



SCHOOL-TO-COURT: LOCAL STRATEGIES

FACILITATOR GUIDE

A Self-Guided Assessment of
School Discipline and Arrests

Developed by State Public Policy Group for

Iowa's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council
Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee

Iowa Department of Human Rights
Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning
2012



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- » Wayne Clinton, Chair, Statewide DMC Subcommittee

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It is the Statewide DMC Subcommittee's hope that communities and organizations find this resource useful in ongoing work to reduce disproportionate minority contact.

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STATEWIDE DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT SUBCOMMITTEE

The guidance, diligence, and long-standing commitment to these issues by the Statewide DMC Subcommittee were essential in the development of the instrument.

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RATIONALE FOR APPROACH

The DMC Subcommittee determined that a relevant, practical tool be provided to Iowa's juvenile court offices, school districts, law enforcement, and communities as another way to reduce disproportionate minority contact in the school-to-court systems. Four counties were selected to be engaged in the development of the resulting instrument: Black Hawk, Johnson, Polk, and Woodbury. In addition, these counties were identified to be the pilot training sites for the initiative.

The DMC Subcommittee, with support from the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning of the Iowa Department of Human Rights, issued a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit vendor proposals to develop a curriculum and conduct a round of training using the curriculum. The contract was awarded to State Public Policy Group (SPPG) from Des Moines, Iowa.

Like the DMC Subcommittee, SPPG's approach to development of the tool was to engage key stakeholders and community members from the four counties. More than 20 individual interviews were conducted with law enforcement officials, school and program administrators, leadership and staff of the juvenile court services, as well as members of the community. Follow-up community meetings were also conducted in each of the counties to engage in a broad discussion of the local issues.

Through the early discussion and engagement process, it became clear that any planning or training guide developed would require a non-traditional approach in contrast to typical diversity training and other required training for compliance. Key requirements identified as central to this new instrument were relevance, flexibility, and usefulness.

With these characteristics in mind, the instrument was developed in modules that can be used singly or combined with others for a training session to fit topic, time, and organizational parameters. Each module includes one hour of core content, which focuses on the specific topical goals. Using only the core content, a day-long session would incorporate seven hours of training. Also included in the guide for each module are two additional hours of activities, case studies, discussion topics, and exercises that can be used as part of the training. The sessions include video of individuals from the counties talking about the issues being covered. Module content and data are specific to the county to ensure relevance. An eighth module was developed specifically for use with the community at large.

This *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument requires participants to be a part of discussions that may help individuals and organizations within systems better understand cultural differences and examine their own personal, as well as organizational, perceptions, practices, biases, and culture.

BACKGROUND OF DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT

The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act requires states to assess the extent to which minority youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system and, if minority youth are overrepresented, to implement activities to impact the issue. Minority youth comprise approximately 10 percent of all of Iowa youth, while minority youth comprise nearly one-third of the youth in Iowa's juvenile detention facilities. Overrepresentation exists at other juvenile court decision points, as well. Iowa's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council has charged a state Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Subcommittee to provide oversight for Iowa's DMC effort. The initial DMC initiative was a pilot project, beginning in 1991. In a report from Caliber Associates in 1992, one recommendation was "the development and provision of cultural competency training."

In January of 2002, Iowa created its DMC Resource Center effort with The University of Iowa's National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice. The University of Iowa (The DMC Resource Center) provides technical assistance to a number of local sites and conducts an annual DMC Conference.

In response to the DMC Subcommittee and other Iowans, Governor Chet Culver issued Executive Order Number Five in 2007 to address the issue of disproportionate minority contact in Iowa.

Executive Order Number Five

PURPOSE. The Youth Race and Detention Task Force shall consider the importance of public safety and its relevance in the use of juvenile detention. Task Force discussions shall include, but are not limited to, the inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention; re-arrest and failure-to-appear-pending-adjudication rates for minority youth; the appropriate conditions of confinement in secure facilities; the overrepresentation of minority youth in detention facilities; and public finances necessary to sustain successful reforms regarding overrepresentation of minority youth in detention facilities.

In response to Executive Order Number Five, the Governor's Youth Race & Detention Task Force and CJJP responded in a comprehensive report published in May 2009. Among the Task Force's findings were the following.

Increasing Minority Overrepresentation in Detention – The Task Force finds that minorities have been overrepresented in Iowa's juvenile detention centers for many years and that their overrepresentation is increasing. In 2007, minority youth comprised nearly 40% of detention facility holds.

Increases in Arrests for African American Youth – The Task Force finds that arrests for African American youth have increased nearly 60% in recent years. Arrests of African American youth for simple misdemeanors, assault (49% increase) and disorderly conduct (213% increase) were offenses that influenced the increase. African American youth are arrested at a rate nearly six times higher than Caucasian youth. Increases in arrests for girls are higher than increases for boys.

Arrests of Youth in Schools – The Task Force finds that schools are a significant source of juvenile arrests. Arrest data from select metropolitan school districts reflect that minority youth comprise a significant percentage of school arrests.

Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee

As a result of the report and other longstanding goals of the Committee, the Statewide DMC Subcommittee embarked on a number of aggressive initiatives to address these disparities. These include the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

How to Use the School-to-Court: Local Strategies Instrument

The *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument focuses on Iowa's school-to-court referral process for juveniles. It was developed to be a practical, flexible, and relevant instrument that will be used in organizational and institutional settings, in neighborhoods and the community, or as a part of presentations with civic gatherings and organizations. How individuals, organizations, or institutions specifically use the instrument will be determined based on their specific purposes and how modules may work best for them. The instrument was structured with a menu of materials, exercises, and activities that may best suit the situation or the participants taking part in any given session.

This instrument was developed for use in Iowa after working with Iowans to identify an approach that would make it appealing and apply in a variety of settings. A number of individual interviews and group discussions were conducted to hear from potential participants and facilitators regarding their community experiences and subject matter that may be included in the instrument. It was apparent that many organizations have conducted a variety of diversity and/or cultural competency trainings over recent years, are required to provide specific annual trainings, and graciously dreaded another that might fall into the same pattern. Most were looking for something that would be more useful in their own situations. Basically, it was noted, "If it is not useful, it will not be used."

School-to-Court: Local Strategies instrument is provided in a usable format with relevant content for Iowa agencies, districts, organizations, institutions, and communities. The instrument is divided into eight modules; seven modules focus on topical group training, and one module has been developed to be used more generally for community presentations.

Each of the seven topical modules presents a core, one hour of training, activities, and discussion. Provided as supplemental materials are additional content, activities, and discussion topics. Each facilitator will be able to determine how to best construct a topical session based on the time available, needs of the organization and type of participants. In all, the instrument guide provides a facilitator enough materials for at least 20 hours of training, plus material appropriate for a one-time public or community presentation.

It is important to recognize that the instrument includes data and other materials specifically relevant to each of the four counties that participated in its development. Black Hawk, Johnson, Polk, and Woodbury counties were designated as the focus of the materials by the Statewide Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee (DMC Subcommittee). The data provide an important quantitative reflection of the issues around DMC and the school-to-court process. The qualitative input is reflected in the instrument through video-recorded interviews with selected individuals from each of the four counties, as they provide essential perspectives directly related to the content.

Because time, cost, and availability of a designated trainer were identified as impediments to use of any instrument, this *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument was designed for flexibility and does not require a formal trainer. Rather, any interested individual in an organization will be fully prepared to conduct a session using the materials included in the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies*. The materials guide facilitators through preparation for, organizing, and facilitating the modules selected for their purposes.

It is intentional that this instrument refers to a facilitator, rather than a trainer. The content leads session participants in exposure to information and discussion related to that information. Typically, the discussion focuses on the individual community, with sessions leading toward a level of greater understanding and, perhaps, some agreement on what might be adapted to be more effective in addressing school-to-court challenges systemically or in one's own organization. The facilitator guides the discussion through each module, assisting participants to stay on topic and constructively address the questions raised for their work and their community.

An Overview of the Contents

The *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument provides a comprehensive, self-contained guide for a facilitator to conduct a successful session or series of sessions. The content is briefly described in this annotated Table of Contents.

Acknowledgements – Offers thanks and credit to those responsible for and contributing to this work.

Statewide Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee – Lists and credits the DMC Subcommittee as the impetus to creating this instrument and guide.

Rationale for the Approach – Describes the process leading to development of this approach to the DMC training sessions.

Background of Disproportionate Minority Contact – Provides background information on disproportionate minority contact in Iowa and efforts to address related issues, specifically through Iowa Department of Human Rights, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division.

Facilitator Guidance – Gives a facilitator an overview of the instrument, its context, its content, and specific steps to prepare to facilitate content sessions.

- How to Use the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument
- Overview of the Contents
- Facilitator Guide Design and Tools
- Organizing the Training Sessions

Module 1 – Disproportionate Minority Contact in a Historical Context

This is an introductory session to lay the groundwork to present and discuss the instrument's purpose as it relates to individuals, as well as organizational policy and practice. This module will include historical information on the community's minority cultures and contributions, as well as a historical reflection of the DMC initiative and statistics over the last 20 years. A self-assessment reflecting cultural understanding is a part of the module.

Module 2 – The School-to-Court Process

This module provides an opportunity to provide a clear explanation and discussion of the school-to-court referral process. This module is particularly focused for individuals and organizations within the system, that is, education, law enforcement, and juvenile court. Participants will discuss and compare practices and policies in their own organization and the goals and challenges of complicated situations.

Module 3 – Data and Trends: Iowa and Local

The improvement or stagnation of progress in reducing disproportionate minority contact is measured by data. The use of data as a tool is examined in this module. This module presents state and county data, looking at the most recent statistics available, as well as historical data. While cultural understanding for all is the ultimate goal, the data that show improvement and success are the bottom-line measurement.

Module 4 – Impact on Kids Now and in the Future

The fundamental purpose of this instrument is to aid in examining the link between disproportionate minority contact in the school-to-court process and the young people that it may affect. This module will address impacts on students, now and in the future, and the reality of incarceration, detention, or juvenile court records. Attention in this module will be given to how practices and policies might alleviate these realities.

Module 5 – Current Initiatives to Address Disproportionate Minority Contact in This Community

There are ongoing DMC initiatives in Iowa's counties and communities. In this module local initiative leaders can present or lead discussions, and participants will take a look at the successes and challenges through these initiatives and in the community. Special attention will be given to how the community engages constructively with the school-to-court process.

Module 6 – Family and Community Engagement

Disproportionate minority contact significantly affects families and minority communities. This module revolves around family and community engagement, communications, and understanding cultural differences. It focuses on techniques, practices, opportunities, local issues, and cultural communication practices to engage families and communities in support of individuals and youth in need.

Module 7 – Sustained Focus to Strengthen Family and School-to-Court Services

Sustaining any program, initiative, or practice over time is always a challenge, particularly in complex systems that deal with youth and families in need. Newly realized awareness and enthusiasm that may come as a result of training or shared discussion often wanes as people go back to work and into a familiar routine. The same can be said for difficulty in strengthening families and addressing family dysfunction. This module focuses on implementing individual and organizational behavior change, maintaining effective practices, and ongoing attention to DMC within and among institutions and the community.

Module 8 – The Challenges of Disproportionate Minority Contact in This Community

This module is designed to be used as a presentation or facilitated discussion with civic and community organizations. A PowerPoint presentation serves as a guide to DMC issues, data, and current programs and initiatives in the community and why DMC matters. It also includes a brief section on the cultural history of the community.

Supplemental Materials – Each module contains information and guidance to deliver a one-hour facilitated session. In addition, this section includes supplementary content, activities, discussion topics, and other options that can be used to expand a module to provide greater focus on that area. Use of the supplemental materials is optional and largely dependent on time available and topical relevance in a community.

Resources and Bibliography – Links and sources of additional information are included to assist the facilitator in learning more about DMC.

Facilitator Guide Design and Tools

This section of the Facilitator Guide provides session leaders with direction on how to effectively use the instrument content and materials.

The design of the guide is intended to be intuitive, requiring little advance study time to be a successful facilitator. Any individual with interest in the subject matter, enjoyment of working with other kinds of organizations and perspectives, and understanding of collaboration for a shared benefit will be a successful facilitator.

Modules were designed to assist participants in achieving competencies developed for the instrument. Relevant competencies are associated with each module and are listed here. Facilitators are encouraged to include the seven core modules in training. If time does not allow inclusion of all seven, this list of competencies can guide facilitation in customizing a session to fit the participants' needs.

Cultural Understanding and Competency Curriculum

Core Competencies by Module

Module 1 – Disproportionate Minority Contact in a Historical Context

- 1.1 Participants understand how history has lasting impact on cultures in Iowa and specific counties.
- 1.2 Participants understand the role of individuals' assumptions in cultural bias by individuals and organizations.
- 1.3 Participants are aware of stereotyping and its impacts on others and their community.

Module 2 – The School-to-Court Process

- 2.1 Participants understand the role of each organization as related to the school-to-court process.
- 2.2 Participants gain a common understanding and agreement on the school-to-court process in their community, particularly as it relates to bias and disproportionality.
- 2.3 Participants agree upon strategies to enhance functioning of the school-to-court process in their community to reduce bias and disproportionality.

Module 3 – Data and Trends: Iowa and Local

- 3.1 Participants have a greater understanding of the value and meaning of specific data to guide strategies for reducing bias and disproportionality.
- 3.2 Participants understand the demographic history of their community and how it relates to bias and disproportionality.
- 3.3 Participants use data appropriately to develop strategies and plans for reduction of bias and disproportionality in the school-to-court process.

Module 4 – Impact on Kids Now and in the Future

- 4.1 Participants understand short-term and long-term impacts of a juvenile record on the individual.
- 4.2 Participants understand the relationships and dynamics of a youth in the school-to-court system with the youth's parents, family, and community.
- 4.3 Participants understand organizational and systemic strategies to mitigate short- and long-term impacts on a juvenile or her/his juvenile record.

Module 5 – Current Initiatives to Address Disproportionate Minority Contact in This Community

- 5.1 Participants are aware of activities, organizations, and initiatives in the community and state to address disproportionate minority contact.
- 5.2 Participants gain a common understanding of the practical meaning of disproportionate minority contact for juveniles, the community, and the school-to-court system.
- 5.3 Participants understand how the Cultural Competency Continuum applies to organizations and individuals' behavior as a part of that organization.

Module 6 – Family and Community Engagement

- 6.1 Participants understand why family and community involvement in school-to-court issues is difficult to motivate.
- 6.2 Participants understand the relationships among relevant spheres of influence in the community.
- 6.3 Participants develop common strategies for effective family and community engagement in individual and system DMC and bias issues.

Module 7 – Sustained Focus to Strengthen Family and School-to-Court Services

- 7.1 Participants develop a common commitment to implementing strategies identified in the sessions.
- 7.2 Participants identify likely barriers and how to mitigate or overcome them in implementing strategies.
- 7.3 Participants demonstrate commitment to sustained efforts through a plan of action for reducing bias and disproportionate minority contact involving each organization and its staff.

In the sections for each module, the facilitator information and the session content information are presented in a side-by-side format for simplicity and ease of facilitation. The narrower, left-side column contains information, guidance, and prompts for the facilitator. The wider, right-side column contains the content material to be delivered to the participants. Each page has a footer that identifies the module number, module title, and page number.

Icons are utilized to aid facilitators in quickly finding certain types of information on the left side columns. Icons are symbols representing session elements such as PowerPoint use, participant activities, videos, and tips for prompting additional discussion.

Participant handouts for each module are included at the end of the one-hour content guide. Facilitators simply need to photocopy or print from the enclosed CD the necessary handouts. Handouts also have a footer that identifies the module and section of the instrument in which it is used to assist the facilitator in identifying the correct items.

Supplemental materials are included in a separate section toward the end of the Facilitator Guide. A list of the supplemental activities is the first page of this section. For groups wishing to concentrate more time on a particular module, additional activities are found in this section.

A glossary of terms and acronyms is included in the Supplemental Materials.

A Resources and Bibliography section is the final section of the Facilitator Guide. Included are a number of resources used in developing this instrument as well as many recommended by individuals involved with the project. Links are provided to data sources, allowing facilitators access to current data as time passes. This section is not intended to be exhaustive, but to support the types of efforts consistent with this instrument.

Organizing the Sessions

This section of the Facilitator Guide provides information helpful to organizers and facilitators of sessions.

Often it is the facilitator who is also responsible for organizing the training session as well as leading it. If there are others available to assist, be sure that each person knows her/his responsibilities and use a checklist to ensure all preparations have been finalized and confirmed. Be sure the facilitator knows who is the “ultimate decision maker” regarding all aspects of the session.

Logistical Organizing

Logistical preparation will make or break a session. Preparation is about anticipating all angles of a session, participant group, and outcome. The following will need to be determined and logistics arranged.

- » **Who should be invited to the sessions?** Ideally, participation will be strong from the schools, law enforcement, and Juvenile Court Services. Other related agencies and organizations are certainly welcome; however, all must have some role in the school-to-court process and support services. A group of 10 – 15 is ideal; 20 can typically be accommodated effectively.
- » **When will the sessions be held and for how long?** Avoid Mondays and Fridays if possible. Calendars for prospective invitee organizations should be checked in advance for potential conflicts. The core instrument is designed for seven one-hour sessions. To complete it in one day, it is suggested that an 8:00 am – 4:30 pm schedule be planned, allowing for arrival, breaks, and lunch. A suggested schedule is included in this section.

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- » **Where will the session be held?** Consider your budget, accessibility, parking options, room size, and request a room with windows if available. “Neutral ground” is desirable if there are control or other ongoing concerns among participating groups. Space is often available free or at low cost at public libraries or community colleges.
 - » **Who will issue the invitations and receive the registrations?** Determine the best way to invite prospective participants to increase their likelihood of attending. Invitations should be issued at least three weeks in advance. Invitations should be provided in writing, either electronic or hard copy, to allow people to retain the information. Phone or personal reminders will likely be necessary.

Other logistics need to be arranged once these initial decisions are made. Additional logistical requirements include the following.

- » Develop a list to track registrants and conduct follow up activities.
- » Provide reminders to unregistered invitee and a map and driving directions to all.
- » Choose the room arrangement. Arrange the room for participants at crescent-round tables or rectangular tables so that 5 – 7 people can be seated together for small group work. Chairs should be positioned so all participants can easily see the screen or charts. Tables should be spaced to allow the facilitator to easily move around the room and between tables. Place a table at the front of the room for the facilitator’s materials. A classroom style arrangement is NOT recommended for these sessions.
- » Request or arrange for a separate AV cart.
- » Request or bring necessary equipment such as laptops, LCD projector, speakers for audio, chart packs and markers, extension cords, and ensure software versions on equipment are compatible with the files to be used.
- » Test equipment and software that will be used at the session in advance of the date of the session.
- » Finalize and copy the session schedule.
- » Determine necessary handouts and make copies for participants.
- » Prepare a sign-in sheet for participants.
- » Create name tents for participants and the facilitator, if possible.
- » Order lunch and refreshments, if necessary.

As a facilitator prepares for the training, she/he should be sure to take time to think about how to organize the PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and video clips to be easily available. All files are found on the CD and DVD provided with each instrument binder. The following information and suggestions may optimize the speed and transition time during the facilitated sessions.

- » PowerPoint Presentations from CD
 - Copy the PowerPoint presentations for the necessary modules from the CD to the laptop’s hard drive. This will typically include Modules 1 through 7.
 - Modify and save the PowerPoint presentations on the computer.
- » Personalize the introductory slides as needed for a particular session.

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- » Hide slides of information pertaining to counties other than the county of the participants.
 - » Save the modified versions or transfer these files to the laptop or flash drive to be used at the session.
 - If preparing for a community presentation using Module 8, copy the file from the CD to the laptop and modify appropriately, saving the modified presentation on the laptop or flash drive.
 - » Video Clips from DVD
 - The video clips located on the DVD are organized by module. The video clips are also referenced in the module guide for additional reference as to identity of the speaker and placement in the session.
 - Note that the clips are NOT embedded in the PowerPoint presentations, but the facilitator will need to switch from PowerPoint to the video player software at the appropriate times. (Embedding the video makes the files sizes unnecessarily large and may create problems for some computers.)
 - » Handouts from CD
 - Handouts for Modules 1 through 7 are located on the CD included in the binder.
 - Handouts include items that may also be included as slides in the PowerPoint presentation. A review of this material is suggested well in advance of the session.
 - Certain handouts need to be printed for distribution in participant packets.

On the day of the training, with the laptop, projector, and speakers set up, do the following:

- » If video clips are operating from a flash drive, insert the flash drive and open the video clip files that will be needed for the day. (Note: clips may operate more quickly if they are copied to the desktop, but that will require a good deal of memory.)
- » Open the video software and test the sound using one of the clips for the session. Adjust speaker volume as needed.
- » Minimize the video clip files for easy access throughout the day.
- » Open the PowerPoint presentations needed for the modules that will be presented during the day.
- » Minimize all the presentations except the file for the first module of the day.

Considerations for Facilitator Preparation

Facilitators may benefit from one or more of the following tools for preparing for their sessions. The job of the facilitator/trainer is to assist participants in working together through discussions specifically related to school-to-court processes and the issues of disproportionality in that process. An important goal is that participants emerge from the training session with insights, tools, and options for reducing disproportionate minority contact through adaptations in organizational and/or individual culture, behaviors, or policy.

One element of a facilitator's preparation for the sessions is to become familiar with those specific organizations and their missions. This may be accomplished through direct contact, previous experience with an organization, or simple research regarding the organization. Additional information that may provide helpful background is to learn a bit about programs and partnerships with which they are involved.

A facilitator of this content will draw upon her/his own broad range of experience, interest, and style. While adhering to the instrument's competencies and guidance, it is important that the facilitator/trainer conduct sessions in accordance with her/his individual teaching styles. The Facilitator Guide and instructions for delivering each module will not overshadow the personality and style of the facilitator. Rather, the facilitator should use her/his style to deliver the content effectively.

In preparing for the session, give thought not only to the logistics, content, and materials, but also to one's own role as facilitator/trainer of this instrument. Consider personal strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator/trainer and develop a style to play to individual strengths.

Before reading further in this guidance, a facilitator/trainer may want to complete the Facilitator Self-Assessment provided at the end of this section/on page. This simple seven-question assessment will guide a facilitator in thinking through her/his attitudes and approaches to working with a group.

The fundamental practices of effective facilitation apply in this instrument. Those include the facilitator's responsibility to engage every participant appropriately in the discussions and activities. All participants have something to contribute, and the facilitator's job is to sense and identify how individual participants are relating to the content and to acknowledge and encourage their participation accordingly. The facilitator also has the primary responsibility for tying the concepts and comments together, bridging many individual thoughts into a reflection of those comments as a whole. This is one way to check back with the group to be sure their views were communicated accurately. Finally, and very important, is the responsibility of the facilitator to keep the session moving along, monitoring allotted time, and managing the day so that the agreed-upon end time is achieved.

One's image and credibility as a facilitator/trainer can be established through certain early actions on the day of the session. The facilitator/trainer will set the tone and training environment by:

- » Dressing professionally and appropriately, demonstrating the serious commitment to the work to be done.
- » Being early to the session site and setting up prior to arrival of participants.
- » Being in charge of the session.
- » Welcoming people and getting them ready to participate actively.
- » Recognizing the importance of one's own role and responsibility as facilitator/trainer.
- » Being fully prepared.

It is typical that the participant group will develop a group personality that is a reflection of all the individual personalities within the group. It is important that the facilitator/trainer understand and respect the individuals and the group personality. It is clear that individuals in the group each have strengths and weaknesses and the facilitator/trainer can take the following steps to assist in building the ability for the group to work together:

- » Know who is in the group and analyze who is there and any previous involvement.
- » Take responsibility to develop the facilitator/participant relationship.
- » Avoid making assumptions about participants.
- » Avoid stereotypical thinking – either organizationally or individually.
- » Acknowledge the validity of participants' feelings, experiences, and ideas.

It is sometimes difficult to draw people into a discussion or activity, particularly early in a session. To help engage individuals in the sessions, a facilitator/trainer might try to:

- » Establish a personal relationship, comfort, and trust with each participant and the group.
- » Engage participants to share their relevant experiences.
- » Move among participants and make individual contact.
- » Call on everyone to contribute to the discussion early in the session.
- » Manage participation so nobody dominates or takes over the floor.
- » Challenge participants to stretch their thinking.
- » Use a variety of teaching techniques and aids, and mix them up frequently.
- » Relate the content of the session to participants' experiences.

Adults process information and learn in different ways, yet it is important to adapt the facilitator/trainer style to accommodate those who learn in each of these ways:

- » Hearing
- » Reading
- » Doing
- » Seeing
- » Touching
- » Talking
- » Observing

There are some Do's and Don'ts to facilitating any session to make it more productive for all. A facilitator/trainer's attitude and demeanor directly affect the response of the participants. Consider the following do's and don'ts.

DO...

- » Speak clearly.
- » Listen carefully to participants.
- » Make eye contact with the group and individuals.
- » Enjoy leading the session (or at least ACT the part).
- » Walk among the participants.
- » Talk directly to individuals.
- » Observe time constraints.
- » Make sure everyone participates.
- » Keep it interesting and varied.
- » Use humor when appropriate – and only when appropriate.

DON'T...

- » Read everything from the guidance; speak to people.
- » Use the podium or table as a personal barrier between the facilitator/trainer and the group.
- » Sit during the session; keep the focus of participants by moving around.
- » Allow one or two people to dominate the session, activity, or discussion.
- » Overlook and pre-judge certain individuals.
- » Discount the importance of what is occurring at the session.
- » Forget to ask questions.

In addition, flexibility on the part of the facilitator/trainer is critical to the effectiveness of the session. If an approach is not working, another approach needs to be used to get the content across. The facilitator can assess her/his effectiveness throughout the session by asking key questions to check for understanding or agreement on critical points. Enthusiasm and participation levels are also good indicators of whether content is being effectively delivered. Break and lunch times provide good opportunities to visit informally with individuals to gauge the progress and satisfaction of participants.

Objectivity is one of the finer points of a facilitator's skills. A facilitator helps people to think through what they want and how to organize themselves to get it done. This is one of the primary reasons that the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument refers to session leaders as facilitators. This instrument is primarily about supporting participants to look at guidance, talk among themselves, and work through questions and issues to improve the school-to-court process and the outcomes for the youth involved.

With that in mind, the objectivity of the facilitator/trainer deserves attention as the facilitator prepares for the session. The objectivity of a facilitator is critical to the group process. Facilitator objectivity:

- » Fosters trust in the facilitator and the purpose of the session.
- » Frees participants to contribute their views openly.
- » Assures balanced airing of all perspectives and issues.
- » Protects out-of-mainstream thinkers from any routine dismissal of the merit of their ideas.
- » Mitigates impacts of participant personalities on the process.

Objectivity includes:

- » Expressing no personal bias or opinion regarding the subject and issues being discussed.
- » Showing no favoritism or bias toward or against any individuals.
- » Carrying no point of view on behalf of any outside organization (a client or funder) that is imposed upon participants.

Barriers to objectivity of the facilitator include:

- » Personal opinion.
- » Expert knowledge of the facilitator far exceeding a lesser or "naïve" knowledge level of participants.

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- » Personalities or behaviors of individual participants.
 - » Opinions of participants.
 - » Group dynamics.
 - » Expectations of an outside organization (a client or funder) for the results to fall into line with their priorities.

Groups expect their facilitator to maintain objectivity and they often look for signs of success or failure on the part of the facilitator. Individuals tend to judge the overall value of the session by the trust and respect they develop for the facilitator. These impressions and judgments stay with the group long – sometimes for years – after the session is over.

There are steps a facilitator can take to help maintain objectivity in a session.

- » Be sure to discuss the process with the client or funder to communicate the role as an objective facilitator. Make clear the expectation to elicit a straightforward and realistic result from the session participants that reflects their own thinking.
- » Place consideration of the facilitator's personal opinions off limits during planning and conducting the session.
- » Use techniques to manage difficult people and group dynamics.
- » Don't take the discussion of participants personally.

There is often a fine line between the facilitating technique of providing information that will assist the group in its purpose and expressing opinions that will influence the group discussion and decisions.

- » Providing information or data to help the group in its process is a necessary part of a facilitator's role.
- » Information provided must not be in the form of biased data, stated opinion, or other means that may bias the process and result.

Effectively dealing with difficult issues and difficult people is critical for the success of a session. A facilitator would not be necessary if these discussions were easy. The value of bringing a broad range of individuals together is to create opportunity for discourse and new solutions. When a specific goal must be achieved in a session, it usually involves multiple viewpoints and controversial, complex, or challenging issues. Because of these characteristics, it should be expected that the discussion will involve difficult issues and/or difficult people. Adequate preparation and the ability to utilize specific techniques will ensure that the facilitator has the necessary background, skills, and tools to lead a discussion that produces the desired outcome.

Difficult People

To successfully deal with difficult or unpredictable people, a combination of verbal and physical techniques may be employed by the facilitator. It is important to know and accept that varied personalities are a normal part of every group. Following is a list of different behaviors that are often exhibited by participants in a facilitated discussion, along with suggested techniques for managing these individuals and ensuring that they positively contribute to the discussion.

Egomaniac – Acknowledge accomplishments or expertise and then move on; use humor to gently stifle the comments if the behavior persists.

Meek, silent type – Encourage participation by finding this person's area of expertise and turning to him or her for "help" in the discussion.

Passive aggressive type – Often contradicts himself during the session; call him out on the contradiction each time he does it by asking second and third questions to expose the contradictions.

Everyone’s friend; agrees to everything – Ask a pointed question that will force the individual to take a stand on an important issue; use humor to question the “good guy” image.

Negative pessimist – Expresses that nothing said or suggested could possibly work or be a move in the right direction. Ask the pessimist specifically why an idea would not work. If she or he persists, ask what the individual would do instead to be successful, and probe as deep as necessary until the individual provides a specific answer. Allow others in the group to discuss the response.

Non-participant – Call on the person by name to equalize opportunity for participation; if an individual decides not to contribute, let him know that his choice to remain silent will indicate that his point of view or that of his organization cannot be reflected in the results of the session.

Loud, aggressive type – Keep mental notes of how often and how long the person talks, and interrupt him if necessary to allow others to have the floor. Use gentle humor to control. “I know you’re really shy, Harry, but it’s about time you give someone else a chance to talk.”

Whisperer and side conversationalist – On first offense, ask all participants to listen to the conversation so they don’t miss an important point. If behavior persists, ask the offending individuals to share their conversation so everyone can hear their points and so they can be part of the greater discussion.

Physical techniques to handle difficult people include the following.

- » Utilize the room set-up to engage participants in an open, equitable, and welcoming discussion.
- » Physical presence is key to establishing control of the discussion. Never stand behind a podium. Only sit down under special circumstances.
- » The facilitator should walk among participants in the room. If an individual is dominating the conversation, move close to that person. Entering that individual’s space should establish that the facilitator is in control of the discussion.

Difficult Issues

Difficult issues are likely to arise in the discussions in the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* sessions. These issues may be a result of the subject matter, current status, group dynamics, or jurisdictional, political, or other organizational issues among participants or the organizations they represent. Following are a list of issues and dynamics along with techniques to address or overcome these issues in a facilitated discussion.

Group think – The phenomenon when individuals all agree without significant thought or discussion may indicate a “group think” or “piling on” mentality. If there is a tendency for “group think” to set in, provide each participant with paper and pen. Have each individual write down his/her response to the question or note a comment prior to anyone speaking aloud. Call upon individuals to report what they wrote – not to discuss what another person has said. The facilitator may also ask second and third questions of individuals to see if the position taken is solid. Identify any nuances or alternate positions and elicit further discussion on those points.

Organizational politics – Organizational politics may be closely related to the culture of the organization, its hierarchy, competition, and other factors that may be personal to some participants. Be aware of these issues and work around them

in your session. In general, organizational issues do not need to be discussed in the session unless this is included in the activities of the module.

Partisan politics and relationships between jurisdictions – Facilitators frequently work in the context of jurisdictional and partisan politics. Learn about political issues prior to going to the session through discussion and preparation with the person in charge of the session and, if appropriate, through interviews with key stakeholders. Facilitators need to understand but not interfere in the political issues. If severe enough that it is preventing progress in the session, state the obvious, “It appears there are side issues at play here, so let’s identify them so we will be able to set them aside.” If the political issues are actually relevant to the goals of the session, incorporate that element into your facilitated session and reflect the results at the close of the session.

General techniques for dealing with difficult issues include the following.

- » Adequate preparation for facilitation will ensure that the facilitator is aware of difficult issues before the facilitation. Preparation should include discussions with the person in charge and may also include confidential interviews with key stakeholders.
- » The facilitator should work to reduce discussion by participants that reflects on individual performance and responsibility.
- » Approach difficult issues in stages. Facilitate the group in mapping out the issue or situation in only its major parts. Take on one part at a time until all have been addressed.
- » Ensure expertise is available from participants or resource people.

With incorporation of the thoughts provided in this facilitator guidance, participants in the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument will be successful in engaging in meaningful and useful discussions and activities. Concerns about disproportionality in the school-to-court process brought the stakeholders together. The results of the day-long facilitated sessions can be the foundation of continued progress to get to the root of disproportionality and begin to adjust the organizational and individual cultures, perceptions, behaviors, and policies.

[sample one-day schedule]

SCHOOL-TO-COURT: LOCAL STRATEGIES

Day, Month XX, 20XX

8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Room

Address

- 8:00 Introductions and Overview of the Day
- 8:15 Module 1 – Disproportionate Minority Contact in a Historical Context
- 9:15 Module 2 – The School-to-court Process
- 10:15 **Break**
- 10:30 Module 3 – Data and Trends: Iowa and Local
- 11:30 Module 4 – Impact on Kids Now and in the Future
- 12:30 **Lunch**
- 1:00 Module 5 – Current Initiatives to Address Disproportionate Minority Contact in This Community
- 2:00 **Break**
- 2:15 Module 6 – Family and Community Engagement
- 3:15 Module 7 – Sustained Focus to Strengthen Family and School-to-Court Services
- 4:15 Wrap Up
- 4:30 Session Ends

Facilitator/Trainer Self-Assessment

Think about yourself as the facilitator/trainer in the following statements. Circle the letter of the response that most closely reflects your views. Then reflect on how your views might come into play when facilitating the *School-to-Court: Local Strategies* instrument.

- 1. When there is an opportunity to facilitate, I ...**
 - A. Will do it if it's something I know about and feel confident on the subject.
 - B. Pretend I don't know anything about it and hope nobody notices me.
 - C. Am always the first to volunteer to take the lead and run the show.
 - D. See it as a chance to travel and see the countryside.
- 2. When I'm getting ready to facilitate a session, I pay attention to...**
 - A. Who will be in the group and how they get along with each other.
 - B. What I will wear that day.
 - C. The political topics of interest to the participants.
 - D. Proofreading my handouts.
- 3. In planning the agenda for the day, I try to ...**
 - A. Stretch the discussion to fill the time assigned to the session.
 - B. Talk to the "boss" to find out exactly what she wants as a result.
 - C. Include something for everyone.
 - D. Schedule the session for a Friday afternoon.
- 4. I get in front of a group and...**
 - A. Perform.
 - B. Babble on and on and on.
 - C. Expect people to do what I tell them to do.
 - D. Try not to let the group see my knees shaking.
- 5. My favorite technique is ...**
 - A. Using data to set the stage and focus the discussion.
 - B. Keeping the discussion moving along at a rapid pace.
 - C. Using exercises and games to make my points.
 - D. Telling stories about my experiences.
- 6. By the time I finish facilitating...**
 - A. We have all the information we need to put our plans into action.
 - B. I need to get away and relax.
 - C. Everyone likes everyone else more than when we started.
 - D. The group knows what I think about the subject.
- 7. In every group I've ever facilitated, ...**
 - A. There is an obnoxious person who makes everything hard.
 - B. Participants are more interested in food and breaks than the topic.
 - C. The time flies by and we never get done.
 - D. Other people in the room know more than I do.

School-to-Court: Local Strategies

Evaluation

Please complete this evaluation to provide feedback to the sponsors of the session. Thank you.

Date of Session: _____

The length of the session was: too short about right too long

The training facility was: less than adequate adequate more than adequate

Please mark the sessions offered and the value of those sessions to you.

Module 1: Disproportionate Minority Contact in a Historical Context

1.1 Participants understand how history has lasting impact on cultures in Iowa and specific counties.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

1.2 Participants understand the role of individuals' assumptions in cultural bias by individuals and organizations.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

1.3 Participants are aware of stereotyping and its impacts on others and their community.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Module 2: The School-to-Court Process

2.1 Participants understand the role of each organization as related to the school-to-court process.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

2.2 Participants gain a common understanding and agreement on the school-to-court process in their community, particularly as it relates to bias and disproportionality.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

2.3 Participants agree upon strategies to enhance functioning of the school-to-court process in their community to reduce bias and disproportionality.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Module 3: Data and Trends: Iowa and Local

3.1 Participants have a greater understanding of the value and meaning of specific data to guide strategies for reducing bias and disproportionality.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

3.2 Participants understand the demographic and economic history of their community and how it relates to bias and disproportionality.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

3.3 Participants use data appropriately to develop strategies and plans for reduction of bias and disproportionality in the school-to-court process.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Module 4: Impact on Kids Now and in the Future

4.1 Participants understand short-term and long-term impacts of a juvenile record on the individual.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

4.2 Participants understand the relationships and dynamics of a youth in the school-to-court system with the youth's parents, family, and community.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

4.3 Participants understand organizational and systemic strategies to mitigate short- and long-term impacts on a juvenile or her/his juvenile record.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Module 5: Current Initiatives to Address Disproportionate Minority Contact in This Community

5.1 Participants are aware of activities, organizations, and initiatives in the community and state to address disproportionate minority contact.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

5.2 Participants gain a common understanding of the practical meaning of disproportionate minority contact for juveniles, the community, and the school-to-court system.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

5.3 Participants understand how the Cultural Competency Continuum applies to organizations and individuals' behavior as a part of that organization.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Module 6: Family and Community Engagement

6.1 Participants understand why family and community involvement in school-to-court issues is difficult to motivate.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

6.2 Participants understand the relationships among relevant spheres of influence in the community.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

6.3 Participants develop common strategies for effective family and community engagement in individual and system DMC and bias issues.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Module 7: Sustained Focus to Strengthen Family and School-to-court Services

7.1 Participants develop a common commitment to implementing strategies identified in the sessions.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

7.2 Participants identify likely barriers and how to mitigate or overcome them in implementing strategies.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

7.3 Participants demonstrate commitment to sustained efforts through a plan of action for reducing bias and disproportionate minority contact involving each organization and its staff.

Little or no growth/change *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Overall value of the session: *Little or no growth/change* *Some growth/change* *Much growth/change*

Please offer any additional comments:

Thank you for your participation.