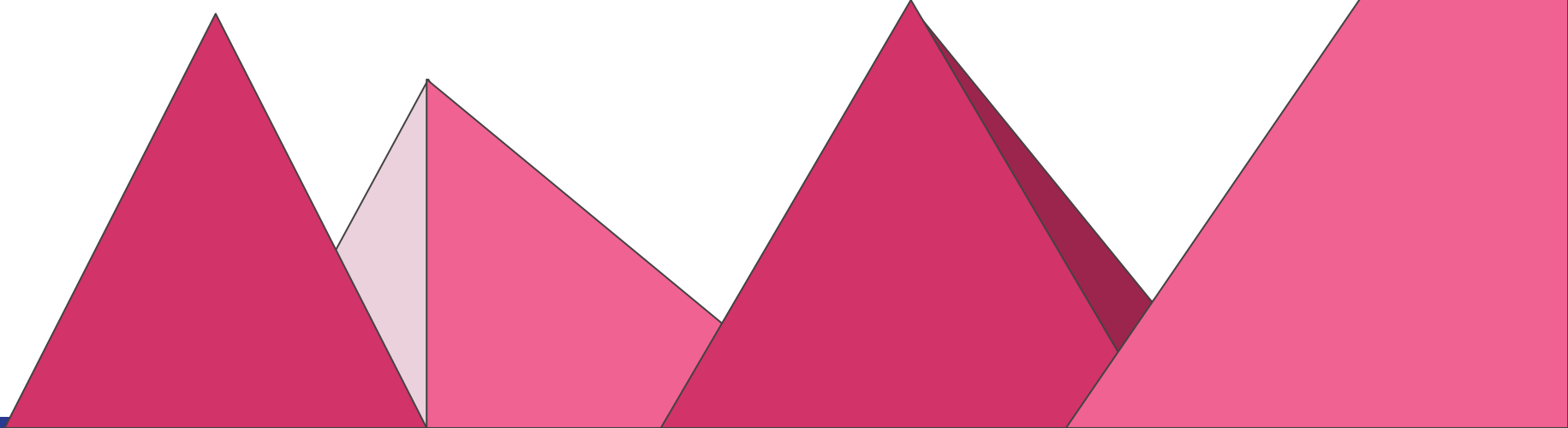


An Evidence Base for RJ


How Do We Get There & Does it Matter Anyway?

The Landscape of RJ Research

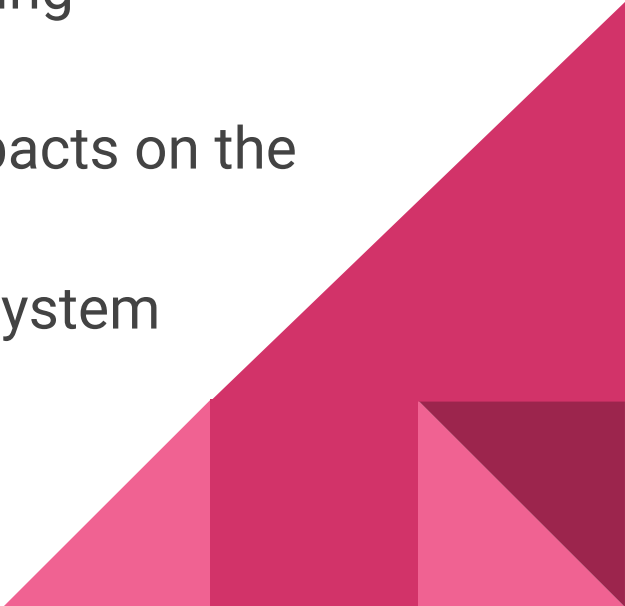
- >85 published studies and 4 meta-analyses
- Include practices in the U.S., Canada, UK, Australia, and South Africa
- Address community conferencing, VOM, and VOD
- Focus on juveniles w/ crimes of minor to moderate severity



The Landscape of RJ Research

- Examine outcomes including
 - Agreement completion rates (80-90%)
 - Satisfaction rates (80-90% and higher)
 - Emotional and psychological impacts on victims and (to a smaller extent) responsible persons
 - Recidivism, with caveats about selection bias
- 

The Landscape of RJ Research

- Neglect outcomes such as
 - More detailed work on trauma and healing
 - The effect of fidelity and process
 - Policy and systematic impacts, e.g. impacts on the scope and scale of the CL system
 - Impacts on racial disparities in the CL system
- 

Challenges to Building RJ Research

Interpersonal Challenges

Difficulties asking vulnerable populations to participate in research in a precarious moment.

Organizational Challenges

Low capacity of community-based agencies to collect, manage, and analyze data.

Disconnect between practice, research, and funding communities.

System Challenges

System data is inaccessible, difficult to link.

Lack of cohesion across the field in what to collect, how to collect it, and what to do with the information.

% of 71 Colorado RJ Programs Collecting Each Type of Data

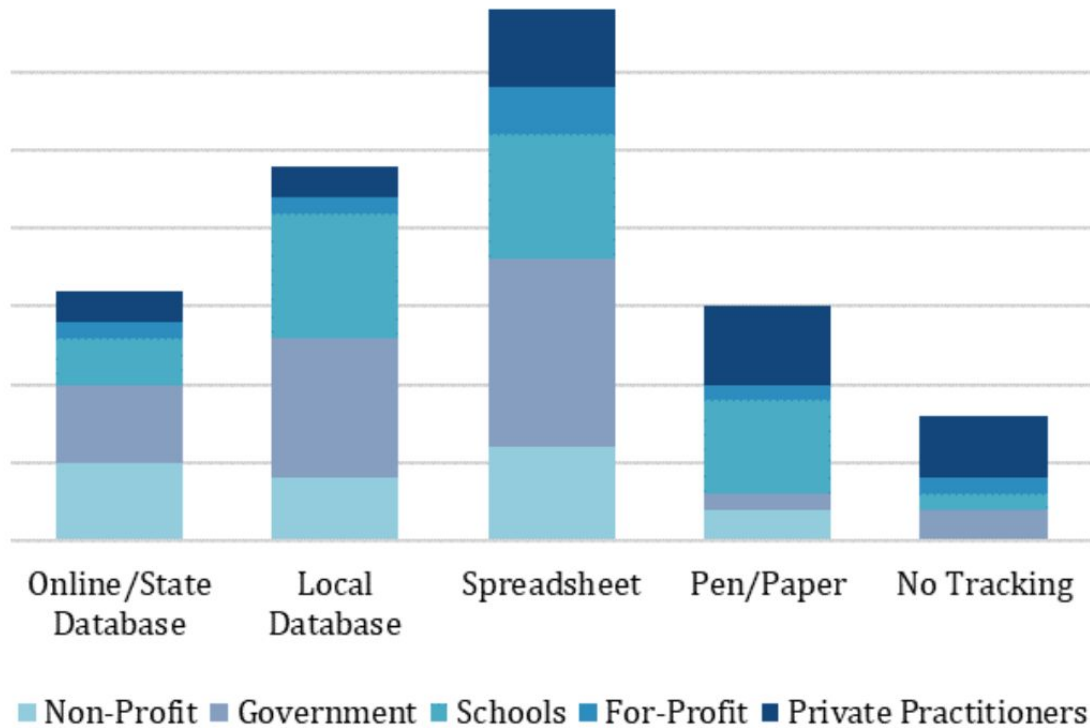
Numbers served	73%
Participant demographics	59%
Participant satisfaction	59%
Agreement completion rates	55%
Participant attitude changes	46%
Recidivism rates	41%
School discipline outcomes (e.g., suspensions)	41%
Educational outcomes (e.g., drop-out rates)	28%
Changes in wellbeing of participants	23%

The most common data points collected by Colorado RJ programs are numbers served, demographics, satisfaction, and completion rates.

Less than half collect information on other outcomes.

A quarter do not systematically collect data.

Prevalence of Data Tracking Methods Among Colorado RJ Programs



A simple spreadsheet is the most common way to track data among Colorado RJ programs.

A significant proportion use only pen and paper or not tracking at all.

Imagining Possibilities for RJ Research

- Expanding our examination of system-level outcomes including racial impacts
- Engaging in national or international planning around RJ research
- Aligning outcomes and measures across RJ organizations
- Centralizing or coordinating data collection and analysis
- Developing or selecting validated scales



Tensions Raised by this Presentation

- What do we stand to gain (or *lose*) by seeking to legitimize RJ through research?
- When we have limited time and resources, is research a good investment?
- Is over-professionalization / over-standardization a risk to RJ practice? Is focusing on metrics a way of colonizing or co-opting RJ practice?
- How do we ensure we are asking the important questions? Who gets to decide and dictate what those questions are?



Of course we have data, but what do we do with it?

One RJ organization's work to make qualitative and quantitative data meaningful to their community and beyond.

Introductions

- Abby Whipple, Founder of Vela
 - Memphis, TN
 - RJ Program Manager: University of Colorado Boulder & Longmont Community Justice Partnership
 - Founded Restorative Justice Data Systems in January 2022
- Kathleen McGoey, Conflict Transformation Facilitator
 - U.S. - Mexico border
 - Executive Director Longmont Community Justice Partnership, 2013-2021
 - Launched KMA, Inc. in April 2021
 - Training: Restorative Practices in the Workplace & Community
 - Restorative Justice with Police

Objective: Demonstrate the Benefits of RJ with the Data We are Already Collecting

- Develop reporting beyond simple counts and percentages
- Communicate strengths of the program in addition to satisfaction and success rates



Basic RJ Program Data

Qualitative

- Incident Date
- Meeting Dates
- Completion Dates
- Demographic Information*
- Incident Type
- Responsible Person Address*

Quantitative

- Post-process Survey Responses
 - Satisfaction

Phase 1: PDF Report

- Analyze 1 year of data
- Consult with volunteer who worked in juvenile justice reform



What Can We Learn from the Data We Already Have?

Adaptability of Services

Assess completion and satisfaction across demographics

Benefits of Timeliness

Determine correlation between completion rate and time in program

Targets for Proactive Services

Ex: Identify higher incidence of folks shoplifting in one part of town prompts grants for preventative services for those communities



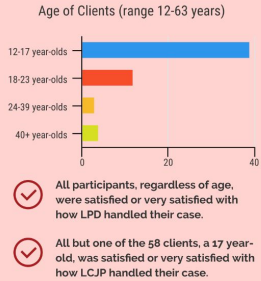
Community Restorative Justice Program - Community Group Conferences

The LCJP served 58 clients in Community Group Conferences in 2016. Satisfaction rates for LPD and LCJP were high -- and steady across gender, age, and type of offense. Conference participants were successful in arriving at a signed agreement -- in 100% of its cases -- an indicator that participants trust the process.

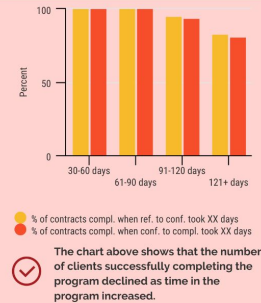
Were male and female clients equally satisfied with how their case was handled?

- ✓ 15 out of 15 female participants indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with how LPD and LCJP handled their case.
- ✓ 43 out of 43 male participants said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with how LPD handled their case-- while 42 out of 43 male participants said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with how LCJP handled their case.

Did age of client impact satisfaction with how the case was handled?



Did the length of time in the program impact contract completion rates?



Who did not complete the contract or offended while on contract?

- ✓ Four of the 58 (6.9%) participating clients did not complete the contract or offended while on contract.
- ✓ Three of these offenders were male and one female.
- ✓ Two of these four clients were age 13 years; one was age 14 years; and one was 39 years old.
- ✓ The referring offenses were: Criminal Mischief, Defacing Property, Theft (Misd.), and Vandalism.
- ✓ The number of days from referral to conference for these four cases ranged from 91 to 147.
- ✓ All four offenders expressed satisfaction with how their case was handled -- by both LPD and LCJP.

Phase 1: PDF Report

Satisfaction across gender & age

Impact of program length on client success

Were male and female clients equally satisfied with how their case was handled?



15 out of 15 female participants indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with how LPD and LCJP handled their case.



43 out of 43 male participants said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with how LPD handled their case-- while 42 out of 43 male participants said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with how LCJP handled their case.

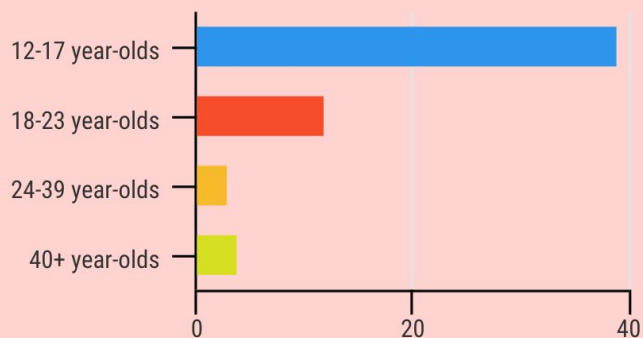
Phase 1: PDF Report

Adaptability of Services:

Satisfaction across gender

Did age of client impact satisfaction with how the case was handled?

Age of Clients (range 12-63 years)



All participants, regardless of age, were satisfied or very satisfied with how LPD handled their case.



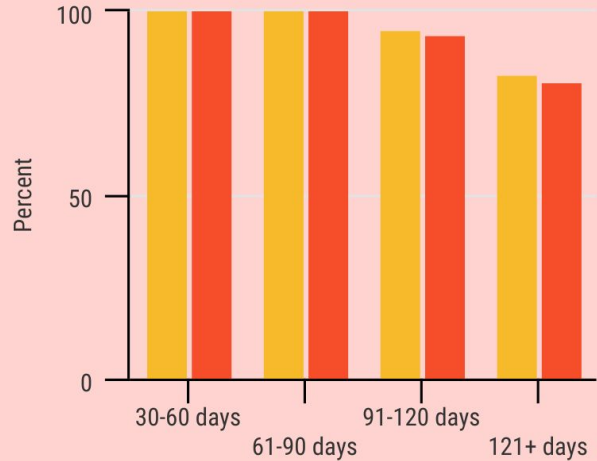
All but one of the 58 clients, a 17 year-old, was satisfied or very satisfied with how LCJP handled their case.

Phase 1: PDF Report

Adaptability of Services:

Satisfaction across age

Did the length of time in the program impact contract completion rates?



- % of contracts compl. when ref. to conf. took XX days
- % of contracts compl. when conf. to compl. took XX days



The chart above shows that the number of clients successfully completing the program declined as time in the program increased.

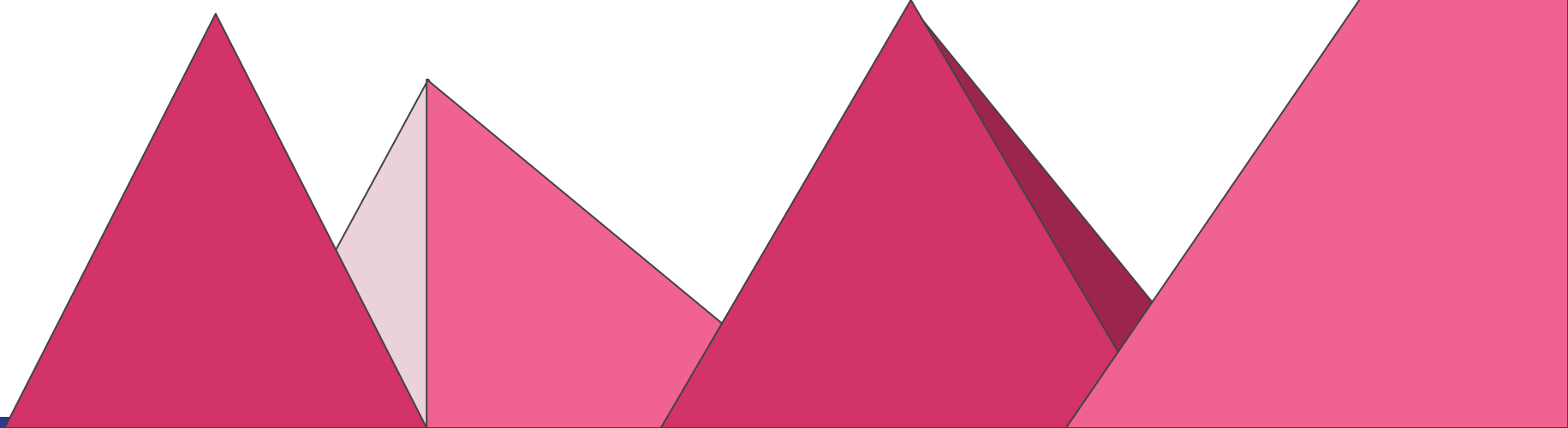
Where We Started:

Benefits of Timeliness:

Impact of program length on client success

Phase 2: Creating Interactive RJ Data Website

- Analyze 15 years of program data
- Enable ongoing updates
- Promote transparency with our community
- Include information that is meaningful for folks just learning about RJ
- Provide a resource for folks wanting to start RJ in their communities



Let's Go to the Site!

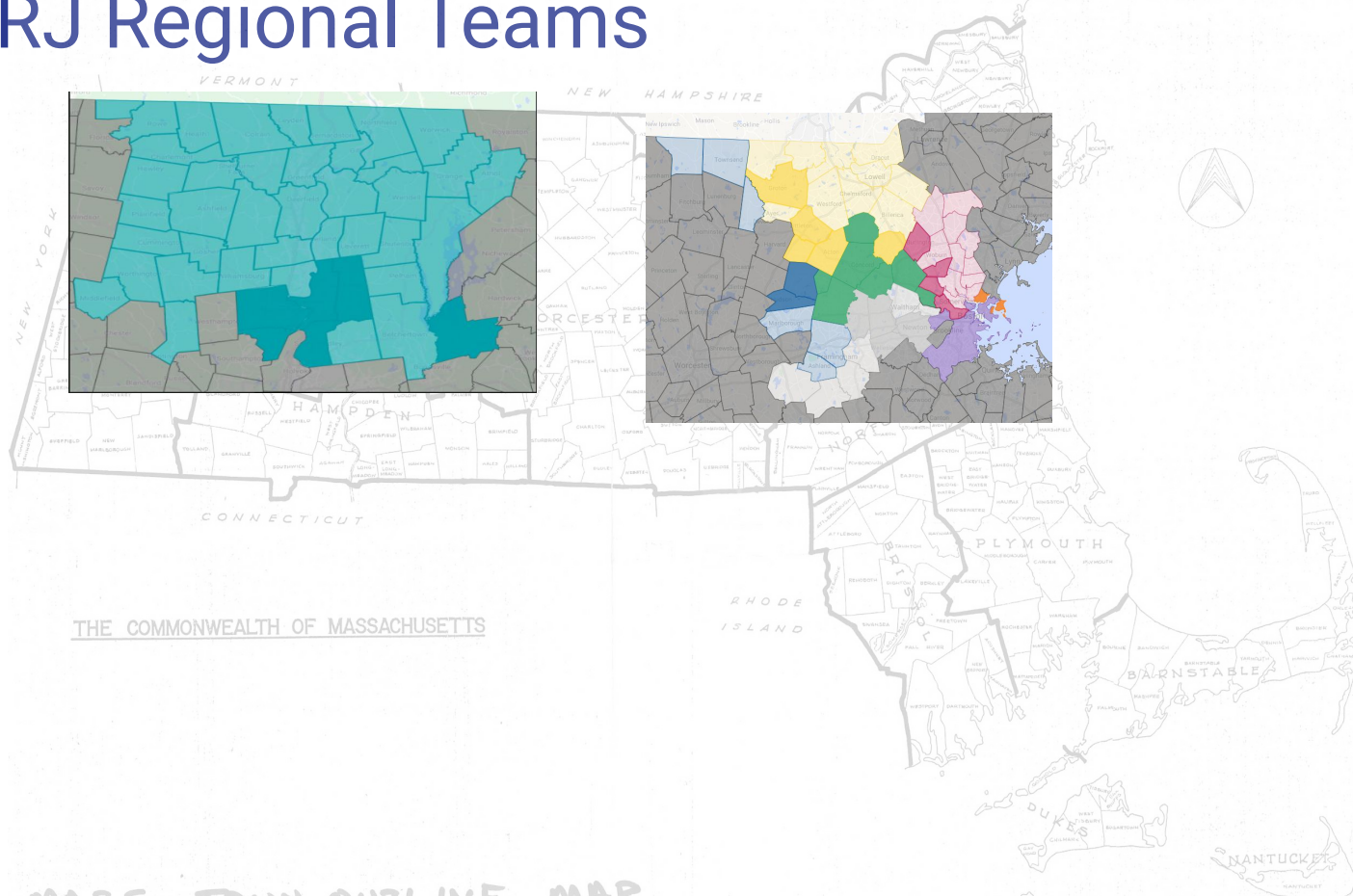
<https://outreach.penlink.com/lcjp/>



C4RJ

One Organization and their experience with data

C4RJ Regional Teams



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MASS TOWN OUTLINE MAP



C4RJ Model



Referrals from:

- Police
- Prosecutors
- Defense Attorneys
- Probation

Circle Participants

- Impacted Party
- Responsible Party
- Support People
- C4RJ Facilitators
- C4RJ Circle Keeper
- Community Members
- Police Representative

2-3 months

- Weekly meetings
- Every Responsible Party meets with 2 C4RJ Facilitators
- Reflective Exercises
- Decision-making Exercises

Circle Participants

- Everyone who was at the Opening Circle attends
- A time to reflect



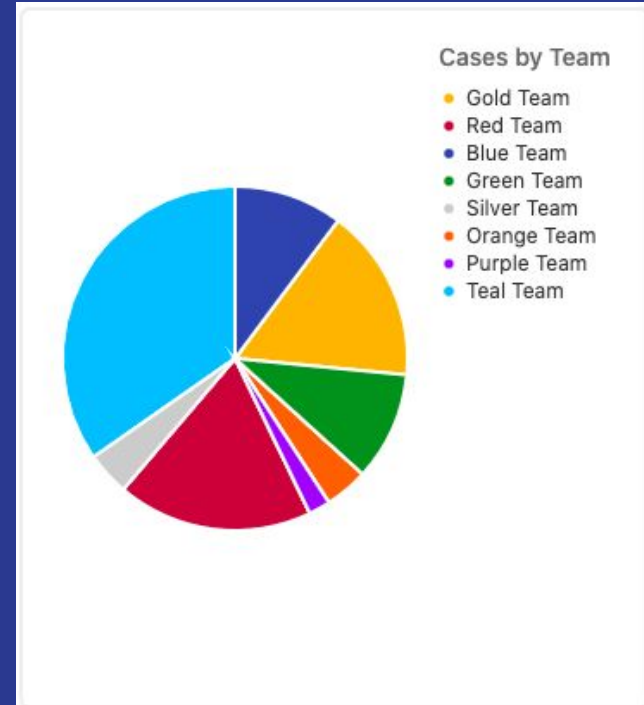
A Good Referral



- ❖ **Responsible Party takes responsibility**
 - “I did it.” (Sometimes this doesn’t sound contrite. That’s OK!)
- ❖ **Impacted party allows process to go forward**
 - Range of options: in-person participation, surrogates, submitting a statement, receiving letter of apology, stating charity preferences for community service, etc.
- ❖ **We can reasonably assure a safe process**
 - No serious mental health concerns.
 - No threat of harm among parties.

Current Data Practice

- C4RJ is a small nonprofit organization
- There is no single role dedicated exclusively to data or M+E
- We collect data using a database that is partially integrated into our case work and have a fairly robust set up for a small organization



Tension point: Data we can't currently see



Cases that don't come to us:

- Who is considered a victim?
- Who is considered an RJ “appropriate” responsible party?
- What charges are considered for RJ referral?
- Who is making these judgement calls?

Tension Point: Confidentiality and Follow-up

- Current practice - ***guided by respect for RP and IP confidentiality***
- Based on our evaluations, there is some interest in follow-up involvement
- Follow-up with RPs beyond recidivism
- IP data and follow-up with IPs



I feel the impacted party/ies needs were met.

A screenshot of a survey response interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Find an option'. Below the search bar, there is a list of five options, each in a colored pill-shaped button: 'Not at all' (blue), 'A little' (light blue), 'Moderately' (pink), 'Very much' (yellow), and 'No answer/Not applicable' (green). A vertical scrollbar is visible on the right side of the list.

Tension Point: Scale - Growing and Stretching



- Keeping RJ community based
- Concern of over-professionalization and gathering data for funders as opposed to for IPs, RPs, and communities
- How much data do we need to have?
- Who guides change?



Contact Information

Shannon Sliva

shannon.sliva@du.edu

Abby Whipple

abby@velaweb.org

Kathleen McGoey

kathleen@kathleenmcgoey.com

Erin Freeborn

efreeborn@c4rj.org

Yael Rhodes

yrhodes@c4rj.org

Research Brief: Evidence for Restorative Conferencing

Shannon Sliva, PhD, & Tyler Han
University of Denver

The Bottom Line: Findings from the literature support the use of RJ practices as an alternative or supplement to traditional criminal justice measures.

More than 85 published studies and four meta-analyses focused on the outcomes of some type of restorative dialogue used as an alternative or supplement to traditional measuresⁱ. Community conferencing, victim offender mediation (VOM), and victim offender dialogue (VOD) are commonly represented in the literature and show similar findings across practices. In addition, juveniles who have committed crimes of minor to moderate severity are most represented in the literature. These studies have investigated outcomes for RJ practices occurring in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa. Studies have used both survey and interview data to gather information from victims and offenders, and occasionally to collect data from parents, facilitators, and referral sources.

This body of research consistently suggests that 80 to 90 percent of both victims and offenders are satisfied with the process, and that agreement completion rates are much higher – also 80 to 90 percent – than those for agreements formed during traditional mediation or restitution processes.ⁱⁱ When compared with victims and offenders going through a traditional court process, those engaging in mediation were significantly more satisfied with the criminal justice system.ⁱⁱⁱ The literature also provides some evidence that dialogues reduce recidivism among offenders; however, it is important to note that selection bias is inherent in voluntary restorative justice processes.^{iv}

The Details: RJ practices result in higher satisfaction among victims and offenders, greater completion of restitution agreements, greater victim healing, and reduced re-offending.

Satisfaction. Both victims and offenders consistently report high levels of satisfaction in RJ processes and outcomes,^v which is related in part to having a choice in justice options.^{vi} Indeed, research shows that individuals who participate in RJ have significantly higher ratings of satisfaction than those who participate in traditional criminal justice processes.^{vii}

While victim satisfaction is often used as an indicator of success in RJ, few studies have examined factors related to ratings of satisfaction. Through interviews with victims, one study found that the extent to which they believe RJ is appropriate for their case, preparation for the conference, interactions with the offenders, and level of involvement contributed to victims' ratings of satisfaction.^{viii} Additional factors that may relate to ratings of satisfaction include expectations of the conference, perceptions of fairness, and restitution completion. Similar to ratings of satisfaction, victims and offenders believe RJ processes and outcomes are fair,^{ix} especially when compared to traditional criminal justice procedures.^x

Victim Healing. For victims, RJ offers a sense of closure and empowerment, helps address their needs, and allows them to be involved and have some degree of control over the process, and improve their overall well-being.^{xi} When compared to traditional criminal justice approaches, RJ can decrease feelings of fear, desire for revenge, in certain cases decrease posttraumatic stress symptoms, and overall decrease the long-term emotional impacts of the crime.^{xii} For offenders, RJ may offer closure or relief, allow them to have greater involvement in the process, which may affect restitution completion, and provide an opportunity to repair harm or help the victim heal.^{xiii} Participation in family group conferencing may also improve hyperactivity, emotionality, and conduct in juvenile offenders.^{xiv}

Despite the emphasis in RJ about the impact of crime on families and communities, there is little research about the experiences of offenders' families in the RJ process. In a study about family members of offenders who had

committed capital offenses, family members experienced a substantial amount of stress, depression, guilt, and posttraumatic stress symptoms as a result of the crime. Consequently, these families often sought healing through informal RJ practices, which were not provided to them through traditional criminal justice proceedings.^{xv}

Recidivism. Recidivism is a common outcome examined in the RJ literature; however, there is variation in how studies choose to measure recidivism. Studies may define offending, conviction, arrest, contact with law enforcement or the court, or a combination of these as recidivism. Several studies indicate that RJ has a positive effect on recidivism,^{xvi} particularly when comparing RJ to traditional criminal justice processes.^{xvii} Effects on recidivism are mediated by age, race, gender, prior contact with the justice system, and referral offense.^{xviii} Other researchers have found that long-term reoffending is best predicted by the offense type and the degree to which conferences adhered to RJ principles.^{xix} Due to decreased rates of recidivism and reoffending, RJ practices can be cost-effective alternatives to traditional criminal justice processes.^{xx}

ⁱ Choi, Bazemore, & Gilbert, 2012; Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005; Poulson, 2003; Umbreit & Armour, 2011

ⁱⁱ Umbreit, Coates, & Vos; 2004

ⁱⁱⁱ Davis, Tichane, and Grayson, 1980; Umbreit, 1989

^{iv} Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005; Nugent, Williams, & Umbreit, 2003

^v Armstrong, 2012; Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005; Hargovan, 2010; Umbreit et al., 2006; Wemmers & Cyr, 2005

^{vi} Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2004

^{vii} Latimer et al., 2005; Poulson, 2003; Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al., 2015

^{viii} Armstrong, 2012

^{ix} Hayes, McGee, Punter, & Cerruto, 2014; Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al., 2015; Umbreit et al., 2004; Wemmers & Cyr, 2005

^x Poulson, 2003

^{xi} Armstrong, 2012; Calhoun & Pelch, 2013; Choi, 2010; McGlynn et al., 2012; Wemmers & Cyr, 2005

^{xii} Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al., 2015

^{xiii} Abrams et al., 2006; Choi & Severson, 2009; Hayes et al., 2014; Umbreit et al., 2006

^{xiv} Mutter et al., 2008

^{xv} Eschholz, Reed, Beck, & Leonard, 2003

^{xvi} Hayes et al., 2014; Umbreit et al., 2004

^{xvii} Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Bonta, Wallace-Capretta, Rooney, & Mcanoy, 2002; Bradshaw, Roseborough, & Umbreit, 2006; Latimer et al., 2005; Rodriguez, 2007; Sherman, Strang, Mayo-Wilson, Woods, & Ariel, 2015

^{xviii} Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Sherman, Strang, Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2015

^{xix} Hipple, Gruenewald, & McGarrell, 2015

^{xx} Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al., 2015; Sherman, Strang, Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2015; Umbreit et al., 2004

Contact shannon.sliva@du.edu for full reference page.