

Youth Justice and Health

Presentation to Mental Health Sector Meeting

5 December 2008



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A wee quiz

- **In the youth justice system, children are aged:**
 - 10 to 13
 - 10 to 16
 - 14 to 16
- **A child can only be taken to court for murder or manslaughter**
 - True
 - False
- **Apprehension rates for children are about:**
 - 320 per 10,000
 - 520 per 10,000
 - 720 per 10,000



- **Youth apprehension rates are about:**
 - 1250 per 10,000
 - 1550 per 10,000
 - 1850 per 10,000
- **Which of these are true for youth?**
 - Overall apprehensions for youth are increasing
 - Property offence apprehensions are increasing
 - Violence offence apprehensions are increasing
 - Male offences are increasing
 - Female offences are increasing



Violence apprehensions

Age range	Apprehension rate per 10,000
10 -13	40
14-16	194
17-20	281
21-30	214



Young offenders and mental health

	Overall	Males	Females
Any disorder	70.4	66.8	81.0
Any anxiety disorder	34.4	26.4	56.0
Any mood disorder	18.3	14.3	29.2
Any disruptive disorder	46.5	44.9	51.3
Any substance abuse disorder	46.2	43.2	55.1

Skowyra KR and Coccozza RR 2007

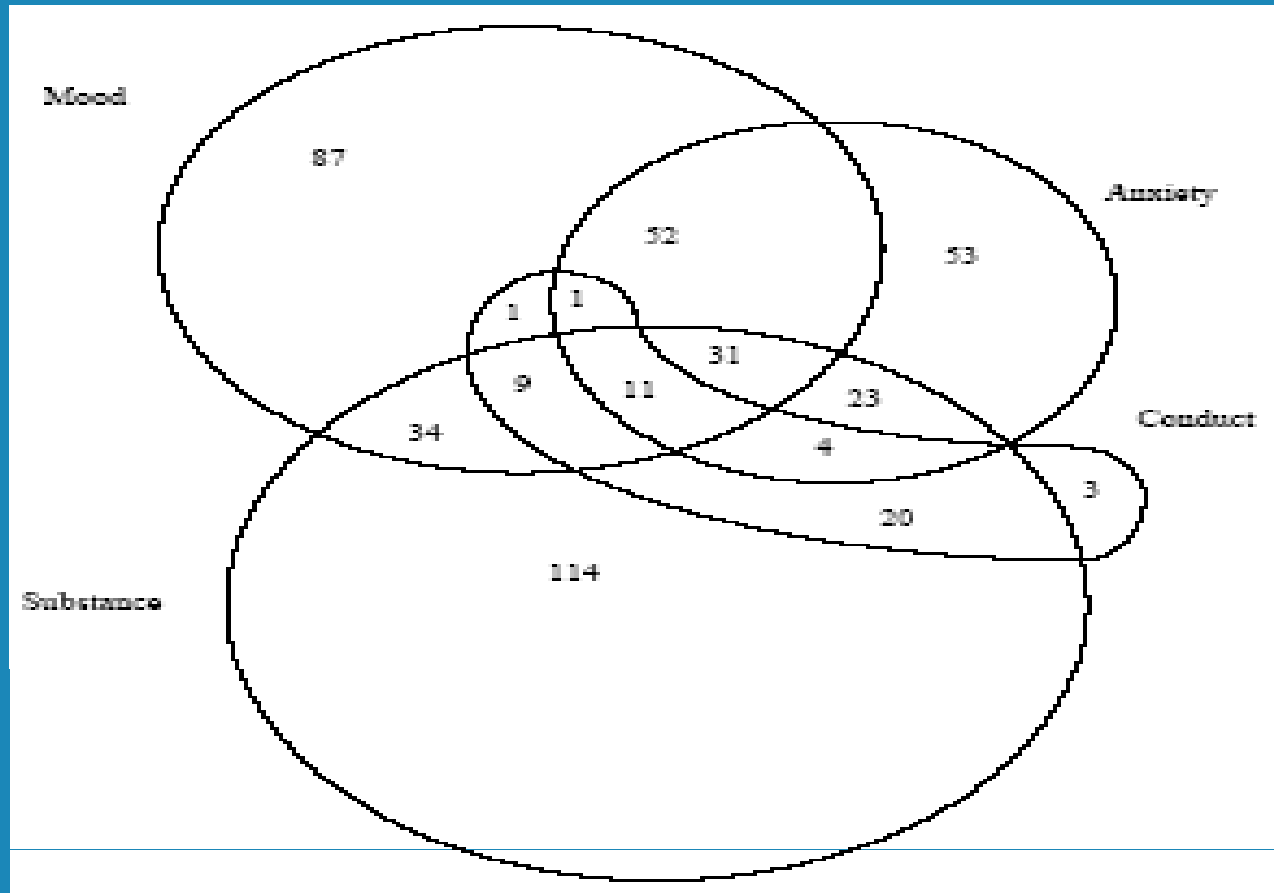


Mental health disorders and aggression

- Increased tendency towards anger, irritability and hostility among youth with mood disorders
- Irritable mood increases likelihood of physical aggression by and against others
- Increased risk of self-harm
- Youths with PTSD are susceptible to responding to threats aggressively and unexpectedly
- CD and ADHD have increased rates of physical aggression
- AoD may increase aggression



Comorbidity



Horwood and Fergusson 1998. Psychiatric disorder and treatment seeking in a birth cohort of young adults



More prevalence

In a US study of a community population drawn from several cities:

- About 30% of youth with persistent mental health problems were persistently delinquent

But

- Only 15% of delinquent youth had persistent mental health problems

Huizinga et al 2000



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So



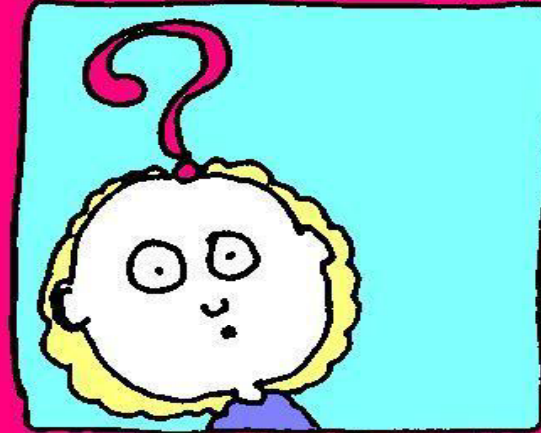
We have a common problem



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What is already happening

- Health is a leader in youth justice
- YOTs have active health members
- Health assessments prior to youth justice FGCs
- Improved health services to residences
- Some youth forensic services
- Interagency collaboration agreement

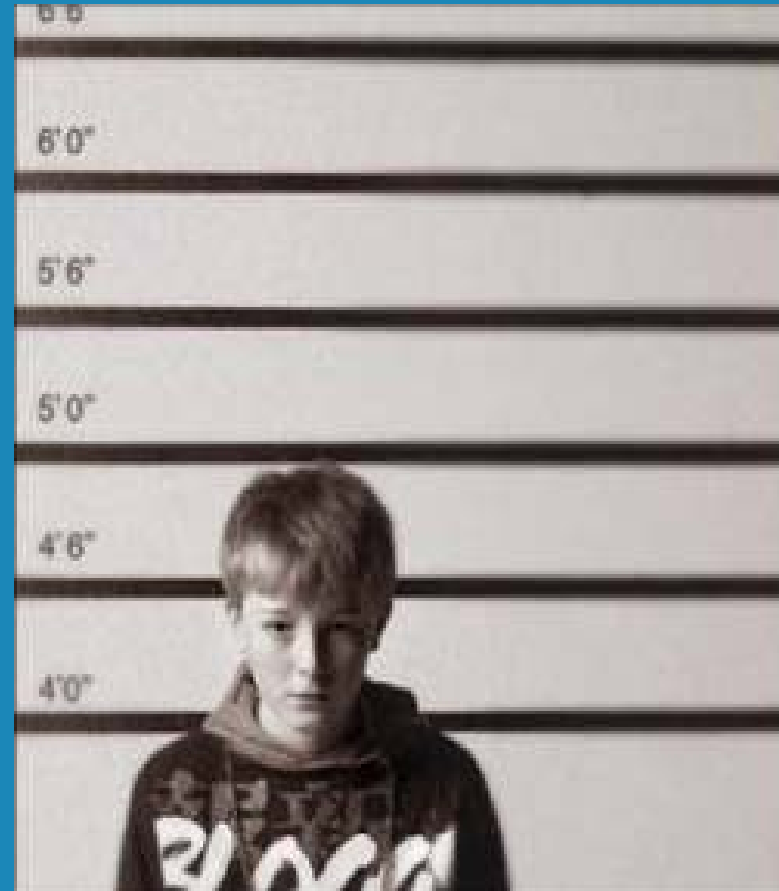


**Problem
Kids?
We've got
answers**



What is on the horizon

- **Wider youth court jurisdiction**
 - Extend the jurisdiction of the youth court so that it can deal with 12 and 13 year olds accused of serious offences



New powers for the youth court

- Parenting orders
- Mentoring programmes
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programmes



Tougher sentences for the worst offenders

- Longer residential sentences
- Fresh start – year long intensive programmes
- Spotlight sentences – court ordered supervision contracts with electronic monitoring



My questions to you



- How might these changes impact on mental health and AoD services?
- It is going to be different – how can it be better?



References

Skowrya KR and Coccozza RR 2007. Blueprint for change: A comprehensive model for the identification and treatment of youth with mental health needs in contact with the juvenile justice system

<http://www.ncmhjj.com/Blueprint/pdfs/Blueprint.pdf>

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