



Research at a glance

Analysis of the Impact of the Restorative Opportunities Program on Rates of Revocation

Offenders participating in restorative justice sessions while on conditional release have decreased rates of revocation.

Why we did this study

Restorative justice (RJ) programs have been increasingly implemented in Canada and other jurisdictions in recent years. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) administers an officially recognized RJ intervention - the Restorative Opportunities (RO) program - that provides victim-offender mediation services. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of the facilitated face-to-face meeting process in improving outcomes for participants released to the community.

What we did

We examined the outcome of 122 offenders who took part in a face-to-face meeting in the RO program and 122 matched offenders in the comparison group, for a total sample of 244 offenders. A face-to-face meeting could take place while incarcerated or under conditional release in the community. Survival analyses were conducted to compare rates of revocation for any reason (including for a reoffence) and time to revocation between groups. Results were analyzed separately based on whether the sessions occurred while incarcerated or while on conditional release in the community.

What we found

For participants who had RO face-to-face meetings while incarcerated, there was no significant difference between participants and non-participants on rates of revocation, although the trend over time was that RO participants did better on release. When RO meetings were held in the community post-release,

participants were significantly more likely to spend a longer period of time under community supervision and were less likely to be revoked than their matched counterparts (see Table below). Specifically, offenders without RO involvement were six times more likely to experience a post-release revocation.

What it means

The primary aim of RJ programs, including CSC's RO program, is to engage victims, offenders, and the community to better understand the harm caused by the actions of the offender. The findings from the current study provide support for RO program participation, particularly when meetings were offered in the community. The results also suggested that taking part in RO while in the institutions may reduce revocation rates over time, although this finding was not statistically significant. Future research should consider examining the perspectives of all parties involved in RJ initiatives to appreciate the full impact of these programs.

For more information

Beaudette, J. N., & Thompson, J. (2015). *The impact of offender participation in the Restorative Opportunities Program* (Research Report, R-364). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service Canada.

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Rates of Revocation for Participants and Matches (%)

	Face-to-face before release		Face-to-face after release	
	Participants N = 81	Matches N = 81	Participants N = 41	Matches N = 41
Within 6 months	10	10	5	20
Within 12 months	19	21	10	54
Within 18 months	24	28	12	54
Within 24 months	26	31	12	59