



CRIMINAL JUSTICE FAX



RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH DIVISION

Volume 9 Issue 2

Community Assessment Teams Provide a Valuable Resource Across the Region

During the 1990s, faced with a growing juvenile crime rate, San Diego County established the goals of preventing and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, promoting positive youth development, and increasing community safety. To achieve these, the San Diego County Probation Department worked with the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), local community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to establish a comprehensive, integrated, and collaborative system of prevention, intervention, and treatment services for youth and families. The prevention component of this system remains in place today: five regional Community Assessment Teams, also called CATs or CA/WINGS¹.

Established in 1997, the CAT programs utilize multi-disciplinary teams to provide case management and gender-responsive services to youth and their families, to address anger management problems, family issues, violence, alcohol and other drug use, gang involvement, school problems, and other anti-social behaviors. Families may contact the CAT program directly, or be referred by Probation, schools, law enforcement, or other community-based agencies. SANDAG's annual evaluation of the CAT programs, which is part of the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) project, has consistently shown that families served have increased resiliency scores (i.e., shown more protective factors than risk factors at program exit²); greater knowledge and willingness to use community resources; and perceive improvement in their child's school performance, peer group interaction, problem solving abilities, and communication skills.

The five regional CA/WINGS programs include:

Area Served	Agency	Physical Location	Phone Number
Central	SAY	San Diego	(619) 283-9264
East	San Diego Youth and Community Services	La Mesa	(619) 258-6877
North Coastal	North County Lifeline	Oceanside	(760) 757-0118
North Inland	Mental Health Systems	Escondido	(760) 747-0205
South Bay	South Bay Community Services	Chula Vista	(619) 420-3620

With recent increases in youth violence in the region and communities seeking ways to prevent gang involvement for our children, it is important that we remember this valuable resource is available throughout the region, both providing services directly and linking clients to other service providers in the community. To learn more about San Diego's comprehensive strategy, including CA/WINGS, please visit SANDAG's Web site for a link to the most recent JJCPA report:

http://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_1276_6272.pdf .

¹ In 2003, the WINGS program, Working to Insure and Nurture Girls' Success, was merged with the CAT program.

² The San Diego Risk and Resiliency Check-Up is used to measure how many risk and protective factors a youth has (out of 30 each) across six domains including individual, delinquency, education, family, peer, and substance use.