**Evidence-Based Research Analysis on the Effectiveness of Restorative Justice**

# Numerous empirical studies and meta-analyses of restorative justice approaches from across the nation and the globe have shown significant benefits of the restorative justice approach to dealing with criminal behavior. Further, restorative justice conferencing is “one of the most rigorously-tested innovations in sentencing and corrections,” in the world, both by the number of empirical studies on effectiveness and scientific rigor.[i](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark0)

As the Dane Co. CRC approach is a novel one, there are no studies specifically on point to the identical method and population at issue, but general trends and analogous population groups have been examined. These observable and measurable benefits include:

* Reduces Recidivism
  + Meta-analysis studies show a reduction in recidivism rates for offenders who participated in different types of restorative processes can range from approximately 20% - 38% reduction in recidivism[ii](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark1)
  + Other smaller and internal self-studies have yielded even more dramatic results of up to 50-80% or greater reductions in recidivism[iii](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark2)
    - This includes successes in Wisconsin[iv](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark3) [v](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark4)
    - Baltimore’s Community Conferencing Program notes a Maryland Department of Juvenile Services study showing 60% reduction in recidivism for youth who have gone through a community conferencing program.[vi](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark5)
    - Grafton County Juvenile Restorative Justice Program (in New Hampshire) notes recidivism rates between 4-7% for restorative justice participants vs. a 45% recidivism rate for the traditional juvenile justice system.[vii](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark6)
  + Another important note is that those who do reoffend tended to commit less serious offenses[viii](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark7) and it took them longer to recidivate than those who did not participate in a restorative justice process.
* Higher Percentage of Offenders Making Full Restitution Payments
  + Offenders are 25-50% more likely to pay full restitution relative to those who do not go through a restorative process[ix](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark8)
  + Higher rates of restitution paid overall. In addition to the greater likelihood of full restitution paid, collect significantly more restitution – some studies 100-200% or more on collected restitution (assessed amount isn’t different, individuals just satisfy more of the obligation)
* Cost Savings, Timeliness, & Efficient Case Resolution
  + Cost estimate comparisons show significant per case savings: $1,500-$3,500 cost per case for restorative justice process vs. $12,000-$13,500 cost per case for traditional court processing.[x](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark9)
  + In Henderson County, North Carolina, researchers found a two-thirds reduction in the number of trials due to the operation of a restorative process, leaving a substantial impact at the county level[xi](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark10)
  + Chilliwack, British Columbia (roughly 1/3 the size of Madison): Restorative justice program handles an average of 100 youth and adult referrals per year, saving the local criminal justice system approximately $260,000 per year.[xii](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark11)
  + Cases resolved in approximately 1/3 the amount of time.[xiii](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark12)
* Increased Satisfaction vs. Traditional Criminal Justice System
  + Multiple meta-analysis studies show greater levels of satisfaction with a restorative process when compared to the traditional criminal justice process[xiv](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark13)
  + A meta-analysis of seven evaluation studies found that, when compared to those who went through the traditional court process, BOTH victims and offenders who participated in a restorative justice process: 1. were more satisfied with the handling and outcome of the case; 2. perceived the process and outcome as having greater fairness; and 3. had greater feelings that the offender had been held accountable.[xv](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark14)
  + This meta-analysis also found that victims who participate in a restorative justice process are 1/3 less likely to still be upset about the crime and are ½ less likely to fear re-victimization when compared to those who went through the traditional court process.[xvi](file:///C:\Users\DMa3\Downloads\CRC_Web_Site_Information_2-19-21_Revised_RC.docx#_bookmark15)

Endnotes

1. The Oxford Handbook of Sentencing and Corrections, 222-23 (Joan Petersilia and Kevin R. Reitz eds., 2012). The authors also point out that the central questions of sentencing and corrections themselves have not been tested in the same rigorous ways as restorative justice has through the use of random control trial studies. The authors noted that they were unable to find another aspect of sentencing, corrections, or criminal justice interventions that has been subjected to an equal level of scrutiny that restorative justice has.
2. Mark S. Umbreit, Robert B. Coates & Betty Vos, The Impact of Restorative Justice Conferencing: A Review of 63 Empirical Studies in 5 Countries, 12-17 (May 1, 2002) citing a study by Clarke, Valente, Jr. & Mace) hereafter “Umbreit, Restorative Justice Conferencing”.
3. Stephen A. Matthews & Gayle Larkin, Guide to Community-Based Alternatives for Low Risk Juvenile Offenders (1999), 67. Outside consultant for Healing and Sentencing Circles Program in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory showed an 80% reduction in recidivism over a two-year period for the program’s sixty-five clients.
4. The State Legislative Audit Bureau published a report in June 2004 revealing that 8.8% of offenders with no prior convictions who participated in a community conferencing program were rearrested for, or charged with, another criminal offense within one year of participation compared to 27.6% of non-participating offenders in a control group. (Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, 2004).
5. David Lerman, The Development of Milwaukee’s Community Conferencing Program, The International Journal of Conflict & Reconciliation Vol.

1 (Fall 2011): 1-26 noting internal evaluation of the first 101 offenders to participate revealed that offenders who participated in the CCP were less than half as likely to re-offend than those who were deemed appropriate for the program but who did not participate in the restorative process.

1. Baltimore’s Community Conferencing Program notes impact <http://www.communityconferencing.org/index.php/impact/>[last visited 4/15/2015]. See also: <http://media.communityconferencing.org/uploads/main/CCC_Outcomes_-_FY13_-_ladderback.pdf>
2. <http://www.co.grafton.nh.us/all-departments/alternative-sentencing/restorative-justice/>[last visited 4/15/2015]
3. William R. Nugent, Mona Williams & Mark S. Umbreit, Participation in Victim-Offender Mediation and the Prevalence and Severity of Subsequent Delinquent Behavior: A Meta-Analysis, 2003 UTAH L. REV. 137, 139-40. A 15 study meta-analysis of 9037 juvenile offenders finding fewer and less serious offenses among those who went through restorative justice process.
4. Minneapolis study: 69% of offenders vs. 54% who did not go through the victim-offender mediation process. In Albuquerque study: 86% of offenders vs. 57% of the non-mediation offenders.
5. <http://www.co.grafton.nh.us/all-departments/alternative-sentencing/restorative-justice/>[last visited 4/15/2015]

xi Umbreit, Restorative Justice Conferencing, *supra* note iv at 12-15. See also William R. Nugent, Mark S. Umbreit, Lizabeth Wiinamaki, & Jeff Paddock, Participation in Victim-Offender Mediation and Reoffense: Successful Replications?, Research on Social Work Practice (January 2001) Vol. 11: 5-23. Study analyzes the combined samples of 1,298 juveniles demonstrating a reoffense rate that is 32% lower for VOM participants than nonparticipants.

xiiZvi D. Gabbay, Justifying Restorative Justice: A Theoretical Justification for the Use of Restorative Justice Practices, Journal of Dis. Res.Vol. 2: 367 (2005) citing FY2001 City of Chilliwack Cost-Benefit Analysis.

1. Id. at 370 citing calculations for the average case resolution time of 12.75 total hours in the restorative justice process vs. 34.5 total hours for same case in the traditional criminal justice process.
2. Jeff Latimer, Craig Dowden & Danielle Muise, The Effectiveness of Restorative Practices: A Meta-Analysis, The Prison Journal, (June 2005)

Vol. 85: 127-144. In a meta-analysis covering both VOM and group conferencing programs found that victims were more satisfied in the restorative process than those in traditional approaches in twelve of the thirteen programs.

1. Barton Poulson, A Third Voice: A Review of Empirical Research on the Psychological Outcomes of Restorative Justice, 2003 Utah L. Rev. 167,

179-193 (2003). Meta-analysis found Satisfaction with Outcome – V: 35% more satisfied (73% vs. 54%) / O: (77% vs. 67%); Satisfied with Handling of Case – V: 40% more satisfied (78% vs. 56%) / O: 15% more satisfied (84% vs. 73%); Outcome Fairness – V: 37% greater perceived outcome fairness (77% vs. 56%) / O: 34% greater perceived outcome fairness (79% vs. 59%); Criminal Justice System Fairness: - V: 46% greater perceived process fairness (82% vs. 56%) / O: 17% greater perceived process fairness (91% vs. 78%); Offender Held Accountable - V: 30% greater feeling of offender accountability (92% vs. 71%) / O: 67% greater feeling of offender accountability (82% vs. 49%)

1. Id. at 196-198. The meta-analysis also looked at victims’ emotional well-being and feelings of safety: 1/3 less likely to still be upset about crime (38% vs. 57%) & less than ½ as likely to fear re-victimization (15% vs. 34%).