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All about life: Analyzing the most effective interventions in a Colorado juvenile diversion program

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, CO

The Graduate School

ALL ABOUT LIFE: ANALYZING THE MOST EFFECTIVE
INTERVENTIONS IN A COLORADO JUVENILE
DIVERSION PROGRAM

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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College of Humanities and Social Sciences

School of Criminal Justice

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This Thesis by: Kamille McKinney

Entitled: *All About Life: Analyzing the Most Effective Interventions in a Colorado Juvenile Diversion Program*

Has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in College of Humanities and Social Sciences in Department of Criminal Justice.

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ABSTRACT

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Far too often in our society offenders in the criminal justice system started their criminal careers as juveniles and never found a way to dig themselves out of the black hole that is delinquency. In recent years, across the nation, there has been great effort expended in finding early interventions for juveniles to deter them away from the criminal justice system before they delve into a negative life trajectory. In Colorado multiple jurisdictions utilize diversion programs as a way to keep juvenile offenders out of the formal court system. This research examines one such Juvenile Diversion Program in the Fifth Judicial District of the District Attorney's Office for a three year period between 2010 and 2012 in the counties of Lake, Summit, and Clear Creek. By looking at which components of the juvenile diversion program are the most effective at producing successful clients it is hoped that improved and targeted interventions for juveniles are able to more effectively help these juveniles stay out of the system before they cannot get back out.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“I don’t want them to be in the system, they’ll never get out” is a common sentiment among adults regarding juveniles who have engaged in delinquent behaviors. It is difficult to see our community’s youth commit wrongdoing and to be punished accordingly. While we as a society experience much less anxiety over sending adults to prison than juveniles, we also have a much larger stake in protecting our children. As a result our society often looks to outside factors for why juveniles have fallen down such a negative path. Likewise, we want the interventions assigned to these juveniles to address their underlying issues that cause delinquency and help them make better decisions in the future instead of punishing them.

Diversion programs are intended to steer juveniles away from the formal court system and provide them with the services to address their delinquency and underlying issues related to negative behaviors. Diversion encompasses a wide variety of program components and interventions (Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). By individualizing the experience for each juvenile, diversion programs hope to address each client’s needs beyond those needs that arise out of the crime itself to help them build the skills to refrain from further delinquency. These programs are often run by district attorney offices or private agencies and are also seen as a way to ease the caseload of the courts and subsequent correctional agencies.

In Colorado multiple jurisdictions utilize diversion programs as a way to keep juvenile offenders out of the formal court system. This program is often operated as a pre-file program in which Deputy District Attorneys would refer cases before they filed formal charges to divert them out of the court process. These cases are often minor crimes committed by first time offenders and are then referred to the Juvenile Diversion Coordinator for a contract and supervision. With the emergence of new research in addressing at-risk youth, especially those who have already encountered the criminal justice system, it is important for programs to look at the past and analyze what has worked to determine their future direction. This research analyzed the Juvenile Diversion Program in the Fifth Judicial District of the District Attorney's Office in the three year period between 2010 and 2012 in the counties of Lake, Summit, and Clear Creek which are located in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado. This research was accomplished by testing which components of the juvenile diversion program were the most effective at producing successful clients and helping juveniles avoid the criminal justice system before they cannot get out of it.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Foundations of Diversion Programming

The juvenile justice system was built on principles of rehabilitation, trying to help juveniles instead of punishing them before they reach adult age. Public sentiment has long considered juveniles worthy and capable of being saved and prefers rehabilitation models over other interventions. This model has also been supported by system professionals and the failure of alternative intervention programs such as Scared Straight and Boot Camps (Zimring, 2000). Historically, punitive programs have not been successful and therefore attention is focused on rehabilitative interventions for juveniles.

The juvenile court model is a diversionary model where youth are being redirected away from the formal court system by utilizing different interventions and creating an informal adjudication system (Zimring, 2000). Diversion programming was subsequently built out of wanting an even more informal way to redirect youth out of the system by not having them in court at all. Instead of formal system involvement, Diversion programs apply interventions before juveniles have to experience the perils of the court room.

In keeping with the juvenile court model, diversion programs embody the ideals of helping instead of punishing children who commit crimes. While most of the juveniles in these programs have been accused of less serious crimes, such as misdemeanor theft or

harassment, the services and components of the program can address the needs of many different types of offenders. The goals of diversion programs are to reduce delinquency and recidivism, increase system efficiency, reduce costs, and reduce the level of involvement juveniles have in the juvenile justice system (Cocozza, et al., 2005). To meet these goals several critical elements become the basis of the program and the required contract that lay out the conditions of the diversion program. These critical elements include screening and assessment upon intake, holistic and family centered interventions, and providing a wide network of individualized services to each juvenile (Cocozza et al., 2005). Above all, in order to participate, the juveniles must admit to their wrongdoing and take accountability for their actions and the harm they have caused in order to participate (Myers, 2013). By taking accountability, diversion programs hope to assist juveniles is recognizing why they committed the crime, fixing their wrongs, and restoring themselves to the community.

Theoretical Framework of Diversion Programming

Besides falling in line with the general theory of rehabilitation and redirecting youth away from a formal system, diversion programs encompass several key theories to explain its structure which are pivotal to asserting the necessity of the program.

Diversion programming rose out of the Labeling Theory movement of the 1960's, which is a theory that dates back to Tannebaum in the 1930's. (Patrick & Marsh, 2005). When attempting to use Labeling Theory to address why those who are labeled criminals early in life are more likely to continue being delinquent, theorists were also able to link this labeling phenomenon to the life-course of an individual. Similarly, Social Bonding Theory discusses the important of pro-social connections to help steer juveniles away

from crime. By using the Developmental Life-Course Theory to address crime in relation to the age of the juveniles and labeling theory to explain why a diversion program is important to avoid social stress, it is apparent that the theoretical framework behind diversion programs is driven by the will to guide juveniles through their negative behaviors into a pro-social adult life.

Developmental Life-Course Theory

It is believed that people's criminal behaviors are largely dependent on their age, with crime peaking between the ages of 15 and 19 and desisting between the ages of 20 and 29 (Zembroski, 2011). Developmental Life Course Theory asserts that criminal behavior progresses and disappears throughout the life course. The theory also implies that the balance of pro-social protective factors and antisocial risk factors will largely determine behavior later in life as people either cease criminal behaviors in favor of a pro-social existence, or continue their criminal careers (Sullivan, Piquero, & Cullen, 2012). There are events in life that effect the development of criminality including the perceived opportunity for pro-social or antisocial activities; the pursuit of these opportunities; possession of skills needed for these activities and interactions; and social reinforcement of participation in these activities (Sullivan et al., 2012). In other words, the balance between pro-social and antisocial opportunities plays an integral role in deciding whether juveniles continue to be criminals into their adult lives or cease their delinquent behaviors.

Zembroski (2011) further asserts that there are risk factors and life events that interact with one another to influence the onset, continuation, and desistance of crime. These risk factors and life events become the opportunity to either be pro-social or

antisocial, similar to the view portrayed by Sullivan et al. (2012). For example, an early age of onset predicts relatively long criminal career duration and the commitment of multiple offenses (Zembroski, 2011). The social nature of crime is also reflected in the age of the offender and the continuation or desistance of crime. Most offenses up to the late teenage years are committed with other peers, whereas most offenses from age twenty onward are committed alone (Zembroski, 2011). Similarly, life events are also the reason for desisting from crime as an adult. The pulls of further education, stable work, marriage, and children are often cited events that cause people to discontinue their delinquent behaviors (Zembroski, 2011). In fact, marriage is seen as the number one reason for this change in behavior in one's twenties. Depending on life events, positive or negative, that occur in one's life, coupled with risk factors, such as delinquent social ties and drug use, crime can either desist after early adulthood, or continue into a criminal career. Thankfully, the majority of crime committed by adults is committed by a small percentage of the population, with the majority of people choosing a pro-social lifestyle in adulthood.

Diversion programs are an attempt at intervening in the criminal behavior of juveniles before these life events and risk factors can encourage them into future crime. Contracts in diversion programs are set up to right the perceived wrong of the juvenile and address specific risk factors in order to help the juvenile develop pro-social ties and sever their antisocial ones. By intervening when the pull of crime is at its greatest, during the teenage years, it is hoped that diversion programs can help juveniles end their life-course for crime without too much involvement in the criminal justice system.

Labeling Theory and Social Bonding Theory

The formal societal reaction to crime can be a stepping stone in the development of a criminal career (Bernberg, Krohn, & Rivera, 2006). Even more pertinent than interventions for youth at-risk of further crime is the need to keep juveniles out of a formal system. Labeling Theory is the assertion that when you assign a label to a person, then eventually that person will embody that label and display behaviors that are consistent with their label (Bernberg et al., 2006). By diverting juveniles away from court, it will keep them from being assigned the label of being a criminal. In fact, labeled teenagers may become aware of stereotypical beliefs in their communities, or they may think that these beliefs exist based on their learned perception of what people think about criminals. In being labeled, juveniles then fear rejection and may withdraw from interaction with conventional peers, further throwing them into the antisocial culture of crime (Bernberg et al., 2006). Further it is asserted by Patrick, et al. (2004) that juveniles are more likely to commit crimes in groups which makes this connection to other delinquent peers that much more dangerous to the future behaviors and persona adopted by at-risk youth. By alienating juveniles from pro-social ties with a criminal label, it is easy for them to turn to antisocial peers with the same labels and propensity for future crime.

The role that criminal justice professionals have in the development of a criminal identity in juveniles is key. Any kind of negative contact with authority figures, such as police officers, attorneys, and judges, can lead to the child being labeled a delinquent by the gatekeepers of the system and lead to further delinquent behaviors (Patrick, et al., 2004). Conversely, interactions with the criminal justice system in a positive way can

help to make beneficial connections to the community and reduce the impact of labeling theory (Patrick, et al., 2004). By diverting juveniles away from any formal labeling to a diversion program negative consequences associated with being labeled a criminal can be avoided. Diversion programming reduces the risks associated with the stigma of the criminal justice system while still allowing juveniles to receive the services they need to address their delinquent behaviors (Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). Diversion programs are intended to direct juveniles away from formal participation in the justice system and formal labeling as a criminal, which is an important service to help juveniles remain tied with pro-social peers instead of being pushed toward antisocial influences.

Similarly, Social Bonding Theory can help to explain why juveniles might fall into delinquent behavior, especially when they are already at-risk for criminal tendencies. Hirschi (1969) posited when explaining Social Bonding Theory that attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief are the four components vital to bonding a child to their societal institutions, whether it be the family system, schools, friends, or churches. Besides this form of control that comes from the parents and community, self-control also plays a role in a juvenile's propensity for criminal behavior. In fact, "low self-control must be considered an important predictor of criminal behavior" (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p. 232). When juveniles possess low self-control, it is then even more important to help them bond to their societal institutions. Social Bonding Theory further asserts that if a juvenile has strong bonds to the community or a specific institution, such as school, then they are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior (Fitzpatrick & Ruberry, 2003). This is why students who are involved in extra-curricular activities are less likely to get in trouble. These bonded juveniles are attached and invested in their schools and have

the motivation to stay on track towards achieving a high school diploma. For kids who have started to engage in delinquent behaviors, any event that would sever the ties that they have created to their community, such as a criminal charge, will break the social bond and cause the juvenile to further spiral towards antisocial behaviors.

Components of Diversion Programs

There are four components of correctional interventions: punitive, rehabilitative, restorative, and life skills based. Diversion programs often encompass all four components to holistically address any issues that might influence juveniles to commit crimes. By using punitive interventions to punish juveniles for their behaviors, rehabilitative interventions to address underlying maladies the juveniles have, restorative interventions to restore the juvenile to a pro-social community, and life skills interventions to provide juveniles with the competencies to make better choices, diversion programs utilize many different opportunities to service their juvenile clients. Each of the four components encompasses different guidelines for programming opportunities set forth by the OMNI Institute, the agency who evaluates juvenile diversion programs across the state of Colorado.

Punitive Interventions

Punishment is the traditional intervention for wrongdoing. While punishment has its merits as a deterrent, being too punitive on youthful offenders can lead to detrimental consequences (Benekos & Merlo, 2010). Punishing juveniles for what they did wrong sends a clear message on what conduct is considered inappropriate, but there is a line regarding punishment of juveniles that should not be crossed. Oftentimes, however, this line determining what level of punishment is effective is often unclear and dependent on

the individual. It is rational to want to punish juveniles for crime just like we punish our own children for breaking house rules. Unfortunately, punishing juveniles for crime can be a negative experience when taken too far. Despite the fact that this line between punishment to send a message and punishment that causes more harm than good, is so blurred, there are constructive uses for punitive interventions.

By incorporating other components along with punishment, and creating different forms of punishment that are less oppressive, the criminal justice system is able to consequence juveniles for their wrongdoing without detrimental effects. For example, probation and alternative placements have allowed the juvenile justice system to dispose of cases without incarcerating juveniles and still allowing for punitive sanctions like lock-down facilities, ankle-monitoring, and supervision (Merlo & Benekos, 2010). Diversion programs also contain punitive elements that allow the juveniles to learn from their mistakes in the least restrictive way possible while still understanding that they are being punished for delinquent behaviors. Above all, being able to use punitive interventions allows for accountability (Merlo & Benekos, 2010). If there is no punitive intervention it is hard to assert to a juvenile that there has been a wrong committed that needs to be righted.

In juvenile diversion programs, examples of punitive interventions include weekly check-ins, curfews, restrictions on activities, drug testing, electronic home monitoring, and requiring extra commitments such as study hall. All of these interventions are to punish and restrict the juvenile and their freedoms, but to do so in a way that is the least constrictive and keeps the juvenile out of any formal justice system or correctional institution.

Rehabilitative Interventions

Since its inception, the juvenile justice system has been based on rehabilitating juveniles in order to address their issues before they become adults. There is belief that a juvenile justice system services a higher purpose, giving it more responsibility to change its clients than an adult system (Piquero, Cullen, Unnever, Piquero, & Gordon, 2010). The public supports this notion of rehabilitation as well and believes that the correctional interventions have the responsibility to repair children who fall into the system (Piquero et al., 2010). Where parents and societal institutions have failed to keep juveniles from delinquency, it is now the responsibility of the juvenile justice system to fix what is wrong with the child before it is too late.

Individual and environmental risk factors interact to lead to delinquency which is a complicated interaction that is difficult to address (Hinton, Sims, Adams, & West, 2007). It is believed that all children have the capacity to be “fixed” and to recover from their delinquency, more so than adults. Rehabilitation is given the task of addressing all of the risk factors that children possess that might give them a propensity for further delinquency.

The biggest issue in trying to rehabilitate the child is the family environment in which they live. The family system plays a large role in the risk of a child to commit crimes. The more disengaged from the family or the more antisocial influences in the family the more likely the child is to be delinquent (Hinton et al., 2007). Therefore, the rehabilitation of both the child and the family is important in the juvenile justice system (Hinton et al., 2007). Unfortunately, few parents who need to receive their own interventions in order for their children to be successful are willing to do so. There is a

large percentage of children in the juvenile justice system whose parents have engaged in criminal behaviors themselves, which played an integral role in their child lacking the pro-social bonds to refrain from crime themselves as well as an inability to process their world in a non-criminal way (Hinton et al., 2007). Without buy-in from the parents and other social support systems, it is difficult for any change in a child caused by rehabilitation programs to stick and continue past the correctional intervention. You can rehabilitate a child, but if they have to return home to dysfunction that caused the delinquency to begin with then all of the work is likely to be undone.

In juvenile diversion programs, there are many options to assist juveniles in rehabilitating any underlying issues that are risk factors for crime. Many juveniles are required to complete drug and alcohol education classes or counseling depending on the crime and background. Other options for rehabilitative treatment are anger management, individual counseling, and family counseling. By providing these services to juveniles on diversion, regardless of what their actual crime was, then you can hope to lessen the risk factors that they possess for future crime and help them develop pro-social coping skills to become successful adults.

Restorative Interventions

Restorative justice has been in practice for many years, but only relatively recently has become a focus of the criminal justice system. It has become apparent that many offenders continue to engage in antisocial behaviors because they have been alienated by society for being a criminal. By using restorative justice principles to reintroduce a juvenile offender into their community, then we are helping to create pro-social ties that will encourage children to refrain from further delinquency. From this

standpoint, the juvenile justice system is responsible to serve offenders, their victims, and the community (Simms, 1997). As such there needs to be accountability from all parties (Simms, 1997). By using restorative justice principles, you give the community and the victim of the crime responsibility to help encourage the offender back into pro-social life along with holding the offenders accountable to repair the damage their crime has caused.

Restorative justice programs reduce delinquency by focusing programs on risk patterns of at-risk youth and incorporating graduated sanctions as interventions in the juvenile justice system (Simms, 1997). In this model, victims are encouraged to take an active role in the restoration of the offender to the victim and the community (Simms, 1997). If juveniles can actively see the harm they caused be repaired through cooperative efforts between themselves, the victim, and the community, they are more likely to connect to the community and refrain from future crime (Rodriguez, 2007). This harm can be repaired through negotiation, mediation, victim empowerment, and reparation (Rodriguez, 2007). By involving the community in these interventions, it allows the public to reflect their values and norms onto a juvenile delinquent who needs to learn positive life skills, values, and pro-social behaviors to reintegrate back to the community (Rodriguez, 2007).

While the current body of research asserts that the presence of a restorative justice program only slightly decreases the likelihood of recidivism, the positive impact on the victims and the community should be considered as successes as well, such as satisfaction with the program and agency (Rodriguez, 2007). Restorative justice is a cooperative effort where all parties can learn, benefit, and grow.

The freedom of Juvenile Diversion programs allows for many opportunities for the juvenile to participate in restorative justice. All restorative justice practices are put into place after an agreement between the offender and the victim in order for the efforts to be truly restorative. For example, any restitution that is to be paid to the victim is agreed upon by both parties as the fair amount to be paid to repair the harm that was caused. Many basic methods are employed in almost all diversion contracts, including community service and apology letters. More in-depth restorative justice interventions are used when there has been crime to a specific victim or group of victims. Mediation, restitution, victim impact panels, physically repairing damage, and service to a specific group or cause are others ways that restorative justice can be utilized in diversion programs.

Life Skills Interventions

Life skills interventions are intended to teach juveniles the competencies needed in order to make better life choices. It is believed that many juveniles commit crimes because they do not possess the social, cognitive, and behavioral skills to make more pro-social choices (Hawkins, Jensen, Catalano, & Wells, 1991). In other words, they lack the capacity to maintain positive behaviors and instead, possess criminal thinking patterns. Criminal thinking patterns can dominate a juvenile's cognitive processes very easily because it is the phenomenon in which right versus wrong are not considered when making decisions, instead what one can gain from a situation is more prevalent. For example if a juvenile with normal thinking processes sees a cell phone left on a table, they will turn it in while a juvenile with criminal thinking patterns will take the phone because they could use it for themselves or sell it without thinking of the hardship the

owner of the phone will face. Such deficits in life skills competencies are attributed to adolescent drug abuse and delinquency. These negative behaviors are a way for the children cope with life due to their lack of mature thinking processes. All children suffer from this lack of skills to some degree due to maturity levels, but others are much more predisposed due to the environment and psychological makeup, among other factors.

Life skills programming is an age-old technique for teaching children how to pro-socially adjust to life, yet has only been recently identified as an effective intervention for juvenile delinquency. Life skills programming seeks to actively find new ways for juveniles to process and respond to interpersonal situations (Hawkins et al., 1991). Life skills programming can be likened to building a tool kit for coping with stressful situations, with each skill being a part of the juvenile's kit. Providing these life skills to juvenile offenders helps them cope in the community and has been seen to reduce the chance of relapse, as well as recidivism. Overall, juveniles who participate in life skills interventions demonstrate better drug and alcohol avoidance, self-control, and problem solving (Hawkins et al., 1991). These interventions are designed to provide juveniles with a way to develop bonds to their community or other organizations, such as school. If the system can provide juveniles with alternative ways to develop these bonds when they are at-risk of further delinquency in a non-threatening manner tailored to their individual needs, then there is a stronger chance of the juvenile desisting from future crime (Fitzpatrick & Ruberry, 2003). Despite the success of these interventions and the relevancy of the skills that are being taught to the juvenile offenders, little attention is paid to life skills programming and therefore few research studies have truly examined their effectiveness at addressing juvenile delinquency.

Characteristics of Juvenile Diversion Clients

Juvenile Diversion Programs are mostly reserved for first time offenders who have committed relatively minor crimes. Most juveniles in diversion have been accused of misdemeanor property offenses, followed closely by misdemeanor violent offenses (Dembo, Wareham, Poythress, Cook, & Schmeidler, 2006). While some programs do allow juveniles with felonies to be on diversion programs, usually extenuating factors in the case will disqualify the case from diversion. According to Coccozza, et al. (2005), forty-five to sixty-two percent of juveniles are on diversion for theft, ten to fourteen percent for drug or alcohol crimes, nine to sixteen percent for trespassing, and fifteen to twenty-nine percent for other crimes. The average ages of juveniles on diversion is between twelve and fifteen, with eighty-eight percent of the participants being male (Schwalbe, Gearing, MacKenzie, Brewer, & Ibrahim, 2012). These basic characteristics of the juvenile diversion programs vary depending on the jurisdiction but many features are consistent across the country.

There are clear patterns in risk factors among juvenile diversion participants. In fact, only fifty-eight percent of juveniles in diversion programs were at the appropriate grade level, the rest had been held back at least one grade level (Dembo et al., 2006). Furthermore, the majority of the juveniles admit to delinquency that occurred prior to being placed on the diversion program but were not caught (Dembo et al., 2006). This pattern of risk factors for delinquency continued into the home life of the juveniles. The majority of the juveniles lived in broken homes with only their mother (Dembo et al., 2006). Further asserting this fact, Hodges, Martin, Smith, & Cooper (2011) presented findings that of all juvenile diversion participants, twenty-one percent had parents who

were married, sixteen percent had parents who were divorced, and forty-nine percent of juveniles had parents who were never married. Hodges et al. (2011) also asserted that poor peer influences, poor school performance, and difficulties at home also heavily marked the juvenile diversion population and are predictors of further risk for re-offense (Hodges et al., 2011). This clear pattern of risk factors for delinquency makes it evident that diversion programs service at-risk youth as intended and have an opportunity for the system to informally confront delinquency before it progresses.

Consistent with the adult criminal justice system, there is also a racial and ethnic disparity in the juvenile justice system and diversion programs (Feldstein-Ewing, Venner, Mead, & Bryan, 2011). Despite popular sentiment, however, these juveniles are not necessarily more delinquent or engage in more criminal behaviors. Racial minorities are over-represented in the juvenile justice system but still exhibit lower rates of substance use than Caucasians (Feldstein-Ewing et al, 2011). While the exact reason for this discrepancy has not been identified, it is an issue that must be noted in an attempt to be culturally sensitive and make sure to reach out to the at-risk juvenile population across the demographic spectrum (Feldstein-Ewing et al., 2011). Given the demographics in Eagle County, where there are high numbers of minority juveniles, this is a topic that must be taken into consideration when developing programs that target at-risk juveniles.

In the Fifth Judicial District of Colorado, a mountain resort area where there are many transient, seasonal, and service jobs available, there is a high Hispanic population. This population is often living in poverty in the Fifth Judicial District and the juveniles display high rates of delinquency. There is an even bigger discrepancy of Hispanic youth in the juvenile justice system in the Fifth Judicial District than the national average. As

the at-risk population in the area, it is important for this cultural presence to be noted for the Juvenile Diversion Program.

Application of the Diversion Program

In the creation of Juvenile Diversion program contracts and application of the program, Dickerson, Collins-Camargo, & Martin-Galijatovic (2012) demonstrated that utilizing wrap-around services is the most effective implementation method. This means that the most effective method for structuring a Juvenile Diversion program is to provide holistic and all-encompassing services to clients in order to address issues not directly related to the offense. In this fashion, these programs can address non-criminal issues such as family problems, emotional and psychosocial functioning, and educational problems (Dembo et al., 2006). The more risk factors displayed by the clients, then naturally, the more of these wrap-around services they receive as part of their diversion program (Hogan & Campbell, 2005). By being equipped to address more than just the criminal behavior, diversion programs take additional responsibility for the rehabilitation and restoration of the juvenile than a traditional correctional agency would be able to do.

In order to provide these wraparound services, diversion programs oftentimes need to collaborate with other agencies to provide the full array of services needed. For instance the majority of programs refer to other agencies for community outreach and counseling. In fact, diversion is most effective when there is interagency collaboration on services as opposed to the programs themselves trying to provide all of the services (Dickerson et al, 2012). The two main elements in collaboration are to have the right people at the table and for all of these people to have the same goal (Dickerson et al, 2012). Notably, with proper communication between the different agencies regarding

what is the desired outcome for the juvenile, collaboration can be successful at addressing all of the services required by each client on diversion programs.

Crafting the contract is also a critical issue in encouraging a successful diversion client. In order to send a clear message that the behavior was wrong but the harm can be repaired, the contract should include both a justice, or supervision, and service component (Cocozza et al., 2005). Examples of service components could include wilderness experiences, awareness programs, dispute resolution, counseling, in-home family intervention services, case management, and referrals. Other effective options of the Juvenile Diversion program include diagnostic intakes, individual mental health counseling, and supervision (Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). By making sure to include the appropriate mechanisms to address both the crime and the underlying risk factors of each juvenile, diversion programs can be effectively applied to achieve successful clients.

In the Fifth Judicial District, the Juvenile Diversion Program operates by creating individualized contracts for each client. The standard conditions for all clients include a fee, community service, and weekly check-ins. Other conditions that are tailored to each client include counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, anger management classes, written assignments, restorative justice programs, apology letter, victim impact statements, family strengthening classes, and participation in specialized wilderness programs, which utilize the landscape of the district.

Effectiveness of Diversion Programs

Since their inception in the 1960s, few diversion programs have been analyzed for their effectiveness at producing successful clients and reduced recidivism. During their participation in juvenile diversion programs, it is seen that seventy-one to seventy-six

percent of the clients successfully completed the program, while thirteen to twenty-two percent failed due to noncompliance and six to twelve percent were rearrested (Cocozza et al., 2005). This is consistent with a study completed by Campbell and Retzlaff (2000) who found that diversion programs carried a seventy percent or greater success rate. A study by Hodges, Martin, Smith, and Cooper (2011), asserts that these diversion programs also reduced recidivism to eight percent, with only one percent escalating in their criminal behaviors. However, Schwalbe, Gearing, MacKenzie, Brewer, & Ibrahim (2012), noted that the recidivism among juvenile diversion participants was between thirty-one and thirty-six percent, a figure relatively unchanged by diversion and consistent with overall juvenile offender recidivism rates. Despite the discrepancy on recidivism rates, the pattern of success rate remains consistent across diversion programs.

Successful juvenile diversion programs also need to consider public safety in “both long and short term, develop case based knowledge, recognize the complicated nature of the problem, promote natural desistance from crime, and be mindful of development when intervening with a criminal juvenile” (Sullivan, Piquero, & Cullen, 2012, p.462). If this appropriate balance among the different components of juvenile diversion programs can be reached, the program can be successful at lowering recidivism and addressing the risk factors of juveniles. In fact, juveniles who participated in diversion programs that addressed these additional risk factors outside of the offense, showed marked improvement on psychological, social, and educational functioning (Hodges et al., 2011). Specific conditions of the diversion program can also improve the likelihood of the juvenile’s success in the program itself. Programs that incorporate recreational interventions carry a ninety percent success rate among their clients

(Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). Another effective intervention at encouraging the successful completion of the diversion program is the juvenile's participation in offender-victim mediation which increases success rates to eighty-nine percent (Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). While few studies have been conducted to see which interventions are the most effective at producing successful clients we can begin to see a pattern regarding the overall success rates and a few interventions that might show promise in creating effectiveness.

Problem Statement

Even though rehabilitative interventions are favored among responses to juveniles at the diversion level, intense rehabilitative services could actually do more harm than good for many clients. It is more appropriate to service clients with life skills interventions that can provide them tools to make better decisions and connect them to pro-social activities during diversion before they reach a higher need level with subsequent delinquency. Despite its increasing popularity among juvenile justice professionals, life skills interventions are largely unknown and unstudied in research when examining the responses to delinquency and ensuing outcomes.

While the foundations and justifications for juvenile diversion programs are strong, there has not been much research examining what components of diversion are the most effective. The diversity of diversion programs makes it difficult to analyze programs because by their very nature, diversion programs are tailored to address each individual child's needs for staying out of trouble (Campbell & Retzlaff, 2000). Due to this lack of research, it is difficult to say which interventions are the most effective at helping these children refrain from further delinquency. To help children in diversion

programs avoid the label of being a criminal and spiraling into a system from which it is difficult to emerge, it is imperative that we study the diversion program in terms of what will be most beneficial to those children.

By analyzing the Juvenile Diversion Program of the Fifth Judicial District, it was attempted to discern which components of the program were the most effective at producing successful outcomes. In conducting this exploratory research testable hypotheses emerged that relate to the four components of a juvenile diversion program and how they interact with age, gender, race, crime intensity, and crime type. These hypotheses could lead to additional research that may further clarify the effectiveness of different interventions for delinquent behaviors among juveniles. Furthermore this research may lead to important implications in the way the Diversion program in the Fifth Judicial District is structured.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Institutional Review Board Approval

Prior to beginning the research process, the author created an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to seek out approval to conduct this research per University of Northern Colorado policy regarding any research with human subjects. The purpose of this application and approval process is to insure that research is conducted with the highest of ethical standards. This application included an overview of the project, a brief literature review associated with Juvenile Diversion interventions, and the planned methodology. The IRB gave permission to use secondary data without the consent of program participants since no human contact was involved in accessing data from the District Attorney's Office of the Fifth Judicial District.

Data Collection

For this research the author used an entire collection of cases from the juvenile diversion programs in the Fifth Judicial District counties of Lake, Clear Creek, and Summit from 2010 through 2012. All of the existing data from this time period consisted of a population of 188 intact records. These files represent clients from the diversion program between the ages of 10 and 17 who were selected into the program after committing a crime. Since these are all closed cases, all data are secondary with no real

live subjects. No sampling method was needed due to the ability to take advantage of all the cases within the selected time period.

Data consist of cases with all names and dates of birth redacted. Since this study is of secondary data, consent forms were not necessary because there was no potential for harm.

Data Analysis

From each case I extracted the age, gender, race, crime, previous criminal record, interventions received, and program outcomes from each case file. These data were then recorded in an Excel file. After coding the data to be fit for statistical analysis, they were then put into an SPSS program to analyze the trends in this diversion population, specifically regarding the efficacy of the program based on the client characteristics and interventions received. For the purposes of this research interventions are defined as any service provided to the participant by the Juvenile Diversion Coordinator or as a result of a referral to a different agency. Furthermore, each intervention was grouped into the four components based on the guideline that was created by the OMNI Institute, the agency responsible for evaluating juvenile diversion programs across the state in Colorado.

The data were run through a series of statistical analyses including frequency distributions, correlations, and Chi-square analyses. For each statistical test an alpha level of .05 was utilized to determine statistical significance. The 188 cases represents the entire population of juvenile diversion cases between years 2010 and 2012. After excluding participants who did not complete the program, there was a total of 177 cases left for analyses. The principle goal of the analyses was to examine how different interventions are related to the outcomes of program participants based on their

demographic characteristics and the type of crime committed. These analyses will ultimately lead to developing testable hypotheses for future research, as well as program evaluation research.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

Results

The first step in analyzing the Diversion Program was to look at the demographics of the juveniles who participated in the years 2010 through 2012 using frequency distributions. These frequency distributions provide a picture of who the juveniles are that make up the Diversion population so that analyses with demographics will be of considerable benefit.

Table 1 describes the demographic breakdown in the ethnicity of each participant. As resort areas, the three counties of Lake, Summit, and Clear Creek contain a large population of undocumented residents who come to the area with their families for seasonal work. As such, there is a high proportion of Hispanics in the criminal justice system, including juveniles who make up over 50 percent of the Diversion population. It is likely then that many of the program participants are also undocumented residents. Besides Hispanic and Caucasian however, there is very little variation among the race of program participants. Caucasians make up 41.80 percent of the program participants, leaving only three participants to other ethnicities (0.60% African American, 0.60% Asian, and 0.60% American Indian).

Table 1: Ethnicity of Diversion Participants

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent (%)
White	74	41.80
Hispanic	96	54.20
Mixed Race	4	2.30
African American	1	0.60
Asian	1	0.60
American Indian	1	0.60
Total	177	100.00

Table 2 represents the frequencies of gender among participants. Most females will desist on criminal behavior as they age, but among the juvenile population there is still a large percent of female offenders. In fact across the state, juvenile diversion programs were made up of 33.20 percent female participants (OMNI Institute, 2013).

The remaining 67.80 percent of participants were male.

Table 2: Gender of Diversion Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	120	67.80
Female	57	32.2
Total	177	100.00

There were no restrictions put on the types or intensities of crimes that juveniles could commit in order to be on the diversion program and therefore there is a wide range

of crimes represented from marijuana possession to second degree assault. All of the petty offense drug offenders were on diversion for Minor in Possession of Marijuana charges, all of the petty offense property offenders were on diversion for Theft under \$50 charges, and all of the petty offense crimes against persons offenders were on diversion for Disorderly Conduct. Misdemeanor offenses were more varied with 74.65 percent of misdemeanor drug offenders on diversion for misdemeanor Minor in Possession of Marijuana charges, with the other 25.35 percent representing Minor in Possession of Alcohol charges. The breakdown of misdemeanor property crimes includes 68.63 percent of participants on diversion for Theft between \$50-500 charges with the other 31.37 percent representing Criminal Mischief under \$500 charges. Misdemeanor crimes against persons offenders were split evenly between the charges of Assault in the Third Degree and Harassment. The three participants on diversion for felony drug cases both committed Distribution of a Controlled Substance. Lastly 62.50 percent of participants on diversion for felony crimes against persons committed Sexual Exploitation on a Child, most notably for “sexting” which is the illicit distribution of pictures and videos via the cell phone or computer than often occurs between teenagers. As a newly criminalized behavior, many juveniles charged with this crime were given diversion as an option despite their felony charges. The other 38.50 percent of participants on diversion for felony crimes against persons committed Assault in the Second Degree and were given diversion because their victims were either also charged in the assault or agreed to diversion as an appropriate sanction as long as any harm was repaired by the juvenile.

Table 3 displays the breakdown of the most serious crime committed by each program participant. While the juvenile might have multiple charges, the most serious

charge is always the one recorded for data purposes following the hierarchy rule. All types of crimes were committed by the diversion participants and those crimes range in intensity from petty offenses through felony crimes. These crimes were ordered to best describe the offenses with crimes being ranked first by the type of crime, which ranked from drug offenses as the least serious, to property offenses, and then to crimes against persons. The crimes were also ordered by intensity from petty offenses, as the least serious, then to misdemeanor offenses, and then to felony offenses. The majority of the participants in the Diversion program were referred after having committed misdemeanor crimes. Examples of crimes in these categories include theft and third degree assault. Misdemeanor drug crimes represented the most common type of offense committed by diversion participants (40.10%). All misdemeanor crimes represented 70 percent of the cases that were chosen for the diversion program, 19.20 percent of the cases chosen were petty offenses, and only 10.70 percent of participants were on Diversion for felony level offenses. This breakdown of crime type and intensity in the Fifth Judicial District is consistent across all Diversion participants in Colorado as many juveniles will hopefully end their criminal careers with misdemeanor level offense, which were most often related to substance use (OMNI, 2013). Knowing which crimes are committed by Diversion participants help guide which interventions need to be utilized to address delinquency.

Table 3: Crime Type for Diversion Participants

Crime Type	Frequency	Percent (%)
Petty Offense Drug	8	4.50
Petty Offense Property	19	10.70
Petty Offense Persons	7	4.00
Misdemeanor Drug	71	40.10
Misdemeanor Property	51	28.80
Misdemeanor Persons	2	1.10
Felony Drug	3	1.70
Felony Persons	16	9.00
Total	177	100.00

Table 4 represents the number of juveniles who did not have a criminal history compared to those that did. Even though the diversion program is supposed to be only for first-time offenders, some juveniles did come into the program with a delinquent history. Consistent with the intent of all diversion programs, very few diversion participants had previous criminal histories. Of those juveniles who had previous criminal histories the majority were not charged but merely contacted by law enforcement for delinquency prior to being accepted onto diversion for their current crime. This is a promising statistic that the program is truly being used for first time offenders and can act as an early intervention to delinquent behaviors.

Table 4: Previous Criminal History of Diversion Participants

Criminal History	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	159	89.80
No	18	10.20
Total	177	100.00

The Fifth Judicial District Diversion program carried with it a high success rate across the years of 2010 through 2012. The state average success rate is below seventy-five percent, with around twenty percent of juveniles reoffending while they are on the program (OMNI Institute, 2013). The Fifth Judicial District has much higher success rates than the state average. Table 5 represents the frequency of juveniles who recidivated, charged with a new criminal offense, while they were on the Juvenile Diversion program. During the reporting period only fifteen participants recidivated.

Table 5: Recidivism of Diversion Participants

Recidivism	Frequency	Percent (%)
No	162	91.50
Yes	15	8.50
Total	177	100.00

In Table 6 the three options for resolutions on the program are portrayed as incomplete (participants who moved out of the service area prior to the end of the program), unsuccessful (revoked from the program for noncompliance or significant new criminal charges), or successful, (completed all contract conditions without accumulating

new significant criminal charges). From these outcomes, only fourteen of the participants failed the Diversion program and had their charges filed in District court. Taking into account the additional eleven participants whose cases were incomplete the Diversion program boasted a success rate of over 85 percent.

Table 6: Outcome Types of Diversion Participants

Outcome	Frequency	Percent (%)
Incomplete	11	6.20
Unsuccessful	14	7.90
Successful	152	85.90
Total	177	100.00

The question now becomes what interventions were these juveniles assigned and was there a common intervention or demographic that had better or worse outcomes than others? We cannot know the long-term outcomes and recidivism rates of these juveniles due to confidentiality issues. This follow-up information would greatly enrich the validity of the research and the effects different interactions have on participants. We can however, look at the short-term outcomes of participants by comparing the interventions received with the juvenile's program outcome, demographic information, and crime type and intensity.

Table 7 looks at the number of punitive interventions that each participant was assigned in the Diversion program. On average, each juvenile received two punitive interventions which most often included supervision (case management services) by the Juvenile Diversion Coordinator and drug testing. These punitive interventions were used more to monitor the juvenile's behaviors in school and at home instead of actually

punishing them, but as restrictive interventions that took away certain freedoms and privileges from participants, they are still considered punitive.

Table 7: Punitive Interventions for Diversion Participants

Number of Interventions	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	68	38.40
2	100	56.50
3	9	5.10
Total	177	100.00

Table 8 reveals that less than 20 percent of juveniles received any type of rehabilitation, which is a startling finding. The OMNI Institute (2013) cites rehabilitative services as the most under-utilized service that could be beneficial to participants amongst diversion populations across the state, which is consistent with the findings in this research. While it is posited that more participants could have benefited from these interventions, perhaps the lack of financial resources and service providers in the somewhat isolated mountain region led to this low use of rehabilitative interventions.

Table 8: Rehabilitative Interventions for Diversion Participants

Number of Interventions	Frequency	Percent (%)
0	143	80.80
1	26	14.70
2	6	3.40
3	2	1.10
Total	177	100.00

Restorative justice interventions are the favorite among all interventions according to these data. Table 9 shows that the majority of participants were assigned three interventions, asserting that the focus of the Juvenile Diversion program in the Fifth Judicial District seems to be repairing the harm to the victim and the community that were caused by the juvenile's delinquent conduct. Consistent with research that restorative justice increases all around satisfaction with the program amongst stakeholders, it is clear that interventions such as community service and restitution, when appropriate, were popular choices for the Juvenile Diversion Coordinators. In fact, almost every participant was required to complete community service and many were also required to complete letters of apology to their victims. While the positive effect on the community is notable, it is unclear whether these interventions actually led to success in the program.

Table 9: Restorative Justice Interventions for Diversion Participants

Number of Interventions	Frequency	Percent (%)
0	1	0.60
1	26	14.70
2	118	66.70
3	32	18.10
Total	177	100.00

According to Table 10, Life Skills interventions were used quite often, but their occurrence varied across the participants. However, over 50 percent of juveniles did receive at least three life skills interventions. Most notably these requirement options included life skills programming (e.g., anti-drug assignments, bullying education groups,

anger management training, etc.), educational programming and tutoring, and pro-social activities (e.g., school sports, extra-curricular clubs, recreation camps, etc.). These interventions are seen to increase the competencies of juveniles as well as to strengthen their pro-social bonds in order to make positive decisions and interact effectively with their community.

Table 10: Life Skills Interventions for Diversion Participants

Number of Interventions	Frequency	Percent (%)
0	4	2.30
1	33	18.60
2	44	24.90
3	75	42.40
4	18	10.20
5	3	1.70
Total	177	100.00

With a clearer picture of the demographics that create the population of Diversion participants, we can now analyze how these different demographics are related to the interventions received and associated outcomes to determine what was the most effective at reducing recidivism among the Juvenile Diversion participants in the study.

The question that was addressed by this research is what interventions are the most effective at reducing recidivism and producing successful case outcomes amongst Juvenile Diversion participants. More specifically, it was posited that life skills interventions, given their promise and realistic interventions for juveniles, would be the most effective. A Chi-square analysis was completed comparing outcomes to the

interventions received in order to examine the relationship between these variables. In Table 11 outcomes are compared to the punitive interventions that they received. Based on these data the majority (85.70%) of participants who failed the diversion program received two punitive interventions; however the relationship between these two variables is not statistically significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 177) = 7.56, p = .11$. The breakdown of outcomes based on the interventions received is portrayed in Figure 1 and shows that while there is a cluster of participants who received two interventions, there is not a significant relationship based on the outcome.

Table 11: Punitive Interventions for Diversion Participants

Punitive Interventions (PI)		Outcome			Total
		Incomplete	Unsuccessful	Successful	
1	Count	6	1	61	68
	% Within (PI)	8.80	1.50	89.70	100.00
	% Within Outcome	54.50	7.10	40.10	38.40
	% Of Total	3.40	0.60	34.50	38.40
2	Count	5	12	83	100
	% Within (PI)	5.00	12.00	83.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	45.50	85.70	54.60	56.50
	% Of Total	2.80	6.80	46.90	56.50
3	Count	0	1	8	9
	% Within (PI)	0.00	11.10	88.90	100.00
	% Within Outcome	0.00	7.10	5.30	5.10
	% Of Total	0.00	0.60	4.50	5.10
Total	Count	11	14	152	177
	% Within (PI)	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00
	% Within Outcome	100.00	100.00	100.0	100.00
	% Of Total	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00

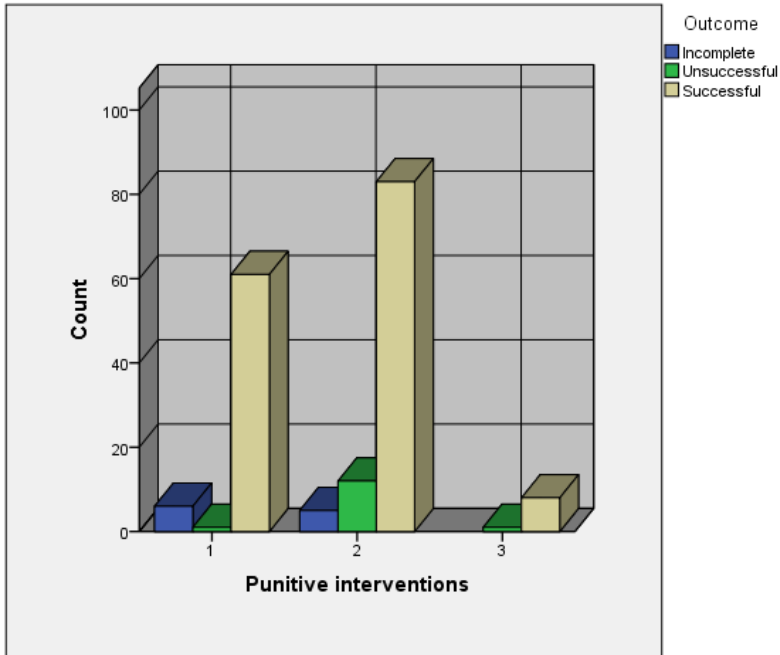


Table 1: Outcomes Based on Interventions Received

Table 12 compares outcomes with rehabilitative interventions. The data reveal that since the majority of participants, regardless of their outcome, did not receive any rehabilitative interventions therefore there was not a significant relationship between the variables, $\chi^2 (6, N = 177) = 1.93, p = .93$. The breakdown of rehabilitative interventions and outcomes is also displayed in Figure 2 which reveals the homogenous nature of rehabilitative interventions.

Table 12: Rehabilitative Interventions for Diversion Participants

Rehabilitative Interventions (RI)		Outcome			Total
		Incomplete	Unsuccessful	Successful	
0	Count	9	11	123	143
	% Within (RI)	6.30	7.70	86.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	81.80	78.60	80.90	80.80
	% Of Total	5.10	6.20	69.50	80.80
1	Count	2	3	21	26
	% Within (RI)	7.70	11.50	80.80	100.00
	% Within Outcome	18.20	21.40	13.80	14.70
	% Of Total	1.10	1.70	11.90	14.70
2	Count	0	0	6	6
	% Within (RI)	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	0.00	0.00	3.90	3.40
	% Of Total	0.00	0.00	3.40	3.40
3	Count	0	0	2	2
	% Within (RI)	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	0.00	0.00	1.30	1.10
	% Of Total	0.00	0.00	1.10	1.10
Total	Count	11	14	152	177
	% Within (RI)	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00
	% Within Outcome	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	% Of Total	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00

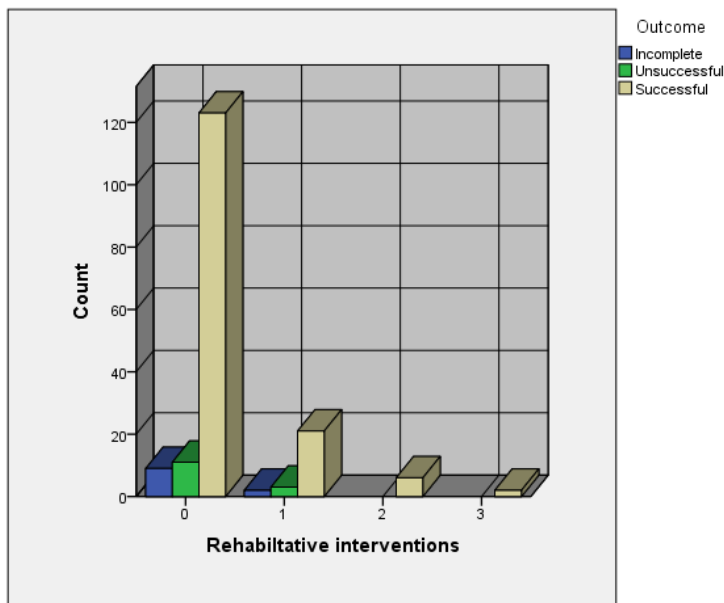
**Figure 2: Outcomes Based on Number of Rehabilitative Interventions Received**

Table 13 compares outcomes with restorative justice interventions. The data display a greater dispersion among the different numbers of restorative justice interventions. However, with a non-significant chi-squared test, ($\chi^2 [6, N = 177] = 7.00, p = .32$), restorative justice interventions do not have a significant relationship with outcomes. The more varied spread of restorative justice interventions is also displayed in Figure 3.

Table 13: Restorative Justice Interventions for Diversion Participants

Restorative Justice Interventions (RJ)		Outcome			
		Incomplete	Unsuccessful	Successful	Total
0	Count	0	0	1	1
	% Within (RJ)	0.00	0.00	100.00	100
	% Within Outcome	0.00	0.00	0.70	0.60
	% Of Total	0.00	0.00	0.60	0.60
1	Count	2	2	22	26
	% Within (RJ)	7.70	7.70	84.60	100
	% Within Outcome	18.20	14.30	14.50	14.70
	% Of Total	1.10	1.10	12.40	14.70
2	Count	4	9	105	118
	% Within (RJ)	3.40	7.60	89.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	36.40	64.30	69.10	66.70
	% Of Total	2.60	5.10	59.30	66.70
3	Count	5	3	24	32
	% Within (RJ)	15.60	9.40	75.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	45.50	21.40	15.80	18.10
	% Of Total	2.80	1.70	13.60	18.10
Total	Count	11	14	152	172
	% Within (RJ)	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00
	% Within Outcome	100.00	100	100.00	100.00
	% Of Total	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00

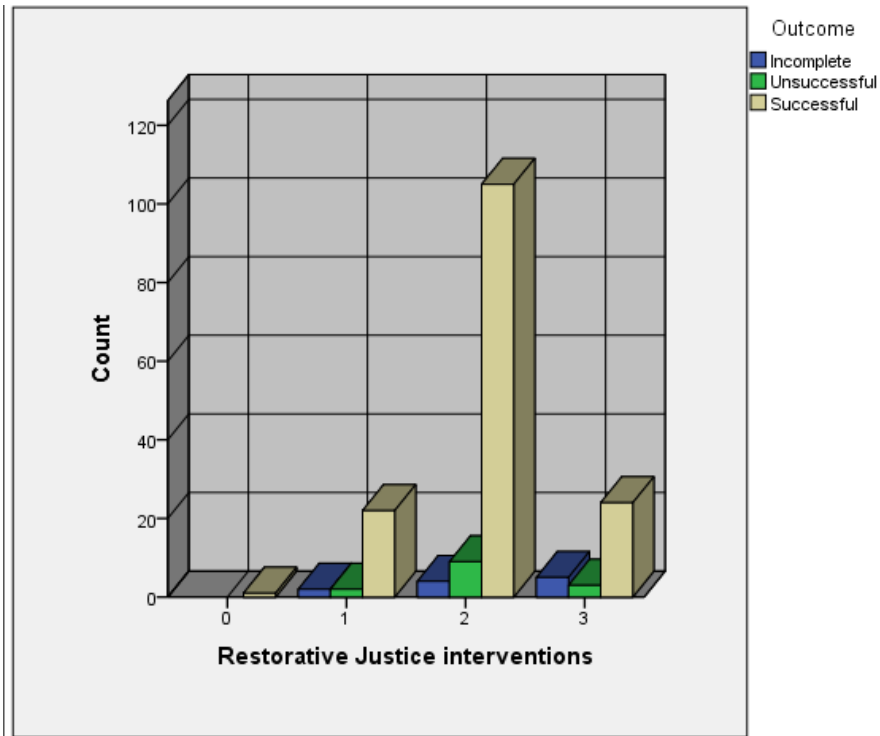


Figure 3: Outcomes Based on Number of Restorative Justice Interventions Received

Lastly Table 14 compares outcomes with life skills interventions. The data are also varied across the different number of interventions. However, this test does not show a significant relationship between life skills interventions and outcomes, $\chi^2(10, N = 177) = 8.20, p = .61$. The outcomes based on life skills interventions received are also portrayed in Figure 4.

Table 14: Life Skills Interventions for Diversion Participants

Life Skills Interventions (LS)		Outcome			
		Incomplete	Unsuccessful	Successful	Total
0	Count	0	0	4	4
	% Within (LS)	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00
	% Within Outcome	0.00	0.00	2.60	2.30
	% Of Total	0.00	0.00	2.30	2.30
1	Count	2	2	29	33
	% Within (LS)	6.10	6.10	87.90	100.00
	% Within Outcome	18.20	14.30	19.10	24.90
	% Of Total	1.10	1.10	16.40	24.90
2	Count	6	3	35	44
	% Within (LS)	13.60	6.80	79.50	100.00
	% Within Outcome	54.50	21.40	23.00	24.90
	% Of Total	3.40	1.70	19.80	24.90
3	Count	3	8	64	75
	% Within (LS)	4.00	10.70	85.30	100.00
	% Within Outcome	27.30	57.10	42.10	42.40
	% Of Total	1.70	4.50	36.20	42.40
4	Count	0	1	17	18
	% Within (LS)	0.00	5.60	94.40	100.00
	% Within Outcome	0.00	7.10	11.20	10.20
	% Of Total	0.00	0.60	9.60	10.20
5	Count	0	0	3	3
	% Within (LS)	0.00	0.00	100.00	10.00
	% Within Outcome	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.70
	% Of Total	0.00	0.00	1.70	1.70
Total	Count	11	14	152	177
	% Within (LS)	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00
	% Within Outcome	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	% Of Total	6.20	7.90	85.90	100.00

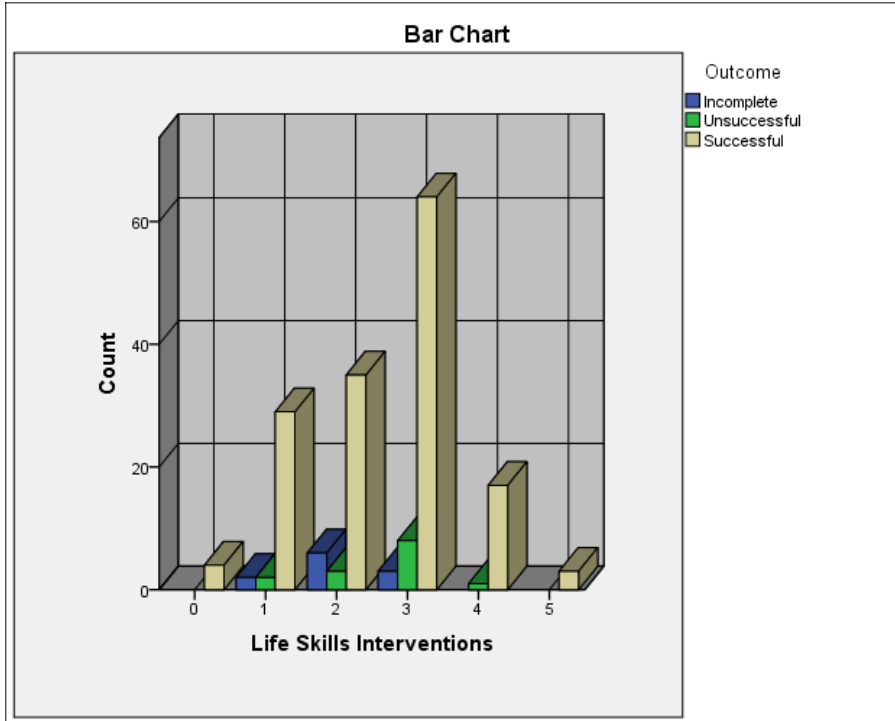


Figure 4: Outcomes Based on Number of Life Skills Interventions Received

Due to low case variability and the results of no significant relationships between outcomes and the different interventions, a correlation was conducted to look at the data more in depth. Table 15 displays the correlation between the type of interventions received by each juvenile and the outcome of the juveniles. For purposes of this analysis, participants whose cases were closed as incomplete, were excluded. Values were assigned to the outcome of each juvenile in the form of “0” for anyone who did not succeed on the program and “1” for anyone who did succeed on the program. The interventions were also coded based on the number of interventions assigned which was displayed in Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10. Only punitive interventions were significantly related to outcome and moreover the relationship was negative. This means that the more punitive interventions the juveniles received, the less likely they were to succeed on the diversion program. The rest of the intervention types were not related to the outcome and

therefore cannot be used in this research to infer that any one intervention is more effective than another.

Table 15: Outcomes Based on Number of Interventions Received

		Outcome	Punitive Interventions	Rehabilitative Interventions	Restorative Justice Interventions	Life Skills Interventions
Pearson Corr.	Outcome	1.00	-0.17*	0.02	-0.03	-0.03
	Punitive Interventions	-0.17*	1.00	0.25*	0.19*	0.02
	Rehabilitative Interventions	0.02	0.25*	1.00	0.10	0.12
	Restorative Justice Interventions	-0.03	0.19*	0.10	1.00	0.29*
	Life Skills Interventions	-0.03	0.02	0.12	0.29*	1.00

**indicates statistical significance per the alpha level 0.05*

In order to see how interventions were assigned, the crime type of participants was analyzed with interventions through Chi-square analysis. Table 16 shows crime type compared with punitive interventions. From the results we can see that punitive interventions are related to the crime that the participant committed meaning that the number of punitive interventions assigned is related to what crime was committed, $\chi^2 (14, N = 177) = 39.62, p = 0.01$. Figure 5 better displays the distribution of punitive interventions received based on the type of crime committed.

Table 16: Number of Punitive Interventions Based on Crime Committed

		Petty Drug	Petty Property	Petty Persons	Misdo. Drug	Misdo. Property	Misdo. Persons	Felony Drug	Felony Persons	Total
1	Count	1	8	1	25	27	0	3	3	68
	%	1.50	11.80	1.50	36.80	39.70	0.00	4.40	4.40	100.00
	Within PI									
	%	12.50	42.1	14.30	35.20	52.90	0.00	100	18.80	38.40
2	Count	6	10	3	43	23	2	0	13	100
	%	6.00	10.00	3.00	43.00	23.00	2.00	0.00	13.00	100.00
	Within PI									
	%	75.00	52.60	43.90	60.60	45.10	100.00	0.00	81.30	56.50
3	Count	1	1	3	3	1	0	0	0	9
	%	11.0	11.10	33.30	3.33	11.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	Within PI									
	%	12.50	5.30	42.90	4.20	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.10
Total	Count	8	19	7	71	51	16	3	16	177
	%	4.50	10.70	4.00	90.10	28.80	9.00	1.70	9.00	100.00
	Within PI									
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total	Count	8	19	7	71	51	16	3	16	177
	%	4.50	10.70	4.00	90.10	28.80	9.00	1.70	9.00	100.00
	Within CC									
	% of Total	4.50	10.70	4.00	90.10	28.80	9.00	1.70	9.00	100.00

Punitive Interventions (PI); Crime Committed (CC); Misdemeanor (Misdo)

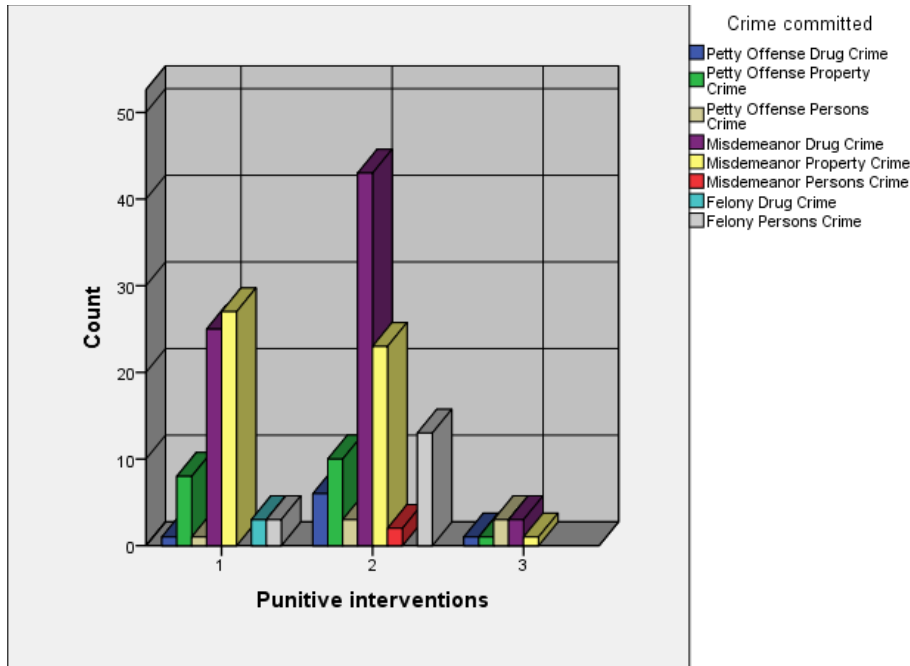


Figure 5: Number of Punitive Interventions Based on Crime Committed

Table 17 shows crime type compared with rehabilitative interventions. We can see that rehabilitative interventions are related to the crime that the participant committed meaning that the number of rehabilitative interventions assigned is related to what crime was committed, $\chi^2(21, N = 177) = 37.16, p = .02$. Figure 6 visually portrays how homogenous the rehabilitative interventions are regardless of the crime committed.

Table 17: Number of Rehabilitative Interventions Based on Crime Committed

		Petty Drug	Petty Property	Petty Persons	Misdo. Drug	Misdo. Property	Misdo. Persons	Felony Drug	Felony Persons	Total
0	Count	8	16	4	56	45	0	3	11	143
	%	5.600	11.20	2.80	39.20	31.50	0.00	2.10	7.70	100.00
	Within RI									
	%	100.00	84.20	57.10	78.90	88.20	0.00	100.00	68.80	80.80
1	Count	0	3	1	10	5	2	0	5	26
	%	0.00	11.50	3.80	38.50	19.20	7.70	0.00	19.20	100.00
	Within RI									
	%	0.00	15.80	14.30	14.10	9.80	100.00	0.00	31.30	14.70
2	Count	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	6
	%	0.00	0.00	33.30	66.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	Within RI									
	%	0.00	0.00	28.60	5.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.40
3	Count	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	Within RI									
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.40	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.10
Total	Count	8	19	7	71	51	2	3	16	177
	%	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00
	Within RI									
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total	Count	8	19	7	71	51	2	3	16	177
	%	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00
	Within CC									
	% of Total	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00

Rehabilitative Interventions (RI); Crime Committed (CC)

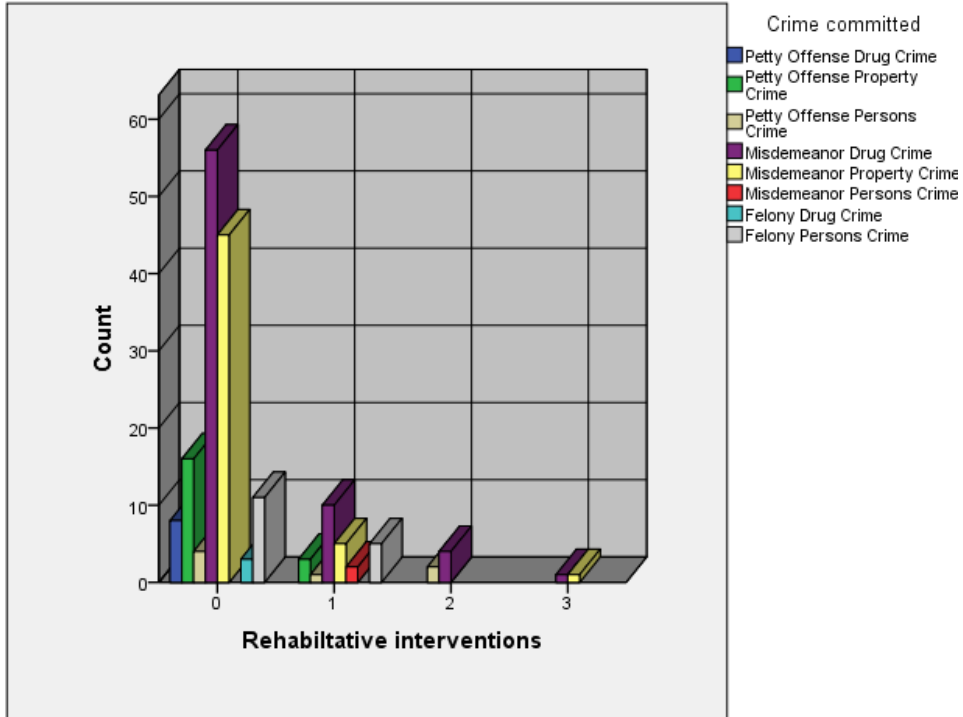


Figure 6: Number of Rehabilitative Interventions Based on Crime Committed

Table 18 shows crime type compared with restorative justice interventions. We can see that restorative justice interventions are also related to the crime that the participant committed meaning that the number of restorative justice interventions assigned is related to what crime was committed, $\chi^2 (21, N = 177) = 34.18, p = .03$. One important result to note displayed in Figure 7 is that the majority of misdemeanor drug offenders, which is the largest group of offenders in this population, received two restorative justice interventions suggesting that these interventions are fairly uniform, specifically for this type of offender.

Table 18: Number of Restorative Justice Interventions Based on Crime Committed

		Petty Drug	Petty Property	Petty Persons	Misdo. Drug	Misdo. Property	Misdo. Persons	Felony Drug	Felony Persons	Total
0	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	Within RJ									
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.60
Within CC	% of Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.60
1	Count	0	2	1	7	12	0	1	3	26
	%	0.00	7.70	3.80	26.90	46.20	0.00	3.80	11.50	100.00
	Within RJ									
	%	0.00	10.50	14.30	9.90	23.50	0.00	33.30	18.80	14.70
Within CC	% of Total	0.00	1.10	0.60	4.00	6.80	0.00	0.60	1.70	14.70
2	Count	4	10	5	58	24	2	2	13	118
	%	3.40	8.50	4.20	49.20	20.30	1.70	1.70	11.00	100.00
	Within RJ									
	%	50.00	52.60	71.40	81.70	47.10	100.00	66.70	81.30	66.70
Within CC	% of Total	2.30	5.60	2.80	32.80	13.60	1.10	1.10	7.30	66.70
3	Count	4	7	1	6	14	0	0	0	32
	%	12.50	21.90	3.10	18.80	43.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	Within RJ									
	%	50.00	36.80	14.30	8.50	27.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.10
Within CC	% of Total	2.30	4.00	0.60	3.40	7.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.10
Total	Count	8	19	7	71	51	2	3	16	177
	%	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00
	Within RJ									
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Within CC	% of Total	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00

Restorative Justice Interventions (RJ); Crime Committed (CC)

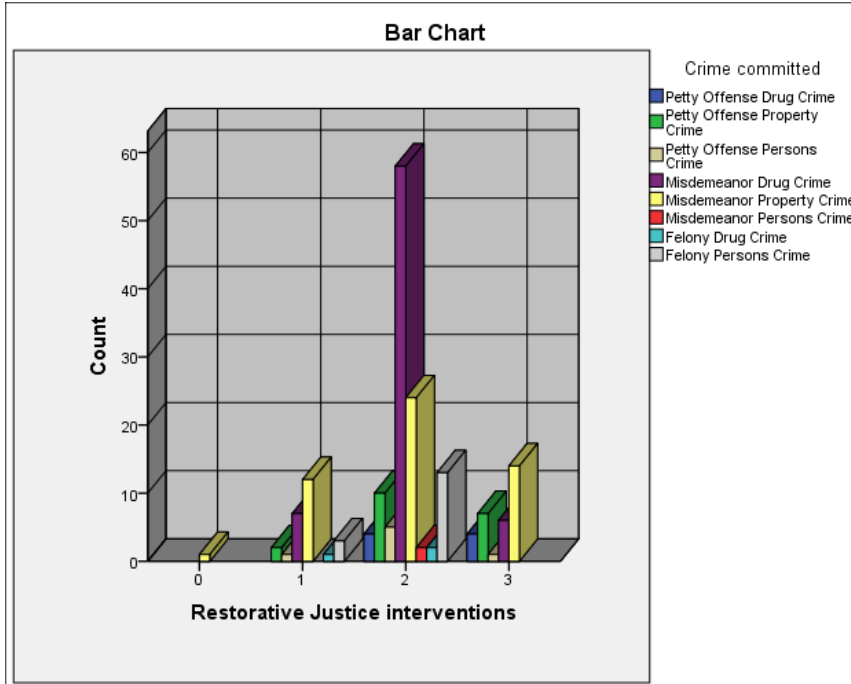


Figure 7: Number of Restorative Justice Interventions Received Based on Crime Committed

Table 19 shows crime type compared with life skills interventions. We can see that life skills interventions, like the rest of the four intervention types, are related to the crime that the participant committed, $\chi^2 (35, N = 177) = 58.79, p = .01$. While the statistic asserts that these variables are related it is important to note that the distribution of life skills is portrayed as extremely varied in Figure 8.

Table 19: Number of Life Skills Interventions Based on Crime Committed

		Petty Drug	Petty Property	Petty Persons	Misdo. Drug	Misdo. Property	Misdo. Persons	Felony Drug	Felony Persons	Total
0	Count	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
	% Within LS	0.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	% Within CC	0.00	0.00	14.30	0.00	5.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.30
	% of Total	0.00	0.00	0.60	0.00	1.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.30
1	Count	1	2	1	12	17	0	0	0	33
	% Within LS	3.00	6.10	3.00	36.40	51.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	% Within CC	12.50	10.50	14.30	16.90	33.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.60
	% of Total	0.60	1.10	0.60	6.80	9.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.60
2	Count	3	4	1	19	15	0	2	0	44
	% Within LS	6.80	9.10	2.30	43.20	34.10	0.00	4.50	0.00	100.00
	% Within CC	37.50	21.10	14.30	26.80	29.40	0.00	66.70	0.00	24.90
	% of Total	1.70	2.30	0.60	10.70	8.50	0.00	1.10	0.00	24.90
3	Count	2	11	3	30	11	2	1	15	75
	% Within LS	2.70	14.70	4.00	40.00	14.70	2.70	1.30	20.00	100.00
	% Within CC	25.00	57.90	42.90	42.30	21.60	100.00	33.30	93.80	42.40
	% of Total	1.10	6.20	1.70	16.90	6.20	1.10	0.60	8.50	42.40
4	Count	2	2	0	9	4	0	0	1	18
	% Within LS	11.10	11.10	0.00	50.00	22.20	0.00	0.00	5.60	100.00
	% Within CC	25.00	10.50	0.00	12.70	7.80	0.00	0.00	6.30	10.20
	% of Total	1.10	1.10	0.00	5.10	2.30	0.00	0.00	0.60	10.20
5	Count	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
	% Within LS	0.00	0.00	34.30	33.30	33.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	% Within CC	0.00	0.00	14.30	1.40	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.70
	% of Total	0.00	0.00	.60	0.60	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.70
Total	Count	8	19	7	71	51	2	3	16	177
	% Within LS	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00
	% Within CC	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	% of Total	4.50	10.70	4.00	40.10	28.80	1.10	1.70	9.00	100.00

Life Skills Interventions (LS); Crime Committed (CC); Misdemeanor (Misdo)

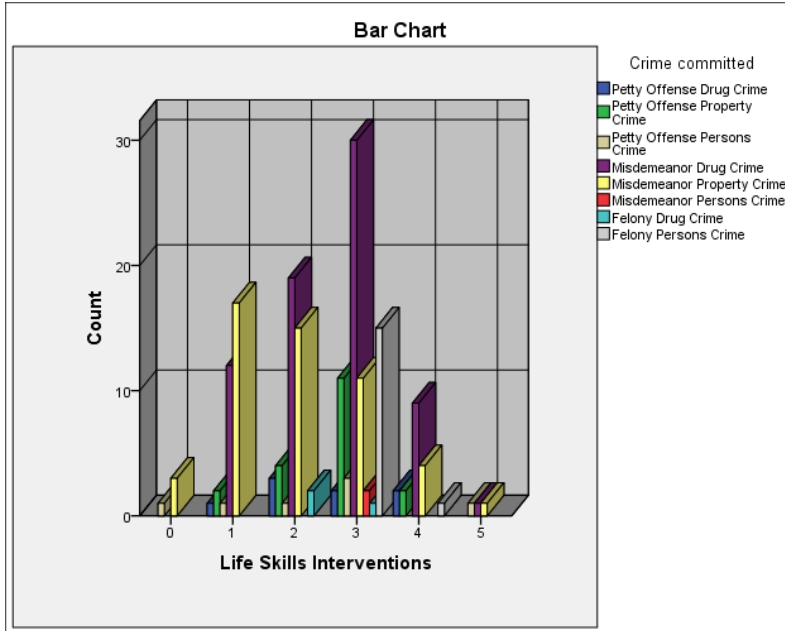


Figure 8: Number of Life Skills Interventions Based on Crime Committed

While analyses asserted that all four intervention types are related to the type of crime that was committed, further analyses needs to be conducted in order to further examine and explain these relationships. In order to look at the data more in depth Pearson Correlation was examined. Contrary to previous research that suggests the more severe the crime, the more restrictive the response should be, the more severe the crime committed, the less punitive and restorative justice interventions the participant received. This contradiction tells us that there are no fixed methods for how interventions are being assigned. One explanation however, could be that the more severe the crime, the more likely diversion participants are to get more intense services, such as counseling. Table 20 displays the correlations between the types of interventions assigned to each juvenile and the crimes committed. Despite the failure of the data to create an inference regarding which type of intervention was most effective for juveniles, other demographic categories did significantly affect outcomes. These results paint a clearer picture of the Fifth

Judicial District Diversion Program that can then help us create new questions regarding what intervention will be the most effective with this population of juveniles.

Table 20: Number of Interventions Received Based on Type of Crime Committed

		Crime Committed	Punitive Interventions	Rehabilitative Interventions	Restorative Justice Interventions	Life Skills Interventions
Pearson Corr.	Crime Committed	1.00*	-0.06	0.04	-.015*	0.02
	Punitive Interventions	-0.06	1.00*	0.24*	0.19*	0.02
	Rehabilitative Interventions	0.04	0.24*	1.00*	0.10	0.12
	Restorative Justice Interventions	-0.16*	0.19*	0.10	1.00*	0.29*
	Life Skills Interventions	0.02	0.02	0.12	0.29*	1.00*

*N=166, * indicates statistical significance per the alpha level 0.05*

The ethnic makeup of the Diversion Program in Lake, Summit, and Clear Creek counties is almost exclusively Caucasian and Hispanic. When compared with the outcome of the juveniles, ethnicity revealed an interesting trend. Figure 9 reveals that Hispanics were offered diversion more often than other ethnicities, but Caucasians were more likely to fail from the diversion program disproportionate to their representation in the population. This phenomenon is a trend that should be further studied to truly understand what effect ethnicity has on the outcomes of Diversion participants or if there is an ethnic bias operating while making decisions about the fate of juveniles.

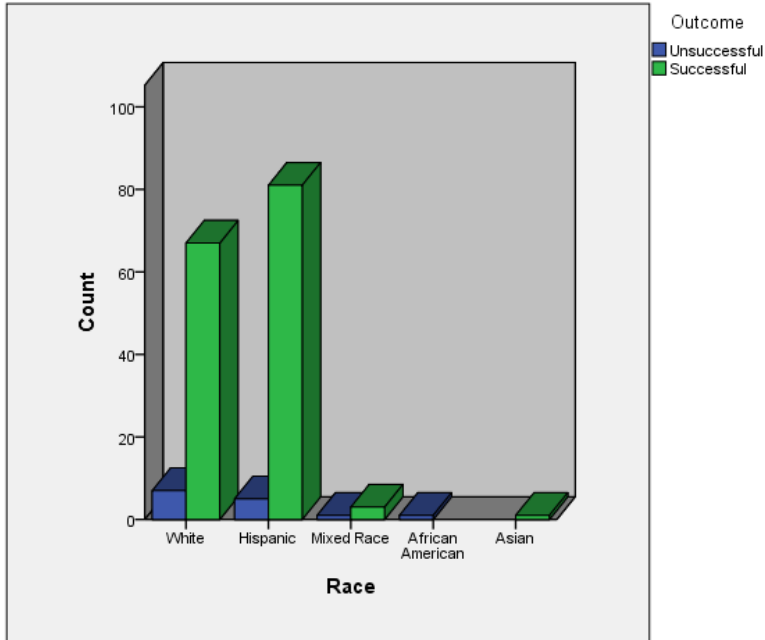


Figure 9: Outcome by Race in the Diversion Program

When the age of participants was compared with their outcome in the Diversion Program, research of lifetime criminality and rehabilitation was affirmed. Figure 10 displays that Diversion participants were more likely to fail from the program the older they were. This reasserts the notion that the prime age for offending is in the late teenage years and if at-risk juveniles can receive interventions early in their criminal careers than they are more likely to be redirected and rehabilitated from delinquent behavior. These results also show that the earlier you can target at-risk youth and divert them from furthering their delinquent tendencies, the easier it is to give the participants the life skills they need to not recidivate. The older participants were likely to be too far along in their criminal careers to desist from criminal behavior for the interventions to be effective.

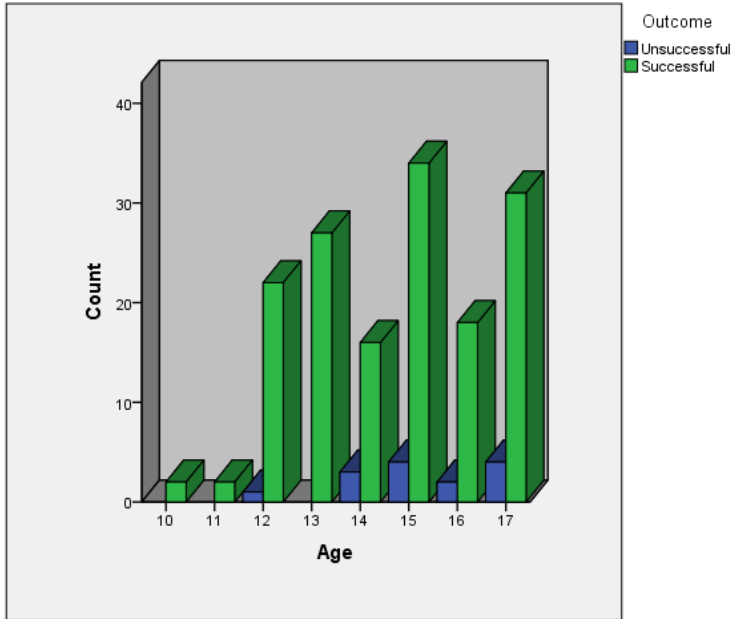


Figure 10: Outcome by Age in the Diversion Program

Perhaps the most telling comparison is the analysis of outcome by crime type. Crime types were ordered based on their severity from the least serious petty offenses, then misdemeanor offenses, and then the most serious felony offenses. The crimes were also ordered based on the type of crime that was committed from drug offenses being the least serious, to property crimes, and then the most serious, crimes against persons. Based on this order compared with each participant's outcome we come to a startling realization in Figure 11 that the participants whose crimes are seen as the most appropriate for Diversion, the misdemeanor property and persons crimes, are those participants who are most likely to fail while participants with the most severe crimes were the most likely to succeed. Diversion programs are often tailored to meet the needs of these offenders, yet the data from this population of offenders suggests that these are the participants least likely to succeed. It would be intuitive to think that the more severe the crime, the more likely the participant is to fail. This trend also needs to be further

examined in order to see if the services offered by the Diversion program truly meet the needs of the target population or if there is another explanation for why those on Diversion for targeted offenses are more likely to fail out of the program.

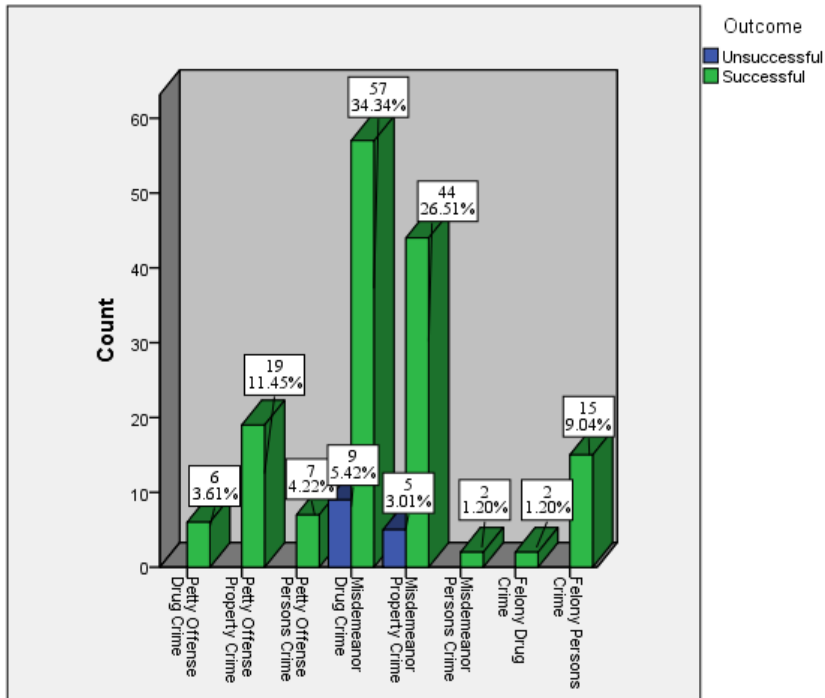


Figure 11: Outcome by Crime Type

By looking at the outcomes of Diversion participants in comparison to the different demographics of program participants, new research can be developed to further examine the most effective interventions to reduce recidivism amongst Juvenile Diversion participants. This future research can lead to positive changes in programming for the Fifth Judicial District Juvenile Diversion program and throughout the state to better service the juveniles at-risk of spiraling into the criminal justice system.

Discussion

The majority of the statistical tests performed on the diversion data from the Fifth Judicial District did not yield significant results regarding the different types of interventions and their effectiveness on the diversion population. The only significant result yielded from this study was that the more punitive you are to juveniles, the more likely they are to fail. This finding is in line with previous research that says being punitive on children is not effective at helping them refrain from further delinquency but can actually make it harder for them to succeed due to stringent supervision and a negative response to being punished (Benekos & Merlo, 2010). For example, programs like boot camps fell out of favor after the harsh and restrictive environments did not lower recidivism as expected. In fact, some juveniles become more encouraged to commit crimes after these types of punitive sanctions. Although the other interventions did not have a significant effect on the outcome of Diversion participants, these results would suggest that it is more beneficial for juveniles to be provided services that can actually focus on changing their behaviors instead of punishing them.

Unlike what was predicted, there was no definitive link between life skills interventions and success on the Diversion Program. More research needs to be conducted about the effectiveness of these reality-based programming options. It might be more beneficial to conduct research that looks at each intervention individually in terms of its effect on the Diversion participant outcomes, instead of trying to compare each intervention to one another with the same client. From this we can then create new hypotheses that life skills interventions will be more effective at reducing recidivism amongst Juvenile Diversion participants than other types of interventions.

The target population of the Diversion Program in the Fifth Judicial District is to serve predominantly Caucasian males who have committed misdemeanor crimes.

Juveniles who make up the target population of participants who committed misdemeanor offenses, are the most likely to fail of any of the Juvenile Diversion participants. More research needs to be done in order to address this high failure rate amongst participants with whom the program is intended serve in order to assign the interventions that will be the most effective. A list of sample hypotheses for future research can be found in Appendix C.

While diversion programming is aimed at serving Caucasian participants, the data shows that the program serves over 50 percent Hispanic juveniles. We must now ask, is there an adjustment that needs to be made for the high population of Hispanic juveniles in this specific jurisdiction? Should this population be the new target population for the program? By understanding the population that the program serves and assessing the services that they need in order to be successful on the program and to refrain from future delinquency is the hallmark research of how to make any diversion program successful for the clients served.

As a result of this research, changes have been enacted in the Juvenile Diversion program of the Fifth Judicial District. The program was expanded in early 2013 to include Eagle County. In Eagle County a life skills based course was created by program staff and enacted in the public high school, entitled Life Works which focuses on giving juveniles the skills to make better choices. Other changes have included requiring all participants to be involved in a recreational activity to emphasize the importance of building pro-social connections in the community. These changes are only the beginning

of programming targeted at constructing life skills competencies and restoring the juvenile with the ability to be a positive, non-offending member of their community. Further research can be utilized to determine the effectiveness of these changes on the juvenile diversion population.

There were several issues with this research that made it more difficult to truly judge the effectiveness of different types of interventions on Juvenile Diversion participants. While the population was large, there was a small number of participants who failed and therefore it was very difficult to judge what was different in those youths compared to the high number of youth that were successful on the program. Furthermore, a more long-term study would have been helpful to see the proportion of juveniles who recidivated after the program was completed. It would have also been helpful to have more anecdotal evidence for this population so as to determine what their perception were concerning why they did or did not fail since there are many factors that could play into success rates.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Diversion is an opportunity for at-risk youth to receive intervention services before they are dragged into the formal court system. More research needs to be completed in order to determine what services are needed among this population of juveniles. There then needs to be additional research on how to best implement these services and which types of interventions are the most effective at reducing recidivism. Furthermore, it needs to be determined if the existing services are actually being implemented and received amongst the juveniles who need them. It is one thing to have services offered, it is another to make sure that each child who needs specific services are getting them.

While we are still uncertain as to what interventions are the most effective at reducing recidivism amongst Juvenile Diversion program participants, we were able to see that the program does embody the theories that it was based upon. With a high success rate and low recidivism rate the program is succeeding at providing a second chance for juveniles to stay out of the system, regardless of what interventions they are given. These outcomes support both the labeling theory and life course criminality theory. By diverting these youth away from formal labels in the court system, the juvenile diversion program appears able to provide them with the services that they needed to refrain from future crime, at least in the short term. The Diversion program is

then able to reduce the impact of criminal labeling and repair the child's pro-social identity by replacing delinquent behaviors with more socially acceptable behaviors.

While much research still needs to be conducted regarding what interventions will be the most beneficial for Juvenile Diversion participants, the results of this research will aid in creating more effective programming in the Fifth Judicial District. The future of the program and continuing research into improving services is promising. The implications of this research will be beneficial to the juveniles who might be just one intervention away from staying out of the system. It is obvious that the services provided to these children are effective at helping them refrain from future crime otherwise Diversion is just another bump along a very long road of criminal behaviors.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER OF PERMISSION FOR DATA



Office of the District Attorney
Fifth Judicial District

Serving Clear Creek, Eagle, Lake, and Summit Counties
Bruce I. Brown, District Attorney

September 24, 2013

Ms. Kamille McKinney
Post Office Box 295
Eagle, CO 81631

Re: Thesis proposal

Dear Ms. McKinney:

You and I have discussed your conducting research based upon the existing and historic Juvenile Diversion program in this office, aimed at assessing effective and ineffective intervention techniques. I want you to know that I applaud this endeavor and consent you access to data that we possess.

Obviously, effective treatment of delinquents is a high priority in this office and consistent with the aims of the public at large. Your research could be an important effort to identify 'best practices'. To that end, please feel free to advise me of how I can be of assistance.

I look forward to reviewing your conclusions.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Bruce Brown

Bruce I. Brown
District Attorney
Fifth Judicial District

APPENDIX B
HYPOTHESES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- H_{R1}: Juveniles who do not receive punitive interventions on a diversion program will have a higher success rate than juveniles who do receive punitive interventions.
- H_{O1}: The presence of punitive interventions on diversion program participants will make no difference on the success of those participants.
- H_{R2}: Juveniles who participate in at least one recreational activity while on a diversion program will have a higher success rate than juveniles who did not participate in at least one recreational activity.
- H_{O2}: Participation in recreational activities will have no effect on the success rates of program participants.
- H_{R3}: Juveniles who complete a life skills course or associated program will be less likely to commit future crimes than juveniles who do not complete a life skills course or associated programming.
- H_{O3}: Completion of a life skills course or associated programming will have no effect on the likelihood that juveniles will commit future crimes.
- H_{R4}: Juveniles who are accepted onto diversion for misdemeanor offenses are more likely to recidivate than juveniles who are accepted onto diversion for felony offenses.
- H_{O4}: The type of crime committed by juveniles accepted onto diversion will have no effect on recidivism.
- H_{R5}: Juveniles who are accepted onto diversion for misdemeanor offenses and are given more life skills and restorative interventions than punitive interventions are less likely to recidivate.
- H_{O5}: The types of interventions given to juveniles accepted onto diversion for misdemeanor offenses will have no effect on recidivism.