

# **The Impact of Out-of-State Residential Placements for Juvenile Offenders: Final Report**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 1990's, the Utah Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) obtained funding to secure contracts with residential programs located outside of Utah that allowed for increasing numbers of offenders to be placed out of state in lieu of commitment to a secure care facility. The number of youth placed in these programs grew rapidly from 7 in 1994 to a high of 103 in 1999. In July 2001, DYC contracted with the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Consortium, located in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah, to examine these placements. The objectives of this evaluation were to answer the following questions:

- Why are juvenile offenders placed in programs outside of Utah?
- What type of programs do offenders placed out-of-state receive?
- How effective are out-of-state placements compared to secure care and community placement?
- What leads to success or failure after an out-of-state placement?
- How do the costs of these programs compare given the success rate?

The data for this evaluation is based upon 20 interviews with out-of-state program providers, 70 interviews with juveniles placed in out-of-state programs, site visits to all five out-of-state programs, an email survey of case managers, an analysis of 290 program case files and an analysis of re-offense rates for a sample of out-of-state (213 offenders), community placement (400), and secure care youth (254). It is important to note that re-offense analyses are based on upon information gathered from the juvenile information system. Efforts are continuing to gather re-offense and incarceration information from the criminal justice system. Results therefore should not be generalized beyond the period in which these youth are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system.

## Results

Case managers most commonly report utilizing out-of-state placements as an alternative to secure care. It should be noted that 17 percent of out-of-state offenders were placed *after* a stay in a secure care facility. The next most frequently reported reason was a lack of DYC programs that are comparable to those available out-of-state. The offenders sent out-of-state more closely resembled community placement offenders in terms of their sex, age at the time of their first offense, and age at the start of their respective placements than secure care offenders. Out-of-state offenders are between community placement and secure care youth when considering the number of offenses prior to their respective placements. A much larger percentage of minority offenders received out-of-state placements than to community placement or secure care.

Every out-of-state placement examined in this study employs the Positive Peer Culture (PPC) approach to treatment of delinquent behavior. PPC is grounded in a sociological view of adolescent delinquent behavior, where youth offending is assumed

to be caused largely by negative peer group influence.

Offenders placed in out-of-state programs reported these programs to be qualitatively different from those they had experienced in Utah. They reported out-of-state programs to have the strongest focus on educational achievement, vocational training and athletics. In-state programs were reported to be more focused on psychological treatment and simply “being locked up.” Out-of-state programs were also perceived to take a more disciplinarian approach, which in one program was reported to include physically abusive disciplining of the youth. The youth’s experience with PPC interventions appears to be mostly negative. The intended positive effects of PPC, such as caring concern for others, were not experienced by the youth. Most youth felt that peer confrontations for negative behavior were co-opted as a means to increase status and power over other youth.

A re-offense analysis was conducted by following youth from the three groups listed above 22 months after sentencing to their respective placements. It should be noted that as the follow-up period essentially began at the start of the placement, many offenders were in some type of restrictive setting for a significant portion of the follow-up period. Re-offense rates are therefore lower than would be expected if the youth were free of any type of supervision during the entire follow-up period.

The current analysis shows that youth placed out-of-state re-offended at higher rates than those who are sent to a secure care facility and lower rates than those sent to a community placement. While out-of-state offenders have a lower rate of re-offense than community placement offenders, this finding is in part a function of the former youth being in a placement four times longer during the follow-up period than community placement youth. Therefore, reduced levels of offending might be due simply to a longer period of incapacitation, rather than the type of program received.

Based on the daily cost for each placement, lower re-offense rates for secure care offenders are obtained at almost double the cost than those placed in out-of-state programs. Community placement was the least costly option, albeit with the highest rate of re-offense.

## Recommendations

While these findings are not encouraging, the youth placed in out-of-state programs consistently cited several strategies that would reduce re-offending after release. Three factors were identified for an intervention to be successful in changing criminal behavior. These three strategies, along with several other policy considerations, are considered below in terms of how they might be used by DYC and the out-of-state programs to increase the system’s effectiveness.

### *1- Making a decision to change*

Many offenders stated that making a willful decision to change was a necessary foundational factor in changing their delinquent behavior. As some youth pointed out, until a juvenile is open to change, program interventions are often successfully resisted. Over the past decade, efforts to formally develop interventions designed to increase motivation to change have been used to combat several chronic behavioral and mental health problems. Intentional efforts to increase an offender’s motivation to change using similar strategies could increase the effectiveness of subsequent programming.

Research has also shown that development of a caring relationship is vital to engaging

an adolescent in the process of change. Proponents of PPC approaches have found that “mature” programs are characterized by lower rates of confrontation. Given that many offenders reported a high level of hostility stemming from peer confrontations, the efficacy of the PPC model must continue to be challenged by Utah officials monitoring these contracts.

*2- Learning new skills at the program, particularly educational and vocational training*

PPC program proponents state that youth in these types of programs are successful because they learn skills such as pro-social behavior and taking responsibility. However, in this study program participants perceived educational and vocational training as more helpful in successfully adapting to life after program release. Some even felt that their experience in a PPC program had made change more difficult as they perceived themselves to have grown more aggressive because of constant confrontations by staff and peers.

This finding notwithstanding, many youth leaving the program with a desire to avoid future illegal activity. It is possible that the value of PPC lies in employing it as a method to increase the will to change and that other program elements, such as educational and vocational training, provide the skills necessary to continue behavior changes after program release.

To maximize the benefits of PPC, professionals have suggested the use of PPC in conjunction with other interventions such as substance abuse programs. Juvenile offenders have been found to have high rates of drug and alcohol abuse, which is strongly correlated with serious delinquency. While the out-of-state programs appear to have high quality educational and vocational training, quality chemical education and treatment appears to be insufficient at all programs.

In addition to increasing chemical dependency interventions, adding interventions that increase both family contact and insight into family issues would be helpful. Many youth interviewed for this study noted that family is a powerful force on success or failure rates. Past research has shown that maintaining family ties while in a placement and establishing favorable family situations upon release are essential for positive reentry and reduced recidivism.

*3- Participating in aftercare that bolsters motivation to continue using new behaviors and allows implementation of skills learned at the program*

This study shows that many offenders find transition from an out-of-state program to their former environment too difficult to successfully accomplish on their own. Even offenders who were motivated to change and came back to Utah with skills that would help them negotiate their former environments more effectively reported that old ways and patterns came back quickly. Without intensive aftercare the value of a long-term out-of-state placement is dubious. Structured reintegration programs and aftercare can help maintain in-program gains.

Youth placed out-of-state would likely have better success if an intensive, structured re-integration plan was implemented for every offender. Aftercare should begin while an offender is in the placement by developing an aftercare plan, one that relates to the known risk and protective factors for re-offense. Obviously, such a plan

goes beyond case manager contact. Key areas that need to be addressed include family, pre-program peers, continued schooling or work, and drug relapse. The personnel that will assume responsibility for aftercare, case managers and program providers, should work directly with the residential placement staff to ensure continuity of care.

#### *4- Additional Policy Considerations*

In addition to the above considerations, results of the current study highlight the urgent need for Utah officials to insist that each program have a clear system for monitoring youth and staff physical incidents. PPC programs have a high potential for abuse, both physical and emotional. A system that clarifies for Utah officials how each program is currently operating in terms of critical incidents or other physical occurrences will increase the ability of state officials to ensure the well being of the youth at these programs. The evaluators believe that the system shown to them at Rites of Passage would serve as a good template for other programs. Programs that cannot provide ongoing information on the frequency and type of physical incidents involving every staff and youth do not have reliable methods for identifying problem staff, youth or situations. Consequently, Utah officials do not have a reliable way of ensuring the safety of the youth they commit to these programs.

Utah officials should also insist that the case files of each program clearly specify what programming a youth receives while placed. Programs that provide one-size fits- all type templates to record their planning and intervention strategies leave Utah officials in the dark as to what services the program has actually provided. If the actual services a program provides to an individual youth remains unknown, then it is impossible to know what works and for whom. The current study shows this point to be crucial. For example, former program participants believe that the quality educational and vocational training, not PPC, was the most effective ingredient in assisting them to change their lives. An individualized system for recording the actual services received can help solve administrators and policy makers understand better not only what their money has bought but what programming ingredients are the most important. The evaluators recommend the system developed by Rites of Passage that specifies detailed information on what services were received for each individual youth.

Beyond these considerations, a system for tracking the recidivism of juvenile offenders into the adult system is a necessity if the division is to obtain the most complete and accurate picture of the effects of its programs on the youth it serves. Without such a system policymakers will continue to be forced to make decisions based upon incomplete data. A common identifier or a standardized method of access between the juvenile and criminal justice systems should be established.

#### Conclusion

Out-of-state placements were intended as an alternative to secure care. The current analysis shows that re-offense rates for youth placed out-of-state are higher than those who are sent to a secure care facility. While out-of-state offenders have a lower rate of re-offense than community placement offenders, this reduction most likely stems from the fact that out-of-state youth are incapacitated in a placement approximately four times longer than those in community placements. Time incapacitated, regardless of type of placement, appears to be the most important factor in re-offense rate. Although out-of-state placements employ a

distinctively different approach to intervening with juvenile delinquents, no evidence exists to support the contention that this approach is more effective than the usual treatment received in Utah. The present analysis is limited to the re-offense information available from the juvenile information system. The evaluators are continuing efforts to examine this pattern of results using a longer follow-up period in the criminal justice system database.

Programming improvements are needed in some out-of-state programs if contracting is to continue. Most urgently, an incident reporting system needs to be present at all programs in order for Utah officials to know that the youth sent to these programs are safe from abusive interventions or staff. Substance abuse programming is lacking in the current out-of-state placements but vital to more successful intervention. Lastly, absent an intensive reintegration program, youth placed out-of-state cannot be expected to maintain gains made while at these programs.



# INTRODUCTION

## Study purpose

During the 1990's, the Utah State Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) obtained funding to secure contracts with residential programs located outside of Utah that allowed for increasing numbers of offenders to be placed out of state in lieu of commitment to a secure care facility. The number of youth placed in these programs grew rapidly from 7 in 1994 to a high of 103 in 1999. In July 2001, DYC contracted with the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Consortium, located in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah, to examine these placements. The objectives of this evaluation were to answer the following questions:

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- What type of program do offenders placed out-of-state receive?
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## National Out-of-State Placements

Nationally, placing youth offenders out-of-state has been practiced for over a century. The first documented out-of-state placements, which occurred in New York in 1853, were intended to show that dependent and delinquent youth could be effectively treated using alternative programs to institutionalization (Hall, Barker, Parkhill, Pilotta, & White, 1982). New York State placed over 91,536 children in out-of-state programs over the next 40 years. Today, the practice of placing juvenile offenders in out-of-state foster and proctor homes has spread to every state in the nation.

In addition to these types of out-of-state placements, a substantial number of the youth placed out of state are committed to large residential programs. In 1997, the most recent year for which statistics have been gathered, 2,116 offenders were placed out-of-state into residential facilities (Synder & Sickmund, 1999). States placing the highest percentage of offenders out of state were largely rural or geographically small. For example, Montana and Delaware had out-of-state placement rates of 29 percent and 28 percent respectively.

Out-of-state placements represent a substantial financial commitment. If each adjudicated juvenile costs an average of \$123 per day and stays an average of 178 days, the annual cost of juveniles placed out-of-state into private facilities was approximately \$45 million dollars in 1997 (Synder & Sickmund, 1999).

Despite a long national history of placing juvenile offenders out-of-state and the considerable financial resources allocated for this type of treatment, there is a paucity of research analyzing the effects of this practice. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention conducts an annual survey on the number of youth placed out-of-state in any type of placement and in 1982 also published detailed results of a study that focused on out-of-state placement practices (Hall, Barker, Parkhill, Pilotta, &

White). These efforts have to some extent described the population of youth placed out-of-state and the rationale for these placements. The practice of placing youth out-of-state into *large residential* programs has received even less attention. Researchers have not examined whether placing a youth in out-of-state placements is more or less effective than in-state programs.

### Utah Out-of-State Placements

Over the past ten years, the Utah State Division of Youth Corrections has contracted with six residential institutions for out-of-state placements, including Clarinda Academy Forrest Ridge, both located in Iowa, Glen Mills School in Pennsylvania, Rites of Passage in Nevada, Tarkio Academy in Missouri, and Vision Quest in Arizona. This study examines these placements excepting Vision Quest, which doesn't have a current contract with DYC and to which no offenders have been committed since 1995.

All the placements studied are large, long-term residential treatment programs that employ a Positive Peer Culture (PPC) model. This type of approach will be explored in detail in the results section of this report but it is important to note that PPC is the most common modality of group treatment used for delinquent youth across the nation. It has also been noted that, "Despite the popularity of this approach for treating juveniles, there are very few studies that look at the effectiveness of this method, especially as it relates to the eventual adjustment of youth back to community life" (Kapp, 2000, p.177). In light of this fact, the evaluators hope the results of this study will provide policy direction on residential out-of-state placements in general and also shed light on the effectiveness of PPC programs for reducing the future involvement of juvenile offenders with the legal system.

# Overview of Methods

A brief summary of the methodological approach employed is given here. For the interested reader, Appendix A provides more detailed information on the data sources and methods of analysis used. Evaluation researchers have advocated the use of wide-ranging and flexible methods of inquiry when conducting program evaluations (Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer, 1994). It also has been argued that the quantitative data available in most juvenile corrections information systems allows for only the most general effects to be elucidated, such as recidivism rates (Mears, 1998). The success of a program cannot be fully understood using current information systems. Gathering qualitative data to supplement quantitative data allows for development of a more comprehensive picture of the impact of out-of-state programs. In light of the above, the current evaluation employed a mixed methods approach. Quantitative measures of re-offense and commitment rates were combined with analysis of qualitative interviews, program and DYC documents, and case files to evaluate the effect of out-of-state placements.

## Re-offense Analysis

Recidivism comparisons were conducted among samples of youth placed into community placement, secure care, and out-of-state placement since 1995. The follow-up period was 22 months from the date of sentence to the specific placement. A follow-up period of this length has been found on average to account for 68 percent of re-offense in studies with longer follow-up periods (Redondo, Sanchez-Meca, and Garrido, 1999). It should be noted that as the follow-up period began at the start of the placement, many offenders were in some type of restrictive setting for a portion of the follow-up period. Re-offense rates are therefore lower than would be expected if the youth were free of any type of supervision during the entire follow-up period. It is also important to note that the current report is based on information from the juvenile information system database. Efforts to examine rates of re-offense and incarceration in the criminal justice system are continuing.

Re-offense was defined as any new charge. Technical violations were excluded. Only the most serious charge during a single calendar day, termed an episode, was recorded when tabulating the number of re-offenses during the follow-up period. Measuring re-offense in this manner allowed for a longer follow-up period while still taking into account that not all charges lead to conviction.

## Analysis of Out-of-State Program and After Care Experiences

Promotional materials, staff training materials, and written information given to offenders was collected from each program. DYC audits of each

program were also obtained. These documents were used to orient the researchers to each out-of-state program.

Two-hundred and ninety case files were collected during site visits. These files were intended to be used to analyze: a) reasons for placement, b) reason for discharge, c) status at discharge, d) chemical dependency treatment received, e) restitution hours completed, f) contact frequency with family, and g) school performance. Due to missing data and diverse methods of calculating these variables across programs, the data were deemed unreliable and are not reported with the exception of reasons for placement.

Interviews were substituted in place of the case files. Qualitative interviews were held with four to six staff from each out-of-state program during site visits. In addition to these interviews, 70 interviews were conducted with juveniles who were either currently at an out-of-state placement (16 youth) or had been sentenced to an out-of-state placement after 1995 (54 youth). Interviews with program providers focused on the type of program they provided and their experiences in working with youth from Utah. Youth interviews focused on their experience while placed and, when applicable, their experience re-integrating into the community in Utah.

#### Analysis of Rational for Placing Youth Out-of-State

An email survey inquiring about the reasons offenders are sent out of state and case managers experiences with out-of-state programs was sent to all case managers. Questions regarding this topic were asked also in interviews with program provider and offenders sent out-of-state.

# RESULTS

## Why are juvenile offenders placed in programs outside of Utah?

Nationally, the most common reasons for sending offenders to any type of out-of-state treatment are reported as: a) to live with relatives, b) because the sending state lacked comparable services, c) experienced previous success with the facility, d) as an alternative to in-state public institutionalization, and e) the inability of in-state programs to change offender behavior (Hall, Barker, Parkhill, Pilotta, & White, 1982). In Utah, a survey of DYC case managers was conducted for this study to assess current rationales for placing youth out-of-state. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix A. Fifty case managers were asked to identify the most common reasons they placed an offender out-of-state. Thirty-two case managers responded. The most common reason reported for sending offenders to an out-of-state placement is as an alternative to secure care. The next most frequently reported reason is a lack of DYC programs that are comparable to those available out-of-state, followed by the belief that certain types of offenders respond better to out-of-state programs. A detailed discussion of the type of youth actually sent out of state.

### Type of Juvenile Placed Out-of-State

Based on case manager responses and interviews with program staff and participants, the following is a description of the ideal offender for an out-of-state program. The offender would be a socially oriented adolescent who is believed to have “rehabilitation potential.” This type of offender is effectively defined by the following case manager’s comment, “If the youth is motivated by sports and has potential in school and vocational education programs but can’t handle the peer pressure of gangs, then [an out-of-state program] would be appropriate.”

**Table 1 Offense Frequency for Offenders Sent to an Out-of-State Placement**

Type of Offense	Percentage of Offenders*
Violent	29%
Sex	2%
Weapon	13%
Drug	18%
Property	50%
Technical Violation	9%
Status Offense	10%
Running from Previous Programs	4%

\* Column total exceeds 100% as most case files listed multiple reasons.

Both case managers and program providers consider offenders who have major mental disorders, chemical dependency problems, and are social isolates poor candidates for doing well in an out-of-state placement.

An analysis of the out-of-state program case files showed that the reasons an offender was sent to an out-of-state placement were multiple. Table 1 provides the frequency that each category of offense was listed as part of the rationale to place a youth out-of-state.

The offenders sent to an out-of-state placement who were interviewed for this study, perceived themselves to be similar or higher in the degree of criminality as the youth from other states at their particular program. To answer how these offenders compared with those in community placement and secure care in Utah, demographic and offending characteristics of these offenders were examined. Although, as reported above most case managers report using out-of-state placements as an alternative to secure care, 17 percent of out-of-state offenders were placed *after* a stay in a secure care facility. Yet as shown in Table 2, out-of-state offenders more closely resemble community placement offenders in terms of their sex, age at the time of their first offense, and age at the start of their respective placements.

**Table 2 Sample Characteristics of Offenders Placed in Community Placement, Out-of-State Programs, and Secure Care Facility**

Variable		Community Placement	Out-of-State	Secure Facility
<b>Race</b>	Caucasian	68%	42%	60%
	Minority	32%	58%	40%
<b>Sex</b>	Male	85%	86%	94%
	Female	16%	14%	6%
<b>Age at First Offense (in years)</b>		11.7	11.6	11.9
<b>Age at Start of Placement (in Years)</b>		15.7	15.8	16.2
<b>Number of Prior Offenses</b>		9.6	12.1	13.3

Out-of-state offenders fall between community placement and secure care youth when considering the number of offenses prior to placement. A much larger percentage of minority offenders were sent to out-of-state placements than community placement or secure care.

In summary, Utah officials and program providers appear to agree on the type of offender most suited for out-of-state placement. The records of offenders actually sent out-of-state, however, show that many offenders are sent after a secure care placement, not as an alternative. Further, the youth sent out-of-state more closely resemble youth placed in community placement in most respects.

## What Type of program do offenders placed out of state receive?

### The Positive Peer Culture Approach

The out-of-state placements examined in this study use the Positive Peer Culture approach to treatment of delinquent behavior. PPC grew out of a group approach to treatment created in the 1950's called Guided Group Interaction (GGI; McCorkle, 1954). The two terms are currently used interchangeably in the literature and taken together represent a family of interventions which focus on peer groups as the stimulus for changing delinquent behavior (Brendtro & Ness, 1992). Information gained during site visits to each out-of-state program suggests that GGI is used in the form of a group meeting to aid in instilling a Positive Peer Culture milieu or environment throughout the program. A brief review of GGI, PPC, and related research on these programs is provided in this section.

#### *Assumptions of Positive Peer Culture and Guided Group Interactions*

PPC and GGI approaches are grounded in a sociological and etiological view of adolescent criminal and delinquent behavior (Vorrath & Brendtro, 1974). Youth offending is assumed to be caused largely by negative peer group influence. Given this etiological belief, PPC and GGI programs attempt to re-orient delinquent youth to a new positive peer referent group. The goal is to positively re-channel these influences in a structured environment where youth are held responsible for their actions and provided with opportunities to be responsible for their peers' actions (Zimpfer, 1992). Rehabilitation takes place in a group environment that emphasizes confronting anti-social behaviors and replacing them with pro-social behaviors. Program participants who have bought into the program's pro-social environment are used as instigators of behavioral change instead of staff. The approach and underlying assumptions of PPC starkly contrasts treatment models that posit anti-social behavior as a type of individual psychopathology (McCorkle, 1954).

#### *A Description of Guided Group Interaction*

Interestingly, one of the earliest studies of GGI was conducted in Provo, Utah in 1952. Results from the Provo experiment were used to support GGI as an effective intervention with chronic delinquent youth (Smith, 1994). The following is a description of the basic meeting structure. "Group meetings...begin with a problem statement by each member. For example, one group member might say, 'Today, I had an easily angered problem. When the teacher told me to hand in my homework assignment, I got angry and walked out of class— I had forgotten to bring my homework.'" A list of common problems including poor self-image and being inconsiderate of others or self is usually memorized by

members to aid identification of negative behavioral patterns (Vorrath & Brendtro, 1985). After problem statements are offered, students must decide which of the members will be 'awarded' the meeting for that day. A student wishing to be awarded the meeting must convince peers that he or she especially needs help at this particular meeting. If the group awards the meeting to this student, the time will be spent examining the problem and exploring solutions, using the problem-solving expertise of the students (Donlevy & Donlevy, 1995). GGI is different from group therapy because it focuses only on those issues that arise during the residential program. Discussion of past problems, such as family of origin issues, is prohibited (Donlevy & Donlevy, 1995). The staff's role is to ensure the group doesn't lose focus or develop negative behaviors.

### *A Description of Positive Peer Culture*

As previously stated, PPC is one of the most popular group therapy approaches used for working with delinquent youth (Gold & Osgood, 1992; Zimpfer, 1992). PPC expands the GGI process of confronting anti-social behaviors and awarding pro-social behaviors from a meeting setting to the entire residential environment. Staff members hold youth responsible for caring for themselves *and* other group members. Habits conducive to a nurturing environment are reinforced by modeling caring, relabeling behavior, and reversing responsibility (Zimpfer, 1992). Assuming responsibility for others and demanding greatness as opposed to obedience to rules are key distinctions of PPC programs compared to other delinquency treatment approaches. In such a program, rules are replaced with norms that orient youth to what is acceptable in a pro-social environment. All youth participants are expected to uphold norms by confronting others when norms are violated. A confrontation structure is taught that ranges from a concerned facial or verbal expression to group support where participants circle a youth who has violated a norm and ask him or her to take responsibility for their behavior. Group support is terminated when the violator accepts his peers' feedback and takes responsibility for his or her actions. Staff is only involved when a violator refuses to accept peer intervention. These actions are intended to increase the offender's feelings of self-worth and reduce their susceptibility to negative peer influence (Vorrath & Brendtro, 1985).

### *Research on the Positive Peer Culture/Guided Group Interaction Approach*

Despite the popularity of PPC programs, few studies have looked at its effectiveness at reducing re-offense rates. One researcher cautions that, "PPC has been endorsed as an effective intervention for changing behaviors in correctional settings despite limited empirical data to delineate the adequacy of treatment outcomes" (Katsiyannis & Archwamety, p. 52).

Research that has been conducted has yielded mixed results. One study found that in general PPC treatments were no better than traditional approaches (Stephenson & Scarpitti, 1974). Short-term community placements combined with aftercare services have been shown to be as effective as a 15-month PPC placement (Deschenes &

Greenwood, 1998). It should be noted that the experimental group used in this particular study was more severe than the control group.

Other studies have analyzed the effect of PPC programs on factors believed to contribute to re-offense. For example, PPC approaches have been associated with a) changes in self-concept (Davis, Hoffman, & Quigley, 1988), b) increased in-program self-control while at the program, and c) higher levels of academic achievement (Brendtro & Wasmund, 1989). While offenders in PPC programs have been shown to develop positive attitudes towards PPC staff, this hasn't translated into greater respect for other authority figures in general (Dubnov, 1986). Whether PPC-related offender improvements reduce delinquency rates remains unclear.

It has been argued that PPC may be particularly effective with gang members if this type of offender is particularly prone to influences of negative peer environments. To date, no research has been conducted to validate this perception. (Donlevy & Donlevy, 1995).

Research has also analyzed the weaknesses of PPC programs. One study that examined failures in a PPC program found that youth prone to isolation or social cautiousness do poorly when they are highly attached to dysfunctional families and distrustful of outsiders (Lee, 1995). These results raise questions about the suitability of this type of treatment model for this type of offender. Given this feedback, the PPC program initiated discussion of family of origin issues during GGI processing.

Brendtro and Ness (1992) found the most common misuses of the PPC approach to be abuse of confrontation, mechanical verbalizations, family estrangement, poor listening skills, lack of individualization, distant staff relationships, staff abuse of control, inadequate professional training, and group leader superiority. Because PPC programs are based on confronting antisocial behavior, there is a high potential for deleterious effects if confrontation is not conducted properly. As Brendtro and Ness point out, "The group is sometimes allowed to ram problems down a youth's throat until he or she finally admits to a problem just to escape group pressure" (p. 311). These authors also note that mature programs show a significant decline in the use of confrontation. In addition, they question the use of peers as the sole agents of change stating, "Some peer group programs still use the peer group as the sole change agent without regard for the family. Following the simplistic rationale that adolescents are more responsive to peers than parents, the family is ignored" (p. 314).

Kapp (2000) examined PPC from the viewpoint of former program participants. Results found a re-occurring theme of low to no trust among participants stemming from a program environment where youth viewed each other as doing time rather than working on changing their lives. In this study one offender commented, "If you are going through something bad, would you want to talk with a bunch of guys who only want to get out of the program?" (p.183). The author concludes that there was rarely a sense of being helped by other group members. In these circumstances, the participants feel that 'fronting' is necessary to avoid being set up by other participants for a staff attack since confrontation must be accepted by the target youth regardless of truth or falsity of

the claim. It is important to note that Kapp's study provides a consistently negative portrayal of the PPC treatment experience and is the first to look at PPC from the viewpoint of former clients. Our study also includes interviews with former program participants and may help to validate or refute these findings.

### Other Services Received at an Out-of-State Placement

As reported above, each out-of-state program DYC has contracted with has employed a PPC approach towards behavior management. However, PPC is not the sole intervention of these programs. Using case files gathered from each program site visit, information was sought on educational and vocational training, athletic involvement, chemical dependency education and treatment, family contact, and restitution hours completed. A total of 290 files of the youth sent to these facilities were collected. As noted in the methods summary, due to missing data and diverse methods of calculation, the information from these files was not amenable to analysis. The Rites of Passage program was the only program that specified the treatment a youth received in enough detail to create reliable variables to study. Given this circumstance, the evaluators relied on interviews with the program participants for information on the program received.

## **What are the experiences of offenders who have been through these programs?**

Based on case manager survey responses, out-of-state placements are perceived to offer a program that is qualitatively different from secure care. Given this premise, the youth interviewed for this study were asked how they perceived differences between the out-of-state and in-state programs in which they had been placed. The questions were designed to assess the differences in treatment philosophies between the two types of placement. With 65% of the offenders interviewed self-reporting more than six previous placements, these youth had a wide array of experiences to draw upon.

Youth consistently identified similar patterns of difference between their Utah and out-of-state placement experiences. Table 3 presents the most common themes found starting with those most frequently expressed.

Clear differences in treatment focus are apparent between offenders sentenced to in-state versus out-of-state programs. In-state programs are perceived to be oriented towards psychological treatment and out-of-state programs are perceived to have a

**Table 3 Offender Reported Differences Between In-State and Out-of-State Programs**

Type of Approach (Focus)*	
In-State Program	Out-of-State Program
Psychological Treatment	Educational and Vocational Training
“Lock-up”	Athletics and Physical Exertion
Educational	Group Treatment (e.g., PPC, GGI)
Behavioral Change	Boot Camp style discipline
Rehabilitative Proctor Care	Behavioral Change
Sports	

\* Beginning with those most frequently mentioned

stronger focus on educational achievement and vocational training. In the words of one offender, “[my out-of-state placement] was more education-based and less treatment.” Another offender,

interviewed at an out-of-state placement, described this difference in the following dialogue.

*Interviewer:* “How does this program differ from the ones that you've been to in Utah?”

*Youth:* “It's helped me out a lot on vocational. Vocation, education.”

*Interviewer:* “The ones in Utah weren't doing those much?”

*Youth:* “Yeah.”

Several youth went so far as to compare the feeling of an out-of-state placement with that of a college when describing the focus of the program. As one youth stated, “[My out-of-state placement] is like a college with no girls.” One offender, currently in a secure care facility, contrasted his experience of placements in and out of Utah by stating, “[out-of-state programs], like pushed more towards education and sports; and want you to do it and get you to do it... Here it's just, you're locked up.” Another youth made a similar comparison, stating, “You're locked up [in secure care]. You don't really do much. And [at the out-of-state program] it's like a school.”

It should be noted that many youth felt being in a facility with no locks was quite positive. One youth stated, “That was probably the best part of the program. You didn't have to be locked down, [you could] go to the bathroom whenever you want, don't have to ask to have them open your door...they don't send food to you, you go get your own.” In defining Utah programs as psychologically oriented, one offender characterized this approach by stating, “Like [in a in-state program], there's a lot more groups, and talking about your problems and drug and alcohol, and expressing your feelings. Out [of state], you didn't do a lot of that. It was like you do what we say, and that was it.” Many other offenders placed in out-of-state programs echoed this youth's view that psychological discussions and interventions were not used or allowed in out-of-state placements. One offender illustrated his recognition of this difference by explaining how a previous strategy he used in Utah “acting crazy,” didn't work in his out-of-state placement. He recalled, “I didn't get that far... I tried to act like I was crazy and that didn't work. And I told them I was going to kill myself and that didn't work either.... Most [in-state] programs lose it totally when you say stuff like that, but here, I tried.” This offender, like others, were surprised to find out that psychological explanations for their behavior were not accepted in most out-of-state programs.

Out-of-state programs were also perceived to be more disciplinarian in their approach. One youth stated this difference as, "If you mess up, you're like, if the unit's messing up, they'll make you, you know, work out or whatever ...there's different consequences type of things. Like in Utah, you don't do none of that. They'll just, you know, you go to bed early or something..." A disciplinarian approach was contrasted to psychological approaches by many of the staff at out-of-state programs. These staff appeared to view the latter as an ineffective approach because it was "soft" or "enabled the youth" by providing excuses for their delinquent actions. Conversely, the approach taken by out-of-state programs, one focused on discipline and accountability, was viewed by many staff as "what these kids really need" in order to change.

Many youth reported the stricter approach taken by out-of-state programs included physical discipline. One youth characterized his experience with this type of discipline by stating, "They correct you, physically, when you do things wrong. But the [in-state programs], you know, they never did that." Youth reported boot camp style discipline at all programs, however, the first stage of Rites of Passage, located in an army style desert camp, was most commonly viewed in this manner. Youth placed in this program characterized this stage of the program as relying heavily on military style discipline. One youth stated, "Some of the programs in Utah don't even come close to this program. Like in the desert, you have to walk [with your hands] at your side or whatever, and if you mess up, you get pushups. Kind of like a boot camp." Other programs were reported to "break you, if they have to." Physical discipline was consistently described by several youth at the Glen Mills program, one youth at Rites of Passage, and one youth at Clarinda Academy in abusive terms (see Appendix C).

Surprisingly, although the staff in out-of-state programs most commonly identified PPC as the component that distinguished their program from ones available in Utah, the juveniles themselves believed there was a stronger focus on educational achievement, vocational training and sports, than on PPC.

This finding notwithstanding, because out-of-state programs all declare that they employ some variant of PPC and in-state programs do not employ this type of treatment, youth were asked about their perceptions of this type of treatment. As stated above, PPC was originally conceptualized as a treatment to help delinquent youth learn to care about their peers and become resistant towards negative peer pressure. It would be expected that offender's perceptions of their experience in a PPC program would reflect these goals to some extent. However, as congruent with past research (Kapp, 2000), the current study found the youth focused almost exclusively on negative peer confrontations when speaking of their experience. Other aspects of PPC, such as learning pro-social behavior, caring about others, or taking personal responsibility were rarely mentioned.

As recalled by several youth, a confrontation is typically structured in the following manner, "The other kids would say, '[Name of confronted youth], this is because of your attitude. You need to change it.' And you need to tell them, 'Thank you.' And if you don't stand up, with your hands at your side, and look them in the eye, and say 'Thank you,' without a smile on your face, you stand there until you do."

As stated previously, the developers of PPC intended confrontations of negative behavior to reinforce a pro-social program environment, develop caring concern for others, and increase personal responsibility (Brendtro & Ness, 1992). Almost all of the

youth interviewed, however, perceived the act of confronting other youth as a means to gain power and not to as an expression of concern or method of maintaining a pro-social atmosphere. One youth formulated his perception of this process by stating, “The whole campus is...they’re quick to tell on you, just to get more status. That’s what the whole thing’s about. They’ll tell on somebody just to get more status so they can become higher.” Another youth responded by stating, “Some of the kids here they get entertainment out of seeing kids get in trouble or get mad at the assistants or stuff like that... If you’re doing good they try to confront you so you’ll say something back to them, or just confront you for no reason so you’ll say something back to them so you’ll get in trouble or something like that. They just get a kick out of it.” Another youth stated simply, “You confront to hurt, not to help.”

Further, as another youth, who reported himself to have achieved a high leadership position, recalled in addition to gaining status, whether you were confronted depended not upon your actions but upon with whom you allied yourself. In his words, “...if I was comfortable with you, I wouldn’t intervene the negative behavior. I would let you get away with whatever you want. And if anyone tried to intervene you, then I would get them for you.”

Some youth pointed out that confrontation was easily co-opted for use as a tool to gain power, and hurt other youth because the truthfulness of the confronting youth’s claims are usually not questioned by staff and cannot be questioned by the confronted youth. One offender pointed this out by saying, “...some people will like try to play games with your program, and like, if they have a high status and they don’t like you, they could like put your program in jeopardy, like as in, like if you’re not really doing anything, but they don’t like you, they could come to your group, and tell your staff, and the staff will believe him, ‘cause you don’t, you have to accept [his accusations whether they are] right [or] wrong. That’s what we’re supposed to do... they just tell us that if we don’t accept, we got to go to [time out].” This type of disingenuous confrontation was perceived to be common and not easily detected by staff.

While group accountability has been discouraged by PPC advocates, many program participants reported being held accountable for the actions of their peers. One offender recalled her experience of group accountability, termed group support, in the following words: “I remember one time, when I was sick ...a girl got in ‘behavior’ and she threw a temper tantrum, and if one girl throws a temper tantrum, everybody gets punished, which is completely wrong, because that doesn’t help us... And so there’s a lot of girls get [confronted] there, and they won’t say ‘Thank you’ because they want to throw temper tantrums and draw attention to themselves. This youth continued, “...I remember one day, we stood in Group Support for eight hours. We didn’t get to leave, we didn’t get to shower, we didn’t get to eat, we had our big lock-up, and we stood there the whole time. We missed school and we sat there for eight hours. We didn’t sit we had to stand in Group Support and look at that girl and give her our full attention for eight hours, until she accepted it. And if they don’t accept it, we’ll stand there for eight hours the next day, and if they don’t accept it, we stand there eight hours the next day... which I think is a complete waste of time. And that is not,

you know, that's not in our best interest to stand for eight hours on our feet to watch that kind of activity." This youth continued, "If it's negative, we should draw away from it and not support it."

Offenders reported that group accountability exacerbated aggression towards other program participants. Concerning this youth, "[Confrontation] causes a lot of tension among the youth, however they are not allowed to fight. They get revenge through [more confrontations]." Another youth stated, "You've got to be there to see what goes on, cause like if someone, if one person does something wrong, everybody, sometimes everybody gets held accountable for it. So it's like one person, like we were watching a movie, and someone is like talking real loud and won't be quiet, they'll hold everybody accountable for it, for one person." When asked, "And does that cause a problem with the kids?" The youth responded, "Ya. That causes big problems. Makes everybody mad at this one guy. So the next day in groups, when we have groups we bring him up and then everyone just wants to yell at him." Given that many youth perceived the juveniles confronted negative behavior not out of caring concern but to gain status or power over their peers, several youth believed the PPC approach had negative effects on them.

The power struggle played out in the act of confronting was perceived by many youth to increase aggressive and victim behavior among the program participants. One youth recalled the effects of constant confrontations by stating, "I went there when I was 14 years old, so I was quite young and I stayed there 'till I was almost 17... 18 or so. At that time, [after] everything I learned, I got really aggressive after being there." Another youth perceived a similar effect stating, "You know, I had people [in secure care] who were helping me, you know, showing me that they cared. They would show me through different ways. When I went to [my out-of-state program] it all flipped on me. They were putting me down and everything, and made me more defensive toward life and more you know... I think it may have made me more aggressive."

Youth most frequently perceived the effect of confrontations in the following manner, "I don't know about other students, but this program, I don't know. Having other students confront me on my negative behavior doesn't help me. It just makes me more aggravated, and then I don't like that student more, and then every time I see that student, I don't want to talk to him, I don't even want to look at him. And it just makes me have a worse day every time I see that student there, as many students try to confront me."

It should be noted that some youth pointed out that confrontations could be helpful if a youth was open to change. Usually this caveat was directed towards youth other than their self. Only one youth stated what many staff persons perceive to be the benefit and end results of holding youth responsible through confrontations in terms of taking personal responsibility for their behavior. This youth stated, "I've learned it's basically up to me with all the negative things that I do, I mean, it's really upon no one else the behaviors I display, but I mean the way it helped me out is I never used to let my negative behavior be mine. Before I was at [my out-of-state program], every therapist or anything I ever had, they said my behavior, I mean, I will use my Mom and Dad as an excuse, or my cousins always as an excuse for my negative behavior. And even after I realized that that was no excuse for the behavior that I was displaying, it

seemed like every therapist I ever had before I went there, they would keep using it as an excuse even after I stopped.”

This youth continued, “And out there, you know, they just helped me feel and basically let me know there was no excuse for my behavior. It might have affected me when I was younger, but then when I got a couple of years down the line, I mean, I basically had no excuse for everything I was doing.”

In summary, offenders placed in out-of-state programs reported these programs to be qualitatively different from those they had experienced in Utah. The offenders reported out-of-state programs to have the strongest focus on educational achievement, vocational training and athletics. In-state programs were reported to have a stronger focus on psychological treatment and simply “being locked up.” Out-of-state programs were also perceived to take a more disciplinarian approach, which in some instances was reported to include physical disciplining of youth. Most youth’s experience with PPC appears to be largely negative. The intended positive effects of PPC, such as caring concern for others, were not experienced by most youth. This appears to be due to the fact that most youth felt that peer confrontations of negative behavior were co-opted into a means to increase status and power over other youth.

## **How effective are out-of-state placements when compared with secure care and community placement?**

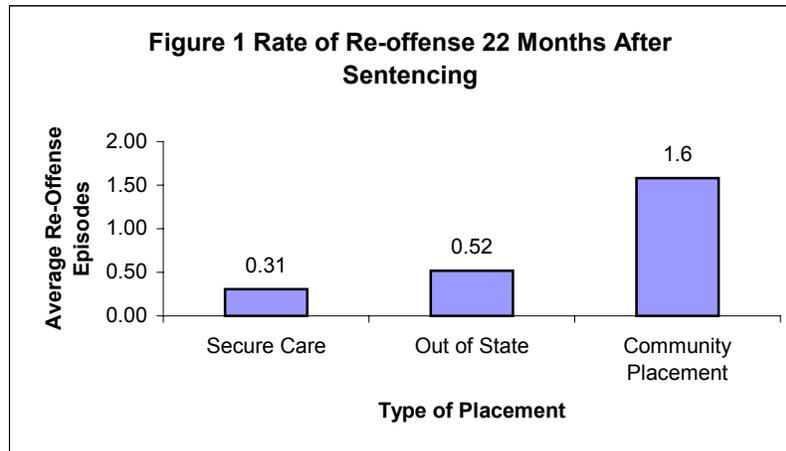
The re-offense rates of secure care and community placement offenders were compared with out-of-state offenders. It was assumed that if out-of-state placements are a valid alternative to secure care, youth sent to this type of placement should have equal or lower rates of re-offense. Youth placed in out-of-state programs were also compared with those placed in community placements as preliminary analyses showed that the offenders in both of these sanctions were similar in many respects (see previous Table 2).

A sample of offenders placed from 1995 to 1999 was selected for each group. The number of offenders in each group was as follows: Out-of-State = 213, Community Placement = 400, and Secure Care = 254. The out-of-state group was comprised of 58 offenders sent to Clarinda Academy, 38 sent to Forrest Ridge, 115 sent to Glen Mills School, 68 sent to Rites of Passage, and 12 sent to Tarkio Academy, as of May 2001. The comparison offender groups, those sent to community placement or secure care, were selected randomly from each correctional region in proportions equal to the out-of-state group, (8% from Region 1, 81% from Region 2, 11% from Region 3), so that the geographical composition of the groups was similar.

A statistical method called regression analysis was used to predict re-offense. This test can be run so as to take into account the pre-existing differences between the youth in each type of placement such as number of prior offenses. As shown below, it is then possible to create a picture of how the type of placement and other important factors contribute to re-offense rates. Two regressions were conducted, the first comparing out-of-state to secure care

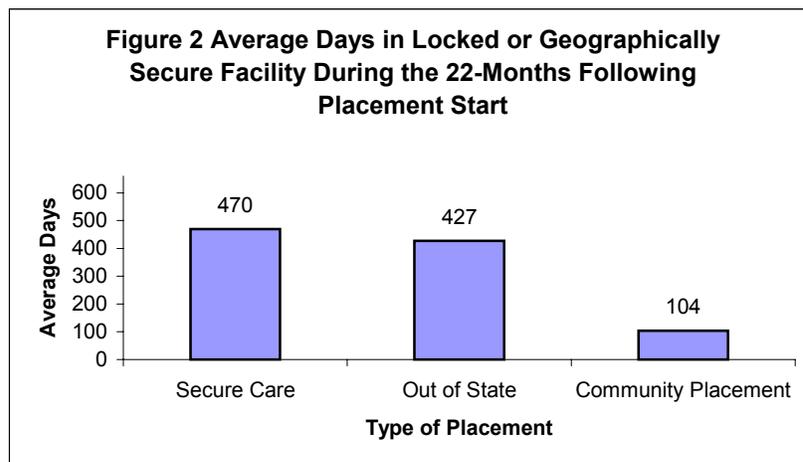
placements; the second comparing out-of-state to community placements.

As shown in Figure 1, offenders placed out-of-state had more offenses during the 22 months following the start of their placement than those sent to secure care. Out-of-state offenders had fewer offenses than those sentenced to community



placement. It should be kept in mind that rates of offending are low in part because a conservative measure of re-offense was used, i.e., an episode system where only the most serious charge on a calendar day was counted as a re-offense.

In addition, the 22-months follow-up period includes time spent under in a placement as well as time in the community. This is a significant factor in understanding the difference in rates of re-offense as it was more predictive of re-offense than the type of placement an offender received. As shown in Figure 2, the average number of days in a locked or geographically secure facility varied significantly depending on the placement.

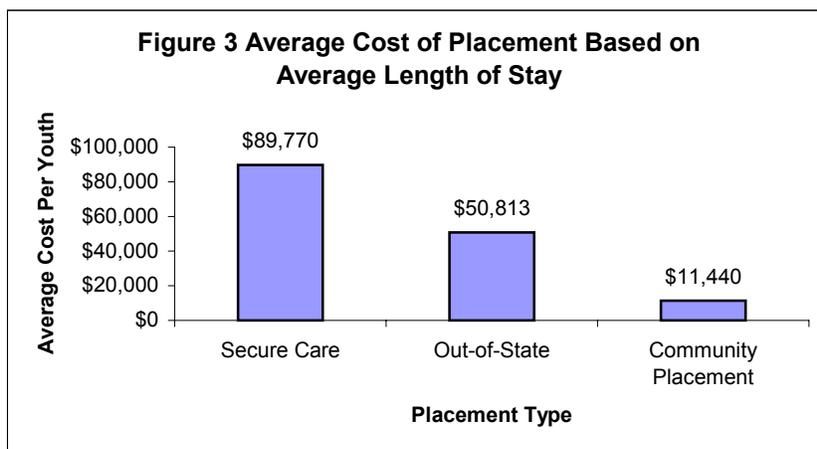


As the figure shows, youth sent to community placement spent one-fourth as long removed from the community (104 days) than the youth sent out-of-state or to secure care during the 22 months after sentencing. Given this fact, it is difficult to separate the effects of being placed into an out-of-state program with the effects of being removed from the community for a longer period of time.

Several other factors were more predictive of re-offense than the type of

placement an offender received. The number of prior offenses, age at the start of the placement and sex of the offender are much stronger factors in predicting re-offense than placement type. Race and age at first offense were not predictive of re-offense.

In addition to considering the re-offense rate of youth placed in a given placement, the average cost is of importance to administrators working with limited funds. Figure 3 provides the average cost of each type of placement



based upon the average time spent in the program (see Figure 2) and the current daily cost of each placement.

From the Figure 3 it can be seen that lower rate of re-offense for secure care placed youth in comparison to their out-of-state counterparts is obtained at a much higher cost. While youth in community placements have a higher rate of re-offense, they also have on average much lower placement costs.

In summary, the current analysis shows that re-offense rates for youth placed out-of-state are higher than those who are sent to a secure care facility. While out-of-state offenders have a lower rate of re-offense than community placement offenders, this finding is in part a function of these youth being in a placement four times longer than youth placed into community placements. Reduced levels of offending for out-of-state youth when compared to community placement youth might be due simply to the longer period of time they were removed from the community during the follow-up period, rather than the type of program received. The present analysis is limited to the re-offense information available from the juvenile information system. While it is expected that a similar pattern of results would exist using data from the criminal justice system database, only future analysis will show whether these predictions are valid.

## What Leads to Success or Failure after an Out-of-State Placement?

This section provides a look at the effectiveness of out-of-state programs from the viewpoint of the juvenile offenders sent to these placements. To these youth it appears that success after an out-of-state placement, and perhaps after

any program that removes a youth from the community, is dependent upon the offender:

- Making the decision to change his or her behavior;
- Using certain program elements to increase the ability to change; and
- Having a supportive structure after program release that bolsters motivation for change and allows application of the skills learned at the program.

### Decision to Change

Surprisingly, the most common reason provided by the youth interviewed for success or failure was personal will. When asked how they had avoided or not avoided another placement these offenders viewed their behavior as a choice. Youth who had been successful upon release characterized this as a decision of “taking responsibility” for their actions. As one youth put it, “The environment I live in now is positive. But, I mean, I don’t say it changed me. I think I changed myself cause that’s all that’s in everybody, if you want to change.”

The period before making the decision to change their behavior for several youth was described as one of increasing insight where the youth realized for the first time they had a choice towards criminal behavior. One youth recalled this period by stating, “Cause before I don’t think about choices, I just do it... If, you know, somebody comes up to me now, I sit there and think about it. Should I do it? You know, I actually think about it.”

In contrast, many youth who failed to avoid another placement characterized this decision as simply, “I didn’t want to change.” One youth expressed this quite directly when asked, “Why weren’t you able to stay out of another placement?” The youth responded simply, “Did not want to.” Another youth who responded almost identically to the previous youth added, “No program is going to help you ‘til you’re ready.” A female offender concurred with this view by stating, “No program helps them unless they really want out.”

Unlike their successful counterparts, these youth apparently see no reason to change. They did not experience a period of insight into the consequences of their behavior as a youth points out in the following dialogue with an interviewer.

*Interviewer:* “What was the main reason [you didn’t stay out]?”

*Youth:* “Just didn’t see any reason to stop being in trouble. Just thought it was going to be worth it.”

Another youth when asked why he was not able to stay out of another placement stated, “I just... I don’t realize it’s messing me up. It ain’t nothing to waste, you know, years of my life just for a few seconds of adrenaline. It ain’t nothing, you know.”

*Interviewer:* “You don’t think about the consequences when you’re...?”

*Youth:* “Well, not really. I just, you know, ‘Come on, let’s go.’ ‘All right.’ ‘Let’s just go,’ you know, I just think it’s fun, you know, but I’m getting old.”

*Interviewer:* “The consequences are getting longer and harder.”

*Youth:* “Yeah. When I thought about it, it’s like, ‘Damn, I’m already in prison. I’m only 18 years old.’ I was like, ‘Dang it.’ You know, my

Mom feels bad for me, but you know, (inaudible word) they shouldn't feel bad for me. It's my fault. You know I just never realized what I'm missing out on."

Another offender described making a decision to change only after she returned from the out-of-state placement saying, "Honestly, I would let the kid run until he decided not to do it anymore. I would let the kid run their path. I would let the kid...I would. You can't stop kids from doing drugs. You can't say you'll let them do it though, cause it's illegal, but I just barely quit drugs three months ago, and I was on meth when I got out of [my out-of-state placement]. I did meth that day, and I did weed that day, and I got drunk that day, and I did every drug I could possibly put in me all day long, and I started slamming, I had never slammed dope until I got back from [the program], but as soon as I got back from [that place], I learned to put the needle in my arm, and I started slamming dope, and I have been clean now for about 90 days, I have a job at [a department store], and I'm going back to college but it's not because of the 25 placements I've been in, it's not because of my family support, and not because I've been to jail more than nine times, it's not because of any of that. It's because I decided too..."

Several offenders who were not able to stay out of an additional placement also attributed their failure to peers, drug use, negative effects stemming from the placement itself, and feeling unable to change their behavior.

In terms of the negative effects of placement one youth stated, "I look at it as like, yeah, I've been in trouble, but when I come to the other programs, where kids [have done] a lot worse stuff than I've done... it's like a bad influence on me... I can learn how to make a gun out of plastic or something, but I never knew that before. If I never would have come to this program, I never would have learned."

### Program Elements Increase the Ability to Change

In addition to making a choice to change their criminal behavior, various aspects of an out-of-state placement provide critical skills that help offenders create a new direction. Overwhelmingly, educational and vocational training are considered to be most helpful. The youth provided various reasons why this training was helpful. For example, one offender speaking about how furthering his education helped him stated, "'Cause it helped me to focus more. When I was out, I never really went to school. I was always locked up, going to the lower educational schools and stuff, so, since I been [at the out-of-state placement], I've caught up almost to my class, and I'm ready to graduate this year. And when I came [to the out-of-state placement], I only had five credits. I'm going to graduate this year when I get out [of the program]. I'll only need like a credit and a half, two credits."

Another youth stated, "Oh, I think the thing that's good about [out-of-state placements] is they made you go to school, so you know, I got my GED and got a certificate for EMT and everything, but if I had been on the streets, I don't think I would have went to school." One offender contrasted the quality of educational instruction in out-of-state placements with those provided by Utah-based

programs stating, "I think that [out-of-state programs], they've got a strong academic program that, you know, that Utah could, could get some education on."

The next most helpful aspect was participation in athletics. Several youth also believed program strictness and caring staff had helped them to change. Interestingly, only one youth mentioned Positive Peer Culture as a helpful program component. From the viewpoint of program participants, educational and vocational training appeared to be considered much more helpful.

### Supportive Structure after Program Release

It is apparent from interviews with youth who have returned from an out-of-state program that making a decision to change and increasing skills such as educational and vocational abilities are necessary but not sufficient factors to maintain change after release. Many offenders found reintegration into their communities to be a very difficult process. During this transition it became very easy to return to past criminal activity.

The magnitude of this difficulty was evident when offenders were asked how it felt coming back to Utah and what aftercare they received during this time. Most youth most commonly reported having received no aftercare. One youth when asked about his experience with NYC or his out-of-state program after release stated,

*Youth:* "...they didn't really have a whole lot of 'after care' to go with it."

*Interviewer:* "So you just kind of when you left, you just left and that was kind of it?"

*Youth:* "Ya, it [was] kind of like, "You're gone. See you later."

Among offenders who reported receiving some type of aftercare from NYC, monitoring by their case manager was the most common activity. Several youth reported receiving aftercare in forms ranging from counseling and vocational rehabilitation to placement in proctor care or a secure care facility.

Aftercare services provided by the out-of-state programs were most commonly described by the program participants as simply having the option to telephone staff if needed. Youth who availed themselves of this option reported mostly calling line staff with whom the youth had established a positive relationship. For several youth this contact was helpful because it bolstered their motivation to do well. These positive reports notwithstanding, one youth's experience illustrates a serious liability in encouraging this type of contact if line staff aren't immediately available.

"I called them once after I got home. I was having some problems. And they really didn't care. I was telling them what I was going through, and they were like kind of, 'Well, we're here, and you're there, and we don't have time to talk to you, cause we're in group right now.' That's what I got told. 'Can you call back when we're done with group?' And I was really strung out. I was all messed up on dope and I called them saying, 'I don't know what to do. You guys said if I ever needed someone to talk to, to call you. My family's not here, I have no one to talk to, and I'm coming down. I'm feeling really suicidal.' Cause I went through some really suicidal phases. They told me, 'Can you call back after group?' I haven't called them since."

In addition to telephone contact, several other youth reported that their out-of-state program helped them "get a job" upon release. For recent graduates of Rites of Passage, the program's Utah representative reports providing limited aftercare in the

form of monthly contacts and employment or educational assistance.

Overall, it's clear that the youth interviewed received no structured aftercare program from either DYC or any of the out-of-state programs. While most administrative staff of out-of-state programs pointed out that aftercare contracts could be negotiated with DYC, it appears that the division policy has been to have case managers implement an individualized program in cases where a youth is determined to need aftercare.

The lack of an intensive, structured aftercare program has detrimental effects on many offenders. As previously stated, past research has found that offender's in-program gains evaporate quickly upon release without appropriate aftercare support. The offenders interviewed for the current study support these results. Many offenders appeared to have bought into the program to a large extent and came back to Utah motivated "to avoid another placement." After being back in the state for several months, many offenders reported, "slipping back into my past ways." According to their report, it was difficult to re-enter the environment from which they had come. One youth recounted the following experience of coming back to Utah in a manner that echoes not only the difficulty of coming home but shows how long term removal from the community made this task much harder.

*Youth:* "Well, like I was a little nervous cause I didn't know what I was gonna do when I got out. I didn't know if I was gonna mess up, cause I've been away from home for three years, you know.

*Interviewer:* "Right."

*Youth:* "I was happy to come home, but where I was gonna live... I was kind of scared to be honest with you. Cause once you do some time, or you're always in placements, you get used to that kind of stuff."

*Interviewer:* "Right."

*Youth:* "And so you're just so used to it, and then when... you're not ready for it, you know, cause you don't know if you're gonna mess up or cause everyone says, 'I'm gonna change. I'm gonna change.'" But it's a different ballgame once you get back out there on the street."

Another youth showed a familiar pattern of initial eager anticipation followed by increasing difficulty living in his previous environment.

"When I came back, like I was more excited then anything... I don't know, 'cause I was back somewhere where I felt comfortable. But it was kind of like difficult coming back because I was around the same things, the same type of people, the same type of environment... It's not reality to take somebody out from, you know, where they live, and send them off somewhere and then bring them back and expect them to survive in that environment, so I had a difficult time, like being around like my friends, or, you know, just going to the store, anything, you know... and then to expect me to survive through all that, when I hadn't been through it, or even

tested the waters, I just got thrown out, I don't know.”

Many of the youth who had difficulty coming back to the same environment perceived themselves as not “strong enough” to withstand the pressures of familiar environments. One youth reflecting upon this by stating: “I think like I said before, it depends on the person. Because I wasn't strong enough to do it, and maybe that's because I didn't learn all that I could [at the program], but if you're a very strong person, I think you could do it. But it's really hard though, coming back into the same situation... and been out there so long... cause you can't really use like the things the way they teach you to cope with things like within the facility... like it's hard to use those out here... You'd have to be a really, really strong person to do it.”

Tellingly, one youth who didn't feel coming back to Utah was particularly difficult, when asked if it was hard to be back with his old friends stated, “Not really, because when I came back I was not put in that environment. I was put in [a small town] instead of [a suburb], you know and that made a big difference.”

The difficulty of re-entry into the community was increased without a supportive structure as explained by the following youth.

“[My case manager and out-of-state program] could do more, cause I just spent, all together I was locked up three and a half years. That's three and a half years that I lost and you know, now I'm supposed to just re-adapt. And I think that the first little while I did good... then all of a sudden I just got thrown out there again where I had nothing. My family was there, but they weren't... The only thing I had was a girl that I thought I, that I was in love with, but you know, that led me to losing scholarships and everything else cause I had to fend for myself.”

Another youth drew a contrast between the intensive structure he was under while in the program with his experience upon release stating, “It was difficult [after the programs] because I was so used to, like, if I was doing something bad, someone would point it out to me, ‘You're doing this bad.’” For this and similar youth, their newly found freedom appeared to be confusing and difficult to handle.

Other youth felt new behaviors and thinking patterns learned at the program didn't generalize to “the outside.” As one offender reported, “...it's really hard though, coming back into the same situation, and just being in the city life all of a sudden after you've been in the country, and been out there so long, and just learn[ed] to deal with things, new methods, cause you can't really use like the things they teach you to cope with things within the facility... like it's hard to use those out here. You don't use them for a lot of situations, so it's pretty hard.”

Despite feeling motivated to continue the positive changes started while in an out-of-state program, many of these youth appeared to give up after sometime in their old environment. They persevered for at least several months and some up to a year. As one youth recalled, “My first couple months, I did good out here. I came back and for like three months I had a job. I was staying out of trouble. I wasn't hanging out with none of my friends... I was doing what I

had to do, you know. Then all of a sudden just one day, I started hanging out with them again, getting high, and that's when everything went down hill.”



## Discussion of Results

The current analysis shows that the major rationale for placing youth into out-of-state programs is as an alternative to secure care. However, re-offense rates for youth placed out-of-state are higher than those who are sent to a secure care facility. While out-of-state offenders have a lower rate of re-offense than offenders sent to community placement, this finding appears to be due to out-of-state youth spending four times as many days removed from the community in the 22 months following their placement start.

While these findings are not encouraging, interviews with the youth placed in out-of-state programs illuminated several strategies that would reduce re-offending after release. Offenders interviewed for this study point to three factors required for an intervention to be successful in changing criminal behavior including the following:

- Making a decision to change;
- Using program components, particularly educational and vocational training; and
- Participating in aftercare that bolsters motivation to continue using new behaviors and allows implementation of skills learned at the program.

These three aspects are considered below in terms of how they might be used by DYC and out-of-state programs that contract with the division to increase the effectiveness of these programs. Several additional policy recommendations are also explored.

### Decision to Change

As reported, many offenders stated that making a willful decision to change was a necessary foundational factor in changing their delinquent behavior. While personal will is not a topic that juvenile justice practitioners overtly focus on when planning programs and services, many practitioners implicitly recognize this fact. Further, as some youth pointed out, until a juvenile is open to change, program interventions are often successfully resisted. Over the past decade, efforts to formally develop interventions designed to increase motivation to change have been used to combat several chronic behavioral and mental health problems (Prochaska, Diclemente, & Norcross, 1992). Intentional efforts to increase an offender's motivation to change using similar strategies could increase the effectiveness of subsequent programming.

Research has also shown that development of a caring relationship is vital to engaging a person in the process of change (Gaston, 1990). Out-of-state programs where youth feel themselves to be in danger will most likely release offenders who have learned to comply rather than change. Characteristics of such programs include staff who are perceived as abusive or untrustworthy and the use of peer confronting as a means for gaining status over or getting even with other program participants. Proponents of PPC approaches have found that "mature" programs are characterized by lower rates of confrontation (Brendtro &

Ness, 1992).

As the decision to change appears to be preceded by a period of insight into the consequences of delinquent behavior, interventions designed to bring out such an awareness would be beneficial. A review of effective juvenile interventions found that the most effective programs for incarcerated youth were those that provided interpersonal skills and insight into their own behavior (Lipsey, 1992). PPC approaches are designed to teach both interpersonal skills and insight but the degree to which this can happen in the hostile environment experienced by many offenders placed out-of-state is questionable.

### Program Skills

PPC program proponents state that youth in these types of programs are successful because they learn skills such as pro-social behavior and taking responsibility. However, program participants in this study perceived educational and vocational training as more helpful in successfully adapting to life after program release. Some even felt that their experience in a PPC program had made change more difficult as they perceived themselves to have grown more aggressive because of constant confrontations of the program.

This finding notwithstanding, many youth reported buying into the philosophy of PPC. These youth reported leaving the program with a desire to avoid future illegal activity. It is possible that the value of PPC lies in using it as a method to increase the will to change and that other program elements, such as educational and vocational training, provide the skills necessary to continue behavior changes after program release.

To maximize the benefits of PPC, professionals have suggested the use of PPC in conjunction with other interventions such as substance abuse programs (Katsiyannis, & Archwamety, 1997; Lee, 1995). Juvenile offenders have been found to have high rates of drug and alcohol abuse (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2001), which is strongly correlated with serious delinquency (Johnson et al. 1993, Huizinga, Loeber, Thorn Berry, and Cothorn ACo-occurrence of Delinquency and Other Problem Behaviors p. 6 from national youth survey?). While the out-of-state programs appear to have high quality educational and vocational training, quality chemical education and treatment appears to be insufficient at all programs analyzed in this study.

In addition to increasing chemical dependency interventions, adding interventions that increase both family contact and insight into family issues would be helpful. Many youth interviewed for this study noted that family is a powerful force on success or failure rates. This finding is not new. As Zimpfer (1992) has noted in a review of the literature on group treatment approaches for juvenile delinquents, as early as 1972 researchers have asserted that programs which attempt to provide delinquents with a new pro-social referent group are likely to fail if no effort is made to deal with the family from which the offender comes. Maintaining family ties while in a placement and establishing favorable family situations upon release are essential for positive reentry and reduced recidivism (Wright & Wright, 1994; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997).

Given this feedback, some PPC programs have initiated discussion of family of origin issues in the group process hour (Lee, 1995).

### Aftercare

This study shows that many offenders find transition from an out-of-state program to their former environment too difficult to successfully accomplish on their own. Even offenders who were motivated to change and came back to Utah with skills that would help them negotiate their former environments more effectively, reported that old ways and patterns came back quickly. Without intensive aftercare, the value of a long-term out-of-state placement is dubious. A recent review by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2001) argues, “Knowing how difficult it is for all individuals to make major changes in complex behavior patterns, it should not be surprising that juvenile offenders may need assistance if they are to avoid re-offending. Even for those who received appropriate treatment programs while incarcerated, change may be difficult to maintain when they return to their old environment” (p. 194). Structured reintegration programs, aftercare, can help maintain in-program gains (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Armstrong & Altschuler, 1994) has developed a recommended intensive aftercare program which includes the following principal components:

- Prepare youth for progressive responsibility and freedom in the community.
- Facilitate youth-community interaction and involvement
- Work with both the offender and targeted community support systems, such as families, peers, schools, and employers, to facilitate the youth’s constructive interaction with these groups and gradual community adjustment.
- Develop needed resources and community support.
- Monitor and ensure successful reintegration into the community.

Youth placed out-of-state would likely have better success if an intensive, structured re-integration plan was implemented for every offender. Aftercare should begin while an offender is in the placement by developing an aftercare plan, one that relates to the known risk and protective factors for re-offense (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998). Obviously, such a plan goes beyond case manager contact. Key areas that need to be addressed include the family, pre-program peers, continued schooling or work, and drug relapse (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1998). The personnel that will assume responsibility for aftercare, case managers and program providers, should work directly with the residential placement staff to ensure continuity of care.

### Additional Policy Considerations

In addition to the above considerations, results of the current study highlight the urgent need for Utah officials to insist that each program have a

clear system for monitoring youth and staff physical incidents. Proponents of PPC have long accepted that it is a type of intervention with a high potential for abuse, both physical and emotional. Youth sent out-of-state can easily become youth who fall under the radar of a case manager. A system that clarifies for Utah officials how each program is currently operating in terms of critical incidents or other physical occurrences will increase the ability of state officials to ensure the well being of the youth at these programs. The evaluators believe that the system shown to them at Rites of Passage would serve as a good template for other programs. Programs that cannot provide ongoing information on the frequency and type of physical incidents involving every staff and youth do not have reliable methods for identifying problem staff, youth or situations. Consequently, Utah officials do not have a reliable way of ensuring the safety of the youth they commit to these programs.

Utah officials should also insist that the case files of each program clearly specify what programming a youth receives while placed. Programs that provide one-size fits-all type templates to record their planning and intervention strategies leave Utah officials in the dark as to what services the program has actually provided. Further, analysis of the most effective program ingredients is not possible. In a very real sense, if the actual services a program provides to an individual youth remains unknown, then it is impossible to know what works and for whom. Specifying the actual services a youth received, in terms of intervention type, frequency, and length is the only way that practitioners will know what parts of a program are most potent. The current study shows this point to be crucial. Proponents of PPC programs believe that these programs provide a unique intervention. As this study has shown, former program participants believe that the quality educational and vocational training, not PPC, was the most effective ingredient in assisting them to change their lives. Which point of view is correct is arguable without clearly specifying what the actual program is that youth receive. An individualized system for recording the actual services received can help solve this difficulty. It also will show providers ways to improve their services. The evaluators recommend the system developed by Rites of Passage that specifies detailed information on what services were received for each individual youth. For example, case files from this program specified the number and type of family contacts and recorded the quality of these contacts from a list of choices. If this type of detail were provided for all services received, Utah officials would know better what their money has bought and evaluators could more accurately specify which intervention appear to be most effective.

Beyond these considerations, a system for tracking the recidivism of juvenile offenders into the adult system is a necessity if the division is to obtain the most complete and accurate picture of the effects of it's programs on the youth it serves. While the evaluators are continuing to gather data in the criminal justice system on the offenders presented in this study, this has proved a difficult task. Policymakers will continue to be forced to make decisions based upon incomplete data without a common identifier or even a standardized method of access between the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

## Conclusion

Out-of-state placements were intended as an alternative to secure care. The current analysis shows that re-offense rates for youth placed out-of-state are higher than those who are sent to a secure care facility. While out-of-state offenders have a lower rate of re-offense than community placement offenders, this reduction most likely stems from the fact that out-of-state youth are incapacitated in a placement approximately four times longer than those in community placements. Time incapacitated, regardless of type of placement, appears to be the most important factor in re-offense rate. Although out-of-state placements employ a distinctively different approach to intervening with juvenile delinquents, no evidence exists to support the contention that this approach is more effective than the usual treatment received in Utah. The present analysis is limited to the re-offense information available from the juvenile information system. The evaluators are continuing efforts to examine this pattern of results using a longer follow-up period in the criminal justice system database.

Programming improvements are needed in some out-of-state programs if contracting is to continue. Most urgently, an incident reporting system needs to be present at all programs in order for Utah officials to know that the youth sent to these programs are safe from abusive interventions or staff. Substance abuse programming is lacking in the current out-of-state placements but vital to more successful intervention. Lastly, absent an intensive reintegration program, youth placed out-of-state cannot be expected to maintain gains made while at these programs.



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# Appendix A- Methods

Evaluation researchers have advocated the use of wide-ranging and flexible methods of inquiry when conducting an impact evaluation (Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer, 1994). It has also been argued that the quantitative data available in most juvenile systems allows elucidation of only the most general effects, such as recidivism rates (Mears, 1998). The success of a program cannot be fully understood using current information systems. Gathering qualitative data to supplement quantitative data allows for development of more comprehensive picture of the impact of out-of-state programs. In light of the above, the current evaluation employed a mixed methods approach. Quantitative measures of re-offense and commitment rates were combined with analysis of qualitative interviews, program and DYC documents, and case files.

## Quantitative Data Gathering and Analysis

Using the Juvenile Information System database, demographic, prior charges, days under any type of court or corrections supervision, and re-offense data were gathered on all offenders receiving an out-of-state placement since 1995. Offenders sentenced to individualized out-of-state placements were excluded from analysis. This included youth who were sent to the home of an out-of-state relative, jail, detention or some other type of secure facility in another state. Additionally, 13 offenders sent to Vision Quest, a program located in Arizona, were not included as this program appears not to have been used since 1996.

Out-of-state offenders were then compared with a stratified, random sample of secure care offenders as policymakers intended out-of-state placements to be used as an alternative for this sanction and of community placement offenders as this group most closely resembled out-of-state offenders in terms of offending history and demographics. Offenders placed after secure care were excluded from the out-of-state group as these offenders would confound examination of the effects of out-of-state treatment as an alternative to secure care. The samples were stratified by year and DYC region in proportions equal to the out-of-state offender group in order to increase comparability across groups.

Two stepwise, linear regression analyses were then run using first the out-of-state placement vs. community placement groups and then the out-of-state placement and the secure care groups to predict rates of re-offense after program release. Number of charges was calculated using an episode system where only the most serious offense in a calendar day was recorded as a new offense. The follow-up period was 22 months from date of placement. A follow-up period of this length has been found on average to account for 68% of re-offense in studies with longer follow-up periods (Redondo, Sanchez-Meca, and Garrido, 1999). Group differences were accounted for on the following variables:

race, sex, age at start of placement, age at first offense, prior offenses and days incapacitated. Previous research has shown that age at first conviction and number of prior offenses has been shown to predict re-offense (Farrington & Hawkins, 1991; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; OJJDP, 1995). Age at program start is important to control for as older offenders have less opportunity time during which an offense may be committed before leaving the juvenile system. Days incapacitated is also important take into account for the same reason, that is offenders who spent more time in a placement have less opportunity time for additional offenses.

Days incapacitated were accounted for using a four level classification scheme where Level 0 included days under supervision only or in a day program, Level 1 days in a staff secure placement without 24 hour supervision, Level 2 day in a staff secure placement with 24 hour supervision, Level 3 days in a locked facility or geographically secure facility such as a wilderness program. Days at Level 0 were not entered into the model as these were considered to be equal to days not under supervision.

Variables were entered into the model in the following order: Block 1- Pre-offenses, Block 2- race, sex; Block 3- age at start of placement and age at first offense; Block 3- Days incapacitated; Block 4 Placement Group, e.g. out-of-state, community placement or secure care.

## Qualitative Data Gathering and Analysis

### *Interviews*

During site visits, the evaluators asked each the site visit coordinator to arrange approximately 4 to 6 staff that would be willing to be interviewed about the program. Two types of staff were sought for interviews: a) those who has worked with Utah youth and/or case managers. b) a cross section of staff including admissions, treatment and program directors and line staff. In addition, several interviews were requested from specific staff that the evaluators, after informal interaction, believed would broaden the range of viewpoints sampled. This approach, called relevant sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994), appeared to work well in gathering comprehensive information about a site by allowing staff to showcase their program and allowing the evaluators to ensure the picture presented by staff interviewees was an accurate depiction of the current program.

In addition to adult interviews, 70 interviews were obtained from the 147 juvenile offenders who were either currently at an out-of-state placement (16 youth) or had been placed in an out-of-state placement after 1995 and could be located in Utah.

Informed consent and assent was obtained from all participants. Interviews were audio recorded with the exception of staff at Glen Mills who declined to be taped and offenders in the State Prison in Draper where tape recorders were not allowed to be taken into the facility. In these cases, written notes were taken. Four research assistants conducted all of the interviews.

Interviewers were provided with a question template, however, not all offenders were asked all questions. The primary purpose of interviewing offenders was because the researchers believe their perspectives, while often overlooked, can be quite informative for understanding program impacts. Given this rationale, the interviewers encouraged the youth to talk about the most important elements of their experience.

Interviewers were asked to have the youth elaborate on topics that appeared to hold the most significance for them. This approach appears to have produced interesting, and at times, surprising results.

Two professional transcriptionists transcribed all interviews. Interviews were analyzed with Atlas-ti 4.2, a qualitative computer software program, using a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1988). This type of analysis is conducted by classifying responses into themes that comprehensively represent all offenders' responses to every question. The themes are then analyzed in terms of their relation to other themes resulting in families of themes that are related in terms of topic. This process is reiterated until an overall structure is created that captures the offender's experiences as told during the interviews. Direct quotations, when used, have been edited for clarity and to remove identifying information.

### *Casefiles*

The casefiles of all youth placed in each program were collected during site visits, with the exception of education information from Glen Mills to which the evaluators were not allowed access. Information was obtained from a total of 290 casefiles. Information from these files on the following variables was rated by two research assistants: Reasons for placement, reason for discharge, status at discharge, chemical dependency treatment received, restitution hours completed. Attempts were made to analyze contact frequency with family and school performance, however, due to missing data and diverse methods of calculating school performance, the data were deemed unreliable and therefore not reported.

The degree of agreement between raters was assessed using Cohen's Kappa and found to be sufficient ranging from .791 to .768 for all variables except chemical dependency treatment received (.458). This variable was reanalyzed, after further rater training, resulting in .614 degree of agreement between raters.

### *Survey of Reasons for Out-of-State Placement*

The following email survey inquiring as to the reasons offenders are sent out-of-state and case managers experiences with out-of-state programs was sent to all case managers.

As you are probably aware, The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Consortium is conducting a study of out-of-state placements. As a casemanager you have probably had an opportunity to consider a youth for out-of-state placement. We are interested in the reasons you would send a youth to an out-of-state program. It would be appreciated if you would take the time to answer the question below and send your reply via email to [mdavis@socwk.utah.edu](mailto:mdavis@socwk.utah.edu). We are interested only in out-of-state programs, that is Rites of Passage, Tarkio, Glen Mills, Clarinda Academy, and Forrest Ridge- NOT individual placements with other programs or a relative. Your responses will be kept confidential. The results will be used as part of our report to Youth Corrections.

In your opinion, why would you send a youth to an Out-of-State placement?

A- You have had previous success with out-of-state programs.

B- Utah lacks comparable services.

- C- As an alternative to Secure Care.
- D- A specific type of youth fits out-of-state programs.
- E- Other. Please describe in your response.

If you care to comment on any pro or cons that you see with out-of-state placements your feedback will be incorporated into the report.

In your reply simply type the letter that corresponds to your answer followed by any comments. We appreciate your help. The report will be available on the web in approximately two months. We will send you an email notification.

Survey responses are reported as the percentage responding to each item. Response to item E and comments were analyzed with Atlas-ti.

### *Program Documents*

Promotional materials, staff training materials, and written information given to offenders was collected from each program. DYC audits of each program were also obtained. These documents were used to orient the researchers and inform preliminary analyses.

# Appendix B- Interview protocols

## Interview for Juveniles Placed Out-of-State

We are trying to understand what your experience was like when you were placed out of Utah so that the court and corrections can understand what the out-of-state programs are like for kids. So, I would like to know about your experience at the programs (and also what happened when you came back to Utah). Remember, I do not work for the court system and so your answers are confidential, which means your probation officer, judge or parents will not be told what you tell me.

*What is your ethnic (race) background?*

### **GENDER?**

Male or Female

Situation that lead to placement

**NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS** \_\_\_\_\_

*What happened that lead to you being placed out of state?  
Why in their eyes did they get sent.*

*How did leaving the state seem?*

Experience at program

Go over experience at each program if more than one placement  
Focus on experience at program, curriculum and treatment philosophy

*What kind of program is this?*

*Describe what you did during a normal average day?  
Be detailed, e.g. so you woke up and then what...*

*What aspects of the program helped you?  
Helped the youth either at the program*

*What do you think/feel about the program? the staff?  
How were you treated in the program?  
Interactions with staff (negative authoritarian, friendly mentor)*

*Did anyone make a significant impact on you there?  
Staff, other youth*

*How was it being with youth from other states? What did you think of the other kids there?  
More hard core or less*

*How did the program differ from ones that you have been in Utah?  
This is an important question! We are looking for a rationale on why these programs are be used.  
Have the youth give concrete examples of differences or similarities naming the program in Utah.*

*If you were a case manager would you send a kid to this program?*

Experience after coming back to Utah

*Did you complete the program?*

*How long have you been back?*

*Are you currently being seen by a case manager or someone from the court/corrections?*

*What have you had to do since coming back from the program?*

We are looking for aftercare components e.g. programs/supervision. Need to have youth define aftercare experience in terms of programs involved with, type and frequency of contact and length so that is may be categorized into excellent, good, poor, etc...

*Have you had contact with anyone from the out-of-state program? Who? What kind of contact?*

*What has coming back been like?*

*Is it difficult? How?*

*How did the program prepare you for coming home?*

Does the program have an aftercare component

For youth currently in a placement

*What lead to you getting placed again?*

*Why weren=t you able to stay out of another placement?*

For youth not-currently in a placement

*Why were you able to stay out of another placement?*

*What helped you to succeed?*

**Interviewer Observations**

**SUMMARIZE YOUR MAIN THOUGHTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:**

**WHAT STRUCK YOU THE MOST?**

**WHERE THERE ANY UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES/PROBLEMS?**

**OTHER PERSONS PRESENT? YES NO**

**WHO AND WHY?**



- \_\_\_\_\_The youth I see need psychotherapy or psychotherapeutic medication.
- \_\_\_\_\_The youth I see need educational or vocational training.
- \_\_\_\_\_The youth I see need to be held responsible for their actions.
- \_\_\_\_\_The public needs to be protected from the youth I see.

Is there another major area that the youth you see need help with that isn't covered by the statements above?

If yes, what?

How could the effectiveness of your program be increased?

**Interviewer Observations**

**SUMMARIZE YOUR MAIN THOUGHTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:  
WHAT STRUCK YOU THE MOST?**

**WHERE THERE ANY UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES/PROBLEMS?**

**OTHER PERSONS PRESENT? YES    NO  
WHO AND WHY?**

## Appendix C- Offender Reports of Physical and Emotional Abuse

It has been posited that offenders placed out-of-state might have an increased risk for physical abuse as the geographical distance reduces the likelihood of effective public scrutiny (Hall, Barker, Parkhill, Pilotta, & White, 1982, p. 2). While interviewing the offenders for this study, several consistent stories of abuse were reported. As reported in the body of this report, youth in all programs reported experiencing emotional abuse. A consistent pattern of physical abuse was reported only at Glen Mills. One youth at Rites of Passage and another at Clarinda Academy reported physically abusive incidents. While this evaluation was not undertaken as an examination of the conditions of confinement, the evaluators have an ethical obligation to report the accounts of these youths.

During the initial interviews, several youth mentioned incidences of physical abuse. Given this information, the interviewers were directed to have the offender explain personal experiences in detail when the subject of abuse was broached. These stories usually were recounted when offenders were asked either how staff treated them in the program or what they thought about the program. The interviewers initiated discussion of physical abuse in only three cases. One youth was re-interviewed specifically about physical abuse because the tape recorder malfunctioned in the first interview and his responses were lost. A total of seventeen offenders placed in an out-of-state program brought up incidents of what the researchers classified as physical abuse or neglect. All of these youth except two were placed at the Glen Mills School. The following is a description of their experiences.

While several different specific incidents were recounted by individual youth in varying levels of detail, one incident was mentioned by three different youth. The following is how one of these youths described the incident when asked what he thought about the Glen Mills program.

*Youth:* "It's a good program in some aspects, but I wouldn't recommend it to anybody, because the "hands-on", it's more than a "hands-on" program. They say it's just "hand-on," but it's a lot more than that. They get a lot more physical than what they tell you it's gonna be.

*Interviewer:* "How so?"

*Youth:* "Like they say it's a 'hands-on' program to where they can just grab you by your shirt and take you down literally beat you up part... most of the time... That's the only part of the program I really didn't like. And I went through one every week, so..."

*Interviewer:* "Ya. Did you ever see anyone hurt really bad? Like seriously injured from it?"

*Youth:* "The person [name of the offender], they broke his leg."

*Interviewer:* "What did they do? They broke his legs?"  
*Youth:* "Ya. Knocked him down some stairs."  
*Interviewer:* "Do you know why? What the situation was?"  
*Youth:* "Um ya, he actually.. he had to go to the refs in front of me cause I give everybody feedback if they do something wrong on Campus, so it was basically just disrespect to the staff."

Another youth recounted the following incident:

*Youth:* "The whole school. No one can touch you."  
*Interviewer:* "What about staff?"  
*Youth:* "Staff could touch you."  
*Interviewer:* "During the meetings?"  
*Youth:* "Huh-huh (yes), and they could just walk up to you and grab you by your neck, grab you...I mean...I've seen kids grabbed by their throats up against the wall. I've seen kids thrown across the gym."  
*Interviewer:* "For what reason?"  
*Youth:* "Throwing non-verbals. It's nothing."  
*Interviewer:* "Non-verbal?"  
*Youth:* "Ya. Just little, little, little things. Like probably moved...talking with their hands. They don't like that stuff out there. It's a real, real, real strict school."

This youth when asked if Glen Mills had "treatment" in addition to the education and sports that he saw as the focus of the program, said the following:

*Youth:* "Ya. They had treatment. It was harsh."  
*Interviewer:* "It was harsh?"  
*Youth:* "Oh, ya."  
*Interviewer:* "Why?"  
*Youth:* "Cause you get in one big circle, and it's...sucks...it's called "Group." And like...you would get in a circle...we all sit in circles in chairs, and whoever messes up, like gets in trouble, not doing their job...someone could sit right next to them, and just spit all up in their face, and you can't do nothing about it."

After the interview this youth provided more detail, explaining to the interviewer that at these times the students would fill their lower lips with saliva and spit on another student until his face was covered. This behavior, in the youth's eyes was considered acceptable. Once the intervention was finished the student would have to look his peer in the eye and accept the feedback by thanking him, as is the standard practice in Positive Peer Culture programs. Only after this final step could he wipe the saliva off his face without fear of being accused of "throwing a non-verbal," a program term for using body language to subtly refuse responsibility.

When youth were asked, "How did you feel about the staff?" and "did anyone in particular have a significant impact on you?," several youth stated they were physically afraid of the staff at Glen Mills. One youth described his experience in terms of a particular athletic coach who he remembered as follows:

"[Name withheld] ...that was the one I was most afraid of... He was just a

big... coach. He don't take nothing. He's like...he could snap whenever he wants. He'd always say, 'I'm \*\*\*\*', and I'm crazy. I can snap whenever I want.' And everybody would square up and just talk to him. That school sucks when it comes down to being scared like that. Because nobody wants to be scared like that. You just want to go to a school...that's what...when I first went there, it was like, 'Yeah, this is a good school. This is a good school.' And then when it gets behind like 5 o'clock to 'after hours,' when nobody else could come on campus, like the visitors and stuff, that's when it gets all... yeah, the staff really touch you from there, and stuff like that."

Another youth recalled a staff member he felt "had it out for him" stating, "when I got physical restrained, I was wiping my face with a hand towel, and the staff didn't like it, and said "What did you do?" I said "I wiped my face." "Well, don't do that in my Townhouse. All right." I said, "Yes, Excuse me" and I sat back down. I hit my arm instead of my head. He said, "What have I been telling you? Oh, we have a smart ass in here now, huh? Someone take this fucker in the bathroom again and scrub it." He said it like that, you know, and so there was (inaudible) the guy sent me in the bathroom, gave me a scrubber and water. I said, "Man, I ain't scrubbing, you're gonna have to make me scrub." So the guy runs out and tells staff and comes back...and so the staff member comes in and starts poking me in my chest... He's like, "You listen to me, you little mother fucker, you're gonna scrub or you know, you're gonna get dealt with." And he said, "You understand me?" And I said, "No, I don't understand you. You can send me back to Salt Lake, I don't want to be here anyway." He's like, "You ain't going nowhere, you're gonna be my little (inaudible) I was looking at him and I like said, "I ain't nobody's bitch (?) I never gonna be nobody's." He said, "Listen mother fucker I'm talking. You're not talking." He went to hit me again, and I like swapped him a punch. That was like the wrong thing, I guess, cause he grabbed me and dropped me on a bench that was in the middle of the floor...dropped me on the bench, half my back hit the bench and half my back hit the floor...like I was...I don't know, I kind of fell hard on my thigh, then he grabbed me by my head, cause he pushed me all the way...like I'm on the floor, so he grabbed me by my head and twisted me by my head, and picked me up and throws me on the washer and dryer and then he pulled me off, and then I like fall and hit my head on the ground and everything...and then he grabbed me by my head and twisted me all the way to the other wall...and he stands me up against the wall and he starts hitting me in my chest and he's like, "You understand me now? Can you hear me now. Are you gonna scrub or what?" And I'm like "No, man. I'm not gonna scrub." He starts knocking my brains out.

Several of the youth, who recalled abuse, also differentiated between physical injuries that occurred while staff was restraining an offender and those that they perceived were not the result of physically out-of-control youth. One offender differentiated between staff abuse and restraining of youth by stating, "I mean they don't sit there and spank you on your ass or nothing, most of the time, they aimed for your chest. That's the number one place they aim for is the chest.

But if you bring your hands up above your waist, while they hit you...then they can physically restrain you and they call it physically restrain..."

Two youths currently in the program recalled, "Hearing stories" about physical abuse at Glen Mills but denied experiencing current abuse at the program. One of these currently placed youth explained his experience during the following exchange:

*Interviewer:* "How does staff treat you?"

*Youth:* "All right."

*Interviewer:* "Yeah?"

*Youth:* "Ya. Staff's all right. If you give staff respect, they're gonna give me respect, regardless of what, you know, problems or situations we been through."

*Interviewer:* "Well, what if you don't want to give staff respect?"

*Youth:* "Staff will just try, you know some staff here they talk about, you know when I was at home before I came here, they told me how the staff used to hit these guys."

*Interviewer:* "Yeah."

*Youth:* "All that crazy stuff. It wasn't even like that when I came here."

*Interviewer:* "Maybe.. Have you guys seen anything like that?"

*Youth:* "No, it's like when a kid's out of control, he'd be out of control, ready to hit staff. Staff they think, you know, restrained hitting... No, restraining is they hold him down on the ground and they just ask him, 'Are you calm? Are you calm?' That's what a restraint is, you know, it's not like they beat him up."

While this report is noteworthy, returned offenders also spoke about a process of both staff and students hiding any evidence of abuse while at the program. For example, one youth, who identified himself as a leader on campus, described how he covered up his experiences of abuse saying:

*Youth:* "They'd ask me questions and I'd lie for 'em too. I'd tell them to make the campus look like it was the best place in the world. It was the same thing every year. I had a representative every year come from somewhere and come and talk to me and ask me if the place was all right. And of course, I'd tell them 'yes,' and I (inaudible) really good program. Especially since your mind tells you to make sure they get whatever they're trying to get out of that."

*Interviewer:* "And if they asked you about abuse, do you lie?"

*Youth:* "Yes. Every time."

Another youth when asked if any legal action was taken in response to his accusations responded:

*Youth:* "You can't press charges, cause the only people, the only people that you are able to get in contact with is your family at home or the state. And you know, with your own state not believing you, there wasn't too much you could do. There was nothing I could do, I know I was, like I said, every time I told my state, it would just be me getting beat down again."

*Interviewer:* "Cause they would intercept the letters and stuff?"

*Youth:* "Well, either they would intercept the letters or I would get a hold of

my state finally and tell them what was going on and they would call back after I would tell them, "don't call up here, come up here!" They would call back up there anyway and tell them that this was happening, and this was happening and they would deny it and next thing I know I'm in trouble, getting beat down, and it was starting all over again."

*Interviewer:* "Uh huh."

*Youth:* "I don't know, I think... I think I have a few problems to take care of coming back from that program. I actually had to lie and manipulate my state, even though, just so that they would bring me back home. And I thought that was ridiculous, that I had to manipulate my way, and lie and say I was enjoying myself and that everything was great up here just so they'd bring me back home."

In an interview with a youth that was not recorded as the youth was incarcerated in a facility that prohibited audio recordings, the youth explained that at one point in his stay at Glen Mills a staff member accused him of throwing gang signs. The staff member took him into a classroom alone and beat him up, throwing him against the wall. He then proceeded to smack the youth around his ears flat handed until they bled. The man threatened to continue beating him until he confessed, so the youth gave the man a false confession in order to stop the abuse. After the incident, staff tried to cover up the abuse. They told him that his ears were bleeding because he had an ear infection. The staff then put him on "major concern" which kept him from going anywhere with out staff for two months. Another youth stated that he was "hidden" in his sleeping unit until the bruises went away. The youth claimed he was hit by staff and was left with bruises all over his body. He stated that he was kept on his unit for two months until the bruises were gone.

One youth who stated that during his stay at Glen Mills he was hit in the face by a staff member, explained that when instances such as these arose, the abuse was done behind closed doors. If anyone else was in the room, they had to turn away and stare at the wall until they were done. If you were caught looking, then you would also be "dealt with." This youth concluded by stating that you could not do anything about the abuse, you just had to deal with it.

It is noteworthy that many of these youth also believed the program at Glen Mills to be a good one if not for the abuse. As one youth put it:

"I had fun there. Yeah. I really did have fun...but the staff...just being scared of staff...like "Am I gonna mess up everyday?" That's the most thing that I hated.

When asked "If the abuse wasn't there, do you think other than that, it's a good program?" the youth responded, "Yes. Entirely." This same youth went on to say, "Oh, just basically they've got a lot of people that are good. Like the person was the [Campus Director]. I simply don't believe that he knows about half the people getting beat up like that."

Several youth believed this abuse had long term effects on their well being. When asked, "If you were a Case Manager, would you send someone [to Glen Mills]?" the youth responded:

*Youth:* "No."

*Interviewer:* "No? How come?"

*Youth:* "Because the way they take care of things, I (inaudible) that is, they put their hands on you and whoop you till you completely change (inaudible) no more... I went there when I was 14 years old, so I was quite young and I stayed there till I was almost 18, 17, so at that time, everything I learned, I got really aggressive after being there."

Another youth stated, "I can't accept a person's love and I mean some of it has to do with me growing up in my family and then you know, I think Glen Mills had a good part to play in it. You know, I had people out at Decker Lake who were helping me, you know, showing me that they cared. They would show me through different ways. When I went to Glen Mills it all flipped on me. They were putting me down and everything, and made me more defensive toward life and more you know... I think it may have made me more aggressive, I don't know. That's the things I want to talk to someone about."

A third youth's comments echoed the previous offender's perceptions of increased aggression after leaving Glen Mills. Disturbingly, this offender also stated, "But coming from there ...felt like you were an E-Man, for one, cause you got beat up so much by men, you come home and you get beat up by anybody else, it don't feel like nothing. So you started thinking constantly like that."

Two youth reported what they felt was abuse at Rites of Passage and Clarinda Academy. By the youth's accounts, these incidents occurred when staff was physically restraining an offender. The Rites of Passage youth stated he had not seen the actual incident "but I've heard."

*Interviewer:* "You heard? What have you heard?"

*Youth:* "Cause when I was out there, I guess, in the desert I guess one of the kids was talking back to one of the staff members and so he got all mad and restrained him like he just kept on talking crap about him or something like that and so like he restrained him too hard and broke his arm."

The incident reported from a Clarinda youth was similar in that it occurred in the context of physical restraint. This youth reported seeing another offender, who had shoulder problems and had previously had pins placed in his shoulder, being restrained by staff. The staff was aware of his condition however they did not take any special care in the injured area. They popped his shoulder out of place and, according to the youth, were so rough that they ripped the pins out of his shoulder.

When the youth who reported experiences that they considered abusive were asked if they were aware of any disciplinary action that had occurred in any of these alleged events, the youth at Rites of Passage stated that the staff members "were fired" and the youth from Clarinda stated that he believed the incident was reported but didn't know what action had been taken. When Glen Mills youth were asked if they were aware of any disciplinary action that had occurred in any of these alleged events, one offender, echoing the comments of several others, stated, "No. Nobody...everybody's basically scared to say anything against Glen Mills. It's the big thing on campus, cause they'll, if you were to say something and they find out about it they can call an open SID and they can actually do "hands on" for that, so nobody really says much against them."

The potential for staff abuse in any program designed to stop acting out behavior is high. Programs using a Positive Peer Culture approach have been cited by proponents as being particularly at-risk for such abuse (Brendtro and Ness, 1992). The question, as posed by Brendtro and Ness is “What do they do here when somebody gets totally out of control?” (p.172). The National Association of Peer Group Agencies (NAPGA) has established quality assurance principles to guard against abusive staff actions that include taking a caring, non-punitiveness where acting out offenders are provided the least intrusive management. These principles mirror longstanding standards of care in most human service professions. The NAPGA also advocates for programs to develop a vigilant abuse monitoring system in for the programs to protect programs from becoming punishment or retributive in orientation.

The evaluators were impressed by the system used by Rites of Passage where trends in the frequency, location, intensity, nature of incidents, and actors involved are collected that allow administrators to create a picture of how staff physical intervene. Such a system can allow administrators to identify staff, events, and locations that have a high rate of physical interventions by staff and subsequently, are times where the risk of physical abuse is increased.



## Appendix D Summary Statistical Tables

For the interested reader, summary statistical tables from the regression analyses conducted to predict re-offense are presented in this appendix.

**Table D.1 Summary Statistics for Linear Regression Predicting Re-offense for Secure Care vs. Out-of-State Placement**

Step and Factor	Partial	$\beta$	R2	$\Delta R2$
Step 1			.02	.02*
Prior Offenses	.148	-.0018		
Step 2			.023	.003*
Race	-.068	-.108		
Sex	.105	.288		
Step 3			.12	.096*
Age at Program Start	-.295	-.244		
Age at First Offense	.042	-.0018		
Step 4			.127	.007*
Incapacity Level 1	.054	.00006		
Incapacity Level 2	-.008	-.00002		
Incapacity Level 3	-.045	-.00003		
Step 5			.137	.010*
Placement Type (Secure Care or Out-of-State)	.109	.184		

\* p > .05. \*\* p > .01

**Table D.2 Summary Statistics for Linear Regression Predicting Re-offense for Community vs. Out-of-State Placements**

Step and Factor	Partial	$\beta$	R2	$\Delta R2$
Step 1			.034	.034**
Prior Offenses	.203	-.005		
Step 2			.058	.024**
Race	-.035	-.101		
Sex	.143	-.577		
Step 3			.173	.115**
Age at Program Start	-.267	-.366		
Age at First Offense	.008	-.00059		
Step 4			.297	.125**
Incapacity Level 1	.075	-.0001		
Incapacity Level 2	.035	-.00005		
Incapacity Level 3	.279	-.0032		
Step 5			.331	.034**
Placement Type (Community or Out-of-State)	-.219	-.825		

\*p > .05. \*\* p > .01