

**Yakima County Juvenile Court
Yakima County Comprehensive Gang Youth
Project**

Program Evaluation Report

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**Completed by
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BACKGROUND

The Yakima County Juvenile Court was awarded a grant by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support the implementation of the Gang Intervention component of the Yakima County Comprehensive Gang Youth Project (YCCGYP). The primary focus of the grant was for hiring two Gang Intervention Specialists (GIS) whose role is to provide mentoring and support to gang-affiliated youth presently involved in the County Juvenile Justice system. The GIS staff included two male ex-gang members, employed by the County Probation staff, who worked on a one-on-one with moderate to high risk youth (and their families) participating in either the Yakima County Gang Court or the Gang Project intervention.

Gang Court Intervention

- Wraparound services from a range of providers for the youth and families
- Weekly provider meetings to discuss case management plan and actions for the youth
- Dedicated juvenile probation counselors
- Weekly meetings with the Gang Court Judge
- Referrals to different Evidence Based Practices (*i.e., Aggression Replacement Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and Multi-Systemic Therapy*)
- Referrals to (and engagement in) other prosocial activities
- Ongoing mentoring and support from the Gang Intervention Specialists
- Ongoing use of Risk Assessment Tool

Gang Project Intervention

- Dedicated juvenile probation counselors
- Referrals to different Evidence Based Practices (*i.e., Aggression Replacement Therapy, Functional Family Therapy and Multi-Systemic Therapy*)
- Referrals to (and engagement in) other prosocial activities
- Ongoing mentoring and support from the Gang Intervention Specialists
- Ongoing use of Risk Assessment Tool

The Yakima County Juvenile Court contracted with **Marc Bolan Consulting** (Marc Bolan, Ph.D., principal) to complete an evaluation of the implementation and impacts of the project intervention. The primary intent of the study is to understand the potential impacts of the utilization of the Gang Intervention Specialists in a one-on-one mentoring role on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of the youth participating in the two interventions. The secondary intent is to better illustrate some of the successes and challenges involved in the implementation of the Gang Court and the GIS component in the juvenile justice system. There are few communities that are currently using a dedicated Gang Court for juvenile gang-affiliated youth and, similarly, few that have a dedicated mentoring role carried out by ex-gang members.

Theory of Change Model

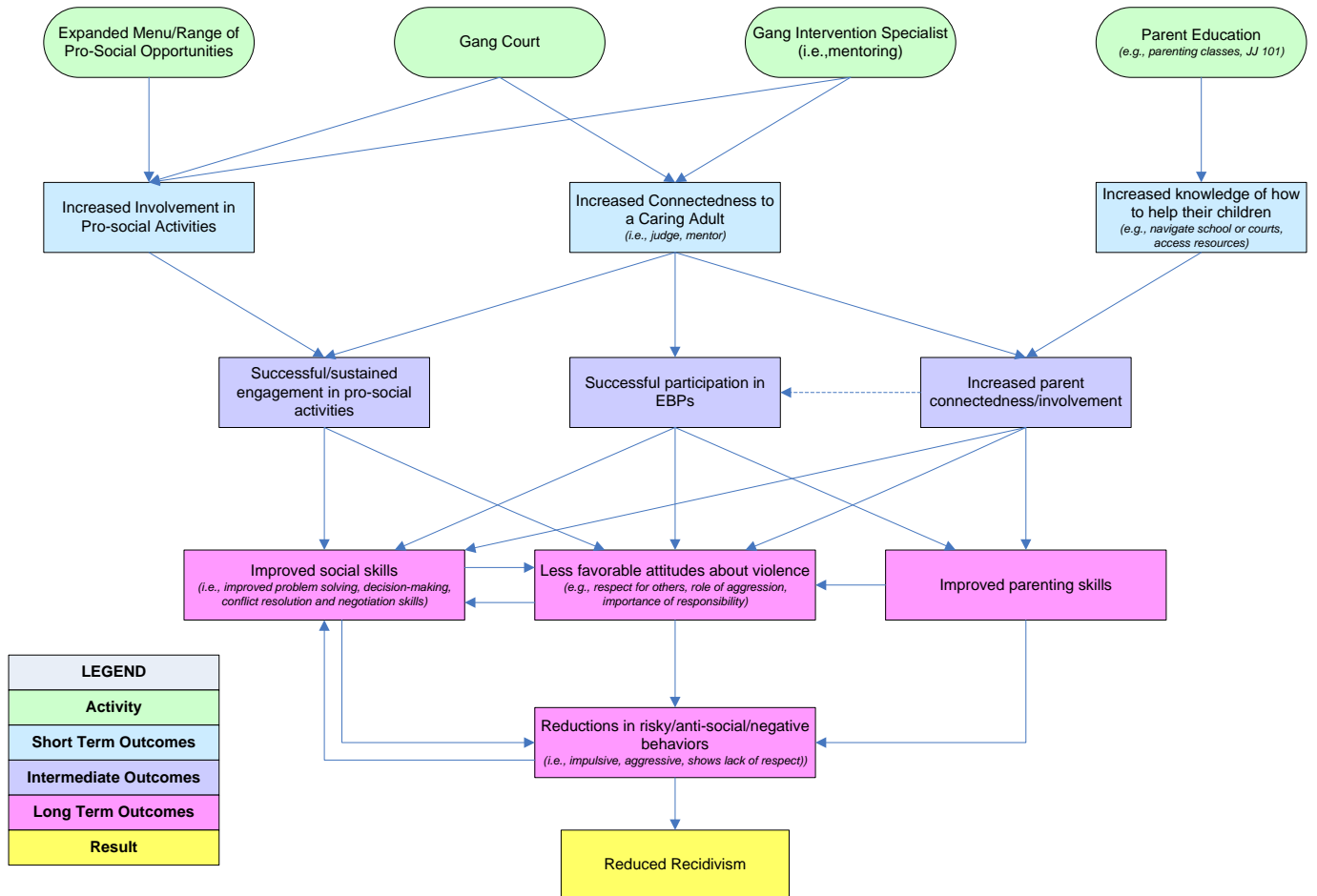
In planning for the evaluation the consultant worked with the Yakima County Juvenile Court staff and Center for Children and Youth Justice on the development of a theory of change model to show the interconnections between the proposed project strategies and some of the short and long term impacts of the intervention on youth and families (see **FIGURE 1**). The two core strategies include the use of Gang Intervention Specialists (*i.e., ex-gang member mentors*) in a one-on-one supportive role for the youth and to provide parents/guardians of these youth with additional training in parenting skills, behaviors and knowledge about the legal system and local court processes. The project also intends to build an expanded menu of possible pro-social opportunities for the youth to participate in. Additionally, many of the youth will also be participating in the Yakima County Juvenile Gang Court, and would receive more wraparound services from the provider community and ongoing interaction with the Court judge over the probation period. We should further note that, as a condition of probation, all of these youth are required to participate in one or more of the following evidence-based interventions: ART, FFT, and MST.

The expectation in the short term is that youth will build a strong connection with a “caring adult” (*e.g., Gang Intervention Specialist, Judge, etc.*) that would hopefully encourage the youth and family to connect with more pro-social activities and build a greater sense of connectedness within the family setting. The theory also presumes that as these connections with caring adults and within the family grow, there is a greater chance that the youth will experience successful participation in the evidence based programs. This might include both higher completion rates and more positive and rewarding experiences within the context of the program.

In the longer term we expect that youth participation in the project activities, parent participation in the education components and whole family participation in the evidence based interventions will have effects on demonstrated risk and protective factors that are precursors to lower recidivism and reduced negative behaviors. In this model the longer term outcomes include less favorable attitudes about violence, improved social skills and improved parenting skills. Ultimately the program would expect lower recidivism rates for youth receiving this combination of services.

FIGURE 1: YCCGYP Project Theory of Change Model

**Yakima County Comprehensive Youth Gang Project
Project Theory of Change Model
DRAFT 11.22.11**



LEGEND
Activity
Short Term Outcomes
Intermediate Outcomes
Long Term Outcomes
Result

Evaluation Methodology

The theory of change model set the framework for ongoing evaluation of the project. The original intent was to gather data with respect to impacts for both **youth and families** as specified in the theory of change model. So in the case of youth, assessing outcomes such as:

- Increased Connectedness to Caring Adult (i.e., *Gang Intervention Specialist*)
- Increased Involvement/Engagement in Pro-social Activities (e.g., *school, programs, etc.*)
- Successful Participation in Evidence-Based Programs (i.e., *completion rates, attendance rates, attrition rates*)
- Less favorable attitudes about violence (e.g., *respect for others, role of aggression, importance of responsibility*)
- Improved SOCIAL SKILLS (i.e., *improved problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, and negotiation skills*)
- Reductions in risky/anti-social/negative behaviors (i.e., *impulsive, aggressive, shows lack of respect*)
- Reduced recidivism (e.g., *new offenses, probation violations, program violations*)

To gather the data on youth impacts we relied on the following tools:

- **GIS YOUTH SURVEY** – gathered from participating youth about 3-4 months into program intervention and then again every 3 months with emphasis on youth perceptions of connections with the GIS and of the program as a whole. (see **APPENDIX A**)
- **PACT ASSESSMENTS** – Washington State juvenile risk assessment instrument completed with each youth via interviews with probation officers at multiple times over the course of the supervision period. In this project we have greater interest in overall scores and specific items in selected domains (*specific items in domains 1, 4, 6, 7b, 10-12 that align with specific outcomes*)
- **YOUTH TRACKING DATA** – information on the youth gathered by the project staff on the number of contacts with the GIS staff, participation in prosocial activities and participation in Evidence-Based Programs (e.g., ART, MST, FFT)

As noted the hope was also to collect data regarding program impacts for families of the youth and families involved in the parenting education activities. We developed a survey to be completed by the participants in the *Leading Change Through Advocacy* parenting program, but since there was such little use of parenting intervention over the course of the project we have no useful data from parents to assess.

This study focuses on looking at changes reported and demonstrated by youth who received some GIS intervention services over time. We have youth who received only GIS services and others who also participated in the Gang Court intervention. The sample includes youth who have been involved for as long as 18 months or for as short as 2 months. The summary assesses changes over time looking at data from multiple administrations of the Youth Survey and multiple completed Risk Assessments, and, where possible, we examined variations in outcomes for different sample populations (e.g., Gang Court vs. Gang Project youth, youth receiving EBP's vs. those not receiving EBP's, etc.).

We also were interested in gathering more qualitative assessments of the project implementation and impacts from different stakeholders involved in the process. We hoped to glean a better understanding

of the successes and challenges involved in the implementation of the Gang Court and specifically of the Gang Intervention Specialist role. The evaluation consultant completed open-ended interviews with 13 individuals including the judges, GIS staff, Probation staff, Prosecutor's office staff, Defense Attorney's staff and other service providers. The analysis of these interviews identified some important themes to consider with continued and future implementation of the Gang Court and Gang Project.

KEY FINDINGS

- The data suggests that the Gang Intervention Specialists maintained good, strong connections with the Gang Court and Gang Project youth, and were able to support the Court, Probation staff and service providers in their effort to work with these youth:
 - The data from the GIS Youth Survey (**see TABLES 1-5**) indicate that the youth reported strong positive connections with the Gang Intervention Specialists, and that these individuals were able to help them in efforts stay out of gang activities and move to more prosocial activities.
 - The interviews with key stakeholders highlight the important role the GIS staff played in mentoring and supporting the individual youth, in providing them with opportunities for prosocial activities and in helping translate the individual youth needs to the other providers working with the youth. For many the GIS served the role of a “cultural coach”, helping the other providers better understand the gang culture and where these youth were coming from.
 - Some stakeholders believe the GIS role has been crucial in the Gang Court implementation and that the program might be adversely affected with the loss of the position.
- The risk assessment data generally shows improvement over time in risk and protective factor domains for youth participating in the Gang Court and Gang Project Interventions. Over time we found significant increases in Risk factors aligned with the specified intervention outcomes and significant decreases in protective factors (**see TABLES 6-8**)
 - The most substantial improvements were demonstrated by the small sample of Gang Court youth. These are youth who received a combination of wraparound provider services, Evidence Based practices and the Gang Intervention Specialist support. There were dramatic decreases in the Total Risk score and increases in the Total Protection score between the First and Last assessments.
 - We find little change over time for the group of Gang Project youth working with a GIS for short period, and who did not participate in the Evidence Based Practices. While we see some positive assessments of the GIS role and work in this study, it is unclear how the role itself contributes to changes in attitudes and behaviors over time.
- The recidivism data suggests more successful outcomes for Gang Court youth (*i.e., only 1/3 incurred a subsequent guilty charge after the original referral*), and somewhat better outcomes for Gang Project youth who participated in an Evidence Based Practice intervention (*i.e., they incur less severe subsequent charges*). (**see TABLE 9**) Unfortunately we don't any valid comparison data to assess whether these rates are better than we would see with youth not involved in such interventions.
- It is clear that the Yakima County Juvenile Gang Court has evolved and changed over time. Many felt that the strongest components of the implementation have involved the collaboration, communication and information sharing between the different providers working on behalf of the youth. There continue to be questions about the referral process and eligibility

of the youth invited to participate in the intervention, and whether there will be long term impacts of the intervention with respect to reduced recidivism and criminal activities.

- The fact that the Gang Intervention Specialists were County employees working within the Probation department raised a number of challenges and concerns over the course of the project. This dynamic left the GIS staff in the awkward position of having to both maintain confidentiality with clients and share information with the Probation staff. Additionally, the fact that the GIS staff members were ex-gang members raised some consternation within the Probation department about their abilities, intentions and their role in working with the youth. The question emerged of whether the staff had the basic skills and experience needed to occupy a County employee role
 - There was strong consensus that any future Gang Intervention Specialist position should be contracted through an outside agency that provides the supervision and oversight of the GIS role. The thought is that the GIS would not be seen as an “arm of probation” and have the independence to share information more judiciously with the other providers.

YOUTH OUTCOMES SUMMARY

In this section we focus on the data provided by the youth participants through the youth survey and via interviews as part of the Washington State Juvenile Risk Assessment instrument. These data help address a number of outcomes stated above from the theory of change model.

The program staff also kept case records on each of the youth that provide information on the level of contacts between the youth and GIS staff and on youth participation in prosocial activities and Evidence Based Practices. We find that:

- We have data on contacts between the youth and GIS for 55 of the project youth. The average youth had 27 contacts with a GIS staff member over the course of the program (*i.e.*, 0 contacts minimum and 108 contacts maximum). About 20 percent of the youth (n=11) had more than 50 different contacts with the GIS in the service period.
- The staff reported that 36 of the 55 youth (*over 65 percent*) were engaged in some “prosocial” activities over the course of the work with the GIS staff. The more common activities included community service hours with the City, City Parks activities, Community Centers and Madison House.
- As noted the intent of the project services was to refer all of the Gang Court and Gang Project youth to participation in one of the three Evidence-Based practices ART, MST, and FFT. In total 31 of the 55 youth (*56.4 percent*) completed one or more Evidence Based practices during this time period. Of that group 27 youth participated in the ART intervention, 10 in the MST intervention and 5 in the FFT intervention.

Youth Survey Data Summary

The Gang Court and Gang Project youth working the Gang Intervention Specialists completed self-report surveys over the course of their participation in the program. The tool was designed to elicit youth attitudes about their work and relationship with the GIS staff and how the Gang Intervention Specialist has helped them in areas of school success, meeting Court conditions and establishing stronger family connections. The youth first completed the survey about 3 months after they started working with the GIS and then each 3-4 months going forward.

We have some survey data on 49 of the youth (*i.e.*, 12 *Gang Court* youth and 37 *Gang Project* youth) who worked with a GIS. We have at least two different surveys completed by 26 of these youth and are able to compare their assessments on their First and Last completed surveys for this group.

In **TABLE 1** we assess the youth attitudes during their first survey assessment regarding their relationship with the GIS and the ways that the GIS might help the youth in addressing tasks needed for long term success. As noted the First assessment was completed about 3 months into the work with the GIS. We find:

- Overall 35 youth reported on their level of participation with the GIS staff. Over 34 percent meet with GIS one time per week, about 46 percent two times per week, and 20 percent meet three or more times per week.
- The youth reported on their relationship with the Gang Intervention Specialist. In general the youth seem connected with the GIS staff, and, in particular, agree that “my GIS almost always ask me what I want to do, (*over 87 percent report sort of or very true*)” and “my GIS is interested in what I want to do (*over 77 percent report sort of or very true*).”
- Further they disagree that “my GIS makes fun of me..,” “when I am with my GIS I feel mad,” and “when I am with my GIS I feel sad.”
- The youth also strongly agree that their GIS helps in many ways e.g.
 - Understand the negative effects of gang involvement (*over 81 percent report sort of or very true*)
 - Think of fun and interesting things to do that won’t get them into trouble (*over 85 percent report sort of or very true*)
 - Understand how to be successful with probation and court order conditions (*over 87 percent report sort of or very true*)

In **TABLE 2** we look at any change in these measures between the First and Last assessment periods. We only have data on 26 youth, and recall the Last assessment could be as short as three months after the First or as long as a year for some of the longer participating youth in the project. In general we don’t observe substantial change in the relationship and impact measures between the First and Last assessments. More specifically:

- There is significant decline over time in levels of agreement with the statement that “When I am with my GIS I feel special.” We also see some declines in items such as “feeling important” and “feeling excited.” It might be case that while the relationship remains strong over time, the youth might not be expressing the same level of excitement about the work as earlier in the process.
- We do see some increase in levels of agreement with the statement “My GIS is always interested in what I want to do.”
- There is also some increase over time in agreement that the GIS can help the youth with fun and interesting activities, and opportunities to stay out of the gang activities.

TABLE 1: GIS Relationship and Impact – Time 1 Assessment

	AVERAGE	Not True at all	Not Very True	Sort of True	Very True
My GIS makes fun of me in ways I don’t like	1.24	77.6%	20.4%	2.0%	
My GIS almost always asks me what I want to do	3.31	2.0%	10.2%	42.9%	44.9%
When I am with my GIS , I feel special	2.13	26.5%	36.7%	26.5%	6.1%
Sometimes my GIS promises we will do something: then we don’t do it	1.57	61.7%	21.3%	14.9%	2.1%

	AVERAGE	Not True at all	Not Very True	Sort of True	Very True
My GIS is always interested in what I want to do	3.08	8.3%	14.6%	37.5%	39.6%
When I'm with my GIS I feel excited	2.10	28.6%	36.7%	30.6%	4.1%
When my GIS gives me advice, it makes me feel stupid	1.63	50.0%	39.6%	8.3%	2.1%
When I'm with my GIS I feel sad	1.31	75.5%	18.4%	6.1%	
When I'm with my GIS I feel important	2.22	24.5%	34.7%	34.7%	6.1%
When I'm with my GIS I feel bored	2.00	36.7%	30.6%	28.6%	4.1%
I wish my GIS asked me more about what I think	1.82	46.9%	28.6%	20.4%	4.1%
When I'm with my GIS, I feel mad	1.61	61.2%	20.4%	14.3%	4.1%
I wish I knew my GIS better	1.88	42.9%	32.7%	18.4%	6.1%
When I'm with my GIS I feel disappointed	1.49	65.3%	22.4%	10.2%	2.0%
When I'm with my GIS I feel happy	2.39	20.4%	30.6%	38.8%	10.2%
My GIS helps me understand how being in a gang can affect my life in a negative way.	3.29	12.2%	6.1%	22.4%	59.2%
My GIS helps me and my family find ways to become less involved with gang activity	3.02	16.3%	8.2%	32.7%	42.9%
My GIS shows me opportunities and things I can do to stay out of gang activities	3.16	16.3%	8.2%	18.4%	57.1%
My GIS helps me think of fun and interesting things to do that won't get me into trouble.	3.18	10.2%	4.1%	42.9%	42.9%
My GIS helps me understand how to be successful with my court order and going through probation	3.33	4.1%	8.2%	38.8%	49.0%
My GIS helps me get my court ordered conditions done, for example, helps me get to counseling appointments, tutoring, probation appointments, school, etc.	3.43	6.1%	2.0%	34.7%	57.1%

SCALE: 1-not true at all, 2- not very true, 3-sort of true, 4-very true

TABLE 2: GIS Relationship and Impact – First vs. Last

N=26 with a First and Last survey assessment	FIRST AVERAGE	LAST AVERAGE
My GIS makes fun of me in ways I don't like	1.31	1.08
My GIS almost always asks me what I want to do	3.35	3.42
When I am with my GIS, I feel special	2.52	2.04
Sometimes my GIS promises we will do something: then we don't do it	1.54	1.46
My GIS is always interested in what I want to do	3.12	3.44
When I'm with my GIS I feel excited	2.38	1.96
When my GIS gives me advice, it makes me feel stupid	1.69	1.38
When I'm with my GIS I feel sad	1.15	1.38
When I'm with my GIS I feel important	2.56	2.44
When I'm with my GIS I feel bored	1.84	2.00
I wish my GIS asked me more about what I think	1.73	1.58
When I'm with my GIS, I feel mad	1.42	1.38
I wish I knew my GIS better	2.08	1.84
When I'm with my GIS I feel disappointed	1.35	1.50
When I'm with my GIS I feel happy	2.58	2.54
My GIS helps me understand how being in a gang can affect my life in a negative way.	3.50	3.38
My GIS helps me and my family find ways to become less involved with gang activity	3.12	3.19
My GIS shows me opportunities and things I can do to stay out of gang activities	3.27	3.42

N=26 with a First and Last survey assessment	FIRST AVERAGE	LAST AVERAGE
My GIS helps me think of fun and interesting things to do that won't get me into trouble.	3.38	3.46
My GIS helps me understand how to be successful with my court order and through probation	3.50	3.46
My GIS helps me get my court ordered conditions done, for example, helps me get to counseling appointments, tutoring, probation appointments, school, etc.	3.46	3.35

SCALE: 1-not true at all, 2- not very true, 3-sort of true, 4-very true

Bold indicates a significant change in average between First and Last based on paired sample t-test at $p < .05$ significance level

In the survey the youth were also asked “In what ways has the fact that your GIS is a previous gang member helped you be successful in this program.” At the First assessment period about 57 percent (28 out of the 49 youth) answered the question and indicated that such past gang involvement has helped. Some common themes include “shows that I don’t have to be in a gang to be successful,” and “understands where I am coming from.” At the Last assessment period about 65 percent (17 out of 26 youth) answered the question and indicated that such past gang involvement has helped.

The survey further asked the youth to comment on the some of the ways the GIS helped in different areas (see **TABLE 3**). At the First assessment period we find that

- Over 90 percent indicated the GIS helped in “being successful in school.”
- Almost 70 percent indicated the GIS helped in “building a stronger relationship with family/friends.”
- Over 59 percent indicated the GIS helped in “dealing with police, courts or legal system.” Of note, this percentage is much higher among those youth with a Last assessment.

TABLE 3: GIS Program Assistance

Please talk about some of the ways that your Gang Intervention Specialist has helped you in the following areas?	<i>Common Themes</i>
Being Successful in School <i>FIRST – 90 percent indicate GIS help</i> <i>LAST – 82.6 percent indicate GIS help</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helped the youth get back into school/educational setting ▪ Takes the youth to school /provides transportation ▪ Pushes the youth to keep attending school ▪ Communicated with school personnel on the youth behalf
Building a stronger relationship with your family and/or friends <i>FIRST – 69.8 percent indicate GIS help</i> <i>LAST – 75 percent indicate GIS help</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talked about open communication with family ▪ Emphasized the importance of listening to parents and family ▪ Importance of spending time with family and being respectful of parents/guardians ▪ Importance of keeping “gang” stuff out of the household and out of these relationships with others
Dealing with the police, courts and/or legal system <i>FIRST – 57.9 percent indicate GIS help</i> <i>LAST – 80 percent indicate GIS help</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keeping track of court requirements and necessary appointments

In **TABLES 4-5** we look more closely at the youth assessments about their future gang involvement and potential success. At Time 1 we clearly find that youth already have the sense that they could refrain from gang activities and feel that they can be successful in school and in navigating probation. We also find that less than 25 percent agree that “I will always see myself as a member of a gang,” suggesting they have already started to move away from the gang identify early in the process. In **TABLE 4** we see little change in these assessments for youth with First and Last assessment data.

TABLE 4: Future Involvement and Success – Time 1 Assessment

	AVERAGE	Not True at all	Not Very True	Sort of True	Very True
I know that I will stay out of gang activities now and in the future	3.47	4.1%	4.1%	32.7%	59.2%
I know I can be successful in school now and in the future	3.51		4.1%	40.8%	55.1%
I know I can be successful in making it through probation	3.63		4.1%	28.6%	67.3%
I know that my family will help me stay out of trouble	3.71	2.0%	2.0%	18.4%	77.6%
I will always see myself as a member of a gang	1.82	57.1%	18.4%	10.2%	14.3%

SCALE: 1-not true at all, 2- not very true, 3-sort of true, 4-very true

TABLE 5: Future Involvement and Success – First vs. Last

N=26 with a First and Last survey assessment	FIRST AVERAGE	LAST AVERAGE
I know that I will stay out of gang activities now and in the future	3.38	3.38
I know I can be successful in school now and in the future	3.54	3.35
I know I can be successful in making it through probation	3.65	3.85
I know that my family will help me stay out of trouble	3.69	3.88
I will always see myself as a member of a gang	1.73	1.69

SCALE: 1-not true at all, 2- not very true, 3-sort of true, 4-very true

PACT Risk Assessment Data Summary

The probation staff completed the PACT Washington State Juvenile Risk Assessment interview with each of the youth in the project several times over the course of their participation in the project. For some youth we have the assessment completed as many as 5-6 times since their initial enrollment in the project. In looking at changes in the assessment data we focused on some key domains aligned with the outcomes previously discussed, and also at the overall Risk and Protective Factor scores.

OUTCOME	PACT Domains
Less favorable attitudes about violence (<i>e.g., respect for others, role of aggression, importance of responsibility</i>)	Domain 10 – questions 5, 6, 9-10 Domain 11 – questions 1-4
Improved SOCIAL SKILLS (<i>i.e., improved problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, and negotiation skills</i>)	Domain 12 – questions 1-11
Reductions in risky/anti-social/negative behaviors (<i>i.e., impulsive, aggressive, shows lack of respect</i>)	Domain 10 – questions 4, 7-8 Domain 11 – questions 5-6
Parents increase parenting skills in working with youth	Domain 7b – questions 7, 8, 11, 12, 14-16

We have some Risk assessment data on 65 of the youth participating in the Gang Court or Gang Project. For the purposes of analysis we have 59 youth with two time points of assessment data (i.e., First vs. Last) for comparison. For those with more than two assessments completed over the course of the project, the Last represents the assessment closest in time to the completion of this report. Of the 59 youth, 13 were Gang Court participants, 23 were Gang Project youth with less than 6 months between the assessments and 26 were Gang Project youth with greater than 6 months between assessments. We also have a large enough aggregate sample (n=39) to compare youth over time with three different assessment points (i.e., SAMPLE – 3 TIME POINTS)

In **TABLE 6** see we the overall Risk and Protective factor scores and selected domain scores for all youth with First and Last assessments. We find:

- A significant decline in the overall Total Risk Score (86.44 to 79.32) and a significant increase the overall Total Protection Score (44.53 to 55.95)
- Significant declines in domain risk scores, with the exception of School History. We see particular declines in risk associated with Current School Status, Attitudes/Behaviors and Skills. Additionally, there is a decline in the risk associated with Current Alcohol and Drug Use
- There are some increases in selected Protective factor domain scores. We find significant increases in Current School Status, Current Living Arrangements, Attitudes/Behaviors and Skills.

In **TABLE 6** we also can look at the sample of youth with data at three different assessment periods. This allows us to look more closely at patterns of change over the progression of the intervention. We find:

- The Total Risk Score steadily drops from 87.00 to 81.85 to 76.67 over time. We find a similar pattern for each of the risk domain items – a steadily decline from Time 1 to Time 2 and then again from Time 2 to Time 3.
- The Total Protection Score also shows a steady increase from 45.38 to 51.38 to 56.74. For the key protective factors that change over time (e.g., Current School Status, Current Living Arrangements, and Skills) we see that similar steady increase from time period to time period. Interestingly, in the case of Attitudes/Behaviors we only a slight increase from Time 1 to Time 2 and then a bigger jump by Time 3.

TABLE 6: RISK ASSESSMENT COMPARISON SUMMARY

ALL GANG COURT AND GANG PROJECT YOUTH	FIRST vs. LAST Assessment (n=59)		SAMPLE: 3 TIME POINTS (n=39)		
	FIRST	LAST	TIME 1	TIME 2	TIME 3
DOMAIN					
RISK FACTOR					
3A: School History	4.49	4.73	4.41	4.26	4.49
3B: Current School Status	8.59	5.42	9.10	7.33	5.00
4B: Current Use of Free Time	0.42	0.31	0.38	0.31	0.26
7B: Current Living Arrangements	12.73	11.42	12.41	11.08	10.82
8B: Current Alcohol and Drugs	6.34	5.25	6.15	5.54	4.92
10: Attitudes/Behaviors	9.49	7.86	9.56	8.56	7.79
11: Aggression	5.68	4.73	5.64	5.21	4.92
12: Skills	7.76	5.05	8.49	6.90	5.69
TOTAL RISK SCORE	86.44	79.32	<i>87.00</i>	<i>81.85</i>	<i>76.67</i>
PROTECTIVE FACTOR					
3A: School History	1.59	1.42	1.64	1.79	1.59
3B: Current School Status	1.66	2.86	1.64	2.64	3.13
4B: Current Use of Free Time	1.19	1.34	1.67	1.79	1.77
7B: Current Living Arrangements	8.34	9.47	8.67	9.85	10.21
8B: Current Alcohol and Drugs	0.07	0.12	0.08	0.18	0.23
10: Attitudes/Behaviors	4.37	5.59	4.51	4.69	5.56
11: Aggression	1.44	1.78	1.51	1.41	1.54
12: Skills	6.49	8.95	6.00	6.95	8.46
TOTAL PROTECTION SCORE	44.53	55.95	<i>45.38</i>	<i>51.38</i>	<i>56.74</i>

Bold indicates a significant change in average between First and Last based on paired sample t-test at p < .05 significance level

Since the aggregate sample includes youth who participated in the Gang Court and the Gang Project we felt it necessary to also look at these groups separately. The Gang Court sample consisted of 13 youth,

all of whom also received support from the Gang Intervention Specialists. Nearly all of these youth also participated in the one of the three evidence based interventions ART, MST or FFT. Of note for the current analysis, the average length of time between the First and Last assessment for youth in this group is almost 1 year, meaning that they have a long period of time to show changes in Risk and Protective factors.

In total we have 46 Gang Project youth with First and Last assessment data. As noted these are youth who received GIS services, but not the extensive wraparound services afforded the Gang Court youth. Over the course of the project there was a steady enrollment of youth into the Gang Project services. As such we have some with a shorter period of time between assessments and some with a longer period between assessments. In the analysis we have two Gang Project groups separated by the length of time between the assessments (i.e., <=6 months and > 6 months).

In **TABLE 7** we look at the same domain and overall factor scores at the First and Last assessments for youth in each of the three different groups. We find:

- A substantial decline in the Total Risk score and a substantial increase in the Total Protection score for the Gang Court youth. While this sample is small, we do see a 22 point decrease in the Risk score and a 24 point increase in the Protection Score.
- In the Gang Court sample substantial declines in Risk domain factors such as Current School Status, Current Alcohol and Drugs, Attitudes/Behaviors and Skills
- Little change between the First and Last assessment for the Gang Project youth with less than 6 months. The Total Risk score barely changes and the Total Protection score only increases by 4 points over time. We do see some slight declines in some Risk domains: Current School Status and Aggression.
- More substantial change for the Gang Project youth around for more than 6 months. The Total Risk score does go down (*yet only by 6 points over time*) and the Total Protection score increases by almost 12 points. We do see some meaningful improvements in the areas of Current School Status, Attitudes/Behaviors, Aggression and Skills.
- Of note the changes demonstrated by the Gang Project youth in this second group are much smaller than we observed with the Gang Court youth who have a similar duration of time with the intervention services.

TABLE 7: RISK ASSESSMENT COMPARISON SUMMARY – BY PROJECT GROUPS

DOMAIN	GANG COURT (n=13)		GANG PROJECT <=6M (n=23)		GANG PROJECT > 6M (n=23)	
	FIRST	LAST	FIRST	LAST	FIRST	LAST
RISK FACTOR						
3A: School History	4.46	4.54	4.70	4.78	4.30	4.78
3B: Current School Status	7.92	4.38	7.39	6.39	10.17	5.04
4B: Current Use of Free Time	0.38	0.15	0.43	0.35	0.43	0.35
7B: Current Living Arrangements	13.08	10.08	13.35	12.96	11.91	10.65
8B: Current Alcohol and Drugs	6.23	1.85	6.74	6.39	6.00	6.04
10: Attitudes/Behaviors	10.92	6.38	9.78	9.61	8.39	6.96
11: Aggression	5.85	4.08	5.70	5.17	5.57	4.65
12: Skills	9.09	3.38	6.48	6.04	7.96	5.00
TOTAL RISK SCORE	91.77	69.15	85.78	86.30	84.09	78.09
PROTECTIVE FACTOR						
3A: School History	1.54	1.69	1.48	1.59	1.74	1.30

3B: Current School Status	1.54	4.85	1.87	2.22	1.52	2.39
4B: Current Use of Free Time	1.85	2.31	1.30	1.43	1.48	1.57
7B: Current Living Arrangements	8.23	10.85	7.83	8.09	8.91	10.09
8B: Current Alcohol and Drugs	0	0	0.04	0.04	0.13	0.26
10: Attitudes/Behaviors	4.08	7.62	4.17	4.26	4.74	5.78
11: Aggression	1.46	1.69	1.57	1.78	1.30	1.83
12: Skills	5.31	10.62	7.57	7.96	6.09	9.00
TOTAL PROTECTION SCORE	42.38	66.54	44.30	48.70	45.96	57.22

As discussed almost all of the Gang Court youth completed one or more of the evidence based programs ART, MST or FFT over the course of the intervention. One of the goals of the Gang Project intervention was to start to involve these youth in the evidence based practice interventions. Of the 46 Gang Project youth in the intervention, 19 (41.3 percent) completed one these programs during the intervention period.

In **TABLE 8** we looked at the Total Risk and Protection scores at First and Last assessments taking into account youth participation in these Evidence Based practices. As we might anticipate there is more change in the Risk and Protection scores for those Gang Project youth who participated in one of the evidence based practices. The drop in Risk score and increase in Protection score, while substantial, are still less than the level of change demonstrated by the Gang Court youth.

TABLE 8: RISK ASSESSMENT COMPARISON SUMMARY – BY PROJECT GROUPS

	<i>Total Risk Score</i>		<i>Total Protection Score</i>	
	FIRST	LAST	FIRST	LAST
GANG COURT	91.77	69.15	42.38	66.54
GANG PROJECT (no completion of an Evidence Based Program) (n=27)	82.81	85.78	45.59	49.52
GANG PROJECT (completion of an Evidence Based Program) (n=19)	87.95	77.11	44.47	57.84

Youth Recidivism Data

The Yakima County Probation staff culled through the client data for youth Gang Court and Gang Project participants to assess recidivism rates after the original referral to the specific project. We have recidivism as incurring a change with a guilty result at some date after the start in the Gang Court or Gang Project. We are also able to determine whether the subsequent guilty charge is of more, less or the same level of severity as the original referral charge.

In **TABLE 9** we summarize the recidivism rates for Gang Court and Gang Project youth and also look at rates when we break down the Gang Project youth by duration (i.e., < 6M vs. > 6M) and by whether they completed an Evidence-based practice. We find:

- About 2/3 of the Gang Court did not incur an additional guilty charge in the period after the referral to the program. Recall that most of these youth have a period over one year for follow-up since start in the program. In contrast over 65 percent of the Gang Project youth incurred an additional guilty charge in the follow-up period.
- Of those Gang Project youth who incurred an additional charge, a majority received a charge of the same or higher level of severity.

- Interestingly the rate of recidivism is not that different between Gang Project youth who completed or did not complete an Evidence Based program (37 vs. 31.6 percent with no charge). We do see some variation in the severity of those subsequent charges for those in these two groups. Those who participated in an EBP were more likely to have a subsequent charge of the same or lower severity.
- Duration between assessment periods did seem to affect recidivism rates. As expected the recidivism rates are higher for those Gang Project youth with greater than 6 months of duration (i.e., only 27.2 percent did NOT incur an additional charge).

TABLE 9: RECIDIVISM COMPARISON SUMMARY – BY PROJECT GROUPS

Recidivism (New Guilty Charge)	YES			NO
	More Severe	Same Severity	Less Severe	
GANG COURT (n=12)	16.6%	16.6%	0.0%	66.7%
OVERALL GANG PROJECT (n=46)	34.8%	13.0%	17.4%	34.8%
No Completion of EBP (n=27)	40.7%	11.1%	11.1%	37.0%
Completion of EBP (n=19)	26.3%	15.8%	26.3%	31.6%
<6M (n=19)	31.6%	21.1%	0.0%	47.3%
> 6M (n=22)	36.3%	5.4%	31.8%	27.2%

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The evaluation consultant interviewed a series of project staff and stakeholders with the intent of gaining a better understanding of the successes and challenges involved in the implementation of the Gang Court and specifically of the Gang Intervention Specialist role. The interviews were completed either by phone or in-person in March 2013, the end of the evaluation period.

The general consensus is while Gang Court continues to evolve, to this point there has been some strong collaboration and communication that has supported the implementation of this new approach. There is also wide spread agreement that the GIS staff played an important role in supporting the youth the Gang Project and Gang Court, and a crucial role in supporting the other providers ability to serve the needs of the youth and families in the project.

The most consistent finding from the interviews is that if the GIS role was to continue in this project there is a need to shift the role from a County Probation employee to a staff member contracted through an outside agency or provider. Over the course of the project the GIS has been viewed as an “arm of probation” and as will be detailed below the GIS and other staff and providers encountered many implementation challenges that likely would not emerge if the GIS is a contracted employee of a different agency.

We offer some additional insights about Gang Court, Gang Project and the role of the Gang Intervention Specialists below:

Gang Court Implementation

SUCSESSES

- Many interviewees spoke to the strong collaboration and information sharing between different youth providers in meetings and Court setting, and that there was great open communication between partners encouraged by the project Judges.
- The Gang Court proceedings and meetings were viewed as an opportunity for the partners to see different perspectives on what is going on for the youth. Many felt that the Gang Intervention Specialists were some of these important partners.
- Over time, with the passage of the Washington State Gang Court legislation and continued training from National Gang Center, the Gang Court has been able to develop more consistent framework and structure. One prime example is that Court now has the ability to offer dismissal of charges at the end of the process as an incentive.

CHALLENGES

- Over the course of the Gang Court and Gang Project interventions there has been some staff turnover in the Juvenile Probation Officer role. The current staff in this role did not start until Fall 2012. Some of the youth worked with three different PO's in this period. These transitions were challenging for some youth, and also a concern for other providers in maintaining some consistency of services
- There have been some ongoing questions regarding who is eligible for Gang Court, how youth are referred to the program and chosen as ideal candidates. The Gang Court experienced a period of time when few referrals were coming, and it was not clear to the court staff, prosecutors and other providers who should be funneled into the program.
 - There appears to be some shift over time in who has more discretion and "say" on youth who would be good candidates for Gang Court. At the onset the Court drew on voluntary participation of youth on probation or those who wanted to defer possibility of JRA sentence. Then there was a period when the Prosecutors were only looking for youth who were to be committed to JRA and this narrowed down the pool.
 - Of late there may be more of a push to open up the criteria for inclusion. Some stakeholders commented that, of late, some youth who would have been denied in past and other youth who may not have the "motivation" needed to be successful in the program are getting referred to the Court.
- Some interviewees commented on the system of rewards for appropriate youth behaviors vs. punishments for inappropriate youth behaviors that seems to place in with the Court. There is some thought that a system that started out with a heavily emphasis on providing youth with rewards and incentives for successes has shifted to one that is more punitive with the youth when they violate program terms.

Gang Intervention Specialist (GIS) Role

SUCSESSES

- The GIS staff played a strong role in building trust with youth and families through consistent contact with the youth in many different areas (*e.g., school help, prosocial activities, at the Court setting*), and could take on a "confidant" role and be able to have more consistent contact than the Probation Officers.

- Many interviewees talked about the fact that the youth could identify with the GIS staff. Their commonalities regarding past GIS gang experience help them and youth better understand where each were coming from, and then the ability to speak some of the same language. The shared experience helped bridge the connection between the GIS and the youth.
- The GIS staff were active in engaging youth in more prosocial, recreational, and fun activities (*e.g., pizza parties, going to the Y, bowling*). They did experience some constraints in trying to provide such opportunities to the youth related to project rules and County liabilities (*to be discussed later*)
- Many noted that one of the strengths of the role is that the GIS staff were able to give new perspective to the other providers working with the youth. They brought to light issues that youth would not share with other providers, and were able to translate what is going for the youth or what the other providers perceived about the youth. They were successful in playing the role of a “cultural coach” for the other providers and the Court personnel.
 - A number of interviewees described an example of a youth who was consistently missing Court appointments even though this youth had easy access from home to the Court via the bus. The GIS working closely with the youth was able to share with the Court and providers how the youth felt the bus was not a safe means of travel and how he had received threats from other gang youth on the bus. In this case the Probation staff were able to make different arrangements for the youth.

CHALLENGES

- The GIS staff faced a challenging balance in their role as a mentor and confidant to the youth and as a County employee working closely with the Court and the Probation staff. On the one hand they were talking with youth, trying to maintain some sense of trust and the ability to keep some confidential information. Yet, at that same time they were often asked to share information about the youth to help the Probation Officers or the Court that was share din confidence, or that might have adverse consequences for the youth. Over time this became an awkward position for both the GIS and Court staff.
 - The situation did change some after a visit from the National Gang Center staff and program staff from Houston who have an GIS role. Their guidance led to some shift in the GIS role, away from direct provision of information to the Probation staff, and more towards a nuanced suggestion of things the PO’s might consider.
 - E.g. if a GIS knew the youth is smoking marijuana, prior to the training they would feel they have to tell PO. With the shift the strategy was more like the GIS commenting to the PO, “have you UA’d the youth recently?” A more subtle suggestion that the PO should look more closely at some of things going on with the youth.
- The fact that the GIS was a County employee working within the Probation department presented some logical constraints to work the GIS wanted to do with the youth. They encountered rules and guidelines such as the amount of time they might spend with the youth or where they could or could not transport the youth to that raised some challenges. In one example, a number of youth wanted to get their gang tattoos removed, and the GIS staff wanted to help facilitate that process, but since the tattoo removal services were outside they County the GIS could not bring them to the service.
- A number of stakeholders felt that the GIS staff did not have the professional skills and basic work experience needed to work within the County Court system. Since the staff were ex-gang members, and did not have significant work experiences in more professional settings they encountered difficulties with some of the basic obligations of the job such as keeping account of

their time, communicating with supervisors, keeping accurate notes and records, and keeping some set scheduled activities.

- The dynamic of hiring ex-gang members into a grant funded position within the Probation department raised some interpersonal issues with other staff. Some interviewees talked of the distrust of the GIS staff because of their past backgrounds that lingered for many who worked for the County. This divide was exacerbated as the County needed to cut positions of employees with seniority while continuing to maintain the grant funded GIS roles.
- Some interviewees raised the question of whether there was a need for better definition of the GIS role. It was not clear over the course of the project of whether the GIS should be a mentor, confidant, and facilitator or maybe all of the above. Some felt maybe the GIS would be better served doing “less” for the youth and focusing more on teaching the youth and family how to do it themselves. Thus would require some shift in the training and requirements needed for the role.

APPENDIX A: YCCGY Program Youth Survey

Program Youth Survey

Name/ID Code: _____ Today's Date _____
{information filled in by probation counselor after the completion of the survey}

Please answer the following questions about working with your Gang Intervention Specialist (GIS). Your responses are confidential and will not be shared by anyone outside this program. Please be as honest as possible; it will help us provide better services!

About how many days per week have you had contact with your Gang Intervention Specialist? _____

We use GIS to refer to your Gang Intervention Specialist!!

	Not True at all	Not Very True	Sort of True	Very True
My GIS makes fun of me in ways I don't like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS almost always asks me what I want to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I am with my GIS, I feel special	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes my GIS promises we will do something: then we don't do it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS is always interested in what I want to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS I feel excited	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When my GIS gives me advice, it makes me feel stupid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS I feel sad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS I feel important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS I feel bored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wish my GIS asked me more about what I think	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS, I feel mad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wish I knew my GIS better	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS I feel disappointed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm with my GIS I feel happy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS helps me understand how being in a gang can affect my life in a negative way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS helps me and my family find ways to become less involved with gang activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS shows me opportunities and things I can do to stay out of gang activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS helps me think of fun and interesting things to do that won't get me into trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS helps me understand how to be successful with my court order and going through probation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My GIS helps me get my court ordered conditions done, for example, helps me get to counseling appointments, tutoring, probation appointments, school, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In what ways has the fact that your Gang Intervention Specialist is a previous gang member **helped** you be successful in this program?

<i>Please talk about some of the ways that your Gang Intervention Specialist has helped you in the following areas?</i>	<i>Please write your thoughts in this column</i>
Being Successful in School	
Building a stronger relationship with your family and/or friends	
Dealing with the police, courts and/or legal system	

	Not True at all	Not Very True	Sort of True	Very True
I know that I will stay out of gang activities now and in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know I can be successful in school now and in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know I can be successful in making it through probation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know that my family will help me stay out of trouble	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will always see myself as a member of a gang	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What are some things you **LIKE** about working with your Gang Intervention Specialist in this program?

What are some things you **DO NOT LIKE** about working with your Gang Intervention Specialist in the program?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!