Evaluation of the REACH Program in Juvenile Detention

Samantha Burgett  
*Valparaiso University*, samantha.burgett@valpo.edu

Eseosasere Okundaye  
*Valparaiso University*, eseosasere.ukundaye@valpo.edu

Abby Koselke  
*Valparaiso University*, abby.koselke@valpo.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus](https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus)

**Recommended Citation**  
Burgett, Samantha; Okundaye, Eseosasere; and Koselke, Abby, "Evaluation of the REACH Program in Juvenile Detention" (2020). *Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE)*. 886.  
[https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus/886](https://scholar.valpo.edu/cus/886)

This Poster Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE) by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.
The Evaluation of the REACH Program in Juvenile Detention
Samantha Burgett, Abby Koselke, and Eseosasere Okundaye
Dr. Matthew Ringenberg
Social Work Department

Abstract
Although mentoring programs have been determined to be effective in promoting positive outcomes in youth and in decreasing delinquency, there is a significant gap in the literature in terms of implementation and evaluation of mentoring programs within juvenile detention facilities. The aim of this study is to measure the effectiveness of the REACH Program, a violence prevention and delinquency intervention curriculum which the REACH curriculum is centered around four key program components: 1) Self-esteem enhancement, 2) Decision-making skills, 3) Setting post-release goals, and 4) Sense of support in working to achieve their goals. By surveying each child, the researchers have been able to determine the effectiveness of the program in providing youth with positive skills that decrease their likelihood of recidivating. This research project not only provides a template for an effective juvenile delinquency intervention program but also may alter the life course of the youth who participate in the program. Successful implementation, evaluation, and promotion of the REACH Program may provide other juvenile detention facilities outside of Indiana with an effective model and curriculum that could be implemented within their own detention facilities in order to decrease recidivism rates and strengthen their curriculums as well.

Hypotheses:
1) Youth will report higher self-esteem after participating in the REACH program while in detention
2) Decision-making skills, 3) Setting post-release goals, and 4) Sense of support in working to achieve their goals after participating in the REACH program while in detention
3) Youth will report a better understanding of their own educational and career goals after participation in the REACH program while in detention

Methods
- Paper pre-survey implemented before each resident began participating in REACH and paper post-survey implemented bi-weekly on Fridays
- Generalizable Population: Youth in Juvenile Detention Centers
- Target Sample: Youth in Porter County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC)
- Permissions: Program was approved and mandated by director of JDC and an assent form was provided to youth, giving them the option to have their data included in the study

Challenges: Some youth were not able to complete the program due to early releases, phase losses, suspensions, or court hearings. Since the surveys were self-reported, the results are dependent upon participants’ moods, which can be influenced by external forces occurring both inside and outside of the juvenile detention center.

Total Respondents: 30 youth, but 1 omitted for data analysis

Results
Table 1: Paired Samples t-test depicting positive change in self-esteem and sense of support and negative change in decision-making skills between pre- and post-tests.

Background Information
The mission of the REACH program is to help youth recognize opportunities, educate themselves, achieve their goals, change society for the better, and help others to do the same.

Mentoring at-risk youth often leads to:
- Positive social and emotional, cognitive, and identity development
- Reinforcement of prosocial actions and positive identity development (Kelley, 2018)
- Significant changes in terms of mentorship programs within juvenile detention centers
- Few to no studies available (Dappen et al., 2006)

Studies show numerous benefits to mentoring:
- Study of at-risk youth showed youth who experienced negative outcomes while being monitored were less likely to become labeled delinquent (Miller et al., 2013)
- Significant gap in terms of mentorship programs within juvenile detention centers

Table 2: Frequency table depicting over half of all REACH program participants reporting increased self-esteem, decision-making skills, understanding of post-release goals, and sense of support in working to achieve their goals.

Table 3: Correlation Table depicting correlations between variables (survey questions) and d-scores (difference between pre- and post-survey responses).

Conclusion
- At least half of all REACH participants reported improvements in their self-esteem, decision-making skills, understanding of their own goals, and/or sense of support in working to achieve their goals.
- Significant changes among five variables between participants’ pre- and post-surveys.
- “I do things well”
- “I am no good”
- “I think before acting”
- “I have support.”
- “I do not have support.”
- 5 correlations between variables (survey questions) and d-scores (differences between pre- and post-survey responses).
- Participants who reported low self-respect on pre-test had increased likelihood of reporting increased benefits after participating in the REACH program.

References