



## Society for Prevention Research 32nd Annual Meeting

### Pre-Conference Workshop III

**Date:** Tuesday, May 28, 2024

**Time:** 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

**Title:** Advancing Prevention Researcher-Policymaker Partnerships to Eliminate Disparities in the Youth Justice System

#### Organizers and Presenters:

- Chair and Organizer: Brian Bumbarger, Colorado Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Council

Pending confirmation: faculty/presenters representing the following organizations:

- Society for Prevention Research (SPR)
- National Prevention Science Coalition (NPSC)
- National Race Equity Implementation Center (NREIC)
- Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ)
- Center for Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice
- National Foundations

#### Purpose

SPR has prioritized *advancing prevention science that promotes equity*, and recently empaneled a Task Force on the training needs of prevention researchers (Chilenski, 2020) and a *Task Force on Prevention Science's Role in Reducing Disparities and Promoting Equity* (Boyd, 2022). 2024 is the historic 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), which requires states to develop a strategic plan for addressing the longstanding challenge of racial and ethnic disparities in the youth justice system (Robles-Ramamurthy, 2019). In the 50 year history of the JJDP, our country has failed to make any measurable progress in reducing disparities in the youth justice system, and in fact those disparities have increased in recent years (Annie E Casey Foundation, 2023).

The goal of this pre-conference is to prepare and promote prevention researchers partnering with state juvenile justice advisory groups (SAGs, the state-level policy board structure created under the JJDP to lead youth justice policy and to advise governors and state legislatures) to advance prevention in state juvenile justice planning and specifically to help states address racial and ethnic disparities through better data analysis and prevention research.

The objectives of the pre-conference workshop are to:

- Provide prevention researchers and graduate students in training with exposure to the necessary background knowledge, theoretical and methodological training and connections to be vital partners and collaborators with SAGs and communities as they pursue policy and practice solutions to eliminating inequity and disparities in youth justice systems;
- Inform the state and national prevention research agenda so that policymakers have the research and data to make informed policy and practice decisions; and
- Create a national network and learning community among prevention researchers and students working towards these goals, to increase the pace of knowledge development and best practice.

We will develop pre-, post-, and 6-month follow-up measures to assess the immediate and longer-term impact of the pre-conference on knowledge, intentions, and actions/accomplishments based on the above objectives.

While these goals have value to the prevention researchers and their policymaker partners (and to the populations who would benefit from these partnerships), it also holds value to the field of prevention science, by demonstrating in an applied context the capacity of prevention science to improve equity and address some of society's most stubborn challenges.

#### **Target workshop audience.**

This pre-conference is targeted primarily for early-career prevention researchers, as well as graduate students, who are interested in pursuing equity-focused prevention research and supporting state policymakers in improving their use of data and research to inform strategies for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities. However, it will also be beneficial to prevention researchers at any career stage, including mid-career and senior researchers who mentor and provide career guidance to others. Finally, the pre-conference will be equally useful to state policymakers looking to identify and engage with prevention researchers. \*\*Fortuitously, the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, the national organization of State Juvenile Justice Advisory Groups (SAGs) pursuing racial equity and other youth justice reforms in each state, is holding their national conference in Washington DC on the same dates as the 2024 SPR conference, just a few blocks away. This will provide unprecedented opportunities to connect the attendees of this pre-conference with their potential state policy partners, in real-time. We will support and facilitate those connections during the pre-conference and conference week through individual meetings and a structured "mixer" event at the CJJ conference.

#### **Materials to be provided to attendees**

In addition to handouts related to the training topics outlined below, attendees will be provided with background material on current and prior efforts in their home states to eliminate disparities in the youth justice system, including data being used, the states' current 3-year strategic plans for youth justice system improvement and racial and

ethnic disparities (“3-year plan” and “R/ED plan”) as well as background on the State Advisory Group and RED Committee memberships efforts.

### **Outline of Workshop**

#### **Topics to be covered during the full-day pre-conference training include:**

- History of disparities in youth justice and legislative and policy attempts to address disparities through the core requirements of the JJDP Act and state plans
- Theoretical perspectives on inequity to shape a prevention research agenda, including health equity constructs, theories, and research evidence which can inform the design and development of equity-focused intervention approaches
- Review of prior research and real-world implementation experiences via state juvenile justice advisory groups and DMC/RED subcommittees and initiatives; Participants will be provided with and review their specific states’ plans as well as funding mechanisms, technical assistance and certificate programs that support research, policy and practice to address disparities
- Discussion of data capacity/sufficiency/infrastructure in states, and traditional and innovative (quantitative and qualitative) methods to study the etiologic, individual and systemic mechanisms that drive and hold disparities in place
- Opportunities for prevention researchers to partner with SAGs and communities for research and advocacy; mentoring pathways for undergraduate and graduate students, early career prevention researchers, and those (youth and families) with lived experience in the youth justice system

This is designed to be a very applied session that immerses attendees in the “real-world” realities of both the drivers of and potential research-informed solutions to R/ED. All of these topics will be covered through very interactive discussion and the review of current data, policy documents, and initiatives currently taking place in states. Further, it is our goal to create and support a national network of researchers engaged in this equity-focused work. We will engage with foundations to support those post-conference efforts, and continue to update SPR’s board and relevant committees and task forces.

### **Relevance to Conference theme**

The particular context, equity goals, and partnerships of this pre-conference have never been addressed in any prior pre-conference workshop<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the historic 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the JJDP Act (which is also importantly up for Congressional Reauthorization in 2024) make this a timely workshop topic for the 2024 conference and would likely draw media attention to SPR and participating SPR members and states.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.preventionresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SPR-Annual-Meeting\\_Preconference-Workshops-2006\\_2023-for-website.pdf](https://www.preventionresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SPR-Annual-Meeting_Preconference-Workshops-2006_2023-for-website.pdf). Although Cooper co-led a 2021 pre-conference session on Translating Prevention Science into Action, that workshop, in line with the 2021 conference theme, emphasized translation of prevention science knowledge rather than partnerships to advance equity, and was not targeted at the specific disparities, systems partners, or youth justice system context of this proposed workshop.

The proposed pre-conference addresses a number of specific SPR training priorities and recommendations identified by the *Training Needs Assessment Task Force* (Chilenski, 2020), and has been designed specifically to implement recommendations coming out of the *Prevention Science's Role in Reducing Disparities and Promoting Equity Task Force* (Boyd, 2022). Cooper and Boyd were involved in each of these and are members of the faculty for this pre-conference workshop to ensure alignment. As outlined in the workshop description above, this pre-conference will include discussion of:

1. applying innovative study designs (e.g., adaptive intervention design), technology (e.g., e-health) and/or analytic approaches (e.g., causal inference, qualitative methods) in prevention science research to enhance understanding of health equity and inequities;
2. research approaches that enable a better understanding of the synergistic effects and intersectionality of multiple social determinants of health and their underlying mechanisms;
3. novel approaches (e.g., co-creation) to community based participatory research, partnering with communities and other non-academic partners throughout the prevention science research process and developing community participatory research programs; and
4. research approaches and methods that support health equity practices (e.g., expand context in the analysis of social disadvantage, expanding current eco-developmental models into testable multi-level models

Finally, the pre-conference specifically aligns with the 2024 conference theme of ***Advancing Partnerships and Collaborative Approaches in Prevention Science***, as well as SPR's current strategic plan goals #1 (*promote health equity in prevention science*), #2 (*translate prevention science for use in diverse settings*) and #4 (*increase member support, engagement, and diversity* – one of the objectives under this goal is to expand outreach to practitioner groups – e.g., state juvenile justice advisory groups).