THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW)

National Cross-Site Evaluation of Juvenile Drug Courts and Reclaiming Futures

Final Cross-Site Report: Evaluation of Drug Court/Change Team - March 2015
Five Site Report

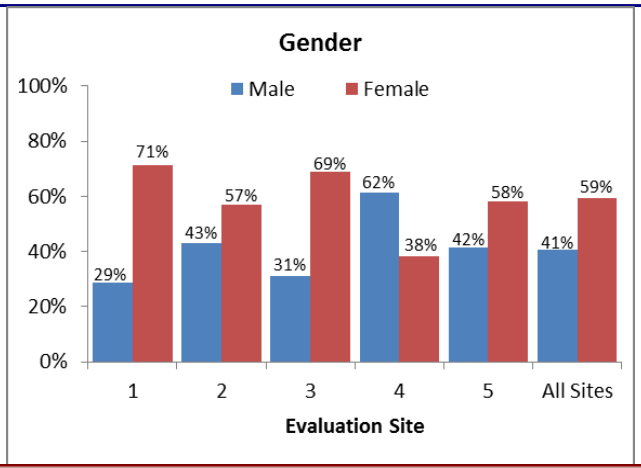
This report presents findings of an evaluation of the Drug Court/Change Teams (sometimes referred to as Reclaiming Futures Fellows) of the Juvenile Drug Court: Strategies in Practice (JDC) and Reclaiming Futures (RF) programs implemented in five juvenile drug courts in the United States (i.e., the evaluation sites). These sites were awarded 4-year grants by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration to implement JDC/RF programs at their juvenile drug courts. As part of this initiative, the evaluation sites were charged with convening and utilizing Drug Court/Change Teams in order to facilitate the implementation of JDC and RF.

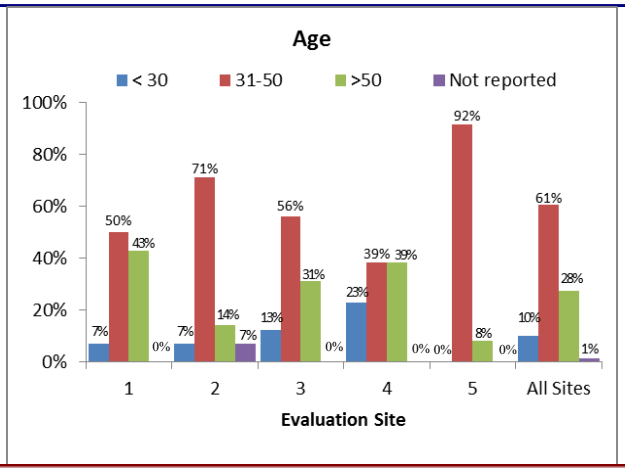
To evaluate the Drug Court/Change Teams, the evaluation team surveyed Drug Court/Change Team members as well as other individuals who have sufficient contact with the JDC/RF programs and personnel in order to make a knowledgeable assessment. These other individuals included other staff of the JDC/RF programs, staff of other youth-serving agencies, and community members. The sample of other individuals at each evaluation site was either nominated by the JDC/RF Program Director as individuals most qualified to assess the effectiveness of the local juvenile justice and substance abuse treatment system, or were identified by the evaluation team as staff of service agencies in proximity to the JDC who would be likely to serve youth involved in the JDC.

The survey queried respondents' perceptions of their Drug Court/Change Team's competency, expertise, and knowledge about the JDC and RF models. The survey was conducted during the fourth, and last, year of the evaluation sites' OJJDP- and SAMHSA-funded grant periods. Thus, the findings reflect perceptions of Drug Court/Change Team's who have been in existence and active in the juvenile drug court system for at least three years.

The reported analyses used data only from surveys for which at least 50% of the questions were answered; data from surveys where less than 50% of the questions were answered were excluded from analyses. The resulting analytic sample consisted of survey responses from 70 of 182 (38%) expert informants invited to take the survey. The response rates by Site 1 to 5 are 48% (n=14), 41% (n=14), 28% (n=17), 46% (n=13), and 40% (n=12), respectively.

Description of survey respondents





- Overall, the majority of survey respondents were female (59%).
- The percentage of female respondents varied across evaluation site from 38% (Site 4) to 71% (Site 1).
- Overall, the majority of participants were between the ages of 31 and 50 (61%).
- The age distribution of respondents varied across evaluation site. The age of respondents was more equally distributed at Sites 1 and 4 as compared to Sites 2, 3, and 5.

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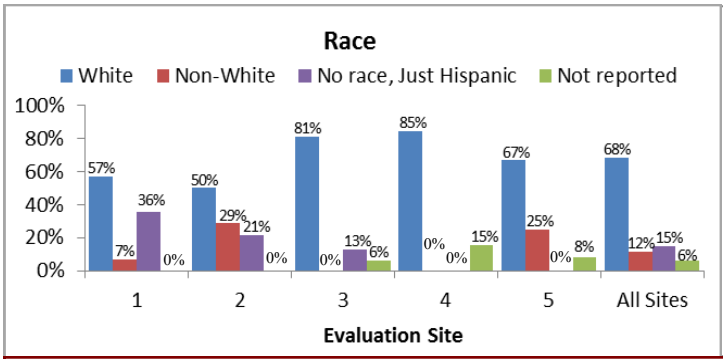

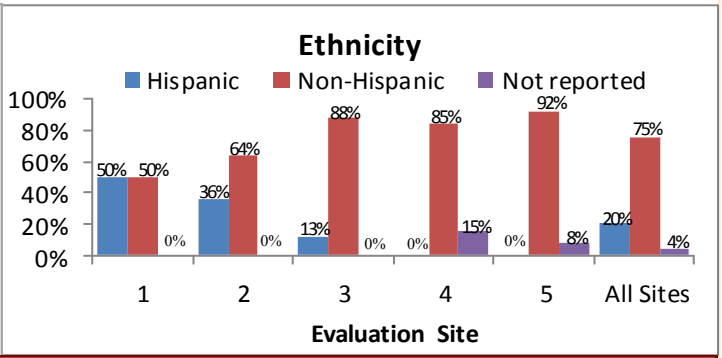

- Overall, the majority of respondents were White (68%).
- The percentage of White respondents varied across evaluation site from 50% (Site 2) to 85% (Site 4).
- Overall, the majority of respondents were non-Hispanic (75%).
- The percentage of non-Hispanic respondents varied across evaluation site from 50% (Site 1) to 92% (Site 5).

Perceptions of the Drug Court/Change Team

- Overall, 70% (49) of survey respondents were aware that their Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) has a Drug Court/Change Team.
- Thirty percent not knowing about the Drug Court/Change Team seems noteworthy because survey respondents were Drug Court/ Change Team members and other individuals who have sufficient contact with the JDC/RF programs and personnel. This high percentage suggests that, overall, the Drug Court/Change Team is not very visible to individuals who have sufficient contact with the JDC/RF programs and personnel who are not members of the Drug Court/Change Team.
- The percentage of those aware that their JDC has a Drug Court/Change Team varied by evaluation site with Sites 1 and 5 having the greatest percentages of survey respondents who were aware of the Drug Court/Change Team. This finding suggests that the Drug Court/Change Team is more visible at some sites than at others.

Aware that the Local Juvenile Drug Court has a Drug Court/Change Team

(N=70)	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	All Sites
Yes	86%	64%	59%	69%	75%	70%

- The 49 survey respondents who were aware that their JDC has a Drug Court/Change Team were asked about their perceptions of the Drug Court/Change Team. Their perceptions are summarized in the rest of this report.
- The number of respondents who answered each question varies because some respondents chose not to answer the question or said that they did not know the answer.

Know the Purpose of the Drug Court/Change Team

(N=49)	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	All Sites
Agree or strongly agree	58%	89%	70%	89%	78%	76%

- Overall, 37 of the 49 (76%) survey respondents who were aware that their JDC has a Drug Court/Change Team agreed or strongly agreed that they knew the purpose of the Drug Court/Change Team.
- This percentage varied by evaluation site from 58% (Site 1) to 89% (Sites 2 and 4), with Sites 2, 4, and 5 having the greatest percentages of respondents who thought that they knew the purpose of the Drug Court/Change Team.
- Assuming that members of the Drug Court/Change Teams know the purpose of these teams, this finding underscores the finding that overall, the Drug Court/Change Team is not very visible to individuals who have sufficient contact with the JDC/RF programs and personnel who are not members of the Drug Court/Change Team.

- Based on these findings, if visibility of the Drug Court/Change Team is important to the evaluation sites, they should increase efforts to make it more visible and/or they should consider different ways to make it more visible.

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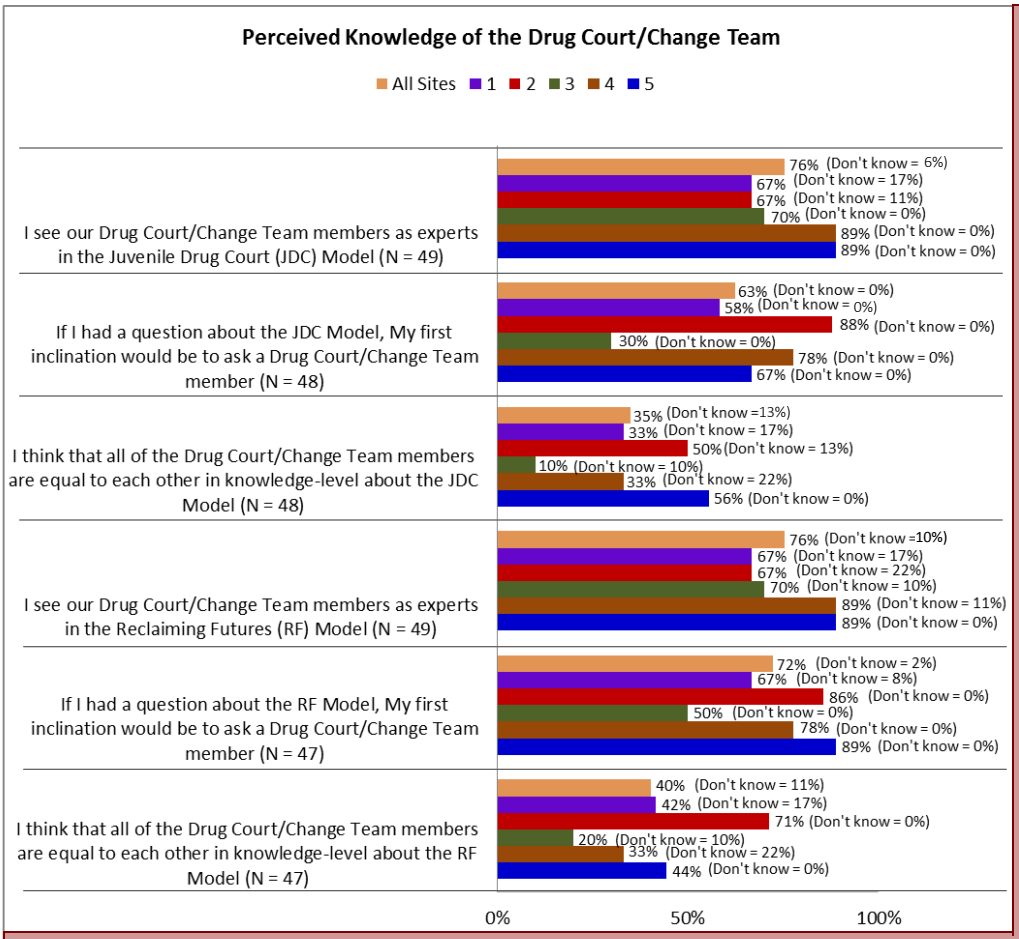
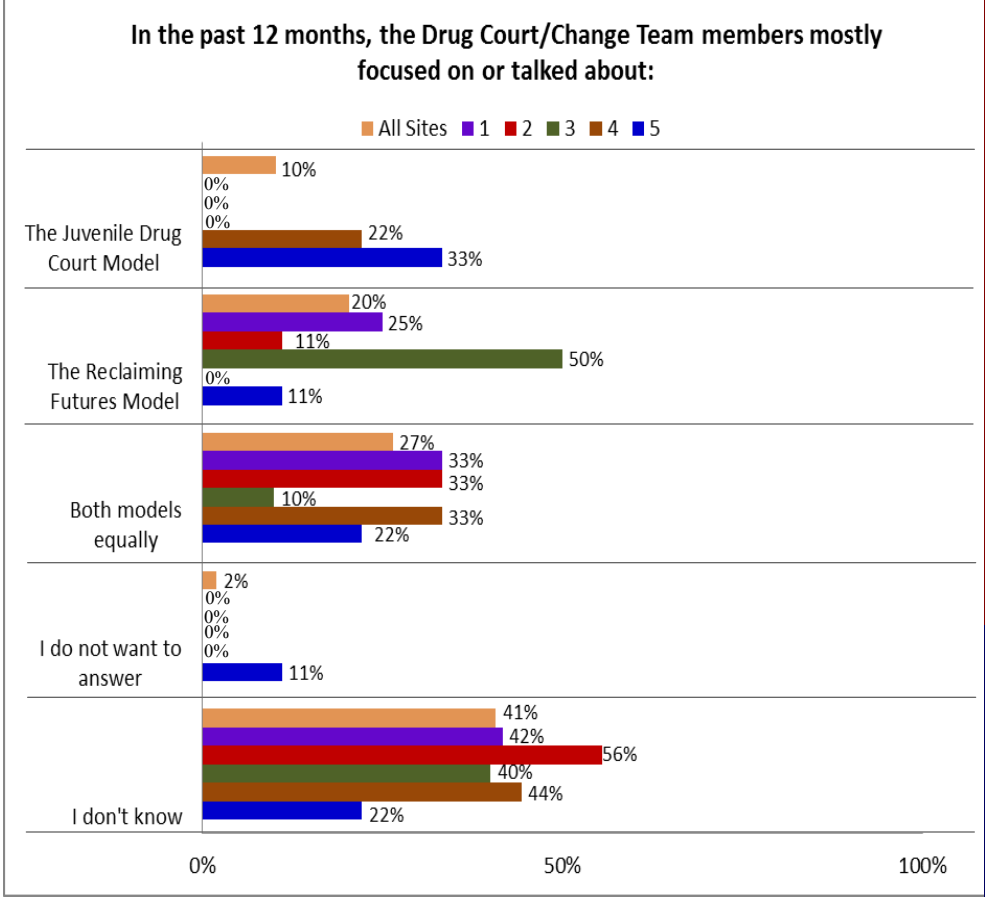


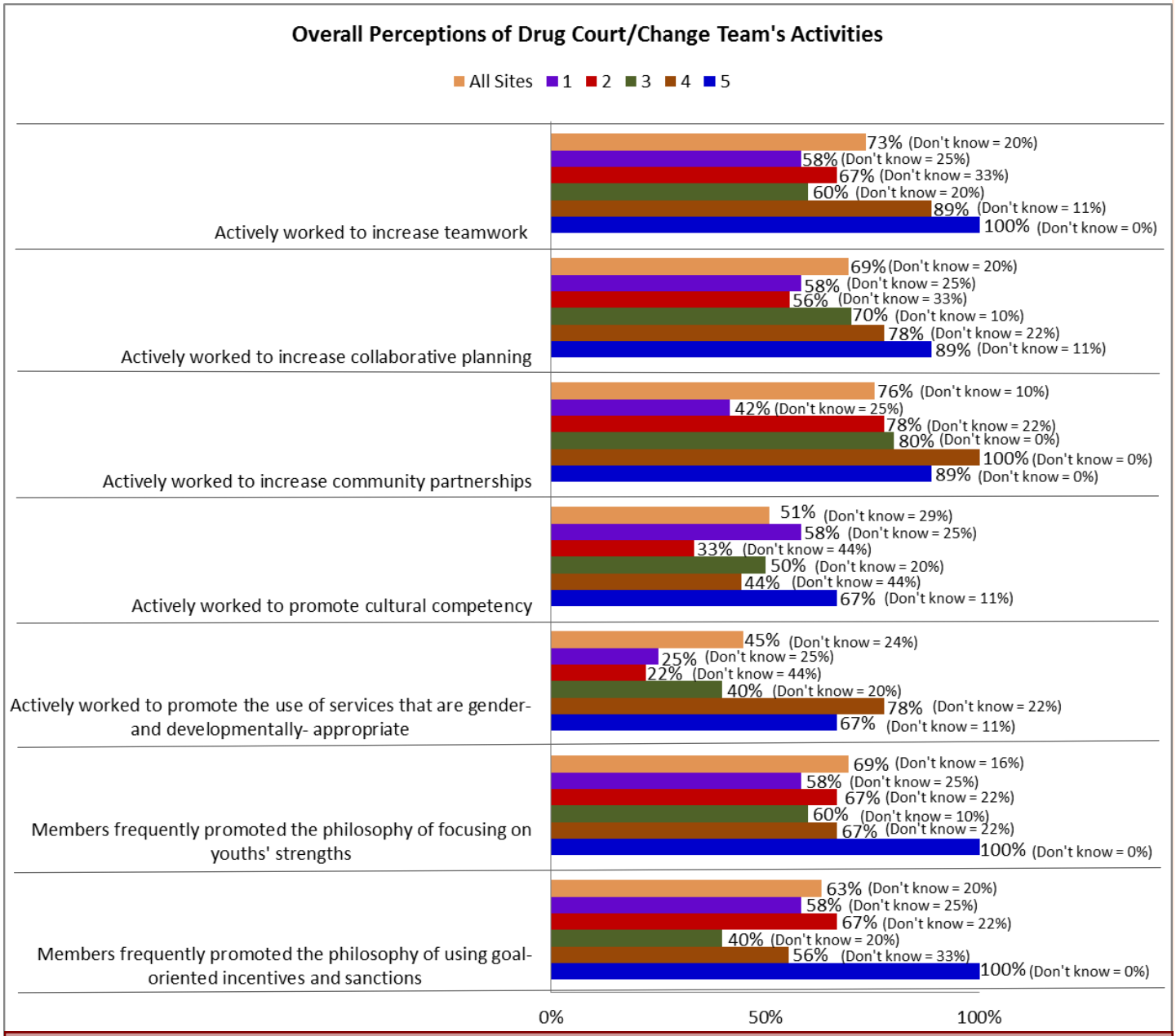
- This figure indicates the percentage of respondents who were aware of their JDC's Drug Court/Change Team who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.
- The majority of these respondents perceived Drug Court/Change Team members as experts in the JDC Model and the people to go to with relevant questions (overall, 76% and 63%, respectively) and the RF Model (overall, 76% and 72%, respectively).
- Substantial proportions of respondents perceived equality across team members regarding their knowledge of the JDC and RF Models (overall, 35% and 40%, respectively).
- Meaningful proportions of respondents reported not knowing about the JDC and RF model-related expertise of the Drug Court/Change Team.

- There was some variation across site in the perceived knowledge of the Drug Court/Change Team.
- These finding suggest that the Drug Court/Change Teams are seen as experts in the JDC and RF Models, but that the visibility of the team could be improved to increase awareness of the team, its purpose, and its usefulness.



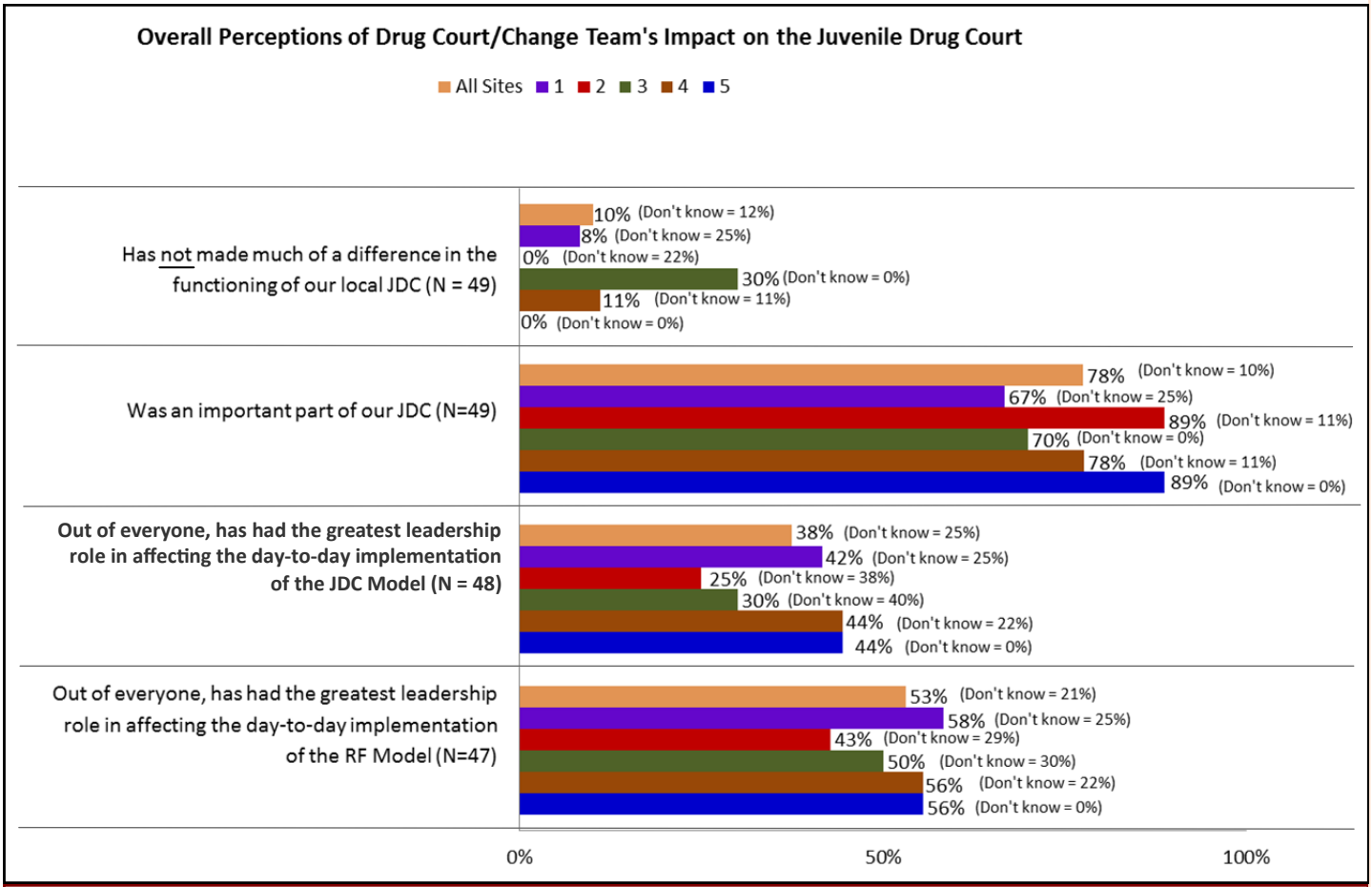
- Many (41% overall) of the respondents who were aware of their JDC's Drug Court/Change Team did not know what the members of the team focused on or talked about.
- A substantial percentage (27% overall) of respondents thought that team members focused on both the JDC and RF models equally.
- There was some variation across site; more respondents at Site 5 perceived more focus on the JDC model (33%), whereas more respondents at Site 3 perceived more focus on the RF model (50%).

- These findings provide some evidence of use of an integrated JDC/RF model. However, they also suggest that the teams could more evenly split their focus on JDC and RF and they could increase visibility of their focus.



- The majority of survey respondents who were aware of their JDC's Drug Court/Change Team agreed or strongly agreed that the Drug Court/Change Team actively worked to increase teamwork (73% overall), collaborative planning (69% overall), and community partnerships (76% overall).
- In addition, many agreed or strongly agreed that the Drug Court/Change Team actively worked to promote cultural competency (51%) and the use of gender– and developmentally-appropriate services (45%), and that its members frequently promoted the philosophies of focusing on youths' strengths (69%) and using goal-oriented incentives and sanctions (63%).
- There was substantial variation by site, with Site 5 being the most or second most commonly perceived as active on all seven of the Drug Court/Change Team activities examined as compared to the other sites. Site 4 was also rated relatively active; it was the most or second most commonly perceived as active on four of the Drug Court/Change Team activities examined.
- Substantial percentages of respondents felt that they did not have the information to be able to evaluate the Drug Court/Change Team activities examined; 10% to 29% of respondents overall responded with "I don't know." This lack of information also varied by site.

- These findings indicate that, overall, the Drug Court/Change Teams are viewed as less active in promoting cultural competency and use of gender- and developmentally-appropriate services as compared to the other activities queried.
- They also indicate that not all of the Drug Court/Change Teams are perceived in the same way. They are perceived differently not only in how active they are in the areas examined, but also in the visibility of their activities.



- Overall, survey respondents who were aware of their JDC's Drug Court/Change Team had positive perceptions of the team, with only 10% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Drug Court/Change Team has not made much of a difference in the functioning of the JDC and 78% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Drug Court/Change Team was an important part of the JDC during the past 12 months.
- In addition, many respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Drug Court/Change Team had the greatest leadership role in affecting the day-to-day implementation of the JDC (38%) and the RF (53%) Models.
- Substantial proportions of respondents felt that they did not have the information to be able to evaluate the impacts of the Drug Court/Change Team examined; 10% to 25% responded with "I don't know." This lack of information varied by site.
- There was substantial variation by site in perceived impact. Across all four types of impact, the Drug Court/Change Team at Site 5 was perceived as impacting the JDC by percentages of respondents equal to or greater than at the other sites. Contrarily, Site 3 was consistently, across all four types of impact, perceived as impacting the JDC by relatively smaller percentages of respondents as compared to the other sites. Sites 1, 2, and 4 were perceived as impacting the JDC more or less positively relative to the other sites depending on the specific type of impact.

- These findings indicate that, overall, the Drug Court/Change Teams are perceived as having substantial impact on the JDCs, but that they could have even more impact.
- They also indicate that not all of the Drug Court/Change Teams are the same. They differ not only in their perceived impact, but also in how visible their impact is.

Questions about this report? Contact Monica Davis, Evaluation Coordinator at 520-295-9339 x211 or midavis@email.arizona.edu

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