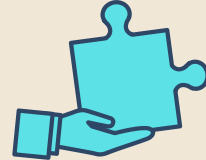




CAFES CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025



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BSCC Prop 47 Cohort III

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CAFES Data Informs Regional Review

Santa Cruz County Regional Mental/Behavioral Health & Criminal Legal System
Review 2021-2025

Starting in 2021, the Criminal Justice Council (CJC), in partnership with Applied Survey Research (ASR), released annual reports analyzing the intersection of behavioral health and the criminal legal system in Santa Cruz County. Prompted by national conversations on policing in 2020, the CJC sought to examine use-of-force policies, oversight, behavioral health responses, and transparency through a series of annual reports.

Data from the CAFES program informed several of the reports, and many CAFES partners were interviewed over the years to provide insight into the different report topics. Finally, the findings from all four reports were synthesized in a fifth summary report that outlined key recommendations for improving system responses to behavioral health needs.

Be sure to click on the underlined linked reports below!

2021: Law Enforcement Policy Review

Provided a comparative snapshot of key law enforcement policies in Santa Cruz County, identifying alignment, gaps, and opportunities for improvement in officer response practices.

2022: Mental/Behavioral Health and Law Enforcement Response

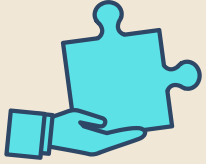
Analyzed local law enforcement policies, training, and real-world response data related to mental/behavioral health calls, including transport, timing, and arrest outcomes.

2023: Court and Jail System Perspectives

Gathered insights from justice system partners on handling behavioral health cases, highlighting strengths, challenges, collaboration efforts, and key data from initiatives like CAFES.

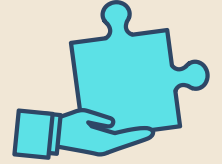
2024: Behavioral Health Treatment and Emergency Care

Reviewed the availability of mental health and substance use treatment, revealing gaps in resources, access barriers, and the need for a stronger continuum of care and lived-experience input.



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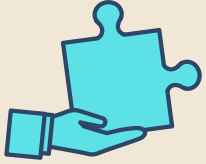
CAFES Data Informs Regional Review

CAFES Data Informs Regional Review

Summary Report

Recommendations Related to CAFES Program Implementation:

- **Improve Jail Infrastructure:** Address infrastructure limitations within the jail to better accommodate and serve individuals with behavioral health needs by improving existing facilities, building a locked mental health facility or building a new jail designed to serve this population.
- **Enhance Collaboration and Communication:** While acknowledging the existing shared commitment and understanding of diverse roles, focus on improving communication and case coordination between partners.
- **Improve Continuity of Care and Strengthen Reentry Planning and Coordination:** Develop strategies to bridge existing gaps in continuity of care, ensuring seamless transitions for individuals receiving services. Enhance reentry planning and care coordination prior to release from jail and treatment settings to facilitate successful transitions.
- **Increase Program Funding:** Advocate for increased funding to sustain current effective programs (e.g. Collaborative Courts), develop new initiatives to address unmet needs, and secure additional resources to address the needs of those who do not qualify for Specialty Mental Health Services.
- **Expand Treatment Options and Improve Access:** Increase the availability of diverse treatment options, including step-down, locked, and on-demand services, particularly for individuals in the criminal legal system. Address barriers to accessing existing services, such as referral processes, eligibility criteria, and inequitable access, especially for those experiencing homelessness, substance use, or labeled "harder to treat."



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- Increase Housing Availability: Expand the availability of transitional housing, sober living environments, and affordable housing options for individuals transitioning from custody or treatment.
 - Reduce Administrative Burden: Review policies and procedures to identify opportunities to reduce administrative workload on agencies, thereby improving staffing capacity and service delivery.
 - Incorporate Lived Experience: Formally incorporate the perspectives of individuals with lived experience and their families into planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts to ensure services are responsive to their needs.
 - Implement Coordinated Data Collection: Establish a system for coordinated data collection across providers and system partners to improve understanding of challenges, outcomes, and inform data-driven decision-making.
-
- ASR is committed to moving from data to action and community change. We are grateful to be the evaluation partner on local efforts like CAFES that advance public safety, equity and wellbeing. Because of these partnerships, we are able to leverage data to tell a larger story about the valuable work being done in Santa Cruz County.

