x	x
3		x	x	x
4		x	x	x
5			x	x
6	x	x	x	x
7	x	x	x	x
8		x		x
9	x		x	
10		x	x	x
11		x	x	x
12	x	x	x	x
13		x	x	x
14		x	x	x
15		x		x
<b>Total</b>	4	14	12	14
<b>Percent</b>	27%	87%	80%	93%

BARRIERS-Community-level				
Participant ID	Societal Values/Ideology	Policy	Research	Funding
1			x	
2				x
3				
4				
5				
6			x	
7				
8				
9				
10	x	x	x	x
11	x	x		
12				
13				
14			x	
15				
<b>Total</b>	2	2	4	2
<b>Percent</b>	13%	13%	27%	13%

<b>BARRIERS-Division/Facility Characteristics</b>			
<b>Participant ID</b>	<b>Ideas and Logistics Related to Safety</b>	<b>Other Tx Priorities</b>	<b>Org-Schools unwilling to partner</b>
<b>1</b>	x		x
<b>2</b>	x		x
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>	x		x
<b>5</b>	x		
<b>6</b>	x	x	
<b>7</b>			x
<b>8</b>			
<b>9</b>	x	x	x
<b>10</b>	x	x	
<b>11</b>	x	x	
<b>12</b>	x	x	
<b>13</b>	x		
<b>14</b>		x	
<b>15</b>	x		
<b>Total</b>	11	6	5
<b>Percent</b>	73%	40%	33%



<b>BARRIERS-People</b>		
<b>Participant ID</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Youth</b>
<b>1</b>		
<b>2</b>	x	
<b>3</b>		x
<b>4</b>		x
<b>5</b>		
<b>6</b>		x
<b>7</b>		x
<b>8</b>		
<b>9</b>	x	
<b>10</b>	x	x
<b>11</b>	x	x
<b>12</b>	x	
<b>13</b>	x	
<b>14</b>		
<b>15</b>		
<b>Total</b>	6	6
<b>Percent</b>	40%	40%

SUPPORTS - Community-level	
Participant ID	Research
1	x
2	
3	
4	
5	x
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
<b>Total</b>	2
<b>Percent</b>	13%

SUPPORTS- Division/Facility Characteristics		
Participant ID	Seeing=Believing	Planning
1		x
2	x	x
3	x	
4		x
5		x
6		x
7		
8		x
9		
10		
11		
12	x	
13	x	
14		
15		x
<b>Total</b>	4	6
<b>Percent</b>	27%	40%

SUPPORTS - People	
Participant ID	Administration
1	x
2	
3	x
4	x
5	x
6	x
7	
8	x
9	
10	
11	x
12	x
13	x
14	
15	
<b>Total</b>	9
<b>Percent</b>	60%

## Appendix I

### IRB LETTER OF EXEMPT STATUS FOR SURVEY



**Institutional Review Board**  
210H Hulihan Hall  
Newark, DE 19716  
Phone: 302-831-2137  
Fax: 302-831-2828

DATE: February 26, 2020

TO: Kalyn McDonough, MSW  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [1509659-2] National Survey of Sport Programs in Juvenile Correctional Facilities in the United States

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 26, 2020

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # (2)

Thank you for your Amendment/Modification submission to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). According to the pertinent regulations, the UD IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT from most federal policy requirements for the protection of human subjects. The privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of participants must be safeguarded as prescribed in the reviewed protocol form.

This exempt determination is valid for the research study as described by the documents in this submission. Proposed revisions to previously approved procedures and documents that may affect this exempt determination must be reviewed and approved by this office prior to initiation. The UD amendment form must be used to request the review of changes that may substantially change the study design or data collected.

Unanticipated problems and serious adverse events involving risk to participants must be reported to this office in a timely fashion according with the UD requirements for reportable events.

A copy of this correspondence will be kept on file by our office. If you have any questions, please contact the UD IRB Office at (302) 831-2137 or via email at [hsrb-research@udel.edu](mailto:hsrb-research@udel.edu). Please include the study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

[www.udel.edu](http://www.udel.edu)

## Appendix J

### IRB LETTER OF EXEMPT STATUS FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS



Institutional Review Board  
210H Hullihen Hall  
Newark, DE 19716  
Phone: 302-831-2137  
Fax: 302-831-2828

DATE: December 8, 2020

TO: Kalyn McDonough , MSW  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [1686725-1] Sport Program Implementation in Juvenile Correctional Facilities:  
Key Informant Interviews

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS  
EFFECTIVE DATE: December 8, 2020

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category 2 (ii)

Thank you for your New Project submission to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). According to the pertinent regulations, the UD IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT from most federal policy requirements for the protection of human subjects. The privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of participants must be safeguarded as prescribed in the reviewed protocol form.

This exempt determination is valid for the research study as described by the documents in this submission. Proposed revisions to previously approved procedures and documents that may affect this exempt determination must be reviewed and approved by this office prior to initiation. The UD amendment form must be used to request the review of changes that may substantially change the study design or data collected.

Unanticipated problems and serious adverse events involving risk to participants must be reported to this office in a timely fashion according with the UD requirements for reportable events.

A copy of this correspondence will be kept on file by our office. If you have any questions, please contact the UD IRB Office at (302) 831-2137 or via email at [hsrb-research@udel.edu](mailto:hsrb-research@udel.edu). Please include the study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

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