

Working with Families of Substance Abuse Youth in Taiwan: State of Art and Way Forward

Lanying Huang

6th CIFA 2021

New Taipei City, TAIWAN

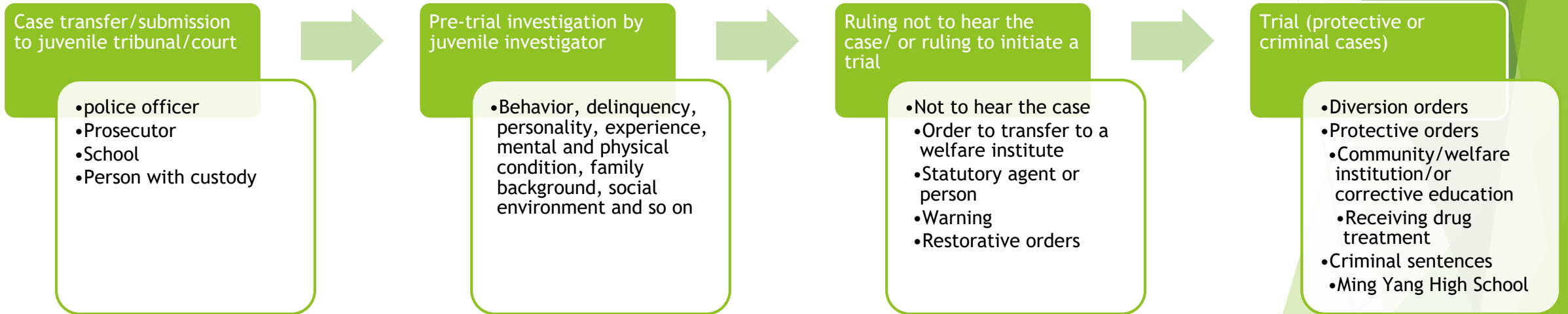
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ▶ BACKGROUND
- ▶ LITERATURE
- ▶ OBJECTIVITY
- ▶ METHOD
- ▶ RESULT
- ▶ CONCLUSION

YOUTH JUSTICE IN TAIWAN

Substance abuse is one of the major youth crimes and the main reason of youth detention, corrective education or imprisonment

在臺灣，藥物濫用是少年觸法的大宗，也是少年被收容於觀護所、或機構感化教育、或監禁的主要原因



BACKGROUND

The Role of Parents in Legislations

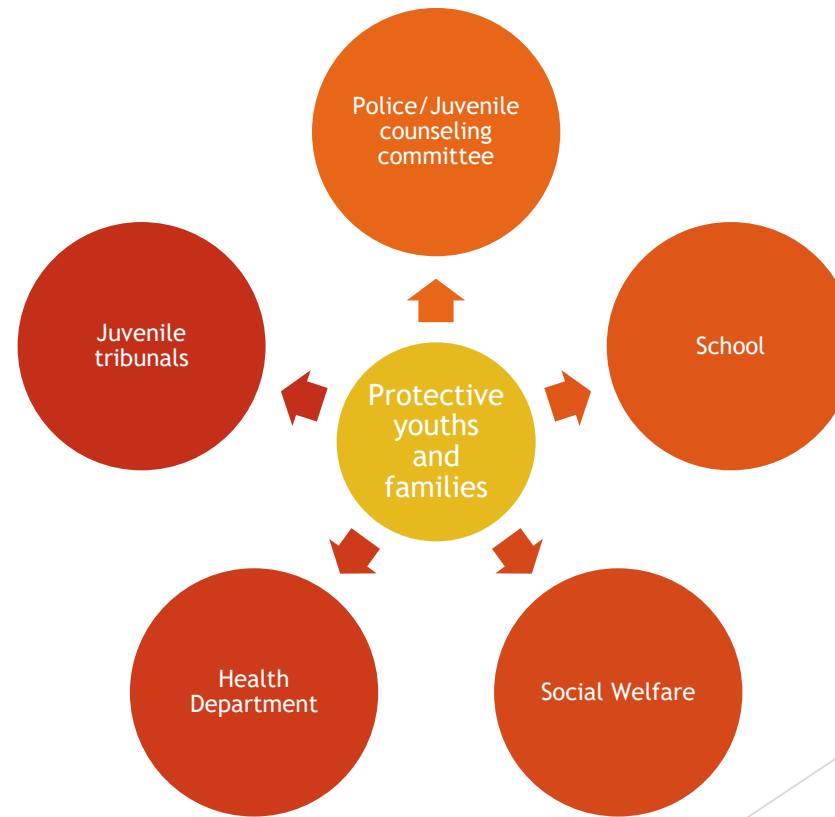
- ▶ The Protection of Children and Youths Welfare and Rights Act (兒童及少年福利與權益保障法2003,2021) (PCYWRA)
 - ▶ Parents responsibilities to protect children and youth(§3)
 - ▶ Parents shall receive assistance from government(§4)
 - ▶ Parents shall prohibit children and youth misbehaviors(§43)
 - ▶ Parents shall provide medical treatment (§55)
 - ▶ Compulsory parental education and fines if disobedience (§102)
- ▶ Juvenile Justice Act (少年事件處理法)
 - ▶ Parents or guardians accompany juveniles during interviews (§3-1)
 - ▶ Parents custody (§26)
 - ▶ Parent consultation of probation conditions (§26)
 - ▶ Court ordered parenting course (§84)

FAMILY AS PROTECTIVE, RISK, OR RESPONSIVITY FACTOR(Vincent, Guy and Grisso, 2012)

- ▶ **Good relationship between the youth and family** can prevent drug-related deviant and upgrade treatment effect (Brunelle, Cousineau, & Brochu, 2005)
- ▶ If parents are dynamic risk factors, they might need to learn more effective parenting skills
- ▶ If parents are responsivity factors, they need to learn to help the young people under rehabilitation
- ▶ Vincent, G. M., Guy, L. S., & Grisso, T. (2012). Risk assessment in juvenile justice: A guidebook for implementation. Chicago, IL: Models for Change, Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice, MacArthur Foundation.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to review the role of families on intervention programs in **schools, communities, courts and institutions**, in order to develop the family empowered programs.



METHODS

- ▶ Accounts are collected from 28 key informers, including advocates, policy makers and frontline practitioners in the field of youth delinquency through face-to-face interviews and one focus group.
- ▶ Police 1~4 (four persons)
- ▶ Worker 1~10 (ten persons)
- ▶ Social work (department chief) 1 (one person)
- ▶ Health 1~3 (three persons)
- ▶ Probation officer (1~2) (two persons)
- ▶ School teacher (counsellors) 1~4 (four persons)
- ▶ Juvenile correction facility (one person)
- ▶ Advocate 1-2 (two persons from NGO)
- ▶ Juvenile tribunal judge 1(one persons)

Results

- ▶ Are parents/families protective or risk factors?
- ▶ What roles are families in the process of treating/rehabilitating youths
- ▶ Problems of current practices
- ▶ Working with parents under existing legislation framework

Protective/Dynamic risk/Criminogenic need factors

- ▶ Poor parenting caused lacking communication and broken social bonds
 - ▶ He is the youngest boy in the family. His parents divorced....The mother and son lack communication for a long time. (Health3)
- ▶ Poor family function
 - ▶ These students usually suffer from family dysfunction, such as cross-generation parenting, parents in jail, complicated families. Parents have no monitoring function at all. (interview diary, school1)
- ▶ Criminal families/parents are drug addicts
 - ▶ Her mother's boyfriend is a drug dealer. Therefore, she got the drug from her mother's boyfriend.(Health1)

Family role in the education/welfare/ justice system

- ▶ Most of the families are described as hard to reach, passive, or resistant to cooperate with the government
- ▶ Parents motivation of involvement with the system is weak
- ▶ Past failure experiences weaken the parents' will and motivation to work with school teachers, social workers, police, youth probationers, or the court
- ▶ Parents are described as not helping for the better, damaging treatment/rehabilitation for the worse

Family role in the education/welfare/ justice system

- ▶ Most of the parents do not even show up at school (if you call them) since they have had enough of this. (School2)
- ▶ These dysfunctional parents will say to me “Don’t call me again.” or “Why don’t you lock him up?” or “Let the society punish him” “He won’t listen! I have tried everything” (School3)
- ▶ A lot of parents have given up on their children. Therefore, they will say something like: “Lock him up! Beat him hard!” (Police4)
- ▶ He father is used to have the court as “sticks” and when the daughter exited the facility and began to misbehave, he would say “let’s put her back in the facility” (School4)

Problems of current practices

- ▶ Unawareness of the fact that families are by no means homogeneous
- ▶ Lack of family evaluation before treatment plans
- ▶ Lack of parents/family focused project
- ▶ Punishing the parents for not fulfilling their responsibility instead of helping parents in needs
- ▶ Compulsory parental education or parenting courses are deemed ineffective, or even harmful
- ▶ Judicial process worsens the children/parent relationship

Problems of current practices

- ▶ We hope that parents cooperate with the probation officer to help the young people in order to increase youths' motivation of participating drug treatment (Probation2)
- ▶ Treating the juveniles is much easier than treating the parents because parents are difficult to change (Health2)
- ▶ Some parents are desperately needing reconstructing their parenting skills but they are those who will never follow court orders (Probation2)
- ▶ Parents would say that “I have worked a whole day, I am labor worker. It is exhausting after work. And I need to go to parent education at night? ”(Worker5)
- ▶ Maybe 60 cases totally and in the end only one parent showed up (parenting education program).(Worker6)

Conclusions

- ▶ A comprehensive treatment plan targeting youths with drug issues should include upfront family evaluation or parenting evaluation
- ▶ Strengthen parents' protective elements, deal with dynamic risk factors, and encourage parents involvement in the system to support their children through the lengthy process of rehabilitation
- ▶ Providing resources to parents, instead of punishing them, to upgrade parents' confidence on the system

Suggestions

- ▶ Conducting family evaluation in schools at earliest stage to identify risk/vulnerable families
- ▶ Providing extra resources to the families of youths with substances use issues to allow parents to pay attention to their children
- ▶ Revising the legislations to allow more flexible way of parenting education and lessen the punishment element
- ▶ Providing widespread family projects through every stages of upgraded treatment, including family therapy and parenting support in school, community, police, welfare, and health sectors



Thank you for your attention!

lanying@gm.ntpu.edu.tw