Balanced and Restorative Justice (RJ) Approaches

While Restorative Justice (RJ) is not a “program” in and of itself, the approach offers an ideal model for dealing with first time and minor repeat offenders by holding youth accountable for their actions, while avoiding formal court proceedings (OJJDP Model Programs Guide). The overall goal of RJ is to restore harm caused by the offense to the victim(s) and to the larger community, and to avoid recidivism by addressing any underlying issues of the youth that may be associated with offending.

Recent research suggests that Restorative Justice (RJ) diversion programs need not necessarily be limited to the least serious juvenile offenders, but may also be appropriate for more serious offenders, e.g., older youth; and/or those with priors; property offenses; and even in some cases, violent crimes. However, these youth – (especially those with multiple priors indicating higher criminal propensity) – may require the addition of more intensive component(s), e.g., cognitive behavioral skills training along with the typical RJ components of restitution, community service, etc. Likewise, recent studies indicate that low-risk offenders benefit more from lower intensity, shorterterm RJ interventions. This aligns with the Risk, Need, Responsivity approach (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2012; Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

Restorative justice strategies are solution-based rather than problem-based processes (van Wormer, 2009). Juveniles who perpetrate crimes rarely consider its impact on others. From a developmental perspective, meeting one’s victim can help the offender learn empathy, accountability, and compassion, and provides an opportunity to impact future behavior (Arredondo 2003). This approach may be particularly appropriate for very young offenders.

RJ has sometimes been successfully used for bullying. While Restorative conferences are similar to mediations, there are important differences. Conflict resolution and mediation, particularly peer mediation, are not appropriate for bullying and can actually be harmful by further victimizing a bullied child. Bullying is a form of victimization and involves an imbalance of power. It is no more a “conflict” than child abuse or domestic violence. Mediating a bullying incident may send incorrect messages, e.g., “you are both partly right and partly wrong” or “we need to work out this conflict between you”.

However, the appropriate message is “No one deserves to be bullied. This behavior is inappropriate and must be stopped” (Stopbullying.gov). The Restorative Justice facilitator focuses on correcting the imbalance of power between the victim and the bully in order to protect the victim (Gonzalez, 2012). If the victim finds it too upsetting to face their tormenter, they should never be pressured to participate.

Restorative Justice conferences typically involve the coming together of the offender, the victim, family members, community representatives and others impacted directly or indirectly by the offense, in order to discuss the impact of the offense and to devise a plan of action to address the offense. As part of this process, victims are afforded the opportunity to share how the crime impacted them, giving the offender a greater awareness of the physical, emotional, financial and psychological consequences of his/her criminal actions. Through this process, the offender is also given opportunities to apologize and make amends for the offending behavior.

Editors
Audrey Stang
Karen Swartzbaugh Ghezzi
Quote of the Day: Creating Harmony

Love dissolves hate.
Kindness melts cruelty.
Compassion calms passion.
Cooperation evokes love and when we bow, others bend.
This creates HARMONY.
Bridge to New Opportunities

Program:

This behavioral and mental health program provides two services:

1. Behavioral Health Counseling
2. Life Coaching

To youth with mental health and/or substance abuse problems. Who are at risk of initial or subsequent involvement with the Juvenile Justice System.

Target population: Children 9-17 years old
OR through the 22nd birthday, if eligible to be enrolled in a

⇒ non-postsecondary school,
⇒ GED courses,
⇒ non-postsecondary vocational program and,
⇒ who have any of the following conditions:

- Mental health issues ranging from mental health problems that result in impairment in functioning to diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders (including Severe Emotional Disturbances) per the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

- Substance issues ranging from substance abuse that comprises maladaptive patterns of substance use manifested by current and significant adverse consequences related to the repeated use of substance dependence comprising cognitive, behavioral and physiological symptoms as a result of continued substance use.

- Dual Diagnosis/Co-occurring Disorders – both Substance Use and Mental Health Issues that meet the criteria for a diagnosis in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

- Current or past traumatic stress may be a factor in the mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

⇒ Reside in Broward County
⇒ Present Behavioral Health problems and are at-risk for initial or subsequent involvement in the Juvenile Justice System.

Evidence problems and behavior can be, but are not limited to:

- Disruptive behavior in school or community;
- Infractions of school rules and behavioral standards; defiance of school personnel or other authority figures;
- Impaired peer relations including verbal altercations and physical aggression;
- A current or previous arrest;
- Difficulties forming and maintaining trusting relationships, concentrating and maintaining task focus, and verbalizing feelings, among other areas.

BNO’s Rule of Thumb

The primary Client in each case is the Child/Adolescent, regardless of whether the services are provided through

- Individual
- Family
- Group counseling
- Or any combination of those modalities.
Living in Harmony 3rd Annual

Awards Dinner

Honorees and HDC CEO

Pictured from Left to Right:

Ana Cowo – Co-Chair, Harmony Development Center
Myriam Campo-Goldman-Founder & CEO, Harmony Development Center
Mari Partin-Chief Executive Officer, Dan Marino Foundation
Cindy Arenberg Seltzer - President & CEO, Children’s Services Council of Broward

Harmony Development Center wants to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped to make successful our 3rd yearly event.

Please join us on our Living in Harmony 4th Annual Awards Dinner that will take place on Friday September 29, 2017!
HDC Team Quarterly Award Winners!

Maria Vasquez
Data Entry & Information Processing Specialist

Elena Andrew
Program Assistant

Gloria Gonzales
Senior Case Management
Together we are critical in our community

With your financial support HDC has uninterrupted success in improving family relationships, obtaining youth academic achievement and school attendance, preventing teen pregnancy, preventing substance abuse, preventing delinquency, and keeping Broward County families from becoming part of the welfare system.

Donate Now

www.harmonydevelopmentcenter.org

Thank You!

Donations are greatly appreciated!!

SAVE THE DATE TO OUR LIVING IN HARMONY 4RD ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER!

September 29th, 2017

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