

Seven Years in the Life of Pathways Study Participants

It is rare that we have the opportunity to describe how life unfolds for a group of individuals over a seven-year period. It is even more rare, to prospectively capture this sort of information for a group of high-risk young people. In this issue, we provide a glimpse of how life eventually unfolded for the Pathways study participants in a number of life domains. This issue will give you a quick overview regarding questions like: How much contact did these youth go on to have with the legal system? How much education did they attain and what sorts of jobs did they get? Did they settle into stable relationships?

As you read through this issue, keep in mind that the adolescents in this sample were not chosen to represent individuals going through “typical” late adolescence and early adulthood.

They have a set of life circumstances that are not typical. At the same time, just how “different” they are is difficult to determine. Overall, the Pathways sample is comprised of primarily low-income, minority individuals from high-crime neighborhoods. Prior to beginning the Pathways study, these youth have already had an average of three petitions to court and over half of the participants (57.5%) met the criteria for at least one of the assessed mental health problems with substance use being most prevalent. Among those with at least one disorder, 39% met the threshold for more than one. (See Figure 1 for the prevalence rates for disorders assessed.) This combination of risk factors makes it very difficult to know how far off any “benchmark” they are in each of the areas described below.

Sadly, we cannot present outcomes for all of the Pathways study participants. Forty-eight subjects (3.5%) died in the course of the seven-year follow-up period (29 from Philadelphia and 19 from Phoenix) and 46 (3.2%) dropped out of the study (38 from Philadelphia and 8 from Phoenix).

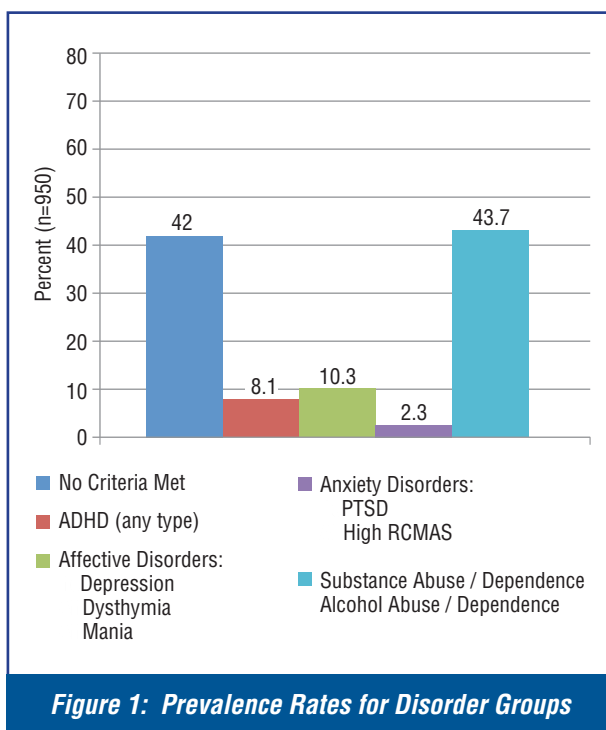
What level of education did they youth attain?

Nearly 2/3 of the sample completed high school or obtained a GED but only a small percentage completed additional training/ education before age 23 (the average age of the sample at the end of the data collection).

How much did they work during this time span?

Nearly all of these youth (92%) had at least one job during the months they were in the community (that is, not in a facility of some sort).

Continued Inside



Of those who had a least 1 job in the seven-year span

- On average, they had five different jobs in this seven-year span
- On average, they held each job for 6 months (24 weeks). The average time that they held a job increased as they aged; the average time in a job during the first two years was 18 weeks, while it was 39 weeks during the last two years

What sorts of jobs did they eventually obtain?

In the final recall period for data collection (84-months past enrollment), manual labor and unskilled jobs (e.g. security guard, cutting grass) were most prevalent.

How did they earn their money?

During the final recall period:

- The majority (60%) had a “legal job” (one for which they paid taxes) during the final recall period.
- 25% indicated that they earned money “off the books or under the table”
- 12% of the youth reported earning money “in other ways, including illegal activity”
 - Selling drugs was the most common form of illegal activity among those doing any illegal activity (77% of the 12%)
 - Selling stolen property (15%), stealing and “other types of illegal activity”(8%), gambling (7%) and prostitution (5%) were also endorsed by those who indicated they engaged in illegal activity

Did they continue to commit crime?

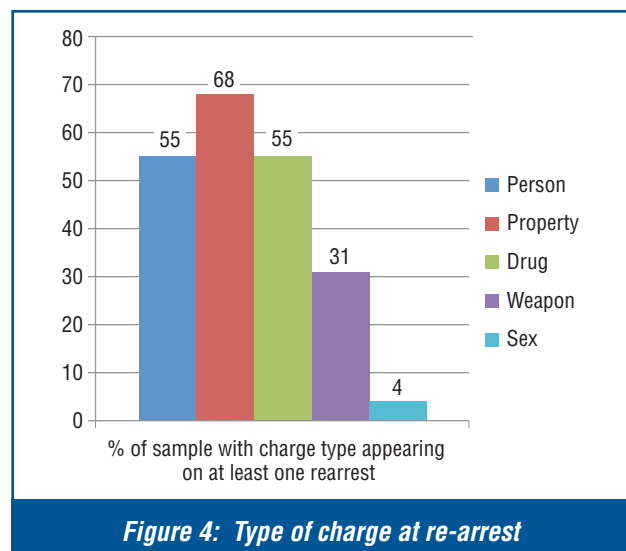
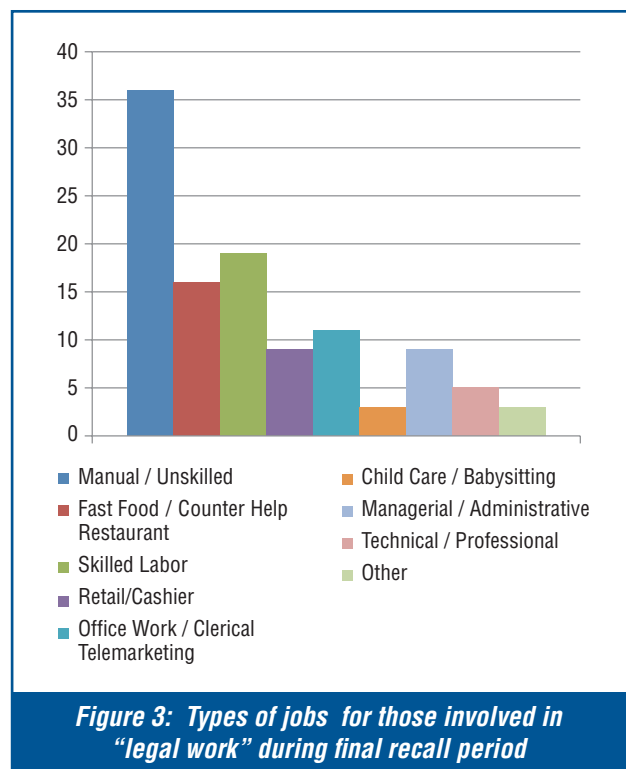
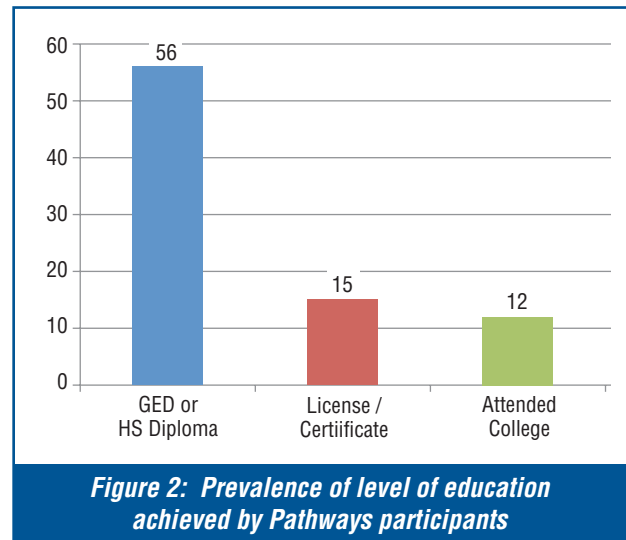
Based on the previous reports regarding how the study participants made money in the final recall period, we know that some portion continued their illegal activity. We also have other indicators of criminal involvement.

Re-arrests

During the seven years following enrollment, 26% of the participants had no additional arrest after the arrest that got them into the study (based on a petition appearing in the court records in each locale and/or FBI files).

Of the remaining 74% of the sample (that is, those with at least one rearrest)

- The average number of rearrests was 4 with a range of 1 – 24
- Across the sample, property crimes appeared most frequently as a charge on at least one of the rearrests (see Figure 4), followed by person and drug crimes. Sex offenses were the least likely to appear.



Self reported offending

1,051 of 1,354 participants in the Pathways to Desistance study were included in an analysis of self reported offending over time. The subsample examined included only the male participants (n=1170) who had at least 70% of their SRO data completed (n=1051).

The approach taken for the analysis is called “trajectory analysis.” This basically means that the sample is divided into groups that are comprised of people who follow similar patterns of change across time. This is a useful approach because it gives a more nuanced view than just looking at sample means and it can take into account the time that the youth is in a facility without opportunity to commit some of the antisocial activities that we tracked.

Figure 5 presents the five-group trajectory solution of self-reported offending for this sample. Two groups (marked as Group 1 and Group 2 in Figure 5) start with relatively low SRO scores that decrease early on and stabilize at low levels. The only difference between these groups is that the second group is consistently a point higher on the SRO scale (these groups comprise 25% and 31% of the sample respectively). Another group (Group 3; 21% of the sample) has a high initial SRO score, which drops rapidly over the first 30 months of follow-up

Table 1: Prevalence of arrest over seven years by self reported offending trajectory group

Trajectory Group	Prevalence of Arrest	For Those Arrested, Average # of Arrests (Range of Number of Arrests)
1 (low, stable)	64%	3.47 (1-13)
2 (low, stable)	79%	3.98 (1-16)
3 (start really high, dramatic drop)	86%	4.95 (1-15)
4 (start fairly low and increase)	87%	5.45 (1-16)
5 (high, stable)	91%	6.07 (1-24)

then levels off. Group 4 (13% of the sample) has a relatively low starting SRO score but increases in SRO activity over time. The final group (Group 5; 10% of the sample) has a high initial SRO score, which decreases over time but remains high overall. These findings indicate that this sample generally reduces their antisocial activity over time, with only a small group (about 10%) continuing to offend at a high level.

We looked to see how the official record reports of arrest map onto these trajectory groups. We would not expect a 1:1 mapping of arrest onto each group

because there are many behaviors for which a person could be arrested that are not tracked in our self-report measure and not all of the self-reported activities would translate to an arrest. However, we would expect that the groups identified would differ in a logical way in terms of their number of arrests. That is, we would expect that the groups which reported continued antisocial activity at low levels would have a lower prevalence of arrest than those reporting these behaviors at higher levels. This was indeed the case.

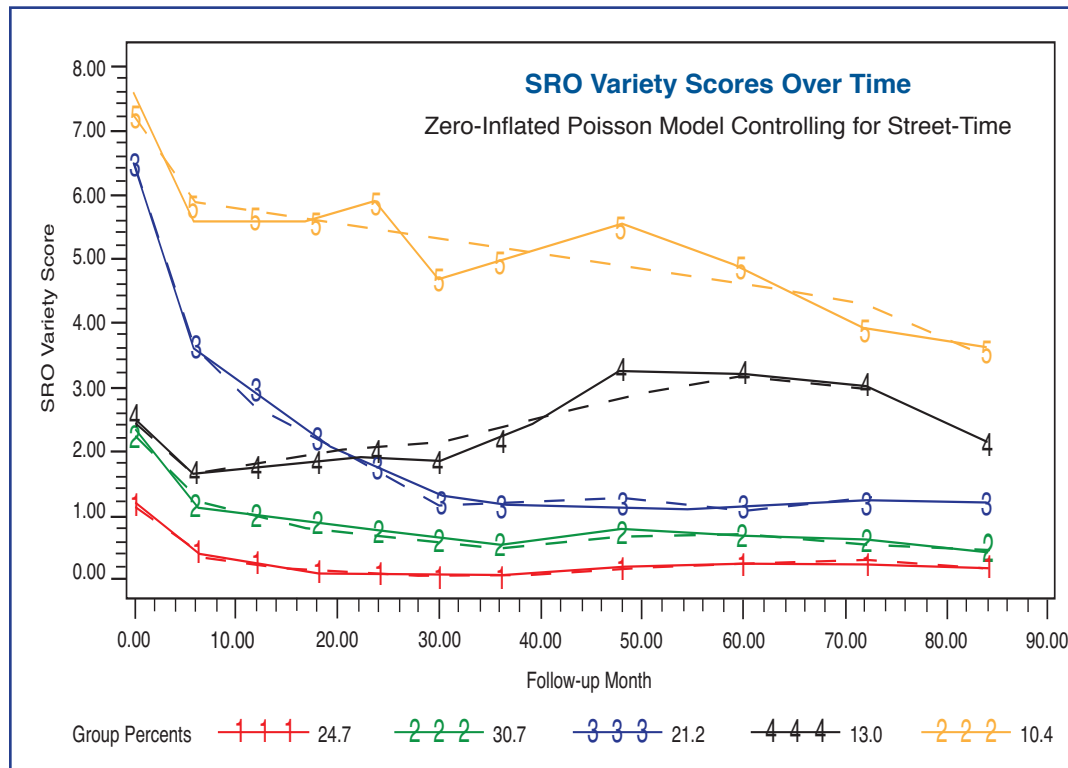


Figure 5: Trajectories of self-reported antisocial activities over 84 months

How much time did these adolescents spend in a facility of some sort?

88% of the study participants spent time in a facility of some sort over the seven years (see Figure 6).

- Of those with a facility stay of some sort, the most common type was jail or prison. 82% of study participants had a stay in a jail or prison. On average, they had four different periods of time in a jail or prison for an average of 701 total days (range 1-2,556 days) in the seven year period
- Contracted residential settings were the most common type of juvenile placement. 14% of participants spent time in a contracted residential setting with a mental health focus and an additional 45% spent time in a general contracted residential setting. Of those who went to this type of setting, they had one stay, on average, in a contracted residential-MH facility and two in a general contracted residential setting. They spent, on average, approximately 255 total days in settings of this type (contracted residential-MH: mean=258 days, range 4-1,312 days; contracted residential: mean=256 days, range 1-1,252 days).

Did these adolescents participate in any community-based services?

Over half of the study participants (63%) reported that they received some sort of community-based service over the seven years (Figure 7).

- The greatest proportion of those received individual treatment (47%) and group services (47%)
- Only 16% reported receiving job training in the community over the 7-year period.

However, the frequency of their involvement with community-based services was very low.

- Although 47% of the sample reported receiving individual treatment, they had a session on just 2% of their days in the community (which is about 34 sessions in 1,707 days in the community)
- Similarly, 47% reported group services, but they participated in a group session on just 3% of the community days (about 49 sessions in 1,650 days in the community)
- In-home sessions were received with the least frequency (<1% of the days in the community)

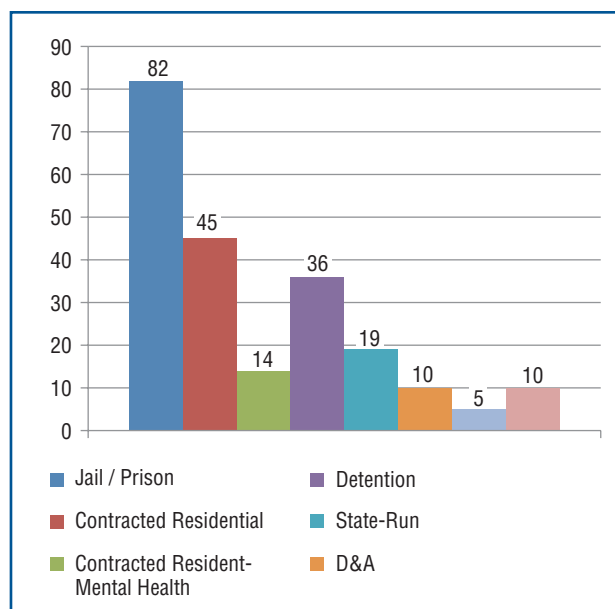


Figure 6: Types of placement

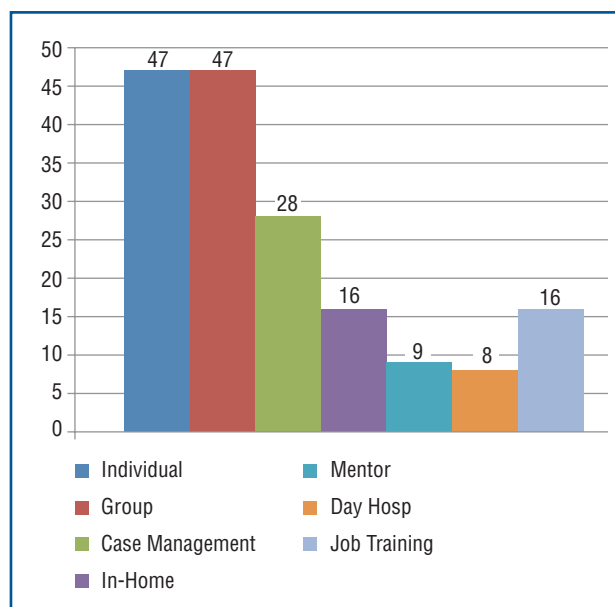
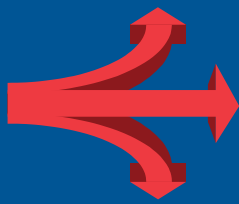


Figure 7: Types of community-based service

Table 2: Type of living situation for most of the recall period

	% at 6-Month Interview	% at the Final Interview
Own Home	3	30
Parent's Home	44	29
Home of Other Relative	5	9
Facility	48	31
Shelter / Streets	<1	<1
Place-to-Place		
Other	<1	1



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Where did these adolescents live and how much did they move around?

As with most young people, the Pathway's youth shifted toward independent living as they got older. A snapshot of the primary living location at the beginning versus the end of the seven year period indicates that many more youth were living on their own by the end of data collection (see Table 2).

- 18% of Pathways youth reported no change in the primary community address throughout the seven year period
 - Of those who did move at least once, they had an average of four shifts in the primary community address over the seven years

However, to understand how much these youth are shifting living situations, we need to consider both their community living situations and their movement in and out of facilities.

- Only 2% (n=23) of Pathways youth reported no changes to their primary community address AND no stays in a facility of any kind over the seven years

The rest of these adolescents experienced an average of nine shifts (range 1-30) in their living situation either because their primary community address changed or because they entered a facility.

How many of these adolescents were married?

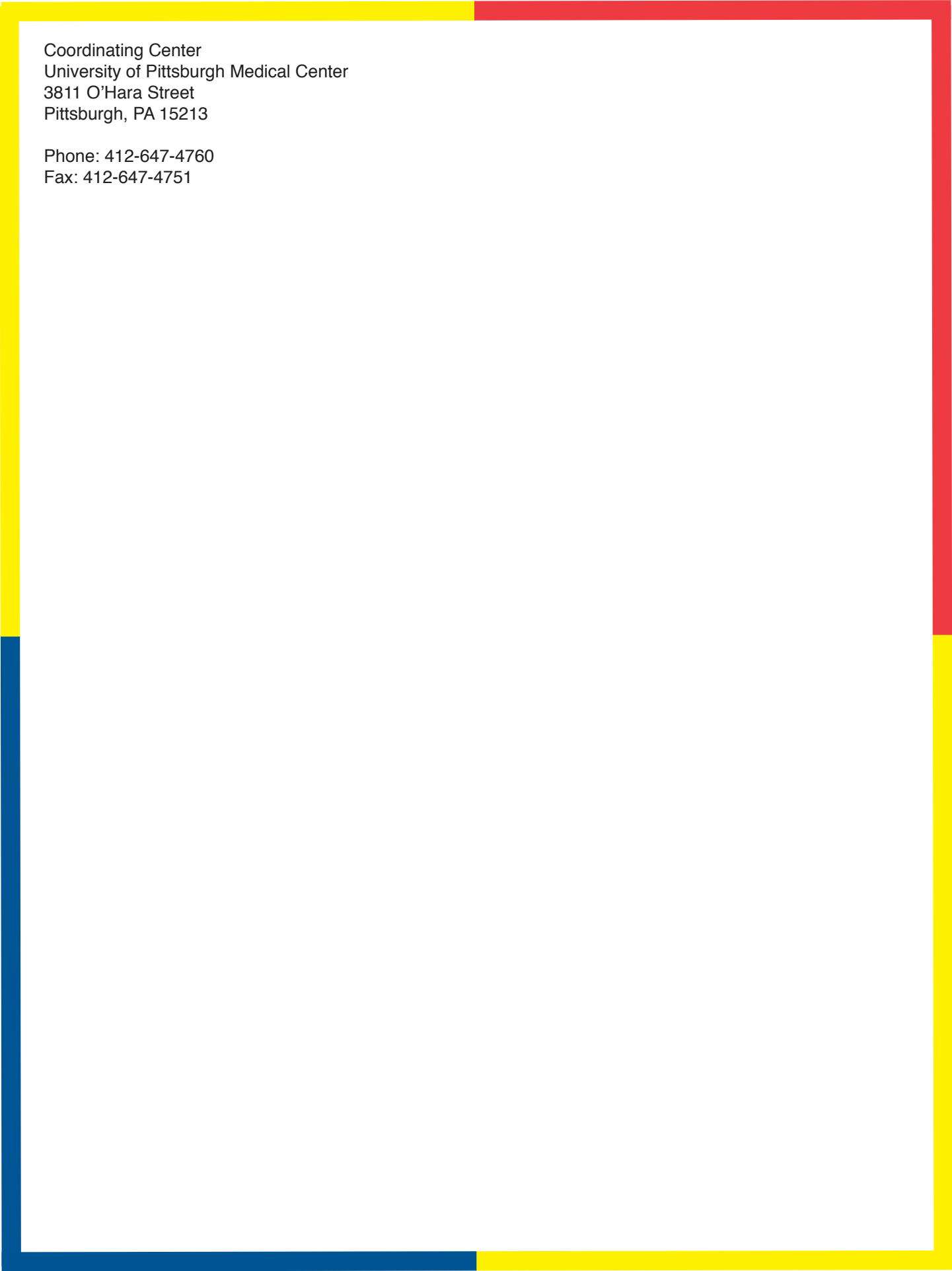
By the final recall period, 91% of participants reported that they were still single

- 7% reported they were married
- 2% reported that they were separated or divorced

How many became a parent?

- 55% of the participants were a parent by the end of the seven-year period
- On average, those that reported being a parent had two children (range 1 – 6)

As noted earlier, this issue provides a snapshot of how life unfolded in a number of areas for the Pathways youth by the time they were age 23 (on average). In some ways, these youth are quite resilient since, despite multiple risk factors, a large percentage go on to graduate, to hold jobs in the community, and to move into independent living situations. At the same time, though, the majority have continued to experience problems and to continue offending and rearrest, although at a lower rate. In the coming months, the study working group will continue to probe into the causes and correlates of these outcomes. We encourage you to periodically check the study website (www.pathwaysstudy.pitt.edu) for publications that might interest you.

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