

Impact of Crime on Victims (IOC) Curriculum Development Project:
Final Evaluation Report

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Introduction

This report summarizes the evaluation research conducted on the Impact of Crime on Victims Curriculum Development Program. The underlying project here involved the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Office of Victim and Survivor Services (CDCR), updating and revising of an Impact of Crime of Victims (IOC) curriculum it originally developed in 1984. This curriculum essentially educates inmates about the impact of crime on victims. The curriculum development project and this evaluation were supported by a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice (OVC).¹

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The basic logic-model for the program posits that insight gained from these classes will contribute to increased knowledge and sensitivity on the part of participants and, potentially, reduce offending behavior. Since the original program was first commenced in California approximately 23 years ago, the same or similar IOC programs have been adopted by some facilities in as many as 73% of state correctional departments in the U.S., according to a 2004 National Institute of Correction survey (National Institute of Corrections, 2004). Clearly there are significant resources being expended nationwide for IOC programs and these endeavors warrant both an undated revision of the curriculum and systematic evaluation.

As stated, CDCR was selected by the OVC to lead this curriculum revision project. After a widely circulated solicitation to participate as a project site, a total of four states (California plus 3 others) agreed to participate in this curriculum revision project. Those states, in addition to California, were Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia. One aspect of state participation in this curriculum development project was their participation in an evaluation of the IOC curriculum. This was required by OVC and is consistent with the need for evidence-based programming in corrections. The University of New Haven's Dr. Mario T. Gaboury and Dr. Christopher M. Sedelmaier were asked, and agreed, to provide evaluation services to this IOC curriculum development project. Dr. Gaboury had extensive experience in designing and conducting the evaluation of a similar IOC program in the State of Connecticut and Dr. Sedelmaier has an expertise in statistical data analysis and is assisting with data analyses related to that project as well.

Despite the expenditure of resources nationally on IOC programs noted above, very little evaluation research has been conducted on these programs and, until recently, virtually

nothing has been published in peer reviewed journals. The evaluations and studies that have been conducted, which have been generally supportive of the program's efficacy, have been of wide-ranging quality. In 2004, perhaps the very first peer-reviewed article published in this area was produced by the Principal Researcher (Dr. Mario Gaboury) and his colleagues at UNH as they evaluated a Connecticut Department of Correction sample (Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn, 2004). This previous research provided guidance and, in large-part, the methodology employed for that study will be replicated in the current study. The University of New Haven's Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved this four-state research project, and appropriate human subjects approvals were received from the participating states as well. Prior to summarizing this four-state research a brief review of the literature will be provided.

Brief History and Current Status of Victim Awareness Offender Education Programs

IOC Classes, often also called Victim awareness classes, were initiated as a pilot program for juveniles by the California Department of Corrections in 1984-1985. The Department later developed it into the full curriculum-based program in 1986. This curriculum has formed the basis for virtually all such programs in the U.S. since its inception. Currently programs variously address juvenile and adult offenders in both institutional and community settings.

The motivation underlying the initial development of victim impact and awareness programs was recognition that many offenders were completely unaware and unmoved by the impact of their crime on victims (California Department of Corrections - Youth Authority, 2002; English, 2005; English and Crawford 1989). The development of offender

sensitivity to the plight of victims was and is a central focus of IOC Classes. According to an OVC publication, the goals of Awareness Classes include the following:

- (1) Teach offenders about the short-and long-term trauma of victimization;
- (2) Increase offenders' awareness of the negative impact of their crime on their victims and others;
- (3) Encourage offenders to accept responsibility for their past criminal actions;
- (4) Provide victims and victim service providers with a forum to educate offenders about the consequences of their criminal behaviors, with the hope that it will help to prevent future offending;
- (5) Build linkages between criminal and juvenile justice agencies and victims and victim service organizations (US Department of Justice, 2005).

Typically, these institutionally-based corrections IOC Classes programs occurred almost exclusively in prisons and other detention settings, were developed with comprehensive curricula, were not limited to one type of offender (as the, for example, the MADD Victim Impact Panels are in their singular focus on drunk driving), were 40-hours in length occurring over a 10-12 week period, and covered many victimization topics, including property crime, violent crime, robbery, assault, child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, drunk driving, and gang violence, hate and bias crime, and drug-related crime (California Department of Corrections - Youth Authority, 2002). Various techniques are used to present the impact of crime on victims, including victim/survivor guest speakers; videotapes and film footage of victims; current news articles; and actual victim impact statements that address the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual impact of crime. IOC Classes also typically include "homework assignments" and a "community service project" component.

IOC classes were designed to help offenders recognize the impact of their criminal and delinquent actions on their victims, their own families, their communities, and themselves. Although these programs are generally delivered by professional correctional staff members trained as instructors, crime victims and survivors are also engaged in program

and course development, and also often serve as guest speakers. The program that is the focus of this evaluation, the VOICES program, follows the typical 40-hour model described above and is specifically based on the original model.

It should be noted that IOC classes have evolved into various types of programs across the country. According to Seymour (1989), although most programs utilize the standard 40-hour curriculum, programs in her survey ranged from a two-hour courses, to 12 one-hour modules, to the full 40-hour curriculum. In 1998, the OVC supported the development of a standardized, 40-hour curriculum entitled “Some Things Impact a Lifetime” (MADD and California Department of Corrections - Youth Authority, 1998) as an attempt to re-introduce a more standardized model for the Awareness Class curriculum. More recently, in the fall of 2005, the OVC awarded funding for the CDCR to take the lead on this national-scope project to further the work in this area, including enhanced curriculum development and program evaluation.

In 2004, the National Institute of Correction (NIC) distributed a large scale survey to the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.), all the U.S. territories and protectorates, and the federal corrections departments of the U.S. and Canada. Responses were received from a total of 50 jurisdictions, including 47 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., Guam and the Correctional Service Canada. Fully 73% of U.S. jurisdictions reported that they conducted what were termed “Victim impact education/empathy” programs in the report (National Institute of Corrections, 2004, p. 10). It should be noted that both Guam and Correctional Service Canada also indicated they conducted such Awareness Classes (National Institute of Corrections, 2004, 17). To provide a benchmark for this, seventeen years ago, Seymour (1989) conducted the first national survey in the U.S. and reported that

Awareness Classes were conducted in only approximately ten percent of the U.S. 50 states. This is a significant increase in programs in a relatively short span of time.

Despite the expansion of these programs, IOC classes have been the subject of an extremely small number of unpublished evaluation reports. A comprehensive literature review conducted in 2005 found no published peer reviewed journal articles reporting empirical findings specifically related to IOC programs, other than Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn (2004). The results of that 2004 study gave substantial support to the hypothesis that IOC Classes increase offenders' "knowledge of victimization facts", "knowledge of victims' rights", and also increased "offender sensitivity to the plight of victims". These three measures, or factors, were significantly and positively different for a treatment group of offenders who were exposed to the IOC class program as compared to a matched comparison group that was not. A fourth factor measured in that study, "victim blaming", did not appear to be significantly affected by the IOC class program. This presents an interesting area for future research, particularly as the reader will note strikingly similar results in this current four-state research project reported herein.

The Washington State Department of Corrections in the U.S. evaluated its Awareness Class program in 1990. An unpublished assessment (Stutz, 1994) followed 75 pre-release offenders who completed the program and 75 who did not. Assessment measures included a pre-/post-education attitude questionnaire (although these results were not specifically reported), re-offense rates, restitution payment, and community placement violations. There was some evidence that lower re-offense rates and higher restitution payment rates resulted from attendance in the Awareness Classes; however, comparisons of community violation rates were equivocal.

Another unpublished evaluation report was conducted in the U.S. state of Maine (Turner 2004). This study reported on a sample of 129 offenders who participated in classes offered in one correctional facility during a three month period in 2004. This research involved an array of both qualitative and quantitative measures. The qualitative results, which involved data provided by participants, staff presenters and victims, were characterized as “uniformly positive”, while the “quantitative data created an entirely different impression”, which were not positive regarding the program’s impact (Turner 2004: 13). The author recognized that the quantitative instruments employed may not have been appropriate to the task of measuring changes in attitude resulting from the program as they were actually measures used primarily to predict future criminal behavior and recidivism. It should also be noted that no direct measures of actual recidivism were used in the study.

Other research has supported the efficacy of IOC classes. Schiebstad (2003) indicated similar gains in knowledge and attitudes occurred in a graduate paper that reported on an evaluation of Awareness Classes in the state of Iowa, U.S. Putnins (1997) studied the effects of Awareness Classes on “sociomoral reasoning maturity” in delinquents. And found significant, positive differences in the group exposed to the classes as compared to controls. Putnins noted that this extends knowledge and attitude research in this area in that this moral reasoning measure is empirically related to prosocial behaviors.

With this limited research as a backdrop, and guided by the more extensive experience in evaluating the Connecticut IOC program, the current four-state evaluation methodology was developed. This is reported below.

Methods and Data

The revised IOC curriculum was administered at a total of ten participating correctional facilities in four states. Curriculum facilitators received training prior to each site's launch date to promote inter-site uniformity of content delivery. Program coordinators solicited voluntary participation from the inmate pool at each of the ten sites. Once the participant slots filled, volunteers were sought from the same inmate pools to construct comparison groups. The comparison group subjects would not be exposed to the program, but would be subjected to the same testing that the participant group subjects experienced. In each case, inmate volunteers were briefed on the project and asked to sign informed consent forms before their addition to either the participant or comparison group. While random assignment to participant and comparison groups would have been preferable from a research design perspective, institutional realities precluded this option.

Prior to the curriculum launch at each site, both curriculum participants and comparison subjects completed a 50-item questionnaire to provide baseline measurements for several factors of interest. The questionnaire is reproduced in the Appendix to this report. These factors consist of the individual's knowledge regarding victim rights; the individual's knowledge regarding facts about criminal victimization; the individual's sensitivity to the victim's plight; the individual's opinions regarding personal accountability for criminal actions; and the individual's opinions regarding the victim's personal responsibility or accountability for their victimization. The first four factors were patterned directly after the previous Connecticut evaluation (Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn (2004)). The fifth factor, accountability, was added after a content analysis of the revised curriculum revealed that this additional factor was included in the learning objectives for the

participants. Following course completion, participants and comparison subjects were once again administered the questionnaire.

Each item on the questionnaire was presented as a statement for which the respondent was asked to provide a measure of agreement on a six-point Likert-style scale. A six-point scale was chosen to remove the neutral response option. This change was requested by program administrators to discourage respondents from simply choosing a neutral response rather than actually considering the response item at hand. Reversal items were also included in the questionnaire to further encourage thoughtful consideration of response items; some items were phrased such that an indication of agreement was more desirable, while others were phrased such that indication of disagreement with the statement was more desirable.

Likert-style scales are useful for measuring intensity of opinion along a continuum, but they are not well-suited to items with a single ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ response. Items intended to measure the respondent’s knowledge regarding victims’ rights and facts about victimization have two possible outcomes – either the respondent answers correctly or incorrectly. However, these items are spread throughout the instrument mixed among more typical opinion items. In order to provide a visually consistent instrument, knowledge items retained the six-point scale format. These items were later recoded as binary-response items for analytic purposes, with the three ‘correct’ and three ‘incorrect’ options collapsed into single ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ categories.

Table 1. – Sample Breakdown by State

State	Sites	Respondents		Total
		Participant	Comparison	
California	2	34	14	48 (13%)
Ohio	3 ^a	48	37	85 (23%)
Tennessee	2	93	86	179 (49%)
Virginia	2	28	26	54 (15%)
Total	10	203	160	366 (100%)

a. One of four sites in Ohio was excluded from analysis.

Table 1 (above) provides a breakdown of usable participant and comparison cases by state. For a case to be considered ‘usable,’ it had to satisfy two criteria: both pre-test and post-test data were collected from the individual, and the individual left eight or fewer items unanswered on both data collection attempts. The eight-item cutoff was agreed upon after a small number of subjects at one of the collection sites missed a single page of the instrument containing eight response items. Furthermore, some subjects either failed to complete or chose not to complete a post-test questionnaire. These subjects were also eliminated from the final data set. While this phenomenon – sometimes referred to as ‘subject attrition’ – was a concern, it did not adversely impact the study.

Ten sites in total participated in this project. One of four participating sites in Ohio was excluded from the final analysis as it was discovered that an early draft of the questionnaire was mistakenly used at the site, rendering the data collected at that site incomparable to the data collected at the remaining nine sites. Nearly one-half of the total usable sample was supplied by the Tennessee sites. Individual state contributions precluded

reliable single-state analyses, but global analysis was still possible. Inter-site curriculum delivery was reasonably consistent with regard to timing and material covered; all program personnel received the same training and instruction at the same time, and no problems with content delivery were reported that would suggest a threat to analysis.

Table 2. Subject Group Mean Age

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Participant	201	35.65	10.39	1.32	0.188
Comparison	160	34.21	10.18		
Total	361				

Table 3. – Subject Groups by Racial Composition

Group	Participant	Comparison	Total	Phi	Sig.
White	102	81	183	.033	.822
African-American	78	71	149		
Other	10	8	18		
Total	190	160	350		

To ensure that the participant and comparison groups were demographically similar, the researchers conducted statistical comparisons of the groups based upon age (Table 2) and racial composition (Table 3). Age information was missing for one percent of subjects (n = 5), and race information was missing for four percent of subjects (n = 16). In each case, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups; any differences

between the two groups' scores on the instrument are unlikely to have been attributable to either respondent age or race.

Prior to analysis, the evaluators each categorized the fifty individual questionnaire items into one of five factors – knowledge of victim rights; knowledge of victimization facts; sensitivity to victim plight; victim blaming; and self-accountability. After rating the items separately, the evaluators met to reconcile any differences in categorization. This meeting resulted in the following single-item categorizations:

Table 4. Questionnaire Items by Position and Factor Classification

Knowledge of Rights (4)	Knowledge of Facts (18)	Sensitivity to Victim Plight (8)	Blaming (7)	Accountability (8)
16	2 26	1 ^a	7 ^a	13 ^a
25	4 27 ^a	3	8 ^a	14
34	6 31	5	11	21
45	9 ^a 33	18	19 ^a	23
	12 ^a 37	35	28 ^a	29
	15 40	38	32 ^a	36
	17 ^a 42 ^a	46	39	41 ^a
	22 48	50 ^a		47 ^a
	24 49			

a. Item eliminated from analysis – both groups scored $\geq 85\%$ correct/favorable on pretest.

Five items (items 10, 20, 30, 43, and 44) went uncategorized. Any item within the remaining forty-five that over eighty-five percent of respondents in both groups answered ‘correctly’ on the pretest were excluded from analysis (Table 4). This procedure had greater impact upon some questionnaire factors than it did upon others; the ‘Blaming’ results should be treated with caution, as all but two items were eliminated.

The scores for the remaining items were summed to create a summary score for each factor. For the two ‘knowledge’ factors, the summary score represents the number of ‘correct’ responses; for the remaining factors, higher scores represent more favorable or desirable attitudes and opinions.

Analysis

The within-group summary scores for each factor were compared using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. This test is a nonparametric analog to the two-group difference in means test sometimes referred to as the paired-sample Student’s t-test. The Wilcoxon test was chosen because Likert-style scale data are ultimately ordinal-level data; one cannot be certain that the ‘distance’ between scores for one subject is the same as the ‘distance’ for another subject. Furthermore, the Wilcoxon test is less likely to yield misleading results based upon the rigid distributional assumptions that must be satisfied for the paired-sample Student’s t-test.

Table 5. – Knowledge of Victims’ Rights

Respondents										
Participant					Comparison					
	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.
		Rank	Ranks				Rank	Ranks		
Negative	31	43.29	1342	5.235	.000 ^a	41	40.35	1654.5	0.609	.542
Ranks										
Positive	78	59.65	4653			43	44.55	1915.5		
Ranks										
Tied	94					79				
Ranks										
Total	203									

a. Results significant at $p = 0.05$.

Curriculum participants demonstrated statistically significant improvement regarding knowledge of victims’ rights (Table 5) following completion of the course. Conversely, comparison subjects appeared to be as likely to improve upon a second measurement as they were to perform more poorly upon retest – notice the similar number of positive and negative ranks.

Table 6. – Knowledge of Victimization Facts

Respondents										
Participant					Comparison					
	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.
		Rank	Ranks				Rank	Ranks		
Negative	58	91.40	5301	3.808	.000 ^a	64	60.16	3850	1.101	.271
Ranks										
Positive	119	87.83	10452			53	57.60	3053		
Ranks										
Tied	26					46				
Ranks										
Total	203					163				

a. Results significant at p. = 0.05.

Scores on the knowledge of victimization facts factor (Table 6) followed a similar pattern to those found in the victims’ rights factor. Again, the curriculum participants demonstrated a statistically significant improvement upon retest. Comparison subject scores showed no statistically significant change from the initial test.

The lack of change in comparison subjects regarding both knowledge factors was encouraging. A lack of statistically significant change should be expected among the comparison group as they received neither the course materials nor instruction that might lead to change. The comparison group’s lack of change combined with the participant

group's improvement suggests that the participants retained the factual knowledge passed along through the curriculum.

Table 7. – Sensitivity to Victim Plight

Respondents										
Participant					Comparison					
	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.
		Rank	Ranks				Rank	Ranks		
Negative	48	90.38	4338	6.013	.000 ^a	58	68.60	3979	1.072	.284
Ranks										
Positive	139	95.25	13240			75	65.76	4932		
Ranks										
Tied	16					30				
Ranks										
Total	203					163				

a. Results significant at p. = 0.05.

Program participants showed marked improvement on 'sensitivity to victim plight' scores (Table 7) while the comparison group scores did not improve statistically. This is important to note. One of the program objectives was to reinforce the idea that being victimized is a traumatic and painful experience; that more than half of the program participants showed improved scores on retest suggests that the message is getting through. Again, the lack of significant change in the comparison group is both expected and encouraging. A statistically significant improvement in the comparison group might have

suggested that the respondents were ‘gaming’ the instrument – supplying responses which they believed that the administrators wanted to hear rather than answering honestly.

Table 8. - Victim Blaming Opinions

Respondents										
Participant					Comparison					
	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.
		Rank	Ranks				Rank	Ranks		
Negative	56	79.85	4471.5	0.499	.618	47	57.68	2711	0.461	.645
Ranks										
Positive	74	54.64	4043.5			54	45.19	2440		
Ranks										
Tied	73					62				
Ranks										
Total	203					163				

Neither the participant group subjects nor the comparison group subjects demonstrated statistically significant changes in either direction regarding victim blaming opinions (Table 8). It should be noted, however, that this factor ultimately included only two response items; the other five items originally included were eliminated from the final analysis as more than 85% of subjects in each group supplied favorable responses to those items on the initial administration of the questionnaire. As such, these results should be regarded cautiously.

Table 9. – Self-Accountability Opinions

Respondents										
Participant					Comparison					
	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.	N	Mean	Sum	Z	Sig.
		Rank	Ranks				Rank	Ranks		
Negative	72	92.33	6647.5	1.089	.276	74	66.79	4942.5	2.117	.034 ^a
Ranks										
Positive	99	81.40	8058.5			53	60.10	3185.5		
Ranks										
Tied	32					36				
Ranks										
Total	203					163				

a. Results significant at p. = 0.05.

The results of the self-accountability opinion analysis (Table 9) were somewhat unexpected. While the participant group showed no statistically significant change in score, the comparison group demonstrated significantly lower scores upon retest. One possible explanation for this finding is that participation in the curriculum may have had a prophylactic effect upon the participant’s views regarding personal responsibility; rather than having indifferent or poor attitudes deteriorate over time, the curriculum may have helped the participants to maintain the status quo. The comparison subjects, lacking any exposure to messages and experiences aimed at promoting self-accountability, may be allowed to figuratively stew in prison and further rationalize their own criminal actions. Instead of at

least considering the possibility of assuming responsibility for their actions, they may slip further into a blame-shifting mindset.

In addition to the evaluating the impact of this curriculum on offenders, the reaction of “guest speakers” to these programs was sought. This needed to be completely voluntary, particularly as many speakers are victims and survivors themselves. A questionnaire, which can be found in the appendix, was developed and given to each speaker with a pre-addressed and postage-paid envelope and each was asked to consider providing feedback about their experiences in presenting to the IOC Classes. The results of the questionnaires that were returned is summarized below.

Twelve questionnaires were returned, 9 from victims/survivors and 3 from professionals/advocates. On a scale of 1 to 6, where 6= Strongly Agree and 1 = Strongly Disagree, the experiences were very good for all participants, ranging from 5.333 to 5.818:

- (1.) 5.667 – Overall Positive Experience
- (2.) 5.417 – Adequate Advance Information
- (3.) 5.818 (plus one n/a) – Safety and Security Provided
- (4.) 5.667 – Participation Well Organized and Structured
- (5.) 5.75 – Participation was Beneficial to Participants
- (6.) 5.333 (plus three n/a) – ... Beneficial to Victim Speaker
- (7.) 5.5 (plus four n/a) - ... Beneficial to Advocate Speaker

Guest speakers were asked to provide any comments they wished to add to specific items (again, the questionnaire is found in the Appendix) and there comments are noted below by item number:

- (1) “The class went very well.” “The staff are extremely hospitable, organized and friendly.” “Very positive, enhancing.” “Mrs. Kauffman went to lengths to assure this.” “I saw people (prisoners) who thought they could change and were willing to try.”
- (2) “Because I work in the system I was a little afraid to give too much information. However, it went along very well.” “They worked completely around my schedule and gave me advanced notice.” -“Mrs. Kauffman’s explanations were helpful in pulling me in a more comfortable frame of mind.”
- (3) “I work at the prison so it was not an issue.” “As an employee of the institution I know safety and security are very important.” “My personal escort, Sgt. Kauffman, made sure that I was fore-informed (?) of what to expect and was careful to have me as worry free as he could. (good job)” “I was very comfortable.” “At no time did I feel unprotected or my safety was at risk.”
- (4) “I think so.” “Very organized!” “Mrs. Kauffman was concise and informative – the transition into/out of my talk was flawless and set me up to be able to speak w/o embarrassment or fear.” “The prisoners interacted well with staff.” “Attention was given to structure, content and format. I could tell by the questions and comments of the audience.”
- (5) “The inmates were very receptive and showed concern for my loss.” “The offenders had high participation and asked very appropriate questions. The interaction between inmates was great.” “The inmates seemed glad for the opportunity to listen and ask questions – their questions made me think that they may have understood what I was trying to say.” “Good feedback with both thru eye contact and verbal response.”

“They saw real people like themselves and their loved ones and could relate to the impact or domino effect.”

(6) “It proved to be some closure for me.” “When I first started speaking I felt that it was beneficial but after 10 years it is hard.” “I am at a place where I am not so impacted by my past as I once was but I can see how it would have been beneficial to me earlier had it come up.” “I’ve already dealt with most of the issues surrounding the crime.” “It gave me a chance to do something to relieve the feelings of helplessness. It allowed me to talk about the pain. There is nothing else a person can do but talk about the pain it can’t be healed or medicated only expressed. Expression gives some release.”

(7) “The opportunity to speak w/ such an interactive group always assist me in professional and personal growth.” “As above” – (“I’ve already dealt with most of the issues surrounding the crime.”)

Additional comments were asked for at the end of the questionnaire and these comments are listed below:

“Having been a victim/survivor but given the opportunity to speak as an advocate was a great privilege for me. From the questions the students/offenders asked, for the first time I could see the pain they suffer continuously also.”

“I think this is a great program.”

“ORC has the best program across the state.”

“I will speak at any times I am needed to try to make a difference in the crime victims and survivors.”

“I feel that the inmates benefit from learning. What to say when they talk to themselves i.e.: how to turn their habitual negative thought patterns into more healthy, positive ones. Thank you for this opportunity.”

“For those individuals who are forgiving it is not very helpful. But those that are in a world of hate it is sad, maybe they could also use it to heal. I believe this program is good for both sides of the fence.”

“I enjoyed the whole experience and would love to come back anytime.” “I was very impressed with this program. I can see that it will be beneficial to all involved.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this evaluation research provide substantial support to the hypothesis that IOC programs produce increases in specific aspects of offender knowledge of and sensitivity to crime victims. Offenders exposed to the program had a significant increase in knowledge of the facts of victimization and increased knowledge of victim rights and were more sensitive to the plight of victims after completing the program, as compared with the control group. The significant finding in these three factors in this four-state study replicates the findings of an earlier study conducted on a Connecticut sample (Monahan, Monahan, Gaboury and Niesyn, 2004).

Consistent with that 2004 study in Connecticut, once again, the avoidance of victim blame (i.e., blaming the victims) did not appear to be affected by the program as the other three measures were. Although one might expect that the observed increased sensitivity to victims' plight would relate to decreases in blaming the victim, this was not seen here. It is important to note that: (1) it is very difficult to change victim blaming attitudes in general in almost any population (see, e.g., Underwood, 2004), so it is not clear that we should expect

this to be so different (or an attitude that is easier to change) in an offender population, and (2) if changes in knowledge and sensitivity (the other three factors) were enough to alter behavior (i.e. result in less offending), even if victim-blaming sentiments remained, then perhaps there is still justification for the program. The relationship between knowledge, sensitivity and victim blame clearly requires more study, as do the intermediate and longer term behavioral results of this program.

On the fifth and newly crafted factor, accountability, the unusual finding reported herein deserves some attention. Subject of course to the limitations of a study of this size and the items included in that factor, it appears that despite no positive gains on this factor for program participants, offenders who participated in the IOC program did not feel *less* accountable regarding criminal behavior, as their comparison counterparts did. Again, this finding warrants future research in this important area.

Future research should certainly focus on the intermediate and longer-term behavioral outcomes, for example, behavior while still incarcerated (e.g., disciplinary infractions) and after release (e.g., recidivism). This is being pursued in Connecticut (Gaboury and Sedemlaier, 2007), and the four states that participated in this current project are strongly encouraged to conduct follow-up work along these lines, as well.

In conclusion, at least for this first level of evaluation on this four-state sample, previous findings supporting the efficacy of IOC class programs were replicated.

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APPENDIX

Sample Selection Instructions for IOC Sites

Pre- Post-test Questionnaire and Instructions

Questionnaire Scoring Key

Victim/Survivor Guest Speaker Questionnaire

Brief Background of Researchers

Sample Selection Instructions for IOC Sites

This is the procedure for selecting subjects for the evaluation component of the IOC Curriculum Development Project. Please note that sites are only expected to use the data that is available to them, such as for matching purposes, and suggested descriptive variables for matching are provided below.

Matched-Sample Creation Process

To determine the effects that the curriculum materials have had upon the inmates involved in the program, we will need to be able to compare two groups. The first group, hereafter called the *treatment group*, shall consist of the program participants – those individuals who are receiving the curriculum for the first time. The second group, hereafter called the *comparison group*, shall consist of similar individuals who have never received the curriculum in any form – neither currently nor in the past. It is important that none of the subjects involved, either in the treatment group or in the comparison group, have a history of participation in any curricula similar to the currently drafted IOC program.

To ensure that any differences between treatment and comparison groups in the study sample may be reasonably attributed to the effects of the curriculum, the groups should be as similar to one another as possible prior to the introduction of the treatment. Ideally, this would be accomplished by randomly assigning subjects from a larger subject pool to treatment and comparison groups. In the current case, however, we have decided to construct a comparison group through a subject matching process. The importance of this process can not be stressed enough; without equivalent groups, it will be nearly impossible to determine program effectiveness. Fortunately, the subject matching process is fairly straightforward.

1. Establish The IOC Participant Group

The IOC Participant Group at each site will be constructed by soliciting voluntary participation in the program using approved scripts. It is critical at this stage that selection is not confined to the “best” candidates; one frequent criticism of earlier program research in corrections is that program coordinators selected only those candidates who would be *most* likely to succeed. In such cases, it is unclear whether the program had the desired effect, or if the participants would have been model inmates regardless of participation.

Once treatment subjects are selected for the program, several pieces of information about the subjects need to be collected. This information falls into two general categories: demographic data, providing basic information about the subjects; and personal history and assessment data, which will describe each subject’s offense, treatment needs and behavioral history within the institution. Generally, both categories should be available within each subject’s institutional records, but as stated, sites are only expected to use existing data sources.

Demographic Data

Gender (presumed male)
Race
Hispanic Ethnicity
Age
Education Level

Personal History and Assessment Data

Offense Committed (for current incarceration)
Severity of Offense
Level of Violence Involved in Offense
Sentence Length
Sentence Start Date
Mental Health Treatment Need
Substance Abuse Treatment Need
Discipline Problem History
Escape Risk
Overall Threat

This information serves two primary purposes. First, it is useful in describing the general characteristics of our program participants. Second, this information will be used for constructing the matched comparison group.

2. Construct The Comparison Group.

Once a treatment group is established through voluntary participation, a group of comparison subjects, also “volunteers” for the research component, will be constructed so that they “match” the general characteristics of the treatment group using both demographic data and personal history and assessment data.

Demographic Data Matching: To the greatest extent possible, the demographics of the comparison group should match those of the treatment group. This form of matching is used to control for any potential pre-existing differences in subject attitudes and behaviors attributable to these factors alone. As a hypothetical example: if female subjects tended to be more receptive to the treatment than were male subjects, then we would wish for both the treatment and comparison groups to have the same proportions of male and female subjects to control for gender differences. This does not necessarily mean that each group must be half male and half female – just that the gender composition of one group mirrors that of the other. At this time, all our subjects will be males.

For this step, try to develop a pool of potential comparison subjects and narrow down. It might be easiest to begin by grouping potential comparison cases by race/gender/age combinations (e.g., African-American male, 20-29). Once the comparison pool is broken into these demographic subgroups, you may continue to fine-tune the individual matches by looking at the personal history and assessment data.

Personal History and Assessment Data: Just as it is important that the comparison group reflect the demographic composition of the treatment group, it is equally important that the groups are similar with regard to subjects’ criminal histories and institutional classifications. The comparison group should closely match the

treatment group on the types of offenses that subjects committed (e.g., burglary, robbery, etc.) the severity or level of violence involved in those offenses (if this information is available), and sentence length. Again, it may be helpful to split the comparison candidates into further subgroups – for example, taking the aforementioned “African-American male, 20-29” and splitting that group into violent offenses and property offenses. As each subgroup becomes further narrowed, individuals who closely match our treatment participants should begin to appear.

To further enhance the comparability of the treatment and comparison groups, comparison group subjects should also be matched to treatment subjects to the extent possible using institutional classification data. This data usually consists of information regarding subjects’ personal histories and assessments made during inmate entry and classification process. Institutional classification data used to match subjects should include such factors as: subject education level; level of need for substance abuse treatment; level of need for mental health treatment; subject history of disciplinary problems within the institution; assessment of escape risk posed by the individual; and an overall threat rating for the individual. While these classification systems may vary slightly from site to site; treatment and comparison groups *within sites* should match as closely as possible on these classification factors. The matches do not need to be completely identical or perfect, but as reasonably close as possible.

Achieving balance between treatment and comparison groups on these factors is equally important as demographic balance, if not more so. Comparability of treatment and comparison subjects in correctional treatment research is a common confound to statistical validity. Put simply, if all of the “best” subjects are in the treatment group, and all of the “worst” subjects are in the comparison group, how can we be sure that our program is having the desired effect? If, for example, the treatment pool consisted primarily of low-level first-time property offenders, while the comparison group included a large proportion of violent repeat-offenders, it

might be reasonably argued that any differences observed between the groups could be attributed to the fact that there are underlying differences in the sample groups.

The most comprehensive way to achieve balance in a matched sample is by attempting to match individual cases. For example, if Treatment Subject #1 is a white male, high school-educated burglar serving a 5 year sentence, we would want to find a similar individual to include in our comparison group. Furthermore, we would want these individuals to match as closely as possible on the personal history and assessment measures. In an ideal world, the only difference between our treatment group and our comparison group would be that one group participates in the program while the other does not. As a practical matter, we are very unlikely to obtain *exact* matches for every individual included in our treatment group. However, if the group characteristics *on the whole* are similar, we can make a reasonable case for program effects in later analyses.

Although the process of creating these matched comparison groups is time consuming, the procedure is relatively straightforward and the research team is available to answer questions by phone or email and may also be arranging for site visits. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Gaboury, Dr. Sedelmaier or Dr. Lowe with questions. Thank you for your assistance with the research component of this very important project.

Questionnaire

PRE-Test POST-Test Facility: _____ Date: _____
 (Circle one)

Subject Number: _____

For Staff Use:

Age: _____ **Gender:** M F **Ethnicity:** _____ **Race:** _____

Please CIRCLE a number from 1 to 6 for each question to tell us what you think
 (“1” Means You Strongly DISAGREE (SD), “6” Means You Strongly AGREE (SA), or you may choose a middle number)

		SD					SA
1	Being the victim of a crime changes a person’s life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Blaming the victim is common in gang violence.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	Parents of murdered children never really recover.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	Most homicide victims killed with a weapon were stabbed.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Most victims of crime get over it as time passes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	It is always OK to spank your child if you are disciplining them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	Victims deserve what they get.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	If a girlfriend says “no” to sex, she’s really just teasing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	If someone controls or isolates his or her partner, it’s because he or she cares about them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	I always tell the truth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Someone who leaves their car unlocked is just asking for it to be stolen.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		SD					SA
12	You can abuse someone without using violence.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	Stealing from people with insurance isn't so bad.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	If you commit a crime you should admit it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	Children who claim to be abused are usually just lying to get attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	Victims can have a say in the sentencing of their offender.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	It's OK for parents to hit each other in front of their children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	When houses are broken into, people often have things stolen that can't be replaced.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	Women who wear sexy clothes are asking to be raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	Sometimes I get angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	People who batter or abuse others just can't help themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	Abused boys are often more seriously injured physically than abused girls.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	No one ever has the right to abuse or intimidate a person, no matter what.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a common problem for many crime victims and causes them problems so bad that they may lose their jobs and marriages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	Victims should be able to speak at parole hearings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	Not many people are injured or killed in alcohol related crashes, making it a minor crime.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	Child abuse can be found in all types of families.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		SD					SA
28	If a woman does not fight back against a rapist, it is because she really enjoyed it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	If you rob someone, you should pay them back.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	Sometimes I think of things too bad to talk about.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	Children are more likely to be abused at home or by someone they know than by strangers outside the home.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	If you're involved in a relationship, you should not talk to or be friends with anybody else who is the same sex as your partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	Crime has a ripple effect that impacts the victim's family, friends and community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	In many courts victims may make a "victim impact statement" about the crime or send a written or video-taped statement.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	Victims of crime can often live in fear for the rest of their lives.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	If you victimize someone, it is important to find an appropriate way to apologize or make amends to your victim.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	Girls are much more often victims of child sexual abuse than are boys.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	When someone's house is burglarized, they often never feel safe there again.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	Gay people deserve it when they get beaten.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	Kids often lie when they claim to have been abused by an adult.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	It's OK to drink and drive as long as it's only beer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42	Children who are molested often have emotional problems as adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		SD					SA
43	If you hit your kids, it proves you love them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44	If a 35 year-old woman has sex with a 14 year old boy, it's OK because it helps him learn about sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45	Victims are not allowed to be present or speak at parole hearings.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46	After an offender has served his time, the victim and/or the victim's family should forget what happened.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47	Spraying graffiti on buildings or buses shouldn't bother anyone.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48	Even when people are dating regularly and one person is spending money on the other person, they have no right to expect sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49	Only a very small number of children are victims of sexual abuse.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50	I feel sorry for people who suffer in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Revised 7-19-2006

Instructions To IOC Facilitators on Pre- and Post Questionnaire Administration

Thank you for your willingness to play a key role in this important program. The following points will be of assistance to us as we effectively evaluate this program. Your cooperation is appreciated.

1) Administration of the Pre- and Post-Test Questionnaire

It is very important to administer the Pre- and Post –Test Questionnaire in a uniform manner. The Pre-Test should be administered at the very beginning of the program as noted in the outline below. There will be both a “treatment” group (those who participate in the classes) and the comparison group (those who are not participating in the classes). It should be given separately to the treatment and to the comparison group; however, these should be administered as close to the same time as possible. At the end of the program, the test is once again given to both groups separately, but as simultaneously as possible. When the test is administered, your groups should be told that “It is important for us to know what you think about these issues” without much else that might bias their answers. Please:

- a) Be certain everyone has first signed the Consent Forms. Please recall that this is a voluntary assessment project and this consent can be withdrawn at any time without prejudice.
- b) Put the 1 to 6 scale on the Board or Tear Sheet Pad and explain the “Strongly Agree” to Strongly Disagree” Scale. Also inform them as to what the numbers in the middle would mean (i.e., middle numbers being on a scale from somewhat disagree to somewhat agree).
- c) Read each question to the group, giving no hint as to the correct response, and asking them to answer them by circling the appropriate number and not by stating their answers aloud.
- d) Answer questions in a way that clarifies any confusion with the items (for example, give a concrete example of domestic violence), but not by suggesting answers or any biases.

2) First Meeting – Pre-Test

The general approach to the first meeting should be:

- a) A *very brief* introduction to the course. This can essentially use the brief script that was provided for announcing the classes. Remember not to say too much else before the Pre-Test.
- b) Put the “Ground Rules” on the Board/Tear Sheet Pad. See Curriculum directions.
- c) Administer the Pre-Test as noted above.
- d) Collect Pre-tests and place the anonymous and confidential identification numbers created for each subject on the questionnaire, if this was not already done. Make certain that there is no personal or otherwise identifying information on any of the pages and, if any is found, please make sure it is removed.
- e) *Make back-up copies* of the completed Pre-Test Questionnaires for your files.
- f) Mail the original Questionnaires to Dr. Mario Gaboury at the University of New Haven, Dept. of Criminal Justice, 300 Boston Post Road, West Haven, CT 06516. Telephone (203) 932-7041.

3) Post-Test

At or immediately after the final class meeting, administer the Post-Test Questionnaire in the same way as the Pre-Test was administered. This should be done for both treatment and comparison groups in a relatively short, contemporaneous timeframe. Follow the same procedure for mailing the Post-Tests to Dr. Gaboury at the University of New Haven, Dept. of Criminal Justice, 300 Boston Post Road, West Haven, CT 06516. Telephone (203) 932-7041.

Scoring the Questionnaire

When administered in a pre-participation/post-participation manner, the included 50-item questionnaire provides both a baseline measure (the pre-participation survey) and an opportunity to gauge change (the post-participation survey). The survey questions are geared at measuring five general constructs:

1. Knowledge of Victim Rights (KR): These questions are meant to measure the respondent's knowledge of victim rights related information. In the included questionnaire, these are questions 16, 25, 34, and 45.
2. Knowledge of Victim Facts (KF): These questions are meant to measure the respondent's absorption of factual material from the curriculum. In the included questionnaire, these are questions 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17, 22, 24, 26, 27, 31, 33, 37, 40, 42, 48, 49.
3. Sensitivity to Victim Plight (SP): These questions are meant to measure the respondent's attitudes toward the victimization experience, and aim to provide a rough measure of levels of expressed empathy. In the included questionnaire, these are questions 1, 3, 5, 18, 35, 38, 46, 50.
4. Victim Blaming (B): These questions are meant to measure the respondent's tendency to blame victims for their victimization. In the included questionnaire, these are questions 7, 8, 11, 19, 28, 32, 39.
5. Accountability (AC): These questions are meant to measure the respondent's attitudes regarding self-accountability and the need or desire to make amends with victims. In the included questionnaire, these are questions 13, 14, 21, 23, 29, 36, 41, 47.

STEPS TO CREATE A SCORABLE DATABASE

Step 1: Establish a common scale. When reviewing the survey, notice that for some questions a high score denotes a desirable response, while for others a low score is desirable. Such **reversal items** are employed as a safeguard against careless response; if a respondent is making a sincere effort to answer the questionnaire truthfully, there should be a mix of high and low responses. When coding the results into a database, the responses for reversal items should be **reverse coded** so that desirable responses receive high scores. As an example, consider the following item:

“It is always OK to spank your child if you are disciplining them.”

This is an item in which a response of disagreement is desirable. On the survey itself, respondents are provided with a range of choices in which ‘1’ denotes strong disagreement while ‘6’ denotes strong agreement. However, in the data it is necessary

for *all* items to be scored in the same direction. This is necessary because additive summary scores will be created later. In this case, we would recode the response ‘1’ as a ‘6’ for analytical purposes.

For items in which a disagreement response is desirable,

If the respondent circled:	Enter a score of _____ into the database.
1	6
2	5
3	4
4	3
5	2
6	1

In the included questionnaire, this procedure should be followed for items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26, 28, 32, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 49.

Before proceeding to Step 2, be sure that all appropriate items have been reverse coded!

Step 2: Binary coding for knowledge items. On knowledge items (KR and KF questions), responses should be recoded into ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ categories. Low-scoring responses (score of 3 or lower) should be recoded as ‘0’, and high-scoring responses (score of 4 or higher) should be recoded as ‘1’. Following this procedure allows for summation of correct responses within the Knowledge of Facts and Knowledge of Rights factors.

Step 3: Create summary scores. Within each factor, sum up the response scores. For Knowledge items, the summary scores should now represent the number of correct responses. For the Sensitivity, Blaming, and Accountability items, the summary scores should now represent an additive scale of desirable responses; higher summary scores indicate more desirable attitudes and responses.

Step 4: Compare the pre-participation and post-participation scores. Ideally, program participants should exhibit higher scores on the post-participation survey. In comparing the post-participation and pre-participation factor summary scores, nonparametric tests such as the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test are appropriate.

3. I was provided with advance information and on-site support that addressed my personal safety and security going to, within and leaving the institution.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree* 6

Additional Comments:

4. The class and my participation as a speaker were well-organized and structured.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree* 6

Additional Comments:

5. I believe that my participation in the Impact of Crime on Victims class(es) was beneficial to the offenders/students.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *Strongly Agree* 6

Additional Comments:

Researchers' Backgrounds:

Dr. Mario T. Gaboury, Principle Investigator for the research component of this curriculum development project, is Professor and Chair of Criminal Justice at the University of New Haven. Dr. Gaboury has over 25 years of government, non-profit, private practice and academic experience related to victimology and criminal justice. He worked extensively with the Connecticut Department of Correction in their development and evaluation of a similar IOC curriculum and co-author one of the first peer-reviewed, published evaluations in this area. He is currently working on the next phase of that research investigating behavioral outcomes of the Connecticut IOC program..

Dr. Christopher M. Sedelmaier is Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of New Haven. He served as Co-Investigator on this evaluation. Dr. Sedelmaier is director of the university's Crime Analysis Center, and uses his experience working with large data sets to teach research methods, statistics, and crime analysis. He is also currently working with Dr. Gaboury on the next, behavioral phase of the Connecticut IOC evaluation.