

Juvenile probation formats studied

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Two Kansas State University sociology graduate students have found placing juvenile offenders in a non-traditional probation program reduces recidivism.

The researchers say assigning such juveniles to a program that emphasizes their strengths, rather than their shortfalls, resulted in fewer future arrests.

What sets apart this approach from traditional ... formats is that it uses what a person does well to affect behavior change, said Travis Linnemann, a graduate student in sociology. Traditional forms often use the 'you will do this or else' model, and often this threat of jail becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts.

Linnemann and Don Kurtz, also a sociology graduate student, compared Manhattan, Kan.-area juveniles offenders on standard probation to juveniles on non-traditional probation.

While the program was designed to deal with behavior difficulties during and after arrest, it has since been expanded to help youths who exhibit behaviors such as truancy or uncontrollability, but have not been arrested.

The study is to be published in The Western Criminology Review.

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