

# THE IMPACT OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE; VICTIM ASSISTANCE, YOUTH ACCOUNTABILITY (VAYA) PROGRAM

— a 10 year cooperative study with—  
Resolve Center for Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice  
Southern Oregon University  
Jackson County Juvenile Department



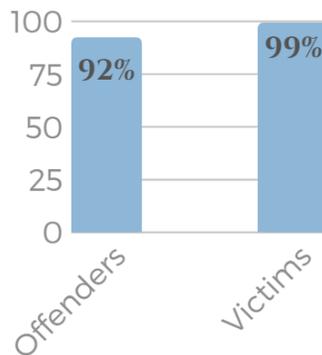
## INCREASING SATISFACTION

### REDUCING RECIDIVISM



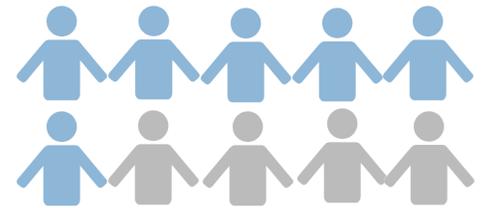
80% of youth offenders who participated in the restorative justice program do not commit further crimes.

19.7% of youth recidivate compared to the county average of 29.7%



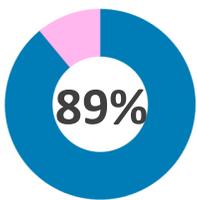
92% of youth offenders and 99% of victims/survivors would choose to participate in a process again

### DECREASING CRIMINOGENIC THINKING



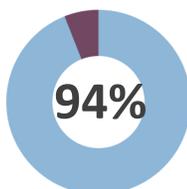
6 out of 10 youth offenders demonstrated a reduction in criminogenic and anti-social thinking

## INCREASING FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE



89% of victims/survivors agree that the restorative justice process made the justice system more responsive to their needs

94% of youth offenders agree that the restorative justice process made the justice system better



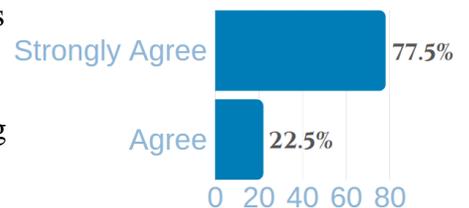
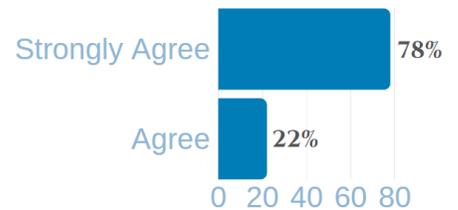
## MEETING VICTIM NEEDS



100% of victims/survivors agree that the process allowed them to express their feelings of being victimized



100% of victims/survivors agree that the process was helpful in making things right



88% of victims/survivors report the process helped them gain information and better understand why the offense was committed

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## RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

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These findings are based on data collected from 2009 through 2018 which looks at the impact of restorative justice processes on juvenile offenders and victims of crime. Restorative justice services were provided through Resolve Center for Dispute Resolution and Restorative Justice, a nonprofit serving southern Oregon, in partnership with Jackson County Juvenile Justice. Data was independently analyzed by David Carter, associate professor of criminology at Southern Oregon University.

During the course of this study, 512 juvenile offenders were referred by the Juvenile Department of Jackson County to participate in a restorative justice program, called the Victim Assistance, Youth Accountability (VAYA) program. There is mathematical stability in outcomes with larger sample sizes such as this. There were 405 (out of the 512) youth offenders that successfully completed the restorative justice program, at a completion rate of 79%. A completion rate between 70-85% is considered statistically acceptable.

The youth in the study ranged from 12-19 years old, but all had been adjudicated as youth. Two-thirds of the offenses committed were property crimes, while the remaining third were person-to-person or violent offenses.

All youth participated in a month-long accountability and competency development class and attended five ninety minute sessions. The classes were designed to support accountability, empathy development, and cognitive reframing. Each youth also participated in a face-to-face restorative encounter with their direct victim, a surrogate victim or members of the community. The restorative encounter provided a structured space for the youth to take responsibility, understand the impact of their actions, and engage in a conversation about repairing the harm.

Outreach was provided to 927 victims/survivors who were directly connected with each offense. The goal of the outreach was to provide support, information, and empowerment to those impacted and to provide each victim/survivor with the option of participating in a face-to-face encounter with the youth offender. 182 encounters took place between direct victims/survivors and offenders. Of these encounters, 101 direct victims/survivors completed a post dialogue assessment, which is represented in the data. All victims/survivors voluntarily chose to participate in the process and were provided with support and preparation prior to the encounter. When it did not meet the needs of the victim/survivor to participate in a direct encounter, a surrogate victim or members of the community participated in a restorative encounter with the youth.

One measure of the impact of the restorative encounter was pre- and post- assessments. Pre-assessments were given to the youth prior to beginning of the accountability class. Post-assessments were distributed to each youth after their restorative encounter. Pre-assessments were distributed to the victims prior to the restorative encounter and post-assessments were distributed upon completion of the encounter.

Recidivism was tracked for 1 year through the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) for subsequent infractions upon completion of the restorative justice program. What is presented is an average of ten years of annual recidivism data.

Changes in cognitive distortions were measured through an evidence-based tool, called the "How I Think Questionnaire". Youth were assessed using this tool at intake and discharge from the restorative justice program. The "How I Think" (HIT) questionnaire is a fifty-four question assessment instrument developed by researchers in the fields of psychology and criminal justice. The HIT is self-administered, can be completed in approximately five to fifteen minutes and requires a fourth grade reading level. The HIT is designed to measure self-serving cognitive distortions. Cognitive distortions are inaccurate or biased ways of conferring meaning upon experiences. Self-serving cognitive distortions are the antisocial attitudes that have played a central role in explanations of antisocial behavior. Research indicates that the strongest predictor of recidivism is the endorsement of antisocial attitudes.

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