



Functional Assessment Systems

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Juvenile Inventory For Functioning®



JIFF®:

A Guide for Service Providers to Share

With Parents, Caregivers, and Youths

A Parent Said It Best...

"Families want their children ...to be able to live at home, to go to school and get good grades, to enjoy friends and activities in the community, and to become responsible adults living independently."

- Trina Osher, Huff Osher Consulting, from "Outcomes and Accountability from a Family Perspective," *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 25:2, May 1998, pg 230.

What Is the JIFF?

The Juvenile Inventory For Functioning® (JIFF) identifies behaviors and symptoms that need attention. For example, the JIFF asks about how the youth handles everyday tasks like going to school and getting along with others.

Research shows that when a young person has significant problems in day-to-day functioning, those problems can interfere with his or her development. All youths have problems from time to time. It is critical, however, to prevent these problems from interfering with the youth becoming a happy, well-adjusted adult.

The JIFF was designed for youth receiving prevention/ early intervention services and for youth referred to juvenile justice, social services, or school counseling. The youth may have gotten into some trouble, or been referred to an agency because of a specific incident or behavior. To help a youth, it is important to look at the youth's overall needs.

Who Completes the JIFF?

The JIFF is a computerized interview that is self-administered. This means the computer reads the questions and possible answers for the youth, and the youth chooses the answer on the computer screen. Most kids really like it! The majority of the time, the youth completes the interview. Whenever possible, the parent (or other caregiver) is also asked to complete the interview. When the parent completes the JIFF, the parent gives his or her view of the child's functioning.

How Does the JIFF Work?

The JIFF computerized interview asks about what is happening in the youth's life in 10 different areas of functioning. Generally, someone should be available during the interview to assist if there are any questions.

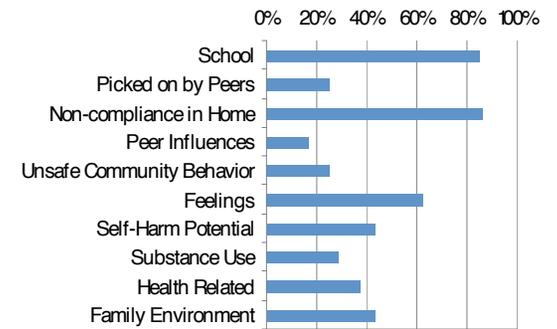
The 10 Areas of Functioning

Functioning Areas	Example Behaviors
At School/ Your Job	Behavior, grades, attendance; fulfilling responsibilities
At Home	Behavior in the home; obeying rules
Family Life	Life in any home in which the child spends time
You & Your Friends	Interactions with friends; peer pressure
You & Your Neighborhood	Respect for others' rights; obeying laws
Your Feelings	Management of emotions such as depression & anxiety
Dealing with Bad Feelings	Behavior or ideas harmful to youth
Alcohol & Drugs	Use of alcohol or other drugs
Thinking	Logic and rationality of thoughts/actions
Your Health	Actions and behaviors that affect health

How Does the Bar Graph Show the JIFF Results?

Once the youth has finished answering the questions, the JIFF will generate a bar graph showing the youth's needs in each of the 10 areas*. The longer the bar, the more problems that were reported, suggesting a need for services. The following chart is an example of a JIFF-generated bar graph.

JIFF Graph: % of Problems Reported



*The 10 areas in the JIFF interview generally correspond to the 10 categories in the JIFF bar graph, although there are some minor differences in the names and order of the subscales.

How Can the JIFF Be Used for Designing the Youth's Service Plan?

The professional and the family work together using the bar graph to design a Service Plan specific to the youth's needs. The JIFF program nominates goals based on the answers given during the interview. These goals will correspond to the needs expressed. The family and professional will then:

- Decide whether or not to accept each of the goals nominated by the program
- Add any additional goals (if necessary)
- Select the "priority level" for each goal (how important it is)
- Select services to address each goal

Here is an example of a completed Service Plan for a youth who needs coordinated care from several agencies:

Priority	Goal	Services
High	Increase compliance with the law	Correct Course Diversion Program (Lead Agency)
High	Increase school attendance	Northwest High School Truant Officer
Medium	Increase participation in pro-social activities with appropriate peers	YMCA Social Skills Group
Medium	Mental health evaluation to assess for possible depression	Northwest Community Mental Health Agency

The JIFF Service Plan should be individualized based on the youth's needs! It focuses on the youth's strengths and skills, addressing all areas of the youth's life. It shows exactly which services in your community were selected to help with each goal.

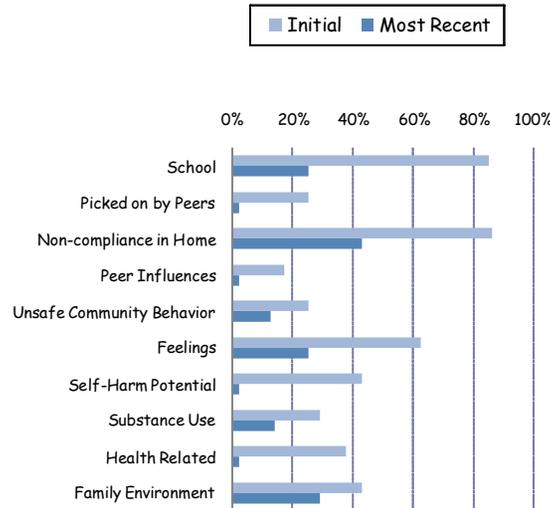


After Services Begin?

You are your child's best advocate! One way to advocate for your child is to focus on whether your child's functioning is actually improving in ways that are important to you. Your child (and you) can do the JIFF periodically (for example, every 3 months) to check your child's progress toward improvement! Think of it as a "check-up" to ensure that your child is really benefiting from the services provided.

JIFF scores for each of the 10 areas can be charted to show change over time (see below). If your child is not showing improvement in the most important areas, you may want to advocate for a change in services. This helps to ensure that the Service Plan continues to meet your child's needs. **If your child is making progress, be sure to celebrate!**

Comparison of Initial & Most Recent JIFF: Percent (%) of Problems Reported



Special Message For Parents

If the people working with you and your child are using the JIFF, this means they are interested in your child as a person — they are not focused on one event. You can use the JIFF to help support your child's needs now, in order to avoid problems in the future.

You are the most important source of information about your child's behaviors and strengths, and about your family's needs. The professional working with you should show you the bar graph generated by the JIFF and work with you to design the Service Plan. Make sure that everything makes sense to you. Don't be afraid to ask the professional to explain his or her opinions or to suggest specific goals and services. The professional will appreciate your involvement in helping to ensure that he or she fully understands your child's needs!

Remember that the JIFF was designed to help you identify goals and locate services to help your child — not to judge you! **Make sure that your opinions are heard!**

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