

Transfer Evaluations: Assessing Rehabilitative Potential within the Juvenile Justice System

Francesca Lehman, PsyD

Doug Ugarkovich, Juvenile Justice Consultant

Track: Juvenile/Legal

CE: CPA/BBS/BRN, MCLE (1.5)

POST TBD

Narrative

This presentation will address the issue of rehabilitation of juvenile offenders in the juvenile justice system, within the context of recent changes to California law as to whether juvenile offenders are tried in adult court. Current standards and potential future changes in the law will be addressed. Additionally, changes to California's Division of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) rehabilitative programming stemming from the Farrell Lawsuit reforms will be covered, with a particular emphasis on current rehabilitative programming for youth at DJJ. Finally, research applicable to youth's rehabilitative potential will be addressed, with a focus on research pertaining to biological immaturity.

BIO

Francesca Lehman, PsyD

Clinical & Forensic Psychologist, Private Practice

Francesca is a licensed clinical and forensic psychologist in California. Her practice consists of conducting forensic psychological evaluations for the Courts with children, adolescents, and adults. She has been qualified as an expert witness in multiple counties in California as well as in Federal Courts and has been retained as an expert in numerous fitness/transfer matters. Francesca was previously a supervisor at Sharper Future, a forensic rehabilitation program, and was previously an adjunct faculty member at Alliant International University's California School of Forensic Studies.

Doug Ugarkovich

Juvenile Justice Consultant

Doug has spent nearly 30 years working with high-risk youth. 27 of those years he was with the California Youth Authority (CYA), later known as the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Prior to his state service, he was a Youth Employment Technician for a school district's Special Programs Unit assisting high-risk youth with obtaining and maintaining subsidized employment. He also worked as a Youth Counselor in a group home providing treatment services for severely emotionally disturbed youth. As a DJJ Court and Community Liaison, he reviewed commitment packets sent to DJJ from the various counties to ensure they were lawful commitments and all the statutory requirements were met. Doug also ensured that the commitment packets included all the necessary documents and the court orders were congruent with the other documents within the packet. When necessary, he wrote correspondence to the court on any issues needing further clarification. Part of this review process included reviewing the commitment packet for any mental health and/or medical issues that would warrant further internal review for the appropriateness of the commitment order and the proper intake

placement. In this position, Doug worked closely with county juvenile justice stakeholders to help inform them of DJJ's programs, services and reform efforts. These county stakeholders included judges, district attorneys, defense attorneys, special investigators, probation administrators and officers, mental health and education service providers, juvenile justice commissions, advocacy groups, and private sector entities.

Learning Objectives

1. Provide updates on changes to the law surrounding when juveniles can be transferred to adult court and potential future changes to the law.
2. Provide an overview of the pertinent research pertaining to juvenile offending, in particular biological immaturity, and how to apply that research in assessing rehabilitative potential within the juvenile justice system.
3. Identify the current and forthcoming programming with the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) within the context of the Farrell Lawsuit reforms, in order to assess rehabilitative potential with the juvenile system.
4. Integrate changes in the law, emerging research, and current available programming with DJJ to determine if youth can be rehabilitated with the juvenile justice system for the purpose of transfer cases.