

## Abstract

In the United States (US) juvenile justice system there is a significant amount of youth with mental health conditions. Numerous studies have identified regardless of gender and race, there are high prevalence rates for mental health and substance use disorders in the juvenile population. The purpose of this quality improvement project was to develop a standardized screening process using a protocol to identify mental health conditions in male adolescents who are transitioning from juvenile detention centers to group homes. Kurt Lewin's change theory and the changing as three steps (CATS) model was used to guide this project. The intervention of the DNP project focused on staff education and training on the administration of the evidence-based assessment tool with the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument, Version 2 (MAYSI-2). A pre- and post-intervention questionnaire was administered to participants to assess knowledge regarding the MAYSI-2. Evaluation included a retrospective chart audit to measure the compliance rate in the utilization of the MAYSI-2. Results from the project intervention illustrate an improvement in staff knowledge, which is evident in the subsequent evaluation of the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire. The result of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (WSRT) revealed a statistically significance in the post-intervention score ( $Z = -2.814, p = .005$ ) implying that the implementation of a mental health screening tool in comparison to current practices. The analysis indicates the significant impact of education of participants on the MAYSI-2. The findings suggest that the implementation of a mental health screening tool can improve early identification and management of mental health conditions in the male juvenile population.