

INTRODUCING NCYOJ

Founded in 2001, with a mission to guide and inform policy and practice improvements for juvenile justice-involved youth who have mental health conditions, the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice has served as a national leader of the field. At the core of our work is the belief that translating research into policy and practice is vital for effectuating change. This translational work creates more effective and efficient systems, which produces better outcomes for youth and families while maintaining safety for youth and families, youth-serving professionals and communities.

Over the 18 years our work has evolved, keeping pace with what the research tells us about **what works** and **why**. To effectively address the complex needs of juvenile justice-involved youth who, predominately, have experienced childhood trauma and are likely to be living with undiagnosed, untreated, or undertreated mental and substance use conditions, we must:

- increase opportunities for early intervention;
- grow a continuum of evidence-based, integrated interventions;
- integrate a strengths-based framework into policy and practice; and
- operationalize cross-systems and cross-discipline approaches.

Our current brand reflects a constricted view of the key issues that affect the lives of youth, families, and communities. It emphasizes “mental health” and “juvenile justice,” which is reminiscent of the siloed systems we strive to replace with collaborative approaches that extend beyond a single system, discipline or profession. Our name no longer represents our approach to affecting evidence-informed policy and practice improvements.

To continue to support systems that seek to effectively address the most complex needs of these youth, it is imperative that our name evolve along with our work. We are committed to continuing and enhancing the legacy of the **National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice**, as the National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice.

While we are changing our name and refreshing our look, we want to assure you that our focus, integrity, and commitment to these important issues will remain the same. We hope you will join us in celebrating our **renewed commitment** and our collective **successes across research, policy and practice** which have led this rebrand.

There is still incredible work to be done. We look forward to working with you to support policy and practice improvements that will improve life opportunities for juvenile justice-involved youth who are impacted by mental and substance use conditions, childhood trauma, and other adversities. To that end, the NCYOJ will continue to:

- collaborate with communities to build capacity across service delivery systems;
- conduct applied research and evaluation;
- communicate emergent and best practices to policymakers and practitioners;
- guide and inform policy at the national, state, and local level; and,
- elevate the voices and perspectives of youth and families.