

DESIGN: Family Group Conferencing was introduced into the Wagga Wagga system in March of 1992 with the goal of diverting more youth from formalized handling. It was hoped that with police trained as coordinators of FGCs, FGC would be regarded as a viable option. A nineteen month period prior to the implementation of the FGC option was used for comparison. Fourteen detailed case studies are reported as are results from interviews with participants, including police. A nine month recidivism check was completed on samples from each period.

CRIME TYPE: Youth in FGCs were most frequently referred for breaking and entering, shoplifting, and stealing from cars and homes.

DIVERSION: With the FGC option available, more youth were cautioned (diverted). This was not accomplished by widening the net, but by taking a deeper cut into the court population. This was done by increasing the eligibility criteria to two or more priors.

RECIDIVISM: Reapprehension rates for conferenced youth were lower than for youth processed before the conferencing program was implemented; reapprehension rates for conferenced youth were also lower than reapprehension rates for youth processes through the courts during the same time period.

The manual contains much useful information for training police and other coordinators.

GROUP CONFERENCING
JUVENILE
MIXED CRIME TYPE
RECIDIVISM, DIVERSION
OFFENDER
SURVEY, RECORD DATA, COMPARISON GROUP
AUSTRALIA