

Travis County's Transformation Project is a pre-arrest, community-based pilot aimed at keeping 15 and 16-year-olds out of the juvenile justice system when they are involved in family violence situations. Instead of moving directly to arrest and detention, the program offers eligible youth and their families the option to engage in restorative justice supports that include trauma healing, skill building, family counseling, and holistic case management designed to address the underlying issues that contributed to the conflict. The initiative reframes accountability by focusing on healing and preventing future harm rather than punitive responses, with participating teens never receiving a formal charge if they agree to take part in the process.

What sets this model apart in Texas is its cross-sector design that partners the Travis County District Attorney's Office with community providers such as LifeWorks Austin and restorative justice facilitators to deliver personalized support outside traditional court procedures. The project emphasizes collaboration with caregivers and community voices in shaping the response, aiming to repair harm, strengthen family relationships, and reduce the likelihood of future justice involvement. Its early work has drawn national attention, including recognition from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as an innovative resilience-building initiative for youth.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/travis-county-transformation-project-with-jos%C3%A9-garza/id1677615965?i=1000651820584>

<https://fuse.org/blog/restorative-justice-for-youth-transforming-lives-and-communities/>