

2021

## Restorative Justice and the Impact of Community Engagement

Tanya Moss

Follow this and additional works at: [https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss\\_dcar\\_etd](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/shss_dcar_etd)



Part of the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

## Share Feedback About This Item

---

This Dissertation is brought to you by the HCAS Student Theses and Dissertations at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Department of Conflict Resolution Studies Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact [nsuworks@nova.edu](mailto:nsuworks@nova.edu).

Restorative Justice and the Impact of Community Engagement

by

Tanya C. Moss

A Dissertation Presented to the  
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences of Nova Southeastern University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University  
2022

**Nova Southeastern University  
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences**

This dissertation was submitted by Tanya C. Moss under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

**Approved:**

March 15th 2022

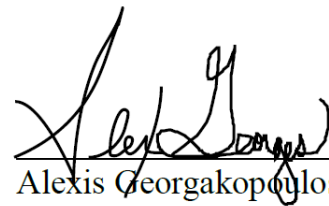
Date of Defense



Ismael Muvingi, Ph.D.  
Chair



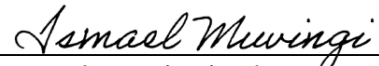
Robin Cooper, Ph.D.



Alexis Georgakopoulos, Ph.D.

April 5th 2022

Date of Final Approval



Ismael Muvingi, Ph.D.  
Chair

## Acknowledgement

This has been one of the most challenging experiences that I've had to face, but to God be the glory! I want to personally thank my chair, Dr. Ismael Muvingi for his kindness, patience, persistence, and encouragement throughout this process. Without him I never would have made it through the difficulties of this experience. Secondly, I want to thank Dr. Alexia Georgakopoulos and Dr. Robin Cooper, whose expertise and wisdom helped to center my thoughts and to keep me focused during some rough and tedious times. And to the entire Nova University staff and personnel for your graciousness, both virtual and in person. Your warm and welcoming spirits made navigating the long nights of endless sleep possible.

I would like to extend a word of thanks to the personnel and staff of the Greater Payne and the Grant Memorial AME Churches who gave me this inspiration and fortitude that helped to see me through completion of this dissertation. Your love, care, and compassion will never be forgotten.

I also pay homage to the ICARE Organization who planted the seeds of justice in my spirit, and to the Ribult Neighborhood Accountability Board, and all of the youth participants, who all have taught me so much about being a voice for the voiceless. When work together, "Great Things Happen!"

I acknowledge my wife, Brenda Moss and my children, Quincy, Tanya, Ashley, Jeremiah and Neremiah for allowing me time away from them to complete this journey. My wife proved her loved by covering me in her gentle care and kept encouraging me to keep moving forward even when backing up was the order of the day. Baby I love and appreciate you. Last, but always first, God! I never could have made it without you.

## Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| List of Tables .....  | v   |
| List of Figures .....   | vi  |
| Abstract .....  | vii |
| Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of Purpose .....                  | 1   |
| Introduction.....   | 1   |
| Justification of the Study .....  | 3   |
| Victim-Offender Mediation .....   | 6   |
| Family Group Conferences (FGC).....                                     | 8   |
| Peacekeeping Circles .....  | 10  |
| Community Restorative Boards .....                                      | 11  |
| Research Questions .....  | 13  |
| Background of the Research Study .....                                  | 16  |
| Origin of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board .....           | 16  |
| Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board Organizational Structure..... | 18  |
| Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board Referral Process .....        | 21  |
| Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board Funding.....                  | 23  |
| Outline of the Study .....  | 24  |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review .....                                      | 25  |
| Outline of the Chapter.....   | 25  |
| History of Restorative Justice .....                                    | 26  |
| Theoretical Framework .....   | 33  |
| Morales, Values and Social Norms.....                                   | 38  |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Reintegrative Shaming.....  | 40 |
| Empathy .....   | 41 |
| Community .....   | 42 |
| Mentoring.....  | 49 |
| Gaps in the Literature.....   | 52 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology .....  | 60 |
| Introduction.....   | 60 |
| Sample Size.....  | 61 |
| Data Collection .....   | 62 |
| Bracketing .....  | 65 |
| Data Analysis .....   | 67 |
| Validation Strategies .....   | 82 |
| Ethical Considerations .....  | 84 |
| The Background and Role of the Researcher .....   | 84 |
| Chapter 4: Research Findings .....  | 87 |
| Participant Demographics .....  | 89 |
| Theme 1: The volunteer’s emphasis on the value of a second chance was a<br>transformative dynamic in the experience ..... | 90 |
| Theme 2: The interpersonal engagement with the volunteers was a driver<br>of successful program completion .....          | 95 |
| Theme 3: The engagement with the volunteer revealed the importance of<br>intergenerational participation .....            | 99 |
| Theme 4: The volunteer’s requirement of an apology to parents was   |    |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| redemptive.....  | 104 |
| Theme 5: The authentic confrontation by the community volunteers     |     |
| initiated reintegrative shame .....                                  | 110 |
| Theme 6: The sanctions required by the community volunteers fostered |     |
| new life perspectives .....  | 112 |
| Chapter Summary .....  | 118 |
| Chapter 5: Analysis, Recommendations, and Conclusions .....          | 120 |
| Findings.....  | 120 |
| Research Findings Connection to the Theoretical Framework.....       | 123 |
| Becoming a Different Person.....                                     | 124 |
| Changed by New Associations .....                                    | 128 |
| Life Has Intrinsic Worth .....                                       | 131 |
| Research Finding's Connection to the Literature Review .....         | 134 |
| Reintegrative Shaming.....   | 135 |
| Empathy Through Apology .....  | 137 |
| Impact of Community .....  | 140 |
| Contributions to the Field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution.....  | 143 |
| Limitations .....  | 147 |
| Future Research .....  | 148 |
| Conclusion .....   | 150 |
| References.....  | 153 |
| Appendix A: IRB Approval.....  | 169 |
| Appendix B: Participant Informed Consent Form .....                  | 173 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Appendix C: Interview Protocol (Questions) .....                       | 175 |
| Appendix D: Site Approval Letter .....                                 | 177 |
| Appendix E: Memorandum of Understanding.....                           | 178 |
| Appendix F: Neighborhood Accountability Board Moderator’s Manual ..... | 187 |
| Appendix G: Neighborhood Accountability Board Brochure .....           | 200 |
| Appendix H: Emerging Theme Graphic Chart .....                         | 203 |



## List of Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Sample of Conceptual Comments.....        | 74 |
| Table 2. Sample of Data Analysis Matrix.....       | 77 |
| Table 3. Sample of Data Cross Analysis Matrix..... | 79 |
| Table 4. Participants Demographics .....           | 89 |

## List of Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Duval County Map by Zone .....       | 19 |
| Figure 2. Sample of Initial Noting .....       | 69 |
| Figure 3. Sample of Transcription Coding ..... | 70 |

## Abstract

Restorative justice provides an innovative approach for addressing misdemeanor juvenile offenses. Diversion programs such as the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board utilizes community volunteers to guide juvenile offenders through the restorative justice process. There is however a lack of current research on the engagement of youth offenders and community volunteers that elucidates the relational dynamics between these two groups. This qualitative study uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to address this research deficit by exploring the lived experiences of 12 youth offenders and their engagement with community volunteers, focusing on the following research questions: 1) how do youth offenders make meaning of their lived experience with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board; 2) how do youth offenders describe their lived experience with the community volunteers; 3) how do the youth offenders perceive their relationship with the community after completion of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board sanction process. Analysis of the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual observation of the data derived from the participant interviews revealed that the engagement of these two groups promoted an existential and ontological transformation of youth offenders. Additionally, this study provided a unique perspective on the intangible element of human engagement and interaction as a foundational principle for bridging differing realities and fostering a common understanding between opposing parties that is mutually beneficial for the parties and society as a whole.

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

### **Introduction**

Restorative justice is based on the foundational premise that crime is a violation or offense that damages the relationship between individuals and community as opposed to a violation against the state as viewed through the lens of traditional retributive justice systems. Consequently, restorative justice programs seek to hold offenders accountable for their offenses, provide restitution and healing to the victims, repair the harm done, and restore the offender back into right relationship with the community (Zehr, 2005).

Restorative justice programs such as neighborhood accountability or community boards use community members to process the cases of juvenile offender that meet restorative justice criteria. These community members see themselves as stakeholders who enhance the safety of the community, help to repair harm done to the community, and facilitate the reintegration or restoration of offenders back into the community (Karp, Brazemore and Chesire, 2004).

Community members are viewed as having an inherent connection with the offender because they are often from the community in which the offender lives. Consequently, offenders generally express having stronger personal and authentic connection with community members versus officials of the criminal justice system primarily because community members are viewed as having a vested interest in the offender's success and reintegration into the community (Karp, Brazemore and Chesire, 2004).

Traditionally, the only contact the community volunteers have with the offender is during the restorative justice accountability board, conferencing, or family circle. Contact

between the offender and the community volunteer is generally limited to questions and statements raised by the volunteer and responded to by the offender in the accountability session. This is the model utilized by the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) in Jacksonville Florida. This study will examine the lived experiences of juvenile offenders and their interpersonal engagement with community volunteers during the RNAB session. Community volunteers' engagement with juvenile offenders through restorative justice mediums such as neighborhood accountability boards have demonstrated effectiveness in holding offenders accountable for their actions, fostering empathy for victims, understanding of wrong-doing, and restoring offenders back in standing with community (Umbreit, Coats & Vos, 2005). Extensive research that explores the dynamics of the interpersonal engagement between the youth offenders and community volunteers however, is lacking within the field of restorative justice. In addition, national restorative justice programs throughout the United States limit the engagement of offenders and community volunteers to the circle, mediation or conferencing stage without consideration beyond the initial process. This study provides research data into the lived experiences of youth offender's engagement with community volunteers at the RNAB and documents their interpretations of those experiences. Consequently, this study was conducted to achieve the following objectives: 1) to explore the lived experiences of youth offenders who are sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board; 2) to explore the perceived experience of the youth offender's engagement with community volunteers who participate in the RNAB sanctioning process; and 3) to explore the impact of the community volunteer's efforts to reengage youth offenders back into the community.

The themes developed from the analysis of the lived experiences of the youth offenders will provide insight on their perception of program functionality, effectiveness of interpersonal engagement with volunteers, thoughts on community reengagement, and most importantly insight on the interpersonal transformation of individuals successfully completing the program regiment. Additionally, the result of this study will provide segue into relevant areas for future exploration regarding the benefits of interpersonal engagement between youth offenders and community volunteers which may potentially include: 1) exploring alternative methods for strengthening interpersonal relationships between community volunteers and youth offenders; 2) examining appropriate avenues for community volunteers' engagement in sanctioned community service-oriented tasks that facilitate learning, reintegration, reengagement into the larger community; 3) broadening understanding of how individual transformation of the offender can lead to transformation of the greater community; and 4) exploring the potential for mentorship relationship beyond the restorative justice process to strengthen community bonds and further the maturation and growth of the youth offender.

### **The Justification of the Study**

Over 1.4 million juveniles were arrested in the United States in 2014 with approximately 48% of these arrests resulting from misdemeanor offenses (Juvenile Arrest Rate Trends, n.d.) Juveniles who committed minor offenses such as throwing spitballs or using profanity in the classroom, have been arrested and charged with battery or disrupting school functions (Postal and Travis, 2013). These types of juvenile behaviors at one time would have warranted a trip to the principal's office or stern rebuke from a parent or neighbor. However, recent trends reveal that too frequently these types of minor

offenses are now handled through arrest and criminal prosecution, which results in the juvenile having a record that follows them for the rest of their lives.

Retributive justice methods of dealing with juvenile criminal behavior focuses on punitive measures such as detention, incarceration, probation and other forms of punishments that are designed to correct criminal behavior and reduce the potential for recidivism by the youthful offender. Data has shown, however, that these measures are counterproductive because they emphasize revenge, retaliation and getting even with those who have committed the wrong (Tsui, 2014). Accountability, in traditional juvenile justice systems, is interpreted as punishment or adherence to a set of rules established and enforced by the criminal justice system. However, punitive measures designed to enforce strict adherence to a set of rules fails to provide encouragement for the offender to take full responsibility for their behavior or repair the harm caused. Punishment and adherence to rules are void of components that engender moral development that is achieved when one takes full responsibility for their behavior (Umbreit, 1997). As a result, juveniles' whose crimes are punished through traditional retributive justice systems are 80% more likely to recidivate (Tsui, 2014). Therefore, the idea of restorative justice has gained increased popularity and support from juvenile justice researchers and criminologists in recent years as a more positive and productive way of addressing juvenile crime.

Restorative justice provides an approach to responding and correcting juvenile behavior that is fundamentally different from the retributive framework that is characterized by punishment and retaliation. Rather than defining a crime as an offense against the state, crime is viewed primarily as an offense against the victim and the community, necessitating repair of the harm done (Umbreit, 1997). The primary principle

that undergirds restorative justice is the concept of the offender taking personal accountability and acceptance of the harm done to the victim and community.

Accountability measures that facilitate taking full responsibility for behavior requires the offender to:

- Understand how that behavior affected other human beings (not just the courts or officials).
- Acknowledge that the behavior resulted from a choice that could have been made differently.
- Acknowledge to all affected that the behavior was harmful to others.
- Take action to repair the harm where possible.
- Make changes necessary to avoid such behavior in the future (Umbreit, 1997).

Proponents of restorative justice do not envision it as a cure all for every juvenile offense and understand that there are serious criminal acts that are appropriate for the retributive system; however, even within the traditional justice structure restorative principles can be applied. Consequently, restorative justice is not conceived as an attempt to undermine the importance of laws and systems, but to acknowledge the value of laws as the basic framework for human interaction. Restorative justice functions on the concept of inclusivity whereby the relevant parties to a crime are engaged in the process of determining an amicable resolution that holds the offender accountable and provides the victim with appropriate support and voice in the overall resolution. Because the focus is on the harm done to people and relationships, restorative justice programs, in their divergent forms, bring together the offender, victim, members of their respective families, supporters and often community members in the attempt to achieve positive



outcomes that facilitate victim satisfaction, offender accountability and restoration of relationships and the community as a whole (Umbreit, Coats & Vos, 2005).

As will be explicated below, restorative justice is used as a generalized term for a variety of programs that fall under the umbrella of alternatives to retributive justice approaches to crime. Alternative intervention programs that demonstrate a consistency with the principles of restorative justice include Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM), Family Group Counseling (FGC), Healing and Sentencing Circle and Community Restorative Boards (Bazemore and Walgrave, 1999).

### **Victim-Offender Mediation**

Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM) is the first, most well-known and commonly used processes within the restorative justice approach to mediating criminal offenses. Originated in Ontario, Canada, VOM was conceived to foment dialogue between victims and offenders to achieve a shared understanding of the human impact and dynamics of a crime. Mediation is routinely used in many situations of conflict resolution, such as divorce, child custody cases, civil court cases and disputes between business and commercial entities. In these types of mediation both parties are described as ‘disputants’ and are focused on reaching a negotiated agreement. The parties of VOM, however, enter the mediation as ‘victim’ who has been wronged and the ‘offender’ who is held accountable and has accepted responsibility for the wrongdoing. The process is the primary focus of this engagement with the intent of achieving a restorative outcome that vindicates the victim but holds the offender accountable and restores them to the community (Aertsen, et al., 2004).

Victim-Offender Mediation brings together the victim and offender with the help of a trained mediator who coordinates the meeting and discussion between the parties. The primary focus of the dialogue is for the victim to express feelings of hurt, loss and personal violation to express how the crime has impacted their lives. The offender is given the opportunity to explain the rationale that gave impetus to the crime, demonstrate understanding of the victim's perspective and show empathy and remorse. After both parties have had an opportunity to express their views, the mediator helps to guide their discussion towards a resolution that would make things right or repair the damage. The mediator's responsibility is to orient the parties to each other so as to achieve a shared outcome that meets the needs of both parties (Fuller, 1971). The primary goal of the VOM is to arrive at the place of agreement that embraces healing for the victim, accountability, understanding of the offender, restoration of losses and repair of broken relationships through the process of dialogue (McCold, 2001).

Victim-Offender Mediation can take various forms depending on the criminal justice system in which it is operated and the structural influence of the public, cultural and historical background of the community, and the level of political engagement in the process. A first form of VOM programs are the 'independent' programs constructed as a complete alternative to criminal litigation and avoid the retributive criminal justice system entirely. Referral to this process occurs at the initial stages and substitutes for any penal response to the crime committed. A second VOM form is the 'semi-independent' which functions as a part of the criminal justice process. Referral of a case in this scenario can take place at any time during the process and a successful agreement negotiated through the mediator can result in the reduction of sentencing or dismissal of

the charges entirely. Lastly, VOM can function as a dependent method for addressing crime when it is contiguous to the formal retributive system and is employed after a formal criminal process such as a trial has been completed. This model is usually employed in cases where a series crime has been committed or within the context of a prison setting (Groenhuijsen, 2000). The mediation session is initiated by victims who voluntarily chose to engage with offenders as a means of bringing closure to the unspeakable tragedy inflicted upon their lives rather than harboring perpetual feelings of being forgotten or unheard (Umbreit, 1995).

Several other criteria relative to the administration of VPM include decisions about whether the mediation should be voluntary or mandatory, whether the interaction between parties can be direct or indirect, and whether confidentiality should be a prerequisite to participate (Pelikan and Trenzcek, 2006).

### **Family Group Conferences (FGC)**

Family Group Conferencing (or conferencing) differs primarily from VOM in that more parties are allowed to participate in the process. Drawing its roots from a Maori ancient practice in New Zealand, the process includes the victim and offender, but may also invite secondary victims, associated families, close friends, community representative and the police (Umbeit, 1998). Family Group Counseling was developed from the Maori whanau (extended family) meetings, which were traditionally used to resolve disputes and required everyone to take responsibility for the harm done and engaged extended parties and community support in determining reparations and reintegration. A secondary basis for this type of conferencing centered around the

tradition of therapeutic meeting conducted for families and others responsible for childcare in a particular community during the 1970s and 1980s (Hayes, et. al., 2006)

Family Group Conferencing can be used during various stages of the criminal justice process, but most often is used by law enforcement as an alternative to arrest and referral to the formal criminal justice system. Most FGCs are scripted which provides a prescribed pattern for the facilitator to follow in guiding the discussion. The process generally starts with the offender's descriptions of what happened and who they think experienced harm as a result of their actions. Victims are then permitted to describe the extent of harm that was inflicted by the offender. Guided by the facilitator, all parties are allowed to express their emotions which may range from anger, fear, hate, pity, revenge and regret. The victim is given the opportunity to state what they feel should be an appropriate outcome of the proceeding and together the entire group works cooperatively in deciding what the offender must do to repair the harm and what support is necessary in bringing that outcome to reality. The facilitator takes the lead in creating a written agreement which is signed by the respective parties and is sent to the governing criminal justice authority (Van Ness, 2000).

Another form of conferencing used in the criminal justice system is the Australian conferencing method which originated in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, under the name of "restorative cautioning", or "restorative conferencing" if the victim is present. The police facilitate both conferencing formats with a particular focus on uncovering the harm done to the victim and to the offender's own family. Community group conferencing provides the opportunity for dispute resolution in the context of schools, workplaces, and other community-oriented gatherings. This form of conferencing is

incident driven and focuses on repairing the breach in relationship resulting from the incident and is devoid of any counseling for the affected parties (McCold, 2001). As demonstrated through a variety of conferencing formats, the consistent criteria of the model is that a group of people must be connected in some dynamic manner and have experienced some form of relational differences that prompts them to come together to work towards resolution (Warner-Roberts and Masters, 1999). The primary focus of conferencing as a conduit to exclusively resolving an offense or break in relationship without consideration to restoration or reintegration of the parties is viewed as a substantial deficit to this model (Braithwaite, 1994). Critics of conferencing also point to police involvement in the process as a detriment. The argument against police facilitation of the process revolves around the notion that a) as the entity that initiates prosecution, it appears inappropriate for the police to be engaged in the process that determines outcomes; b) the ability of law enforcement as program coordinators to be victim-neutral or objective would be well-nigh impossible; and c) police would be severely limited in what input they could or could not give in facilitating the process (McElrea, et al., 1998).

### **Peacekeeping Circles**

Indigenous cultures such as Native Americans and the Canadian aboriginal people are recognized as the origins of peacekeeping circles. Peacekeeping circles generally have two distinct formats: a healing paradigm (healing circles) designed to reach disposition in a conflict, and a co-judging paradigm (sentencing circles) which make recommendations to criminal justice authorities in actual case dispositions (Melton, 1995; Ross, 1994). Peacekeeping circles are organized by community justice committee that decide which cases to accept. Circles bear considerable similarity to conferencing

because they expand the level of participation beyond the victim and offender. In addition to the victim and offender, participants in the circle may include respective family members, friends, court officials and personnel, prosecutors, defense attorneys, the police and members of the community who have an interest in the outcome (Nader and Combs-Schilling, 1997).

The process begins with all participants sitting in a circle and listening to an explanation of what happened. Everyone in the circle has an opportunity to speak and may offer whatever comments they feel appropriate with the overall goal of resolving the conflict, restoration of order and harmony, community healing and relational healing between the offender and victim to prevent future harm (Ross, 1992). The facilitator is called the 'keeper of the circle' and their primary role is to ensure the fidelity of the process (Pranis and Stuart, 2000). Peacekeeping Circles can be initiated at various stages within or outside of the criminal process and work in tandem with the criminal justice system to ensure community consensus in a dispute and the development and implementation of an appropriate sentencing plan which addresses the concerns of all interested parties (McCold, 2001).

### **Community Restorative Boards**

Community Restorative Boards offer members of the community an opportunity to feel some sense of ownership through direct involvement in the criminal justice system. Community volunteers receive specialized training to prepare them to confront wrongdoers in constructive face-to-face dialogue with the intent of reaching community-driven consequences and restoration of the offender and the community to a sense of wholeness (Knapp, 1999). The process begins with the offender appearing before the community

panel and discussing the nature of the offense and the negative effect it had on the victim and community. The offender is given an opportunity to express remorse and accept responsibility of their actions and explain facts relevant to the offense. The offender's parents, guardians or supporters may be present during the process. After all the pertinent issues have been discussed, the community board will consult to determine what sanctions should be administered in the particular case. A written list of sanctions is drafted and presented to the offender. The offender is required to complete all the stipulated sanctions as a condition of successful completion of the program. Failure to complete the specified sanctions can result in dismissal from the program and referral for prosecution through the retributive criminal justice system (Crawford and Newburn, 2002). Through the engagement with offenders, community boards have been touted as having the potential to reflect the power of the community, to express community values, and to cast the desired vision of community wholeness and unity (Crawford and Newburn, 2002). In addition, community involvement in the criminal justice process also serves as forum for problem solving and builds cooperative partnerships between criminal justice agencies, governmental entities and local communities (Kurki, 2000).

Critics of community lead justice initiatives have cautioned about the perceived dangers of community restorative boards, panels and similar programs as promoting an image of community homogeneity, consensual and unified identity that functions as a vehicle for exclusion of the poor by the wealthy leading to xenophobia and racism (Pavlich, 2002). Other critics have raised the concern that the premise of 'community justice' creates the perception of a harmonious, utopian society that masks the reality of complex social, legal and criminal issues (Walgrave, 2002).

Notwithstanding the various critics of restorative justice models, Community Restorative Boards Victim-Offender Mediation, Family Group Conferencing, Peacekeeping Circles, and Community Restorative Boards, are consistent in their theoretical concept and general application but have divergence in principle questions affecting specific methodology and overall effectiveness. The literature providing analysis of these approaches to justice point to six primary questions that are asked of restorative justice initiative as a new paradigm for addressing crime: a) should the approach of these initiative focus on outcomes or process; b) who are the stakeholders that are critical to the process and how many should be involved; c) should these initiatives operate within the formal criminal justice system or stand as an independent form of corrective justice; d) do these programs establish a new paradigm or do they complement the established criminal justice system; e) are these programs defined as alternative punishment or an alternative to punishment for criminal acts; and f) what level of flexibility should be afforded to the various restorative justice programs (Gavrielides, 2007).

### **Research Questions**

Arguments around restorative justice reveal that there is a multiplicity of opinions regarding the appropriate methods for addressing crime and specifically juvenile criminal behavior in society that differ in approach, strategy, implementation, and severity. “Tough on crime” advocates generally proffer the notion that the most effective and impactful method of addressing crime in general, both juvenile and adult, is through inflexible punitive measures that coerce behavioral conformity to societal norms (Zehr, 1990). The idea that there is a sharp divergence between the goals of retributive and



restorative justice principles and goals can be misleading. Legal theorists such as Conrad Brunk would argue that the commonality of these two forms of addressing crimes maintain striking consistency in principle if not application. Burke states that the desire to achieve vindication by some type of reciprocal action and an appropriate response and resolution to the criminal act that holds the offender accountable and makes the victim whole is the intent of both forms of justice. Whereas retributive justice advocates for the infliction of a punitive response that results in pain, loss of liberty, and potentially the loss of life in egregious cases, restorative justice argues for the vindication of victims through the acknowledgment of the harm done, the offender's admission of guilt and responsibility, and the identification and correcting of underlying causes of their aberrant behavior (Hadley, 2001).

The theoretical premises of Durkheim and Merton establishes the notion that criminal activity is a behavioral response or manifestation of independent thought that reveals the divergence and breakdown of the structures of societal integration and engagement (Lemert, 2010). Inasmuch as society has the obligation for providing instructions on morals, virtue and ethical behavior that promotes conformity while reducing the potential for deviance that threatens the safety and wellbeing of society as a whole, it is therefore the responsibility of society to repair the harm done by those who are perpetrators of behavioral deviance against society (Lemert, 2010). The alarming increase in the numbers of incarcerated people over the past twenty years suggests that the "tough on crime" approach to mediating and modifying criminal behavior is yielding marginal if not counterproductive results at best (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.).

Proponents of restorative justice principles suggest that restorative practices are more effective in addressing the underlying psycho-social causes of deviant behavior and empowering bilateral communication, cooperation and constructive engagement between the offender, the victim, and the community that facilitates the repair of harm and the restoration of the offender as a productive member within society (Wenzel, 2008). Within the constructs of the restorative justice paradigm, reintegrative shaming and empathy development have emerged as two contributing factors that affect change in offender behavior and promote conformity to societal norms, values and morals (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). Community volunteers who participate in neighborhood accountability boards, community impact panels or victim empathy groups contribute their time, expertise and interpersonal experiences to assist in the process of undoing the harm caused by a criminal act perpetrated against an innocent victim (Umbreit, 1997). This research project evaluates the effectiveness of community volunteer involvement and interaction with juvenile offenders throughout the restorative justice process to gauge its impact on empathy development, behavior modification, community reintegration and interpersonal bonding between the community volunteer and juvenile offenders.

This research was conducted as an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis that sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do youth offenders make meaning of their lived experience with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board?
2. How do youth offenders describe their lived experience with the community volunteers?

3. How do the youth offenders perceive their relationship with the community after completion of the RNAB sanction process?

### **Background of the Research Study**

#### **Origin of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board**

The Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board was developed through the advocacy work of the Jacksonville justice ministry ICARE, Interfaith Coalition for Action for Reconciliation and Empowerment. The ICARE organization is a faith-based, multi-issue, direct action, community organization comprised of 38 congregations from diverse faith traditions, economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. ICARE is an incorporated, Florida non-profit 501 (c) (3) tax exempt, politically non-partisan organization whose mission is to use the power of organized people to hold key public officials and elected leaders accountable for correcting systemic injustice and inequity in the Duval community (Jacksonville, 2020).

During the fall of each year, ICARE conducts grassroots listening campaigns that involve hundreds of citizens connected to member congregations to discuss problems deemed to be critical issues in the Duval County community. In 2012, more than 600 people attended house meetings conducted by ICARE congregations where concerned citizens told stories about young people who were being arrested for misdemeanor crimes such as stealing sodas and underage drinking. Based on the research conducted by the ICARE research team, it was determined that more than 600 youth were being arrested annually for these type of misdemeanor crimes with an average cost to the taxpayers of Duval County of \$4,500.00 for processing each arrest. The Jacksonville Sheriff 's Office had the authority to issue civil citations and divert eligible youths to diversion programs

as opposed to arresting them under Florida Statute 985.12, however, only 25% of eligible youths were receiving civil citations (Jacksonville Arrest, Court, and Public Records, n.d.) The “lock em’ up” philosophy that prevailed in Duval County disproportionately affected minorities. African Americans make up 40% of Duval’s population between the ages of 10-17 but comprises 77% of all juvenile arrests. Duval County also ranks above the state average in referring juveniles to adult court even though data reveals that putting juveniles in the adult system substantially contributes to turning them into career criminals (Article 404 - The Florida Times-Union - Jacksonville, FL, n.d.).

ICARE’s research of other municipalities with similar demographics as Duval County uncovered a model neighborhood accountability program in Orange County Florida which was effectively being used to reduce misdemeanor youth arrests. This neighborhood accountability program reported a recidivism rate of 9% for participants who successfully completed the program. Subsequently, the ICARE youth crimes committee began a series of meetings with officials and stakeholders crucial to implementation of a neighborhood accountability program in Duval County. In April of 2014 at the ICARE annual gathering, ICARE successfully pressed the Chief Judge, Sheriff, State Attorney, Public Defender, Chief Probation Officer and Teen Court Program Director to consent to sign a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to cooperatively participate in the formulation of a restorative justice neighborhood accountability board in Duval County. The Memorandum of Understanding stipulated that the following misdemeanor offenses would be eligible for issuance of a civil citation pursuant to Florida Statute 985.12: affray, simple assault, simple battery, criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, disruption of school functions, loitering and prowling,

possession of alcohol by a minor, petite theft, possession of marijuana (less than 20 grams), trespassing, municipal ordinance violation except: resisting an officer, adult entertainment offenses, escapes, and unauthorized temporary use of a motor vehicle (Appendix 5).

### **Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board Organizational Structure**

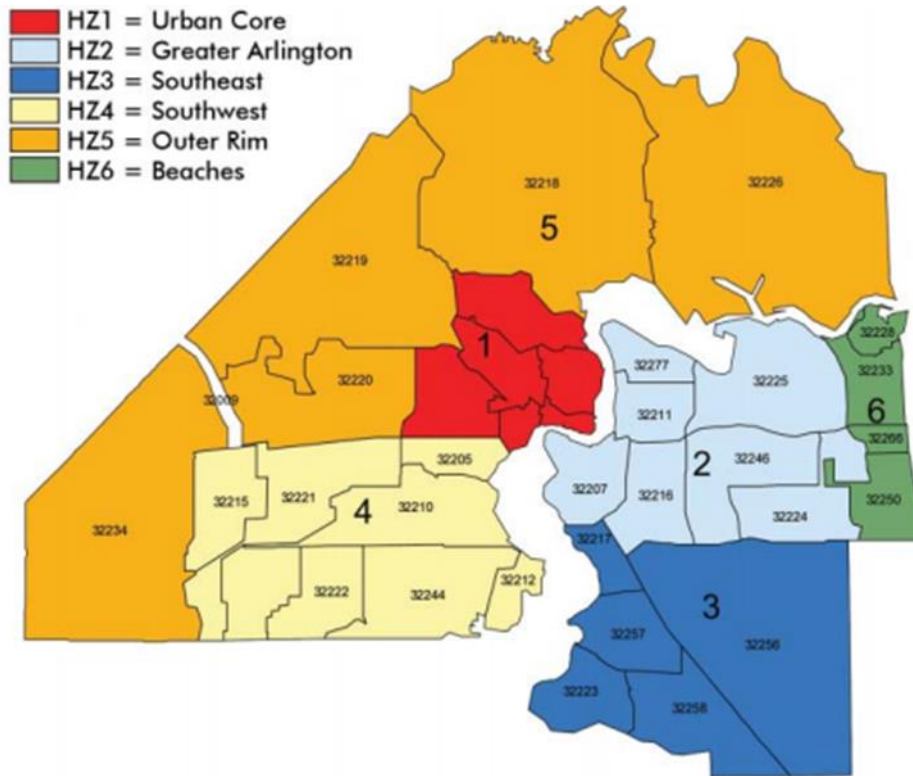
Duval County is located in the northeastern part of the state of Florida within the United States of America. Duval County, which includes the consolidated areas of the city of Jacksonville, is the largest city in the state of Florida with a population of 939,480 as of July 1, 2021. The racial demographics of Duval County is whites (non-Hispanic) 60.9%, black (non-Hispanic) 29.5%, Hispanic or Latino 7.6%, Asian 4.2%, American Indian and Alaska Native 0.4%, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders 0.1%, and other races 2.1% (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Duval County, Florida, n.d.). The formal boundaries of Duval County range in land area of 747.44 square miles and a water area of 127.19 square miles (Jacksonville, FL Profile: Facts & Data. (n.d.).

Figure number 1 provides an illustration of the geographic boundaries of Duval County. The areas labeled as HZ1 (red), HZ4 (yellow), HZ5 (tan), and HZ6 (green), represent the areas within the city with the highest crime rate per capita. Based on the number of youth arrests made in these geographic locations, neighborhood accountability boards were established in these four zones. The Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) was the first board established for zone HZ5, which encompassed the 32218-zip code (Peterson, 2015). The Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board derived its name from the Jean Ribault High School in Jacksonville, Florida which was the board's original host location. Due to budget cuts in the school's funding, in July

2017 the RNAB was relocated to the Greater Grant Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church which is within the 32219-zip code in the city of Jacksonville, Duval County.

**Figure 1**

*Duval County Map by Zone*



Duval District Map - Bing images. (n.d.).

The RNAB is operated under the authority of the Duval County Teen Court Program, Fourth Judicial Circuit Courts of Florida. The Chief Judge of this Judicial Circuit is Judge Mark H. Mahon, Jr. Joseph G. Stelma, Jr. serves as the Trial Court administrator, and Stacy Peterson is the Director of Teen Court (4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court- Teen Courts, 2001). There are 2 NAB case monitors and 1 NAB Assessment Coordinator assigned to the RNAB who are responsible for intake of youth offenders, scheduling accountability board meetings, substance abuse screening, case coordination,

secondary referrals to affiliated agencies, and case closure and file documentation. Each neighborhood accountability session is led by a trained moderator and 4 to 5 volunteer members from the community serve as members of the accountability board. One lead volunteer coordinates the scheduling of community volunteers' participation in each accountability meeting. Currently there are 15 volunteer community members who serve at the RNAB. Volunteers are selected from congregations affiliated with the ICARE organization in the geographical area of the RNAB. The RNAB is located in zip code 32219, a predominantly African American community, hence 97% of the volunteers are African American and 3% white. Seventy three percent (73%) of the volunteers are women and 27% men. Each volunteer participates in a training program conducted by Teen Court staff and observes two NAB sessions before being given authority to actively participate.

Several community service providers are affiliated with the RNAB and provide support services to the youth offenders and families. These agencies include:

- United Way/ Duval Full Services Schools – Referrals for counseling services utilize Full Services School resources
- ICARE Organization – Community outreach and advocacy
- PACE Center for Girls – individual counseling and mentorship
- Empowerment Resources – Nurturing parenting and Journey to Womanhood
- Vets and Veggies – Non-profit agencies that provides community services opportunities
- Boys and Girls Club – Non-profit agency that provides community service opportunities

- Gateway Community Services – Non-profit that provides drug counseling
- Department of Children and Services – State information and resources
- partner (Roberts, S. (n.d.).

### **Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board Referral Process**

The RNAB is a community based restorative justice process designed to repair the harm done to the community by youth offenders and to restore the youth back to full status and participation in the community. The NAB is a pre-arrest diversion program applicable for youth 10-17 years of age who commit eligible misdemeanor offenses (4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court). Youth who commit non-violent misdemeanors are issued juvenile civil citations in accordance with Florida Statute 985.12 as opposed to being arrested. Juveniles' civil citation cases are referred to the State Attorney's Office which reviews the case for constitutional or proof issues and makes the appropriate referral to the Teen Court for prearrest diversion management. The cases of youth who commit eligible offenses while at school are referred to the State Attorney's Office through the Direct Alternative To Arrest (DATA) process. The Director of Teen Court refers the case to the Assessment Coordinator who makes initial contact with the parent, schedules the preliminary assessment with the youth offender, collects background information on the youth personal and school history, and schedules the date and time for the case to be presented before the community volunteers at the RNAB (Roberts, S. (n.d.).

The parents or guardians and the youth offenders initially meet with the case manager at the NAB. All of the paperwork relative to the case is reviewed, the guidelines and requirements of the program are explained, a drug screen of the youth is conducted, and the youth is assigned to one of the two functioning accountability groups. The case



documents are presented to the NAB moderator who conducts a preliminary review of the case specifics with the community volunteers. The youth offender, parents and or guardians are allowed into the room and the moderator begins with an introduction of all parties presents. The moderator explains the protocols and ground rules of the NAB session and responds to any questions posed by the attending parties. All parties are administered an oath of confidentiality. Admission of guilt is a critical prerequisite of participation in the program. The youth offender is asked to provide an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the offense and the community volunteers are allowed to ask questions. The questions posed to the youth offender are open-ended and designed to promote introspection, self-analysis relative to the commission of the offense and to elicit feelings of empathy, remorse, regret and to help formulate conceptual alternatives to criminal behavior.

The NAB conferencing between the community volunteers, youth offender and their family is designed to repair the harm caused by the offense and restore the youth to full relationship in the community without the vestige of a criminal record. The NAB process focuses on consensus building, holding the offender accountable for his or her actions, competency development, education on actions and consequences, and addressing needs uncovered during the interview process. At the conclusion of the interview, the youth offender and family are excused to allow time for the moderator and community volunteers to deliberate and formulate sanctions to be implemented in the specific case. After the NAB reconvenes, the sanctions are announced and a full explanation of the requirements for completion of the program are given. Failure to comply with all requirements of the program could result in the case being referred to the

State Attorney for criminal prosecution. The youth offender and family are referred back to the case manager for assignment of community service, mental or family counseling or other requirements sanctioned by the community panel. The program requirements are documented in a contract signed by the youth, parents, and case manager. The sanctioning period extends for 90 days or upon early completion at which time the youth offender and parents return to the NAB for close out of the case and graduation from the program. The program may be extended beyond the 90-day period for extenuating circumstances (RNAB Moderator's Manual).

### **Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board Funding**

The RNAB is funded through the Duval County Fourth Judicial Circuit Courts. A substantial part of this funding is derived from a \$3.00 fee included in all traffic tickets issued throughout the state of Florida. Additionally, RNAB receives a lesser amount of funding from the Jacksonville Journey, the Mayor's initiative to prospectively address youth development, the Department of Juvenile Justice and private donations from independent contributors. All funding received is dedicated to salaries, benefits and administrative cost associated with the program. The meeting space is donated by the Greater Grant Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church and moderators and community board members serve on a voluntary basis.

### **Outline of the Study**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters and appendix. The first chapter provides a brief introduction of restorative justice, the justification for this study, the research questions and the outline of the study. Chapter two presents the theoretical framework, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, which was used to guide the study,

and a comprehensive review of the literature.e Chapter three discusses the research methodology with a rationale for using interpretative phenomenological analysis, the sample size, the data collection methods, bracketing, data analysis, strategies for substantiating the validity and reliability of the research, and potential ethical issues. Chapter four gives a detail analysis of the data collected and chapter five discusses the results of the study and the implications for theory development, practical application, implications for future research, a conclusion, and documentation of all references used in all chapters of the dissertation. The appendix section includes copies of the Nova Southeastern University Internal Review Board approval, the participant informed consent forms, the interview protocol, site approval letter, Memorandum of Understanding, Neighborhood Accountability Board Moderator Manual, Neighborhood Accountability Board brochure, and the data analysis charts of the researcher.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Outline of the Chapter

This chapter is presented in five sections. The first section describes the brief history and development of restorative justice from an international and domestic perspective. The second section discusses the relevance of morals, values, societal norms, reintegrative shaming and empathy in relations to the restorative justice process. The third section addresses the definition of community and the importance of community input and involvement in addressing crime. The concept of community is a critical element in the implementation of restorative justice because of the following rationale: a) crime is viewed as a local problem, the community is empowered when it takes ownership and engage in solutions; b) community justice initiatives provide a vehicle for victims, the primary customer of the justice system to be involved in determining outcomes; c) the community justice initiative facilitates dialogue between the victim, offender and community to address the break in relationship and work toward healing; d) community justice initiatives establish partnerships with governmental agencies and help to more accurately pinpoint where resources are needed; e) community justice initiatives create an inherent path for reconnection and rebuilding of relationship and restoration of the community as a whole (O'Brien et al., 2003).

In addition, this section also examines the concept of mentoring and its potential impact as a strategic tool for changing the behavior and creating understanding and community connection to young people sanctioned by neighborhood accountability boards in restorative justice programs. The fourth section discusses the theoretical framework that provides the foundational guidance and understanding for this research.

The fifth section examines the gaps in the literature that give impetus and justification for this research project and provides valuable insight into possible expansion on the results uncovered therein.

### **History of Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice principles have been used in societies to solve community problems of crime and offenses committed against persons and property throughout most of human history. Community practices closely akin to restorative justice principles were detected in early societies such as the Codes of the Hammurabi and Middle Eastern cultures which required restitution for violent as well as property crimes (Van Ness and Strong, 2002). In addition, the Hebrew Scripture utilizes words such as “shalom” which represents a state of wholeness that occurs when an individual or community is restored after the commission of a particular offense. In most indigenous cultures, restorative justice was woven into the fabric of daily life. In Pre-colonial New Zealand, the Maori embraced the principles of restorative justice as well as the Pacific nations of Tonga, Fiji, Samoa and pre-Norman Ireland (Consedine, 1999). Some African societies also engaged in relational models of reconciliation and restoration after the commission of an offense. The word, ‘*ubuntu*’, consistent in the Zulu, Xhosa and Bantu languages, inculcates the notion of “organic wholeness of personhood” or ‘the natural connectedness of humanity of persons’. In other words, ‘I am because you are’ and ‘my humanity is interconnected with yours’, suggesting the impossibility of relational conflict resolution without relational reconciliation (Van Ness and Strong, 2002).

The largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, the Pashtun, had a ceremony called Nanante that was consistent with the principle of restorative justice, forgiveness and

reconciliation. In the Nanante ceremony, the offending party would kill a sheep and bring flour and other food over to the victim's house for a community feast. During the preparation of the meal, in which the victim, offender and community members all participated, the offender would not be admonished relative to the severity of their conduct or their need for reform but advised, "You have done an injustice to this person". Both the victim and community would then assure the offender, "You are one of us and we accept you back among us" (Braithwaite, 2000).

Community forms of justice recognized that crime was an offense against people and placed a high premium on involving people in the resolution, relationships reconciliation, and restoration of the victim, offender and community to a sense of wholeness (Zehr, 2005). However, these forms of community justice and reconciliation began to dissipate as a recourse for addressing crime and broken relationships primarily because the focus of assigning fault changed from a victim-centered perspective to the state being the party to which harm was done (Maiden, 2009). Community justice, of course had its deficiencies particularly in contested cases where establishing guilt could be obituary in application, inaccurate and lacked safeguards. In addition, vengeance stood as a possible alternative to negotiated settlement of disputes, which carried the potential for reciprocal violence and blood feuds. Additionally, the urbanization of societies in the late medieval period resulted in the migration of people from small villages to towns. This migration to urban areas decreased the interpersonal connection inherent in rural life where everyone knew everyone. Accumulation of people into a central urban area reduced the interpersonal familiarity and the tradition of community members being

responsible for enforcing the laws and maintaining peace in their communities (The Evolution of Criminal Justice/Criminal Lawyer Group, 2015).

The judicial system of countries that trace their heritage from England have commonality based on the systemic shift from the community - restitution centered justice to the state-centered form of justice advanced under the reign of William the Conqueror. "William and his descendants used the legal process to increase their political power, competing with the growing influence of the church over secular matter under canon law, and with local systems of dispute resolution controlled by the barons" (Van Ness, 1990, 78). Proclaiming itself the 'keeper of the peace', the crown literally transformed the nature of disputes from being victim-centered to the concept of crimes against society, wherein the state was the universal victim. Crimes were henceforth considered a breach in 'the king's peace' necessitating courts to defend the king through vigorous prosecution of the offender. Real victims were no longer parties in their own cases and were often locked out of any meaningful participation in the resolution process without the permission of the state (Christie, 1977). The encroachment of the king into the legal system was incentivized by the potential for monetary gain and increased income to the king leading to the expansion of crimes considered to be committed against the state and the further proliferation of the retributive form of justice to the detriment of restorative practices (Ryan, 1977).

The retributive justice model that focuses on the "state as victim" has proven to be counterproductive in addressing the diverse needs and issues of juvenile offenders because it ostracizes the offender from the community, focuses on punitive outcomes, is unilateral in its application of punishment, and provides little or no assistance with

critical psycho-social, mental or family aberrations that may be foundational causes of the behavior (Wenzel, 2008). Research studies conducted by Nathaniel Ascani and Aviva M. Liberman, et, al, also determined that processing juveniles through traditional retributive justice systems leads to increased delinquent peer association and initiates an official “labeling” process that leads to increased exposure to delinquency subcultures. These studies further reveal that the labeling process also increases the association of offenders with other deviant peers resulting in higher levels of delinquency (Nathaniel, 2012; and Liberman, et. al., 2014).

Consequently, restorative justice practices and principles began a resurgence both nationally and internationally as a means to address juvenile crime. Restorative justice models began to reemerge in the 1970’s primarily because the traditional process of addressing every type of criminal offense through punitive measures was not only proving to be ineffective but also cost prohibitive (Maiden, 2009). In addition, traditional justice approaches to juvenile crime failed to address the underlying issues and yielded unproductive results in changing the behavior of youthful offenders (Tsui, 2014).

In 1974, Mark Yantzi, a probation officer for Waterloo Region of Ontario, Canada, and Dave Worth, thought that it would be an interesting concept for the victims of a vandalism spree to meet with the youth offenders. The two young men of Ontario, Canada had damaged cars, slashed tire, and broken windows causing \$2,220 CAD of damages to 22 properties in the community of Elmira, Ontario. The positive response by the victims led to the first victim-offender reconciliation program in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, with the support of the Mennonite Central Committee and collaboration with the local probation department (McCloud, 1999; Peachey, 1989). Consistent with his



Mennonite values of pacifism and individual responsibility. Worth, a full-time volunteer for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), recommended that the two vandals personally face their victims. To his surprise, the judge accepted the recommendation, ordered a one-month remand for the offenders to meet with the victims, and ordered Worth and Yantzi to oversee the meetings (Peachey, 1989). The offenders spoke to twenty-one victims and were ordered to pay restitution and serve eighteen months of probation. The victim's responses to the initiative varied but were overall positive. Worth, Yantzi and the MCC continued to experiment with victim-offender meetings which ultimately became known as the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Project (Mika, 1993). The concept spread throughout Europe and North America between the 1980s and 1990s taking on varied names such as victim-offender mediation and victim-offender dialogue (Umbreit & Greenwood, 2000).

Victim-offender mediation, victim-offender meetings, victim-offender conferences, victim-offender reconciliations or other varied nomenclature is a process that provides interested victims the opportunity to meet their offenders in a safe and structured environment. The ultimate goal of these meetings is to provide opportunity for dialogue between the parties with the intent of holding the offender directly accountable for their actions while providing support, assistance and a forum for victims to express how they were impacted by the crime. Victims are given the opportunity to describe how their lives were affected by the crime, to pose relevant questions, and directly participate in the planned restitution directed at holding offenders accountable. The goal for offenders is to develop an understanding of the impact of their actions, accept

responsibility, and to participate in the plan to address the damaged caused (Umbreit & Greenwood, 2000).

Victim-offender mediation is one of the most fundamental expressions of restorative justice and provides a very different framework for understanding and responding to crime and victimization (Umbreit & Greenwood, 2000). VOM and other diverse forms of restorative justice serve as alternatives to retributive justice practices and are grounded in six consistent key principles:

- Focusing on repair of harm to the victim.
- Providing a process for making amends to the community.
- Providing a process for greater understanding of how the incident affected the victims.
- Offering a meaningful way for the offender to take responsibility for the actions.
- Encouraging apology or expressions of remorse.
- Involving the victim (when possible) and the community in determining the accountability measures.

Restorative justice embraces the fundamental principle that crime is a violation between people and relationships, creating the need for repair of harm and restoration of the victim, community and offender. The concept of “victim” may include those who are directly affected by the crime as well as family members, witnesses, and the larger community. The break in relationship between offender, victim and community must be addressed by way of reparative responses initiated to mend relational damage. The restorative process is inclusive of all these parties and seeks input and communication

that brings healing, restoration and future prevention (McLaughlin, Ferguson, Hughes and Westmarland, 2003). Moving beyond the offender-oriented focus of retributive justice, restorative justice promotes the concept that restoration of emotional and material losses from crime is far more important than imposing graduated increased levels of punishment on the offender. The use of dialogue and negotiation among victims victimized communities, and offender is emphasized in facilitating accountability, restoration, and community healing (Umbreit & Greenwood, 2000). The roles and participation of parties may vary based on the offence and party preference; and the state, although not considered a primary victim, serves a supportive role in investigation, ensuring safety as well as facilitating the process (McLaughlin, Ferguson, Hughes and Westmarland, 2003).

Criminal violations create liabilities which obligate the offender to make amends and to the best of their ability repair the damage done. The community which is inclusive of the victims are empowered to determine what is right and define obligations placed on the offender. In the discussion of repairing the harm done to the community, victims and offenders' participation is integral to reaching understanding of harm and for the offender taking responsibility in restoring the victim and community. Voluntary cooperation is emphasized on the part of the offender, but coercion may be used to force acceptance of responsibility. Coercing acceptance of responsibility may appear inconsistent with restorative principles but is used as a means to facilitate dialogue and interpersonal engagement designed to lead to offender, victim and community restoration as opposed to being vengeful or punitive as effectuate in the retributive process (McLaughlin, et al., 2003).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the theoretical framework. The IPA approach was chosen as the proposed theoretical framework because it facilitates the examination of the lived experiences of research participants based on their personal and detailed accounts provided on his or her own terms (Willig & Rogers, 2017). IPA gives the researcher the ability to treat the participants of the study as “experiential experts” of the phenomenon and to explore the meaning derived from their experiences and how their perspectives were shaped by those experiences (Willig & Rogers, 2017). The analysis of this study focused on the participant’s engagement with community members who serve on the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) during the restorative justice process. The interpretative phenomenological analysis method used for this study provided opportunity for each participant to talk about their experience within the context of their individual understanding and articulate personal meaning based on their interpretation of how their experiences made sense to them (Moustakas, 1994). Although a theoretical framework is customary for most research projects, it is not an absolute imperative for a qualitative study primary because qualitative research does not rely on theoretical hypothesis to be formed prior to the collection of research data (Charmaz, 2006). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest however that it is important for the researcher to have a broad understanding of the potential theoretical claims which may be made by participants that will help guide and structure data analysis and theory formulation.

Phenomenology is an approach that evolved from work of Edmund Husserl and later developed by Martin Heidegger that seeks to study the lived human experiences and

the way things are consciously perceived and appear to individuals. IPA is committed to the process of analyzing, clarifying and explicating a human phenomenon with the intent of understanding the experience as described through the individuals personal lived experience. Rather than transcend the particular, IPA aims to grasp the texture and qualities of an experience as it is lived by an experiencing subject (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher, initially theorized that the grounding principle of phenomenological inquiry was the examination of the lived experience as it occurs on its own term. Husserl proffered the notion that examination of human phenomenon is too often encumbered by the tendency to situated behavior into pre-existing categorization systems. Consequently, Husserl theorized that to attain an authentic understanding of the lived experience necessitated the researcher to “go back to the thing itself” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This return “back to the thing itself” enables the researcher to evaluate lived experience of the participant based on their engagement with things and people and to seek the meaning which is derived from those experiences (Willig & Rogers, 2008). Husserl suggests that humans are always conscious of their experiences by way of seeing, hearing, touching or by stimulation of objects or people in the world. Phenomenological inquiry focuses on exploring the meaning of that which is experienced in the consciousness of an individual (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The IPA approach in this research study provided a forum for youth offenders to introspectively examine the conscious understanding of their experience with the neighborhood accountability board and the community volunteers and articulate an accounting of their unique perspectives and insights. The researcher summarized an all-

inclusive accounting of these lived experiences from which both general and universal meaning can be drawn (Moustakas, 1994).

Whereas Husserl's basis for phenomenological inquiry was concerned primarily with the question of consciousness, Martin Heidegger, who studied under Husserl, was driven by the ontological question of existence itself (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). According to Heidegger's theory, the engagement of youth with community members in the restorative justice process would represent real world lived experiences that produce ontological understandings and meanings that are relevant for phenomenological inquiry (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Subsequently, Heidegger's aim was to develop an appreciation for the essence of life, everyday experiences, and the sense of what it means to be human within the particular context of the interpersonal engagement (McLeod, 2001). Heidegger suggests that human activities cannot be studied by "bracketing them" because lived experiences are always "in relations to something or someone. Hence, human activities and their meanings must be studied and analyzed by exploring the cultural relations of the participants to the world in which they exist. Further, Heidegger proffered the notion that through a hermeneutical approach to the documented descriptive lived experiences of participants, the embedded meaning of everyday occurrences could be uncovered (Freeman, 2008).

The phenomenological inquiry of this research project also found foundational grounding in Jean-Paul Sartre's developmental emphasis on the lived experience of the human being. Sartre suggested that human essence is always in the state of becoming relative to its engagement with the world (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Therefore, our experiences and interactions, and the absence of those interactions propels the

development of the human being into a new reality of self that was non-existent prior to such experiences and interactions. This philosophy is key to the phenomenological methodology which resists “top down” interpretations or predetermined theoretical categorizations of the meaning of the experiences of the participants of this study (Willig & Rogers, 2017). Therefore, the central research question is designed to elicit responses that describe how the participants not only make sense of their experiences but also seek to understand what potential developments and changes are evident within the experiential descriptive. Employing Kierkegaard’s philosophy that “An existent individual is always in the process of becoming something” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), IPA will guide the examination and analysis of the epistemological and ontological inquiry relative to the concept of being of the research participants.

Phenomenological methodology, as previously stated, resists “top down” interpretations or predetermined theoretical categorizations of the meaning of experiences under examination. The phenomenological approach provides the researcher latitude to examining the emergence of frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in the raw data without the constraints imposed by structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006). This approach will give in-depth descriptions and interpretations of the lived experiences of the study participants with the intent of “goal-free analysis” based on the interpreted meaning derived from the verbal expressions in the participant narratives (Thomas, 2006). The researcher ventured to set aside prejudgments, biases, and preconceptions about the experiences being described by attempting to see the described experience from the participant’s perspective. The researcher also consistently engaged in reflexivity throughout the data gathering and analysis process to further reduce the potential for bias

and prejudgment in the formulation of themes derived from the lived experiences of the participants. Reflexivity is described as the researcher's intentional self-consciousness of his or her background, experiences, cultural history or other personal attributes or orientations that are potential influencers of the data under study (Roulston, 2010). The researcher gained extensive experience working with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board as a moderator and because a researcher's experience shape how meaning is understood (Smtih et al., 2009), it was critically important to avoid interjecting preconceived understandings in the thematic formulation based on those experiences. The reflexivity method employed throughout this research study is extensively detailed in the methodology section.

Notwithstanding the non-presumptuous objective intentionality of phenomenological methodology, it is nevertheless important for the researcher to have a broad understanding of the existence of theoretical underpinnings inherent in the descriptive lived experiences of the study participants that potentially may provide guidance and structure to data analysis and theory formation (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, (2009). IPA draws from a wide and selective range of philosophical ideas rather than attempting to operationalize a specific philosophical narrative, therefore, this researcher discusses several social variable and dynamics that may be relevant to this research. These theories of cultural and social behavior are elucidated in the study as background information that gives descriptive rationale and meaning to the behaviors under examination resulting in the youth offender's participation in the diversion programs. The researcher attempting to "make sense" of the participants "making sense" of his or her experience, utilized reflexivity and a cyclical approach to bracketing to avoid



intentionally looking for or the subjective application of any preconceived theories during the data analysis process (Smith et al. (2009).

### **Morals, Values and Societal Norms**

One construct through which the appropriation of restorative justice programs can be understood is through the lens of Emile Durkheim's theory of societal collective consciousness. Durkheim proffered the notion that human beings were inherently egoist which compels them to seek their own self-interests. However, collective consciousness is developed in human beings as a result of their social interaction and this consciousness represses or subdues the egoistic tendencies within humans facilitating the ability to coexist in society (Lemert, 2010). Durkheim further states that through societal interaction, the ideas of morality, values, and acceptable cultural behaviors are communicated which further develop and shape the social consciousness of the citizens of the society (Lemert, 2010).

In situations where society does not effectively teach these morals and values effectively, a condition called *anomie* occurs. Anomie represents a break down in society, disturbance of intergroup relationships, and deviation from the standard moral conduct and behavior of a particular society (Lemert, 2010). Durkheim theorized that the commission of crime was a primary byproduct of anomie, however, in his perspective crime had some redemptive values to society such as creating opportunities for society to transform itself in response to the implications derived from the analysis of the criminal act or acts (Lemert, 2010).

Robert K. Merton used the work of Durkheim as a foundational ground for his theory of deviance but went further to characterize Durkheim's notion of anomie as

dysfunction in society resulting from the disjunction between the goals of society and the legitimate means to attain them (Lemert, 2010). In other words, Merton suggests that inherent in the morals, goals and values taught by a society, are various societal goals and measures of success that define individual identity within society. These measures of success are generally connected to wealth and power. And because of the existence of perpetual and gapping disparities within groups in societies, every person does not have the same amount of access, resources, or capabilities to obtain these societal goals (Lemert, 2010). Consequently, one human response to the disparities is to act in a deviant manner or “innovate”. As defined by Merton’s theory, Innovators are people who accept the goals of culture or society but rejects the traditional or legitimate means of attaining these goals. They therefore find creative ways to obtain what they want through means that are unacceptable to and contrary to the societal morals and values (Lemert, 2010). This type of human actor stands opposite to what Merton describes as Conformist, who accept the goals of culture and society and the traditional or legitimate means of obtaining them.

The premise made by these two theorists suggest that society has the responsibility and capability to teach morals, values and societal norms that govern behavior and create a societal environment that promotes collective conciseness and dissuades deviant or innovative (antisocial) behavior. Consequently, restorative justice principles are closely aligned with this theoretical construct and have demonstrated effectiveness in proactively changing behavior of juveniles more effectively than retributive justice programs (Boveland, 2002).

## **Reintegrative Shaming**

Reintegrative shaming is a behavior modification tool that has demonstrated significant effectiveness in correcting deviant behavior, bringing the offender back into societal compliance with established rules and laws, and it also strengthens the moral bonds between the offender, the victim and community (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008).

Braithwaite and Braithwaite (2008) argued that the concept of reintegrative shaming produces guilt on the part of the offender that serves to build social consciousness and to enforce informal social control when wrongdoing occurs. According to Braithwaite and Braithwaite (2008), there are two types of shaming: stigmatization and reintegrative. Stigmatization occurs when the community attempts to correct deviant behavior through isolation and punishment of the offender as with incarceration. This type of punishment detaches the offender from the community and inflicts shame so remorsefully and unforgivingly that they invariably become social outcasts (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). As a result, it then becomes more rewarding and personally acceptable to associate with others who are perceived in a similar way and are ostracized from society and mainstream standards (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008).

Reintegrative shaming, contrary to its detractors, is not a “slap on the wrist” or a “soft on crime” initiative, but a means of focusing punishment on the criminal act instead of the individual. Reintegrative shaming involves holding the offender accountable for their act, denouncing the actions versus condemnation of the actor, and then affirming efforts that reintegrate the offender back into the community through forgiveness

(Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). Psychologically, reintegrative shaming effectively engages the offender in a manner that develops values that support long-term compliance with the law as opposed to pushing them towards association with others who are viewed in a similar manner. Reintegrative shaming cognitively reinforces values and beliefs that committing another crime would violate the relationship with individuals and the community, and that the law is legitimate and worthy of individual compliance (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). Consequently, reintegrative shaming is most effective in strong communities, where members are in trusting and respectful relationships with each other. The existence of strong communities is a counteraction to criminal subculture formation (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008).

### **Empathy**

Empathy, which is the cognitive ability to discriminate affective cues in others, the ability to assume the perspective and role of another, and the emotional response or the ability to experience emotions, is considered to be a direct variant of prosocial behavior (Mulford, 1992). The absence of empathy is considered a characteristic of aggressive and antisocial behavior. In restorative justice programs, the development of empathy and understanding of the community and victim's perspective in a juvenile crime has become a transformative agent within offender/ victim/ community interaction (Newbury, 2011).

Empathy is an innate human capability. Researchers in the field of neuroscience have identified the process by which the experience of empathy occurs in the brain (Silani, G., Lamm, C., Ruff, C.C., and Singer, T. Right, 2013). Scientists have identified a class of cells in the brain which are call "mirror neurons". These cells fire when an

individual observes another experiencing some type of event or sensation. And because of “brain changeability”, a phenomenon known as neuroplasticity, the actual observance on the mental state of one person can cause a mirror emotional reaction in another (Gerdes and Segal, 2011). In other words, thinking about a person’s experience can create empathy within the individual listening or observing it. The tendency to be egocentric is innate for human beings, but a part of the brain called the right supramarginal gyrus recognizes a lack of empathy and autocorrects (Silani, G., Lamm, C., Ruff, C.C., and Singer, T. Right, 2013). This phenomenon has substantial importance in the area of juvenile justice because it suggests that empathy is a learned emotion that can be increased, refined and mediated to help foster interpersonal identification with the victims of crime and potentially reducing recidivism or other anti-social behavior (Gerdes and Segal, 2011).

### **Community**

In several restorative justice models, the community plays an intricate role in holding the offender accountable, rendering sanctions and helping to restore them to the community. The term “community”, however, is vaguely defined and often confused with the term “society (Maiden, 2009). In addition, as defined within the context of the restorative justice model, the importance of the “community” as an agent of behavioral modification in juvenile crime is an undetermined factor. Within the context of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board, the term community is used synonymously as an expression of the geographic area in which the offender lives, where the crime was committed, the aggregate of people who may be affected by the crime and the individuals

who participate in the reciprocal response designed to hold the offender accountable for his or her actions.

This research projects theorizes that the support from the community experienced by juvenile offenders has an affirming affect that helps the offender define the harm experienced and facilitate a decision-making process that repairs harm thereby increasing victim recovery from the trauma of crime. In addition, community involvement in restorative justice models has the effect of improving neighborhoods and strengthening the bonds among community members that ultimately promote greater community safety, cohesiveness and collective consciousness. The participation of community also promotes greater understanding of the human impact of the offender's behavior, acceptance of responsibility, expression of remorse, and taking action to repair the damage, which invariably helps the juvenile offenders become a fully integrated, respected members of the community (Umbreit, 1997).

Community is generally defined as a geographical location in which people live or work. However, community as a concept extends well beyond the locality or geographically defined borders to also embrace a complex network of individuals and groups which have commonality with others within the group or community. Adults who were born during the baby boom era of the 1950's and 60's, particularly in rural communities, are familiar with the communal connection of family and neighbors that shared a common responsibility for looking after children with the same care and concern that they have for their own. Within these local communities, disturbance, childhood mischief and even some crimes were handled peacefully through an informal process that held the offender accountable, imposed consequences and restored wholeness to the

community without involvement of the justice system (Bazemore, 2001, p. 216). This early cultural phenomenon is a prescriptive precursor to the contemporary idea of the virtual “community of cares” that promotes a mutual network of respect and obligation between individuals and those connect to them. The “community of cares” shares commonality, identity, familial relationships and background with one another despite the fact that they may not be located in the same geographical area (Walters, 2014). By virtue of their commonality and shared experiences, the “community of cares” bears symbolic responsibility for the care and accountability of its members.

A secondary perspective on community is centered in the description of “community of place”. The “community of place” takes priority in addressing an offense through restorative justice practices because it is defined as the geographical location where the crime has been committed and involves those individuals who are most adversely affected by the crime (Strickland, 2004). The “community of place” is considered to have the most at stake when crime is committed within its relative proximity because individuals in the local community may not have the ability to relocate or the desire to live elsewhere. They also may be personally connected to the offender or victim and consequently have the most vested interest in seeing harm repaired and community restored as a preventative measure against future crime and enhancement of community safety (Chang, 2009). Grounded in a sense of community as an interconnected network of citizens, the “community of place” has the potential to mobilize its collective tools and resources and focus them towards healing and reintegration of youthful offenders, create new positive relationship, or strengthen

existing ones, and increase awareness of and commitment to the common good (Bazemore, 2001, p. 214).

A third concept of community is the “community as utopia”, which represents the ideal community where all citizens live in harmony and there is no crime. A theoretical goal of restorative justice is to move society towards this ideal (Chang, 2009). The “community of cares” and the “community of place” both play a vital role in holding offenders accountable while developing a sense of obligation and willingness to change behavior. Offenders should be supported by the community and encouraged to take responsibility for their behavior. The community can help identify positive strengths that can be built upon in an effort to foster behavioral change. Community engagement fosters a spirit of care and concern for the victim and offender and promotes a willingness to learn from each other in an effort to strive towards safety and crime reduction in the community (Nicholl, 2000).

Local communities that suffer the loss of security and safety as a result of crime need to feel that an appropriate and immediate response will be initiated to restore feeling of safety and trust. Communities have responsibility for initiating action to protect victims and others from further harm, to protect the offender from vengeance, to initiate a process that brings healing to the parties and community, and to promote restoration of victim and community (Galloway and Hudson, 1996). The concept of crime as an offense against the state is viewed as one of the contributing factors to the retributive justice system’s ineffectiveness in impacting antisocial criminal behavior, however, within the restorative justice paradigm, community is viewed as a civil and cooperative entity within the state that is empowered to make decisions that directly affect the community.



Consequently, the community takes collective responsibility and ownership for addressing crime based on its inherent obligation to a set of morals, standards and generally accepted behavior that creates and maintain social order (Schiff, Bazemore and Brown, 2011).

Community is a feeling, a perception of connectedness (Abrahamson and Beck, 2011). The feeling of connectedness allows restorative justice to work because “people do not want to disappoint those who they are connected to and care about (Braithwaite, 2000). Communities are also considered a “way to be”; a place that provides individuals an opportunity to interact, care and trust (Abrahamson and Beck, 2011). Consequently, communities serve as a conduit for reconciliation between offender and victim and a figurative incubator where standards of behavior are established, monitored and reinforced (Abrahamson and Beck, 2011).

Communities have a large responsibility in participating in the process of repairing the harm done when a crime is committed. This responsibility is grounded in the fact that the community may have failed in some respect to provide the victim adequate protection against the crime and may have failed to provide adequate opportunities for success that would have prevented the offender from perpetrating the crime. (Abrahamson and Beck, 2011). Offenders can be considered victims as well: victims of broken homes, unemployment, unsafe neighborhoods, and broken social networks (Strickland, 2004). The community is also viewed as playing a role in creating the environment for criminal behavior by allowing offenders to fall through systemic cracks in the social services system, schools, child protective services, mental health facilities, substance and domestic violence abuse agencies (Abrahamson and Beck,

2011). Traditional criminal justice systems primarily focus on punishing criminal behavior as opposed to addressing the underlining more structural causes. The adversarial approach of traditional justice systems back offenders into a corner and forces them to defend their actions which they may intuitively deem justified considering the conditions from which they may have derived. The adversarial system then pushes offenders farther away from the moral standard which connects individuals within the given community particularly if they are allowed to break the law without being punished. Restorative justice advocates theorize that it is critically important for the offender to take responsibility for their actions and be restored and reconnected to the community as a basis for affirming their human dignity and individual worth (Strickland, 2004).

Communities are empowered when they have the capacity to regulate themselves (Strickland, 2004). Community closeness or connection with those involved in crime, i.e. offenders and victims promote a sense of familiarity and cultural learning that invariably helps to reduce crime and the fear of crime. Formal mechanisms of social control exercised by the traditional criminal justice system are not as effective as the informal controls exercised through family, friends and social organization of the community. A sense of solidarity and connection develops when the community comes together to address community issues such as crime (Strickland, 2004). Restorative justice proponents sight these factors as critical factors that necessitate the involvement of community persons in restorative justice process. The engagement of micro communities in the restorative justice process promotes community healing, strengthen community ties and bonds, and facilitates the restoration of victims and the reintegration of offenders (Walters, 2014).

Norwegian criminologist Nels Christie conducted a study of the cause of death of prisoners incarcerated in Norwegian prison camps during WWII. Christie's study revealed that 50 guards were convicted of inhumane treatment, abuse, and killing of prisoners who died under their supervision. The guards' behavior was directly attributed to the interpersonal distance between the guards and their human prisoners. The study concluded that social distance between humans is a natural precursor to moral indifference. Guards who were not in close personal contact with prisoners were able to treat them in inhumane ways as opposed to those who had close personal contact (Umbreit and Armour, 2010).

The impact of crime from the community and offender's perspective is experienced differently when there is up close personal contact as opposed to distance. Hence, bringing together those affected by crime, the "community of cares", the "community of place", the victim, and the offender, theoretically should result in an enhanced outcome of connectivity, communal closeness, and offender restoration based on the proposed personal engagement and interaction demonstrated throughout the sanctioning process. The interpersonal engagement of all parties impacted by the offense and those who have responsibility to facilitate repair of the harm and promote resolution of the conflict, should foster a greater sense of community belonging and overall understanding of the impact of crime from a deeper humanistic perspective (Umbreit and Armour, 2010).

Research also suggests that the imposition and payment of restitution and the engagement in sanctioned community service projects helps to develop connections to the community and enhanced commitment and feelings of citizenship. Community

service helps young people acknowledge wrong-doing and harmful acts, and take responsibility for their actions. Procedural fairness exhibited by authorities increases trust in authorities and institutions, and the increased trust in authorities increases trust in communities and identification, participation and engagement as part of the community (Braithwaite, 2002). Communities therefore inherently mirror a bilateral relationship of trust as opposed to the dense social order of rulemaking authority which induces compliance (McLaughlin, et al., 2003).

The author of the harmful act must accept responsibility and must acknowledge the causal link between the act and the harm done. The offender must recognize the act was indeed wrong and harmful and recognize his or her intention to perform such act (Walgrave, 2003). Participation in interpersonal relationship building, mentorship efforts, cooperative community service projects, and other offender / community engagement components will help bridge the gap between the offender and community representatives, help build personal self-esteem, fosters feeling of usefulness, and provide both symbolic and tangible reparation and restoration of social links to community (Walgrave, 2003).

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring can take on various applications but for the purpose of this study it is defined as a relationship developed between an older and experienced adult and a young person for the purpose of providing guidance, instruction, and support to enhance the character, decision making and life skills of the mentee. Pliess and Feldhusen (1995) describe mentors as adults who expose their perspective mentees to concepts, ideas, tools, or occupations that are aligned with the mentor's particular area of expertise. Mentoring

provides tremendous advantages in delinquency prevention and intervention and are usually cost effective primarily because most mentoring programs capitalize on the resources of community volunteers, the faith community and other caring individuals (Nicholl, 2000).

Studies suggest that the overall impact of mentoring programs on youth development have been positive in relationship to interpersonal behaviors and attitudes, self-perception, reduced truancy, dropout rates, and substance abuse (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.). Although they are intangible and difficult to measure, qualities such as resilience, social adaptability, and improved mental well-being are also positively affected by mentorship relationships. Mentoring relationships between an experienced adult and a young protégé facilitates a transfer of knowledge, wisdom and useful life experiences from the older to the young. These relationships can be formally arranged by organizations specifically designed for that purpose or they can develop informally through natural relations such as teacher or coach to student (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.).

Mentoring provides a simple and inexpensive remedy for diverting at-risk and socially disadvantaged youth away from delinquent behavior. Matching disaffected children with caring adults who can offer emotional and social support that may be lacking at home or school has the potential to act as a counterbalance to negative influences and assist youth in overcoming or mediating life difficulties that can potentially lead to criminal behavior. Mentoring has shown promise when used as a therapeutic approach in lieu of punitive responses to delinquency such as boot camps,

juvenile detention, adult court or other retributive justice practices (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.).

At risk or high-risk youth are generally defined by the broad classification of youth who are personally, economically or environmentally disadvantaged and are susceptible to negative life influences. These youth have not, however been labeled as offenders or delinquent but have a high probability of becoming involved in the criminal justice system that exceeds those of non-at-risk youth. The designation of “at risk” is not an exclusive categorization for youths that derive from disadvantage socio-economic and environmental circumstances. The factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency cuts across a broad cultural spectrum. The increasing need to seek independence from parents, the inclination to seek popularity with peers, the tendency to participate in adolescence experimentation to “find identity”, and the proclivity to leave children unsupervised when they live in perceived “good neighborhoods” are a few of the factors that contribute to counter-conventional or “at risk” behavior exhibited by youth from middle class and affluent backgrounds (Luthar, Barkin and Crossman, 2013). Mentoring has the potential for prevention and intervention that diverts the path of young people from the criminal justice system or creates experiences that lead their lives in positive directions, irrespective of the socio-economic, cultural background or environmental conditions they derive (Lerner, Napolitano, Boyd, Mueller, and Callina, K.S., 2014).

Additionally, mentoring has the potential to foster or promote the type of relationship between the youth and their social world that can enhance adolescent life skills, provide opportunity for making contributions to self and society, and advance interpersonal growth and development (Lerner, et al., 2014). Effective, high-quality and

enduring mentoring relationships have shown the capacity to promote youth development academically, in educational engagement and social adjustment, and to help them view their future with greater positivity. Non-parental mentoring relationships between youth and adults also can have a positive effect on the parental relationships, peer relationships, self-awareness and self-worth, affect recidivism, delinquency and substance abuse factors (Lerner, et al., 2014).

Many churches and other religious and faith-based organizations are funded through state and federal grants to provide mentoring programs. Similar to schools, these organizations have close ties to the local communities of the at-risk youth and have a ready supply of mentors from within the organization or community at large. Churches and faith-based non-profits generally carry more credibility with the families of the youth than secular organizations and often provide a spiritual component that potentially facilitates a deeper emotional and spiritual outcome (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.).

### **Gaps in the Literature**

In 1974, Congress created the Office of Juvenile and Delinquent Prevention (OJJDP), under the auspices of the United States Department of Justice, to provide national leadership, resources, research support, and coordination of efforts directed at prevention, response and reducing juvenile delinquency and victimization (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.). Approximately twenty years later, OJJDP funded the Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Project to coordinate with several states and key stakeholders to develop training, technical assistance in juvenile justice reform and to facilitate implementation of

restorative justice principles and practices across the country (Bazemore and Umbreit, 1998). Since that time, 38 states have adopted legislation and implemented policies that address juvenile delinquency through various forms of restorative justice practices and principles. Restorative justice principles promote a reordered approach to addressing juvenile crime that involves the justice system professionals, offender, victim, community and other stakeholders working cooperatively to hold the offender accountable and repair the harm done by the offender, and to restore the victim, community and offender back to a place of wholeness (Pavelka, 2016).

This study was designed to explore the lived experiences of juvenile offenders who are sanctioned through the RNAB and their engagement with community volunteers who serve as RNAB board members. Inasmuch as a foundational principle of restorative justice is the desire to restore the offender back to good standing in the community following the commission of an offense (Zehr, 2005), this study sought to examine the impact of youth engagement with community volunteers and understand their sense-making of the concept of community after this engagement.

Community participation in the restorative justice process, both the “community of care” and the “community of place”, are critically important in transforming the offender’s perspective of the offence committed through the development of empathy and reintegrative shaming and restoring the offender back into the community as a valued and contributing member (Karp, Bazemore and Chesire, 2004). Despite the potential success demonstrated when adult volunteers within local community mentor at-risk youth, this type of interpersonal engagement, relationship development and mentoring is not an



extensively utilized or studied component within community based restorative justice programs.

The state of Vermont is one of the leaders in the United States in embracing restorative justice practices based on citizen impetus grounded in the belief that community engagement in the criminal justice process could transform non-violent criminal behavior (Schiff, Bazemore, and Brown, 2011). Vermont's neighborhood accountability boards are called reparative boards and are comprised of volunteer community members who conduct public "face-to-face" meetings with adult and youth offenders who have committed non-violent offenses. Volunteer community members participation in the reparative boards includes coordination of meetings to develop specific sanction agreements, periodic monitoring and submission of compliance reports to the courts (Schiff, et al., 2011). The reparative board model employed by Vermont has limited engagement between the offenders and community volunteers during the sanctioning session and interim period prior to completion of imposed sanctions. This has been a critique of the program's effectiveness based on the established research which notes the critical nexus between community involvement in empowering offender behavioral change and the familiarity of local community participants which encourages a more responsive, open and genuine dialogue that helps promote offender reintegration back into the community (Umbreit, 1997).

The Hennepin County Attorney's Office and the Minneapolis Police Department cooperatively conduct a restorative group conferencing model that reviews cases of youth offenders under the age of 18 years old. Community volunteers participate in face-to-face meetings between the offenders, their parents, victims and other support persons in

attendance at conferencing proceedings (Seward Neighborhood Group, n.d.). Community volunteers provide direction and guidance for the conferencing sessions, give impact statements concerning harm done to the community as a result of the offence, and coordinates the development of sanctioning agreements that hold offenders accountable for their crimes. The responsibilities and duties of the community volunteers do not involve any tangible follow up efforts with offenders during the sanctioning process that provides opportunity for relationship building, mentorship and transference of generational knowledge (Seward Neighborhood Group, n.d.).

Restorative justice programs operated under the auspices of the Dakota County Community Corrections Department are “victim-centered” with a primary focus on Victim/Offender meetings that facilitate dialogue and accountability, Victim Impact Panels that create opportunity for the victim to “tell their story” of how they were impacted by the crime, and Youth Repay Crews which provide work venues for offenders required to pay restitution and court-imposed fines (McGlynn & Westmarland, 2018). Community members are provided training through the Volunteer Program and function in roles that involve victim and offender services, and offender monitoring to ensure completion of imposed sanctions (McGlynn & Westmarland, 2018). According to Tim Morgan, probation officer and program coordinator, the service provided by community volunteers is restricted to the conferencing process and sanctioning development but do not involve mentorship or interpersonal follow up between volunteers and offenders (personal communication, July 3, 2018).

The Spokane County Juvenile Court Services considers participation of community volunteers as an essential element for the success of its juvenile correction

and intervention programs. Volunteers serve a critical role in providing mentorship, positive role modeling, support and guidance for juvenile detainees. Eighty-five percent of these detainees never receive a visit from a family member during the detention period. The void created by the lack of interpersonal engagement with family members creates a valuable opportunity for volunteers who visit juvenile detainees to form relationships and bonds. Through conversation and dialogue with juvenile offenders, volunteers have the capability to discuss the impact of juvenile's crime on community, to help foster empathy and understanding of the victim's plight, and to assist in facilitation of the offender back into the community. Although employed with fidelity and effectiveness within the detention structure, interpersonal engagement and mentorship is not a criteria of the non-detention restorative justice accountability boards or conferencing or diversion programs (Document Center • Spokane County, WA • CivicEngage, n.d.).

Community volunteers play a vital role in the conferencing and accountability processes in other national restorative justice programs such as Charlotte County, Florida (Charlotte County, Florida.) and Crow Wing County, Minnesota (Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project); however, a consistent theme that connects these programs with other restorative justice programs around the country is the absence of targeted mentorship and relational building components between the community volunteers and offenders that extends beyond the conference or accountability meeting (Krueger, Doris, personal communication, July 3, 2018).

In New Zealand, family group counseling is exclusively used in all criminal cases with the exception of homicide. The goal of family group counseling proceedings is to

promote inclusivity of all family members. These sessions are coordinated and moderated by a youth justice worker employed by a social services agency rather than the criminal justice system (McLaughlin, et al., 2003). The environment of the family group counseling is structured to create a sense of safety for the youthful offender so he or she feels comfortable enough to express their feeling and thoughts relative to the crime they have committed (McLaughlin, et al., 2003). Community members involvement in family group counseling is designed to create a sense of “extended family” of concerned citizens who were affected by the crime and have a vested interest in restoring the offender to the community and foster a sense of community membership (McLaughlin, et al., 2003). The community’s engagement with the offender is limited however, to the communication and dialogue exchanged during the family group counseling session with no follow up interaction or interpersonal engagement beyond the initial sessions (McLaughlin, et al., 2003).

The metaphysical phenomenon of community is that both the “community of cares” and the “community of place” has the ability to formulate an “as it should be” theoretical community that ostensibly teaches, promotes and undergirds the normative standards and values that all community members should ascribe to. The “community of cares” and “community of place” includes family, friends, and those who have formed meaningful relationships with the offenders as well as community members connected to the offender or connected to the place affected by the commission of the offence (Walters, M.A., 2014). Within the restorative justice paradigm members of the community play a critical role in repairing the harm done through the commission of an offense and restoring the offender back to the community (Braithwaite, 2000).

This study examined the lived experiences of juvenile offenders sanctioned through the RNAB. The study explored the perceived impact of their personal engagement with community volunteers and their feelings of community connectivity, community support and reintegration with the community. Inasmuch as research reveals that intergenerational mentoring has the potential to promote self-worth and awareness in youth, and enhance adolescence life skills, and develop societal and community connectivity (DuBois and Karcher, 2014), this study will provide groundwork for future research relative to substantive mentorship of youth extend throughout and beyond the NAB sanctioning process. As previously stated, critique of national restorative justice programs such as Charlotte County, Florida (Charlotte County, Florida.) and Crow Wing County, Minnesota (Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project) reveal the impact that community volunteers play in the conferencing and accountability processes, however, a consistent element absent from these programs and other restorative justice programs around the country is the targeted mentorship and relational building components between the community volunteers and offenders that extends beyond the conference or accountability meeting (Krueger, Doris, personal communication, July 3, 2018).

Community-based diversion programs draw a distinctive line between personnel who provide monitoring and mentorship. Monitors are people who are responsible for ensuring the youth fulfills the requirements of the program while mentors build personal relationships designed to enhance the development, growth and maturation of an individual. A juvenile offender participating in a diversion program titled Youth Aid Panel, expressed a desire for more mentorship involvement in the program curriculum (Chernoff and Watson, n.d.). This perspective gives credence to the potential need for

interpersonal connections and mentorship beyond the sanctioning period experienced by youth offender with the goal of facilitating continued interpersonal development, supportive community networks, and intervention that assists youth in avoiding future negative involvement with the criminal justice system.

By virtue of the study of the lived experiences of the participants of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board, this researcher will evaluate the potential for establishing alternative methods for strengthening interpersonal relationships between community volunteers and youth offenders, exploring appropriate avenues for community volunteers' engagement in sanctioned community service-oriented tasks that facilitate learning, reintegration, reengagement into the larger community, and broadening understanding of how individual transformation of the offender can lead to transformation of the greater community.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### **Introduction**

This study explored the lived experience of juvenile offenders who were sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) to evaluate their perceptions of the impact of community volunteer's personal engagement in the restorative justice process. Interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology was used to explore juvenile offenders experience with community volunteers to determine their attitudes and opinions relative to the impact of the community volunteers promoting increased feelings of community connectivity, a sense of community support and a stronger bond and reintegration with the community following successful completion of the sanctioning period.

The primary goal of employing phenomenological methodology in this study was to explore how the participants made sense of their experiences with the community volunteers (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). ). IPA gives the researcher the ability to treat the participants of the study as “experiential experts” of the phenomenon and to explore the meaning derived from their experiences and how their perspectives were shaped by those experiences (Willig & Rogers, 2017). The analysis of this study focused on the participant's engagement with community members who serve on the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) during the restorative justice process. The interpretative phenomenological analysis method used for this study provided opportunity for each participant to talk about their experience within the context of their individual understanding and articulate personal meaning based on their interpretation of how their experiences made sense to them (Moustakas, 1994). This was an inductive

study in which the participants were asked open-ended questions to illicit rich descriptions of their perceived experiences with the community volunteers and how those experience impacted their understanding of community and restoration to that community following the commission of an offence (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

### **Sample Size**

The RNAB are assigned eight juvenile cases per month. A total of twelve participants were selected for this study consistent with the historical tradition of IPA which generally promotes usage of small sample sizes in order to facilitate depth of analysis of similarities and differences within the population (Turpin, et al., 1997). Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis studies generally are conducted with small number samples because the focus is centralized on detailed accounts and representation of individual experience and human phenomena (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The researcher reviewed several studies that employed IPA methodology and achieved a rich saturation point of the data utilizing sample sizes between six and 16 participants.

The sampling selection of the twelve participants was purposive to promote the collection of the most plentiful and relevant data, and to maximize variation by including subjects or interviewees that may offer contradictory evidence or views (Yin, 2016). The sample selection was done with intentionality and purpose, as opposed to probability methods, based on the gatekeeper's observation of the participant's engagement with the community volunteer panel and their openness and ability to express attitudes, thoughts and opinions during the initial session. The ability of the participant to provide clear articulation of thoughts and perspectives greatly enhanced the researcher's ability to record the epistemological significance of the participant's personal engagement with the



community volunteer. The twelve participants represented a homogeneous sample in the sense that they had the common experience of being given the opportunity to participate in the RNAB diversion program as opposed to being prosecuted through a retributive criminal justice system. The twelve participants selected for the study represented a particular perspective rather than a population (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

According to Cresswell (2006), the appropriate sample size for a phenomenological study may range from 5 to 25 participants. The number of participants vary widely among studies suggesting the number of participants included in a study is not a definitive factor in assessing its quality and scope. The amount, depth and detail of the information provided by each participant generally dictates the quality of the data derived from the interview (Magnusson, Eva and Marecek, Jeanne, 2015). Based on the principle of redundancy, if saturation of new information was not reached with the initial twelve participants, additional participants would have been recruited and interviewed until at least two interviews in a row revealed no new information or themes (Yin, 2016).

### **Data Collection**

The Duval Teen Court oversees the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board which is held at the Greater Grant Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church. The coordinator of the Teen Court Program served as the gatekeeper for this research project and provided the researcher with appropriate authorization and made objective referrals of potential participants for this study. The gatekeeper played a significant role ensuring the researcher gained access to potential participants for the research and facilitated resolution of problematic issues throughout the project. To void implicit or intentional bias by the gatekeeper, a strict set of guidelines that governed the referral of potential

participants was initially agreed upon and reviewed periodically during the research process. All potential participants referred by the gatekeeper were required to meet the following criteria:

- All potential participants who meet the study requirements would be referred
- All participants must have successfully completed all requirements of the RNAB between 2015-2017
- All participants must be age 18 or older
- No participants could have criminal charges after completion of the RNAB
- Researcher was given access to Teen Court data base to ensure compliance with referral requirements

A total of 38 referrals were made by the gatekeeper. The researcher attempted to contact each potential participant by telephone and with a follow up letter. The researcher made repeated attempts to contact all 38 participants until twelve agreed to meet for an interview. The male-female ratio was 50% each. It was coincidental that 12 out of the 38 potential participants who responded and agreed to be interviewed resulted in a 50% male to female ratio, however the gender ratio of the study is relatively consistent with the gender ratio of the RNAB. Between 2013 to 2020 a total of 318 youth successfully completed the RNAB program. The gender ratio during this period was 178 males (56%) and 140 females (44%). The researcher met with the twelve prospective families and explained the purpose of this study and secured written consent to participate. The gatekeeper was present during this meeting to help build trust and rapport between the researcher and participants and to answer any questions relative to the Teen Court

process or methodology. The gatekeeper was not present during the data collection process of the research study.

*Interviews:* The length of the sanctioning process for youth offenders in the RNAB program is generally 90 days but may be shorter depending on the offender's completion of all the required sanctions imposed or longer if an extension is approved. After verifying that the youth participant was 18 years of age or older and had completed all of the sanctioning requirements, the researcher scheduled an interview. The interview was audio-recorded, and the researcher took manual notes. The researcher reviewed the consent form signed at the beginning of the study to reemphasize the rights of each participant and to reaffirm that their identity and confidentiality of the information recorded would be strictly protected. Each interviewee was asked and gave verbal consent to record the interview. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and the participants were advised of their right to take periodic breaks if necessary.

The interview protocol for this study was conducted in three parts. The first part began with a brief introduction and discussion of the study. A copy of the consent form originally signed by the participant was reviewed and all questions raised were answered. The structure and format of the interview was explained and if no additional clarification was needed the interview was started. The second part of the survey protocol consisted of several questions. These questions were divided into three categories: 1) two demographic questions that categorized the respondents and verified eligibility for the study; 2) three primary questions designed to explore the lived participant's experiences and engagement with the community volunteers relative to the neighborhood accountability board process. These three questions were posed in the following manner:

- a. Please tell me about your experience with the Neighborhood Accountability Board.
- b. Please tell me about your experience with the community volunteers.
- c. Please describe how this experience has impacted your understanding of your community.

3) Follow up questions were asked to provide clarity and deeper exploration into the primary descriptions of the participant's lived experiences. With the exception of demographic questions, all questions were posed as open-ended to elicit rich and detail accounts of the lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. The third part of the protocol concluded the interview by reviewing all responses for accuracy, answering any remaining questions of the participant or parents, and thanking them for their time and participation.

### **Bracketing**

Total objectivity in the research process is virtually impossible because each researcher brings a reservoir of knowledge, beliefs, values and life experiences that potentially can be superimposed upon the collected data. In order to identify and reduce potential influence and bias, the researcher purposely engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process. Reflexivity helps the researcher approach the data provided by participants with an honest examination of preconceived notions, interest and values that might impact the research project (Primeau, 2003). The researcher created a diary to record reflexivity throughout the research process which assisted in guiding decisions made during the study and highlighted feelings, thoughts and perceptions that could

compromise the integrity of the research data (Wall, Glenn, Mitchinson, and Poole, 2004).

- Pre-interview Stage: the researcher reflected on the experience gained through involvement with the neighborhood accountability program. The researcher had witnessed numerous personal accounts, descriptions of offenses, family life histories and rationales provided by youth offenders during NAB accountability sessions. The researcher recorded these thoughts in a journal for future reference to make comparison with lived experiences provided by youth participants with the intent of providing a level of confidence in differentiating the researchers thought from the descriptions of the participants.
- Data Collection Stage: during this stage the researcher recorded the responses of the participants but also wrote notes of first impressions, feelings, descriptions of the environment and other thoughts believed to be relevant to the engagement with the participant. These notes were transferred into the journal again to use during the analysis stage to ensure the participant's experiential descriptions took precedent.
- Data Analysis Stage: the researcher fully immersed himself into the data during the analysis stage and the field notes and journal entries were used as a check against the responses of the participants again to reduce researcher bias and provide precedence to the participant's descriptions. Areas that the researcher perceived as potential areas of bias were documented in the journal. The researcher made particular note of lived experiences that conjured feels

and emotions relative to other stories heard and to personal experiences of the researcher. The researcher also made specific notation of stories that were personally emotional to avoid preferential treatment of those accounts as opposed to others during the analysis.

The researcher provided another validation level to the data collection process by returning to the participants to confirm the accuracy of the statements as transcribed. Each transcript was reviewed by the respective participant to verify that the responses to the questions posed had been accurately recorded and that the researcher had not misinterpreted the verbal retelling of their experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

### **Data Analysis**

A critical element of the IPA analysis was the necessity for the researcher to immerse himself into the data to become intimately familiar with its contents, therefore all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The researcher created a Microsoft Word file to record transcriptions of the interviews and initiate a passcode to protect the confidentiality of these files. All files were downloaded to the researcher's personal laptop computer and backed up into an independent hard drive which were both locked in the personal safety cabinet of the researcher when not in use. Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009 guided the development of the data analysis utilizing the following steps:

#### **1. Reading and re-reading the transcripts.**

Reading and re-reading of the transcripts is the first and most critical role in developing intimacy, understanding and complete immersion into the data.

The first two readings of the transcripts were conducted while simultaneously listening to the recorded version in an attempt to place myself in the world of the participant. The researcher read the transcript 4-5 times in total. The researcher imagined the participant responding to the questions posed and visualized facial expressions and body movements during the re-reading process. The researcher was deliberate and purposely spent considerable time in this phase and conducted the reading and re-reading session late at night when there was complete quiet and no external distraction. The researcher made notes concerning the rhythm and flow of the interview and highlighted areas where the data was rich in personal insights, feelings and emotions of the participant. The researcher gave close attention to life stories that provided deeper understanding of the participants experiences.

## **2. Initial coding of the data.**

Smith et al., 2009 makes it clear that “there are no rules about what is commented upon” during the coding process (p.83), but it is critically important to identifying the manner in which the participant understands and describes the experience. The part of the analysis begins with looking at descriptive language, linguistic comments and moves to a conceptual analysis of the lived experience. The researcher wrote within and outside of the margins of the transcript initial thoughts, impressions, and circled words, expression and occurrences that transpired external to the interview but provided relevance and context to the interview setting (See Figure 2). Comments were initially written distinguishing between descriptive, linguistic

and conceptual narrative and flow of the information and was then coded using Word comment tool with emphasis highlighting (See Figure 3).

**Figure 2**

*Sample of Initial Noting*

TM: Okay, alright. You've talked about some of the things you've learned, but can you tell me anything else that you learned from this that you're able to use in your current life adventures and endeavors?

I: I don't know, it's been a while since I've been through this. It made me realize that being an adult or becoming an adult comes with more responsibilities and that yes they gave me a second chance to better myself and made me realize that when I become 18 the trouble that I was getting into could have been a lot worse. It would be a lot worse, and they opened my eyes to show me that what I'm doing now when I turn 18 is not going to fix. I'm not going to have that second chance that you all gave me, and I took it and I really do greatly appreciate that opportunity.

*Revelation*

*no second chance different standing as adult*

TM: Okay, alright. How was your experience with the community volunteers? How was your experience with them? What did you think about them and the way that they conducted their business and handled you in that session?

I: At first, I was like they got attitudes with me. They're not helping me. They're not doing anything for me. Once I got to know the people on a better basis of not just meeting them and trying to talk about everything. They showed me that they do have a heart and they do care about me and about my future. I was all in all really impressed with how they treated me. They didn't treat me as an outcast or outlander or anything like that just because of my color or anything of that nature. They showed me that they do care about me and they do care about my future, so I was really impressed with them. They were all really nice. I was just stuck in my ways.

*→ not connected at first*

*diversity of client & board*

TM: Okay, alright. Did they talk to you about your responsibility to your community?

I: To be honest, I don't exactly remember everything. It's been a few years, been almost 4 years.

*progress also recidivism*

TM: Well let me ask you this question this way. What do you think your responsibilities to your community is now that you have gone through this program and learned some valuable skills from the program?

I: I don't know. That's kind of a tough question to be honest.

TM: Okay.

*Phonetic*



**Figure 3***Sample of Transcription Coding*

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| I:  | It was I think petty theft. I had got caught stealing.  | Commented [TM5]: D:5.25.2020: petty theft is the most common offense for NAB participants.  |
| TM: | Okay, okay. Alright, good. Can you tell me a few things that you learned from the program? You've already told me a few but anything else that you can think of that you learned? |   |
| I:  | No.   | Commented [TM6]: D:5.25.2020: PRT was unable to elaborate on what was learned.  |
| TM: | Okay. What was your experience with the adults that were sitting in the room? How did that go?  |   |
| I:  | It was alright. They was helping me and stuff like that. They was actually talking to us. They had people come in and talk to us and stuff like that.                             | Commented [TM7]: D:5.25.2020: the engagement with the comm members simply described as "they were helping me". ("Stuff like that" is a frequent expression: LA) |
| TM: | Okay. Alright and did you have any problems with your experience with them?   | Commented [TM8]: D:5.25.2020: PRT may have included some of his experience with the program administrators with the comm members initial engagement.            |
| I:  | No. I just came there and looked every day like well I ain't leave but I came, got my work done, and really just stayed to myself. Like I wasn't really talking in that program.  | Commented [TM9]: D:5.25.2020: PRT suggests that the routine of showing up and doing the work required enabled him to successfully complete the program.         |
| TM: | Okay, do you remember when you first came and all the community members were there?   | Commented [TM10]: D:5.25.2020: PRT appears to suggest that he was minimally engaged only as required.   |
| I:  | Yes.  |   |
| TM: | What were some of the things that they said to you?   |   |
| I:  | They said something but I don't remember.   | Commented [TM11]: D:5.25.2020: PRT recollection for specific conversations was not high.  |
| TM: | Okay, alright. Well let me ask you this, if you could tell them how to improve the program, what would suggest?   |   |
| I:  | I would suggest like have them, mean like doing outside work, not outside work but having them help the community.  | Commented [TM12]: D:5.25.2020: PRT feels that community service is a beneficial component for youth in program.   |
| TM: | You mean the young people?  |   |
| I:  | Yeah.   |   |
| TM: | So like community service?  |   |
| I:  | Yeah, stuff like that, having to go like into schools and stuff.  | Commented [TM13]: D:5.25.2020: Other youth offenders sharing their stories with other youth may serve as preventative measures to crime.                        |
| TM: | Okay. Do you think young people would benefit from people to come in and talk to them and share their stories?  |   |

**Descriptive Comments:** The researcher thoroughly analyzed each paragraph of the transcript individually for descriptive comments. Descriptive comments provided insight into the participant's experience. The researcher took precaution not to restate what the participant said verbatim but to comment on how the experience was portrayed, what were key elements of the experience and the things which appeared to be important to the participant. Descriptive comments were made to the right of the Word documents with the comment tool and was identified with a "D" and the date documented. An example of descriptive comment coding is as follows:

Commented [TM33]: D:5.25.2020: Participant appears to suggest that failure to persist through completion of program may result in “regrets”. The participant used the term “regrets” as a descriptive of a negative consequence, potentially engagement with the criminal justice system which was an emphasis of the volunteer engagement process.

The descriptive comments were “taken at face value, highlighting the objects which structured the participants’ thoughts and experiences” (Smith, et al., p. 84).

***Linguistic Comments:*** Linguistic comments were identified and documented.

These comments focused on the language of the participant highlighting figures of speech, repetitive usage of words or phrases, the tone, intensity, volume and inflection of the voice, laughter, tears or demonstrative actions that suggested how the participant interpreted the experience. The researcher noted colloquial saying such “you know what I mean” and “for real, for real” that suggested the importance of what was being communicated or the participant’s perception of universal understanding of the terminology. “Metaphor can be a particular powerful component of the analysis here because it is a linguistic devise that links descriptive notes to conceptual notes” (Smith, et.al., p. 88). Identified with the initial “L”, an example of a documented linguistic comment is described here:

L11.11.2020: “weight off my shoulders” used 2 times suggesting relief of tension and discord brought about by apology. Participant may not have known how repair breach or damage otherwise.

***Conceptual Comments:*** The conceptual comments began the interpretative stage of the analysis and assisted in the development of themes. Tentative language was used in

formulating the conceptual comments and as an initial test of the conclusion and prospective themes. Conceptual phrasing was structured in the form of statements or questions that opened in this manner: “It may be”, “It seems like”, or “It’s possible that” (Smith, et al., 2009). This stage of the process was not about finding answers or pinning down understanding but opening up a range of provisional thoughts that would potentially assist in finding meaning in the described lived experiences. The researcher drew from his own experiences during this process but bracketed personal understandings and concepts to avoid projecting my beliefs into the descriptions of the participants. Smith, et al. (2009) states that “It is more important to remember that analysis is primarily about the participant, not oneself. One is using oneself to help make sense of the participant, not the other way around” (p.90).

Conceptual comments were recorded in an Excel spread sheet and were color coded to assist in drawing parallels to potential developing themes and link similar concepts expressed by other participants (See Table 1). Here is an example of a conceptual comment recorded by the researcher:

Is it possible that redemptive shame is a potential result of pressing the youth to specifically described the offense committed? [Bracket: Redemptive shaming is a concept that the researcher encountered and may affect the objectivity of the analysis of this potential theme.]

A second example is: “It would appear that the engagement process had a profound impact on the youth as demonstrated by the youth's deliberate, thoughtful and calm manner in choosing the right words to describe the youth's experience.”

Inasmuch as conceptual comments began the analysis stage, the process required enormous focus by the researcher to accurately record the described experiences and avoid interjecting meaning that was inherent to the researcher personal understandings. During this process the researcher would take frequent breaks to walk, have unrelated conversation or engage in stress reducing activity. At the close of each narrative the researcher provided some concluding comments that gave summation of the overall impression of the described experience.

**Table 1***Sample of Conceptual Comments*

| Conceptual Comments:<br>Your Participant 1   |  | THEME DEVELOPMENT  |
|--|--|--|
| 1A (D:5:20:20)   |  | History and life experience helps guide sanctions  |
| It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions   |  |  |
|  |  | 1A (D:5:20:20) YP 1  |
| 1B (D:5:20:20)   |  | It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions   |
| It seems like this supports 1A on meaningful sanctions   |  |  |
|  |  | D:5.22.20 YP 5   |
| 1C (L:9:24:20)   |  | It is possible that providing youth a greater opportunity to express their perception of life gives the community volunteer more information upon which to base recommendations/ sanctions/ help   |
| Youth used words "Vibes" and "I felt them" which suggest that the approach of the community volunteers and chemistry felt by the youth facilitates more productive engagement                                      |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1D (D:5:20:20)   |  | D:5.25.20 YP 6   |
| It would appear that this youth gained an enhanced understanding of the importance of deliberation in the decision making process from the engagement with the comm volunteers                                     |  | It appears that the increase in familiarity between the youth offender and comm volunteers reduces the barriers of resistance to the program purpose and intent (Possible integration for videos, tools, pre-session prep for youth and board members) |
|  |  |  |
| 1E (5:20:20) Also noted in 1A  |  |  |
| Is it important for the youth to feel a sense of "caring" on the part of the comm volunteer as an element of constructive engagement?  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 1F (L:9:24:20)   |  | D:5.25.20 YP 6   |
| It appears the youth perceived all components of the NAB process as essential requirements by virtue of the emphatic use of the word "ALL" in describing the inconvenience of the work as having redemptive value. |  | It appears that the more information the community volunteers have prior to the initial engagement with the youth offender, the greater potential for success. (pg 29)   |
|  |  |  |
| 1G (L:9:24:20)   |  |  |
| It appears that the concept of "caring" is an important element of the success of the process as seen in the youth suggesting they were not "just a name on a piece of paper".                                     |  | Impact of Open NAB Apology   |
|  |  |  |
| 1H (5:20:20)   |  | 1J (D:5:20:20) YP 1  |
| It appears that the body language of the comm volunteers impacts the effectiveness of the engagement with youth.   |  | It appears that hardships and inconveniences experienced by the parents because of this youth offenses may be a preventative factor against future offenses.   |

### **3. Developing emergent themes.**

In this stage the researcher began looking across the data and comments made in the initial notations to develop emergent themes that were related to the phenomenon under study. The researcher created concise and pithy statements which captured the important elements of the descriptions provided by the participants as recorded in each transcript. The emerging themes were expressed as phrases which spoke to the psychological essence of the participant's described experience and contained enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstraction to be conceptual (Smith, et al., 2009). The researcher periodically reviewed highlighted and bolded comments made in the transcripts and re-read conceptual annotations to add validity to the theme development. The themes represented a synergy of both description and interpretation, reflecting the participant's original words and the researcher's analysis of experience (Smith, et al., 2009).

### **4. Searching for connection across emerging themes.**

The process of searching for connection across emerging themes required the researcher to draw together emerging themes and produce a structure that gave emphasis to the most interesting and cogent details of the participants experiences (Smith, et al., 2009). The color coding done in Excel spread sheet during the conceptual comment stage greatly assisted in this process (See Table 1). The color coding helped the researcher quickly identify the frequency in which a theme was supported throughout the participant's description and gave some indication to the relative importance of the

emerging theme. The researcher attempted to avoid giving over-emphasis to themes because of numerical repetitiveness but made observation of its frequency as potentially an important element of the participant's experience (Smith, et al., 2009). Contextualization was also an important criterion for connecting emergent theme as the researcher listed themes based on key life events and moments detailed in the participant's narratives (Smith, et al., 2009).

#### **5. Moving to the next case.**

A write up after theme development for each participant was not essential to the process as the methodology of a case study dictates. Therefore, the researcher moved to the next case to repeat theme development with intentionality towards allowing each participant's narrative to be assessed independently for potential themes unique to their experience (Smith, et al., 2009).

#### **6. Looking for patterns across cases.**

As themes were developed from individual transcripts, the researcher grouped them together to facilitate cross case analysis and identify connections between various participant descriptions of their experience. A total of ten themes were initially formulated and graphically displayed in an Excel spreadsheet with identical color coding of similar themes from each participant for easy identification (See Appendix). The researcher categorized the themes based on interpreted potency and relevance to the overall experience of the participant (Smith, et al., 2009). The major themes were

graphically charted in a Word document with supporting verbatim comments from the transcripts used in framing the conceptual theme for each participant (See Table 2). The researcher created a matrix that illustrated the connection of all themes across the twelve participants with excerpts of the data to provide validation of consistency (See Table 3). This was a creative process and reoriented the researcher back to theory of double hermeneutics, a foundational principle of IPA in which the observer provides interpretation of the participant's interpretation of their experience (Smith, et al., 2009). This section provided opportunity for the researcher to share what was learned about the lived experiences of the participants and allows for objective critique of the interpretation of those experiences by future reviewers.

**Table 2**

*Sample of Data Analysis Matrix*

|         | <b>Descriptive</b>  | <b>Linguistic/ Key Words</b>  | <b>Conceptual Comments</b>  | <b>Emergent Themes</b>  | <b>Themes</b> |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 1. Andy |   | <p>"officer smelled smoke"<br/>(seriousness of offense)</p> <p>"taste"<br/>encounter with criminal justice system</p> |   | <p>The Value of a Second Chance</p> <p>Universal Applicability</p>                  |               |
|         | <p>Desired to know background &amp; decision making process</p> <p>Interested in all aspects of the incident</p> <p>Staff follow up suggest sincere</p> | <p>"Actually wanted to know what happen"</p> <p>"Vibed" term used to describe relatability</p>                        | <p>Chemistry promotes productive engagement</p> <p>Sense of caring promotes engagement</p> <p>Youth interpret body language</p> | <p>Interpersonal Connection Makes a Difference</p> <p>Importance of Being Heard</p> |               |



|  |  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|
|  | <p>desire for his success</p> <p>Questions from board indicated genuine concern</p> <p>Questions helped them get to know him</p> <p>Board members had relatable backgrounds and experiences.</p> <p>Body language of board members' created comfort with process</p> <p>Board members personal stories created rapport</p> <p>Board sacrifice their time to help him</p> | <p>"Community understands mistakes but wants you to move forward"</p> <p>"pushes you" towards right path</p> <p>"looked on the bright side"</p> <p>"more than names of a piece of paper"</p> | <p>Personal experiences facilitate connection</p>                                    |   |  |
|  |  |  |  | <p>Generational Identification</p> <p>Racial Diversity</p>        |  |
|  | <p>Consequences faced by family incentive to not re-offend</p> <p>Family hardships have redemptive value</p>   | <p>"ALL" used emphatically to describe value in the inconvenience posed by the program</p>   | <p>Parents hardship and inconveniences may prevent future offense</p>                | <p>Sincere Apology is Redemptive</p> <p>Reintegrative Shaming</p> |  |
|  | <p>Board chose sanctions specific to offense</p> <p>Sanctions were meaningful, not just busy work</p> <p>Members with community connections facilitates</p>  | <p>"watch your circle" (more selective about friends)</p> <p>"Man's brother" (community responsibility)</p> <p>"Circle" used to define</p>   | <p>Familiarity with life experiences/ background facilitate meaningful sanctions</p> | <p>Meaningful Sanctions Changes Perspectives</p>                  |  |

|  |   |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
|  | understanding of<br>life circumstance/<br>background (guide<br>sanctions) | community i.e.<br>loved ones,<br>family...<br><br>"Came to<br>understand<br>how offense<br>hurt the<br>community" |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|

**Table 3***Sample of Data Cross Analysis Matrix*

| Partici<br>-pant | Importance of<br>a Second<br>Chance  | Impact of<br>Interpersonal<br>Connection  | Inter-<br>Generational<br>Involvement<br>Critical   | Impact of the<br>Apology<br>Redemptive<br><br>Reintegrative<br>Shaming  | Impact of<br>Meaningful<br>Sanctions   |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Andy             | "taste" of the<br>system"  | "actually<br>wanted to<br>know what<br>happened"<br>"vibed"<br>"push you"<br>"More than<br>names on<br>paper"     |   | Parents<br>inconveniences<br>may prevent<br>reoffending   | "watch your<br>circle"<br>Man's brother"<br>"came to<br>understand<br>how offense<br>hurt<br>community"  |
| Becky            |  | "formed new<br>relationships"<br>"concerned"  | "I felt<br>uncomfortabl<br>e"<br>"Ambushed"<br>"cut down the<br>number of<br>adults"<br>"1,000 people<br>in the room" | "felt bad"<br>"was<br>embarrassed"<br>Cried openly<br>"regret<br>"putting father<br>through this"<br>"I felt his pain"<br>"I saw the hurt<br>in his face" | "my circle of<br>friends has<br>changed"<br>"learned the<br>importance of<br>self-care"<br>"faze you"<br>"see you<br>sweat"<br>Tears shed with<br>laughter |
| Cathy            | "not worth it"<br>"shouldn't<br>have been<br>there"<br>"affects your<br>future<br>actions" | "they worked<br>with me"<br>"nice, but<br>held me<br>accountable."<br>"not a slap in<br>the wrist"<br>Was "heard" |   | "uncharacterist<br>ic behavior"<br>"shocked<br>parents"<br>Apology<br>"brought<br>relief"   | "expressed<br>how I was<br>changed"<br>"think before<br>you act"<br>"Valuable stuff"<br>Voice elevated<br>when   |

|       |  |   |   |  |   |
|-------|--|---|---|--|---|
|       |  | <p>"told my story"</p> <p>"didn't feel abandoned"</p>   |   | <p>"presents seeing progress"</p> <p>"not worth it"</p>              | describing self-improvement   |
| Donna | <p>"return not always monetary"</p> <p>"beneficial in unexpected ways"</p> | <p>"not trying to be cool"</p> <p>"smart",</p> <p>"intelligent"</p>   | <p>"didn't feel alone"</p> <p>"Youth members would be an asset"</p>   | <p>"new freedom" to dialogue with parents</p>                        | <p>"cool kids"</p> <p>"from stubborn to open minded"</p> <p>"healthy on the inside"</p> <p>"Clear minded"</p> <p>"being part of community requires giving back"</p> <p>"don't measure life success by others"</p>   |
| Edna  | <p>"nobody can touch you"</p>  | <p>"did not agree with everything"</p> <p>"allowed to tell my story"</p> <p>"in one ear out the other"</p> <p>"forth right"</p> |   | <p>"laughter" about perceptions</p> <p>"principle of the matter"</p> | <p>"pros and cons"</p> <p>"pushed"</p> <p>Spoke in 3<sup>rd</sup> personal (objective self-assessment)</p> <p>Voice showed pride in accomplishments</p> <p>"sweet, innocent"</p> <p>"different when pressed or pushed"</p> <p>"transformation occurred in the work"</p> |
| Fran  | <p>"life saver"</p> <p>"opportunity should not be wasted"</p>              | <p>"initially uncomfortable"</p> <p>"opened my eyes"</p> <p>"thought they had attitude with me"</p>                             | <p>"same color as me"</p> <p>"because of my color"</p> <p>"You all"</p> <p>"Don't judge a book by its cover"</p> <p>Feeling "everyone was against me"</p> | <p>"only have one mother"</p> <p>"was long overdue"</p>              | <p>"helped transform me"</p>  |

|        |   |  |  |   |   |
|--------|---|--|--|---|---|
|        |   |  | "fear"<br>"scared"<br>"treated less than" because of color |   |   |
| Gail   | To "pour into others"                         | "initially closed minded"<br>"stayed in contact"<br>"race and background"<br>"poured into me"<br>"enhance follow up" |  | "parental units"<br>Reluctant to name offense (embarrassment)   | "OK" repeated   |
| Hector |   | "they were helping me"<br>"stuff like that"  |  | "sad and scared"<br>"she had to pay for my actions"   |   |
| Irving | "silly actions brought serious consequences"  | "mentors to me"<br>"role models"<br>"teachers"   | "include youth to tell their stories"                      | "weight off my shoulders"<br>"broke down barriers"  | "wrong place, wrong time"<br>"silly actions brought serious charges"<br>"rising above"<br>"came to understand seriousness of actions" |
| John   | "never been in this type of situation before" | "same steps I was in"  | "sense of hope"<br>"increased ability to focus and listen" | "sad but happy"<br>"relieved to confess my wrong"<br>"mixed emotions"<br>"sad for taking mom through this"<br>"turn the page"<br>"bury the hatchet" | "giving back to community"<br>"count to 10"   |
| Ken    | "got in trouble a lot before program"         | "I listened"<br>"positive influence in"  |  | "was turning point with mom and behavior"   | "behavior dictates community"   |

|       |   |  |  |  |                    |
|-------|---|--|--|--|--------------------|
|       | "life would be different"<br>"life was on a dangerous path" | the community"   |  |  | perception" of you |
| Lewis | "second chance carries responsibilities"                    | "very hands on"<br>"had time to invest in me"<br>"took time out of their day"<br>Interesting in helping" | "youth may be closed minded to adults" |  |                    |

### Validation Strategies

Demonstrating validity in an IPA research project is critical to the overall success of the study and the legitimacy of its findings. The researcher utilized Lucy Yardley's four broad principles of validation: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance to substantiate the credibility and reliability of this study. First the researcher gave careful consideration to the sensitivity of the context by recognizing the interpersonal nature and environment in which the data was being collected. All of the participants within the study were 18 and 19 years old which established a significant cultural and generational difference between the participants and researcher. Hence, considerable attention was given to creating a climate conducive to open dialogue, avoiding the perception of being judgmental, showing empathy, and navigating the power differential by affirming the participants as experiential experts from whom the researcher would obtain knowledge. All interviews were conducted in the desired location of the participant to create the sense of comfort and trust (Smith, et al., 2009).

Secondly, the researcher ensured conformity to Yardley's second principle, commitment and rigor (Smith, et al., 2009). The researcher connected the research questions to the deficit revealed through the literature review and the desired focus of the study. The researcher was attentive to the descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants, providing analysis of the comments while cautiously attempting to avoid overlaying or substituting preconceived bias or personal experiences. The researcher attempted to show sensitivity to the participant and interview process by closely observing body language, verbal and unspoken cues as indication when deeper inquiry was warranted or if further exploration into an area should be discontinued. The researcher dealt with Yardley's third criteria, transparency and coherency, by adhering to a consistent protocol in the selection, interview process, and steps taken in the analysis of the data gathered. These steps are documented in the Methodology section of the study. The researcher attempted to make a sound and coherent argument by linking the themes developed through the research with established theoretical assumptions and findings uncovered through the literature review. A purposeful effort was made to avoid ambiguities and contradictions or to address areas that may have created such perceptions.

Finally, in the conclusion of the study, the researcher sets forth what he perceives as the import of the research. Yardley suggests that the final level of validation of a research study rest on the impact and importance of the findings presented (Smith, et al., 2009). In that vein, the researcher documents the relevance of this study based on the established void revealed through the literature review, the relevance of the new

knowledge germinated by the research, and its meaningfulness to the area of conflict analysis and resolution and future researcher in the area of restorative justice.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The approval by the Institutional Review Board of the Nova Southeastern University was secured prior to initiating data collection efforts and all participants were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the IRB and the American Psychological Association (APA). All participants were age appropriate and legally capable of and gave adult consent to all aspects of the interview process. The researcher was inclusive of participant's parents in the orientation portion of the study in order to increase trust and build rapport with the entire family. Parents were not permitted to sit in the interview, however. This study did not present any identifiable risk for the participants; however, the researcher was attentive to the needs and concerns of the participants and parents to address any unanticipated issues and to ensure they understood their unconditional right to feel comfortable, safe or to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **The Background and Role of the Researcher**

I have been involved with the Jacksonville restorative justice project since its inception in 2010. Restorative justice was implemented as a result of the work of the Jacksonville justice ministry, the Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE). During the initial research stages and negotiations with city leaders, law enforcement agencies, and the Duval County School Superintendent, I served as co-president of the ICARE organization and co-chair of the restorative justice and youth crimes committee. Through my experience with the ICARE organization, I

observed the alarming statistics relative to the rate of young people being arrested for misdemeanor crimes and the enormous disparity between the racial and socio-economic groups adversely affected by discretionary policing. I am also the parent of five children and four grandchildren and understand the life-long negative implications of young people being shackled with a criminal record at an early age and the unfathomable opportunities that are denied as a result of having to check a box that indicates you were once arrested. Needless to say, I have a tremendous passion for being intimately involved in juvenile justice reform and the greater implementation of restorative justice principles and practices in applicable cases of juvenile misconduct or misdemeanor crime.

I currently serve as moderator for the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) in the city of Jacksonville. Jacksonville has four approved and operational NABs that serve twelve zip codes across Jacksonville and Duval County. As moderator I have up close and personal involvement with the restorative justice process as implemented in four NABs and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the process. Because of the frequency of young people, I observed appearing before the NABs on a biweekly basis, I was moved by my passion for the growth and developmental wellbeing of children to initiate this study as a methodological systems analysis that could potentially lead to improvement of the NAB and restorative justice process. My passion for investigating potential improvements to the NAB and restorative justice processes is not without bias and preconceived notions about what should and should not be done; however, it is my belief that extensive research of this phenomenon will enlighten my bias and preconceptions and create an opportunity for objective analysis and formulation of viable recommendations relative to this subject. As addressed in the Data Collection section, the



researcher purposely engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process and documented those feelings, thoughts and perceptions that could compromise the integrity of the research data (Wall, Glenn, Mitchinson, and Poole, 2004).

Examination of other statewide and national restorative justice programs have revealed a void in the area of this research, necessitating the construction of this credible and thorough research project to serve as a valuable tool for other programs seeking to improve their processes. In addition, I submit that this research adds to the relevant studies done in the field of social science and qualitative research methodology.

## Chapter 4: Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of juvenile offenders who are sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) to evaluate their perceptions of the impact of community volunteer's personal engagement in the restorative justice process. Interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology was used to explore juvenile offenders' experiences with community volunteers to determine their attitudes and opinions relative to the impact of the community volunteers promoting increased feelings of community connectivity, a sense of community support and a stronger bond and reintegration with the community following successful completion of the sanctioning period.

The phenomenological methodology was employed in this study to facilitate the exploration of how participants made sense of their experiences with the community volunteers (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This was an inductive study in which the participants were asked open-ended questions to illicit rich descriptions of their perceived experiences with the community volunteers and how those experiences impacted their understanding of community and restoration to that community following the commission of an offence and engagement with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

A total of twelve participants were selected for this study consistent with the historical tradition of IPA which generally promotes usage of small sample sizes in order to facilitates deep analysis of similarities and differences within the population (Turpin, et al., 1997). Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis studies generally are conducted with small number samples because the focus is centralized on detail account and

representation of individual experience and human phenomena (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

The sampling selection of the twelve participants was purposive in order to promote the collection of the most plentiful and relevant data, and to maximize variation by including subjects or interviewees that may offer contradictory evidence or views (Yin, 2016). The sample selection was done with intentionality and purpose, as opposed to probability methods. The ability of the participants to provide clear articulation of thoughts and perspectives greatly enhanced the researcher's ability to record the epistemological significance of the participant's personal engagement with the community volunteer. The twelve participants represented a homogeneous sample in having the common experience of participating in the RNAB diversion program as opposed to being prosecuted through a retributive criminal justice system. The twelve participants selected for the study represented a particular perspective rather than a population (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The confidentiality of each participant's identity was maintained, and pseudo names were used to avoid the potential of personal identification of the subjects of this study. A total of three hundred eighteen (318) youth have successfully completed the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability program during its first eight years of operation. The ratio of female to males is 56% males (178) and 44% female (140). The ratio of youth who volunteered to participate in the research project, 50% females and 50% males, closely aligned with the ratio of overall participants in the program.

## Participant Demographics

**Table 4**

### *Participants Demographics*

| <b>PARTICIPANTS</b> | <b>AGE</b> | <b>GENDER</b> | <b>OFFENSE</b>                     |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Andy                | 18         | Male          | Possession of controlled substance |
| Becky               | 18         | Female        | Possession of controlled substance |
| Cathy               | 18         | Female        | Petty theft                        |
| Donna               | 18         | Female        | Possession of alcohol              |
| Edna                | 18         | Female        | Battery                            |
| Fran                | 19         | Female        | Petty theft                        |
| Gail                | 18         | Female        | Sexual Misconduct                  |
| Hector              | 19         | Male          | Petty theft                        |
| Irving              | 18         | Male          | Battery                            |
| John                | 18         | Male          | Destruction of property            |
| Ken                 | 18         | Male          | Trespassing/ possession            |
| Lewis               | 18         | Male          | Battery                            |

The following three primary questions designed to explore the participant's lived experiences and engagement with the community volunteers relative to the neighborhood accountability board process were initially asked:

1. Please tell me about your experience with the Neighborhood Accountability Board.
2. Please tell me about your experience with the community volunteers.
3. Please describe how this experience has impacted your understanding of your community.

Follow up questions were asked in order to attain clarity and deeper exploration into the primary descriptions of the participant's lived experiences. Except for demographic questions, all questions were posed as open-ended to elicit rich and detail accounts of the lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation.

**Theme 1: The volunteer's emphasis on the value of a second chance was a  
transformative dynamic of the experience**

A consistent theme that initially emerged from the participant's responses to the question about their engagement with the community volunteers and the Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) was the concept that the experience provided them with a second chance. Ten of the participants opened the discussion of their lived experience recounting that a major emphasis stressed by the community volunteers in the initial interview session was that the central purpose of the program was to prevent the participants from having a criminal record. The participants indicated that the volunteers spent a significant amount of time in describing the differences between the prearrest diversion program they were participating in and the criminal justice system through which their cases would have been processed if not for the existence of the RNAB. The negative aspects of having a criminal record were described in detail as a motivating factor for change by the participants. Additionally, participants gained an understanding of their own culpability and responsibility in the offense committed and developed an appreciation for the opportunity that the prearrest diversion program presented. Participants stated that the volunteers strongly emphasized that the opportunities for college admission, the potential for employment, and the ability to be accepted in the military would all be closed because of a criminal record, so the opportunity to successfully complete this program and avoid the stigma of being branded a criminal in essence equated to a second chance in life. Fran described the program as "a lifesaving opportunity that should not be wasted". She described her encounter in this manner:

*“This opportunity has been a lifesaver. To say that I don’t have anything on my record because you all gave me that chance to turn myself around and show you all that I could do better for myself.”*

Andy indicated that his engagement with the police gave him “a taste of the system”, which was enough to spark his commitment to change. Andy used these words to describe his second change revelation:

*“I mean it’s just your outer presence, I mean, through the process you’re around people, you’re around your family. They now know you’re in that position, that, you know I’m saying, like they try to lead you more to a straight path now that they see that you see the taste of what the wrong path can lead you, you know what I’m saying? They try to push you and now you have that outward pressure to make sure you still on the right track.”*

Hector indicated that all of the volunteers emphasized the fact that failure in the NAB program would result in “reinstatement of criminal charges” and his case being processed through the criminal justice system which was a strong motivator for following through to successful completion. Hector said:

*“Like it was helping, like people that like get sent to jail type stuff, and it was like they had us doing work and stuff like that, learning from it.... Yeah. That I thought I was going to go to jail.”*

The participants indicated that an effective strategy employed by the community volunteers was a series of questions posed to them about the specifics of the offense and the mindset or rationale behind their decision to commit the offense. According to several of the participants, the dialogue that ensued as a result of this line of inquiry prompted them to perform self-analysis and deconstruct the narrative surrounding their offense from an objective perspective. Cathy stated that she was prompted to admit that “I shouldn’t have been there in the first place”, “it wasn’t worth it”, and “this can really affect my future”. Framing her conscious revelation in these terms, “nobody can touch you”, Edna suggested that in the conversation with the volunteers she arrived at the

conclusion that being young involves a certain sense of invincibility that leads to impetuous decisions. And although these rash youthful indiscretions are probably consistent throughout every generation of young persons, the results can nevertheless be life altering demonstrated in Irving's comments that, "silly actions can bring on serious consequences". Edna talked about her experience in these terms:

*"Like the life and the pros and cons, the possibilities, the things that you can and you cannot do, like as far as, you know, young people have a habit of making a lot of mistakes, and when you talk to someone older and they just give you a lot of information, it just makes you think, "Hey, well I never thought about this. I never thought about going this route or doing this."*

Cathy's engagement with the volunteers helped her to draw a clear line of demarcation between what she described as "a criminal offense, and not a childish prank", and the serious implication that could result if she was charged as an adult as opposed to being given prearrest diversion as a minor. Irving's experience with the volunteers pushed him to arrive at the understanding that shifting blame was not an option and that he had a "personal responsibility to rise above any negative community or peer influences". Irving stated spoke about the impact of a second chance in these terms:

*"Well we were talking one on one, and they were just telling me that I got to do better and you know I was 18 at the time and it was like I was going to be charged as an adult for that, and it was something as minor as a pillow can send me somewhere I don't want to be, and they were just telling me that, and that's when \_\_\_\_\_ and I really needed that, yes, sir."*

An underlining component of the "second chance" theme is the acceptance of the concept that "with a second chance comes responsibility", as articulated by Lewis. The first responsibility is to make the best of the second chance. Lewis described his opportunity at a second chance in these terms:

*“So it was beneficial because it allows you to get a second chance basically instead of going through the justice system. It gives them a second chance at redeeming themselves, and it was beneficial to helping me not being in jail and go through the court systems. .... I learned that there’s people out there who are willing to help you and that you always have a second chance in life, so you know, take it and don’t waste it.”*

Ken talked about how his “life was on a dangerous path”. He stated that “he got into trouble a lot prior to the program” and that “my life would be totally different”. But he continued, “I listened” and have become “a positive influence in my community”. His thoughts about the second chance he received was described in this manner:

*“I’d tell them straight up like I think they should go ahead and go through the program and get it over with because I feel like if they go through the program and they do the same things I did, it ain’t going to do nothing but make a better change in their life. I’d rather for them to go ahead and go through the program than going to prison or jail or dead. Teen Court is going to get you help you out. It’s going to better your life.”*

Donna indicated that the benefits of the engagement with the community volunteers cannot totally be “measured in monetary ways” but “it is beneficial in unexpected ways”. One of these unexpected ways is the opportunity to affect the lives of other young people. Gail suggested that an intangible benefit of engagement with the volunteers was the opportunity to “pour into others”. Through the sanctioning process of the RNAB, Gail developed relationships with other young people who she was able to share her testimony and experience with and hopefully prevent them from making mistakes similar to hers, thereby actualizing her second chance into a positive benefit to a particular individual and her community as a whole. Gail described her mentorship of young women as “part of her reengagement with the community”.

*“I feel like my role in the community is very helpful because like even now with my situation that occurred I know other females that went to my high school. They went through similar situations so I reached out and talked to them. I’m like a mentor to them. Even though I’m going away in college, I still talk to them and*



*reach out and make sure they're okay like, "You need anything? What do you want to talk about?" That kind of thing. So it's like from the board, I poured into the other people because they poured into me."*

Becky indicated that her positive contribution to the community involved advancing her career and creating other opportunities for those who were in her sphere of influence. According to Becky, because of the tremendous limitations placed on life opportunities, "avoidance of the criminal justice system is a key motivator to change". Fran also described "an increased respect for the law" as an intangible resulting from engagement with the volunteers, underscoring the notion that a second chance comes with a personal responsibility to be better. John suggested that his "respect for authority" in general increased substantially.

Providing a second chance to a youth who has committed a criminal violation is a foundational principle of restorative justice. Second chances, however, can be meaningless and an abuse of the system if the youth offender does not accept responsibility for their action and commit to behavioral change in the future that reduces potential recidivism. The lived experiences as expressed by the youth participants in RNAB revealed that their engagement with the community volunteers resulted in a dramatic transformation in their thinking and perspective. The youths expressed a clear understanding of the seriousness of the offense committed and the resulting consequences and potential engagement with the criminal justice system if not for this diversion opportunity. Engagement with the volunteers not only reinforced the need for behavior modification but also fostered a desire for the youths to share relevant lessons learned with other youth as voiced by several of the participants.

## **Theme 2: The interpersonal engagement with the volunteers was a driver of successful program completion**

The lived experiences as described by the participants of this study indicated that interpersonal engagement with the community volunteers made a significant difference in their success or failure in the program. Andy talked about the probing nature of the volunteer's questions and advice suggested a sincere "level of concern" for his wellbeing and success and acknowledgement that he was "more than just a name on paper". Andy talked about the difference between interpersonal and dissociative engagement in these terms:

*"I mean, more insight, you know what I'm saying. I feel as a community board you can't bring people from, you know what I'm saying, Flagler, Argyle, \_\_\_\_\_ 12:12, North side, everybody that's not from that community of that person, and try to completely get to see somebody for the first time, listen to one situation, and think you know that whole person. I mean, if you're not the people that is actually around them, you know what I'm saying, that sees the whole background and actually knows you, you know what I'm saying, that's your community that's going to actually be able to know what's best for you. Not people that get to know you by your name on a piece of paper."*

There was a consistency of thought throughout all of the interviews that the volunteers took a personal interest in each of them and as Andy continued, "they actually wanted to know what happened". Fran indicated that she was "initially closed minded" to the process but the caring nature of the volunteers caused her to "open up" and be engaged in the process.

*"At first, I was like they got attitudes with me. They're not helping me. They're not doing anything for me. Once I got to know the people on a better basis of not just meeting them and trying to talk about everything. They showed me that they do have a heart and they do care about me and about my future. I was all in all really impressed with how they treated me. They didn't treat me as an outcast or outsider or anything like that just because of my color or anything of that nature. They showed me that they do care about me and they do care about my future, so*

*I was really impressed with them. They were all really nice. I was just stuck in my ways.”*

Becky suggested that she was able to “form new relationships” with some of the board members and her voice became visibly excited and elevated when she began to describe the caring nature she felt from the community volunteers. Edna described her engagement with the volunteers as being “holistic, concerned with her emotional state, personal life” and overall wellbeing. Edna described her experience with these words:

*“All of the people were nice. The people were telling you they don’t have no problem with telling you, “Hey, you’re wrong about that. You don’t need to think that.” They are straight up with you, and they make you just feel like, “Okay, well, these are old people that have been through what you have been through. They get what you did, so you need to listen.” So it really wasn’t a negative that I got out of the situation. I really honestly got straight positive, but like I said when I was 15, everything was negative to me. I didn’t want to hear what they said. I didn’t care what they said. I don’t care, but now it’s like I understand why they did what they did to better improve me, to keep me from being in the mistake and me being 14 and being charged with a little something rather than me being 18 and being charged with something big, that it’s hard to get off my record. So I really do appreciate the program because it really did help me.”*

Lewis perceived that there was an intentional sacrifice made by the volunteers who “took time out of their day” to personally help him through the process which he labeled as “an investment in me”. He further defined the sense of caring and concern demonstrated by the volunteers in this manner, “they were very hands with me”.

Several of the participants indicated that a key to effective communication between the volunteers and youth offenders was the authenticity of the volunteers who were considerably more mature. Donna said her impression of the volunteers was “they were cool” because they “didn’t try to be cool”, which the researcher interpreted to mean they were authentic and spoke from a place of maturity, wisdom and experience without attempting to appear conversant with the youth’s culture or generational milieu. She

continued to say that she was impressed by their “smarts” and “intelligence”. Here is how Donna described her perception of the volunteers authenticity:

*“I thought they were actually kind of smart and intelligent to because and they weren’t like trying to be cool or anything. They just really sat down and talked to me and what I could do better, how not to make the same mistakes again. I thought they were pretty cool.”*

The authenticity of the volunteers reminded several of the participants of their parents, teacher or role models who had impacted their lives and again engendered the feeling of genuine parental care and concern. Andy stated that the “body language of the board members created comfort with the process” and visually illustrated their overarching desire to see him attain success in the program and avoid having a criminal record. Fran described the volunteers as projecting a “fair and non-judgmental attitude”, which helped to break down barriers and initial reservation about cooperative participation.

A common descriptor used by participants to label their perception of the volunteer’s attitudes was “nice”. The participants felt the volunteers attempted to put them at ease and create an environment conducive to positive dialogue and exchange. Cathy said she did not feel “abandoned” while engaged with the volunteers and “they worked with me”. Cathy’s “worked with me” comment was followed up by a cautionary interjection that while the volunteers created a climate of comfort to facilitate open exchange, by no means was the experience “a slap on the wrist”. Cathy and other participants expressed the same sentiment that while the volunteers were accommodating, they most certainly “held them accountable” for their actions. Cathy’s comments about the nice attitudes of the volunteers were punctuated with the use of “it was hard” three times during the interview as confirmation of the accountability factor of the program:

*“I didn’t really have a problem with the program. It was hard, of course. I shouldn’t have been there in the first place, but it’s a nice program. The people were nice. The work was beneficial. It was a pretty nice program.”*

Andy described his experience as “vibing” with the volunteers but realizing they were “pushing” him to understand the implication of his actions and to commit to “being better” going forward. Edna indicated accountability for her meant that the “volunteers encouraged self-analysis and problem solving” that enabled her to arrive at solutions to rectify past bad behavior and chart positive goals for the future. John stated that the personal engagement with the volunteers “help identify the root causes of my behavior” and formulate workable solutions. Because he perceived the volunteers genuinely desired “to help”, he was able to “transition through emotions of anger, hostility, acceptance and forgiveness”.

The participants also stated that the willingness of the volunteers to share their personal stories and experiences was also confirmation of their authenticity and sincere desire to assist them through this process. Although volunteers did not try to connect on a cultural level with the youth, Andy stated that personal stories about youthful indiscretions and even minor crimes committed in their youth help to establish rapport and commonality around the idea that everyone “makes mistakes” and is worthy of redemption and restoration. The volunteer’s relatability was captured in this expression provided by Andy:

*“I mean, yeah, it’s like me in a group of people at different time. You take in every person’s vibe, you take in, you know what I’m saying, just by what you’re presenting and then also how they speak and how they come across. I mean, so, if one lady says something about their past to open up to you, and you can relate to it back, that’s how you make a connection with new people.”*

Edna stated that the testimonies of the volunteers help her identify and empathize with her parents and others who she had hurt by her actions. John said the openness of the volunteers gave him a conscious awareness that “they had been in the same steps” he was in, which the researcher interpreted as meaning they had similar youthful transgression from which they rebounded and went on to have productive lives.

There is a significant age difference between the youth offenders and the community volunteers which requires considerable diplomacy in bridging the generation gap appropriately to facilitate productive discussion within the RNAB session. Empathy, shared life experiences, and authenticity about past indiscretions were described by the participants as effective tools used by the volunteers to build trust, reduce apprehension about the process, and open lines of communication that resulted in transformational change. Many of the participants perceived that the volunteers genuinely cared about them as human beings and engaged in this work to make a personal investment in the lives of the youth offenders. In several cases, the caring nature of the volunteers was described as the impetus for the youth offenders forming relationships that extended beyond the completion of the RNAB sanctions.

### **Theme 3: The engagement with the volunteers revealed the importance of intergenerational participation**

The lived experience of the youth offenders in their engagement with the community volunteers indicated that the presence of other youths on the board made a significant difference in the manner in which the offenders interacted with the volunteers and the level of comfort they felt in being transparent with people who they were meeting for the first time. Participants of this study overwhelmingly described the positive

attributes and feelings of personal and instantaneous identification with the community volunteers when youth were a part of the group.

Youth offenders who are subject to civil citations as an alternative to arrest and are directed to complete the RNAB process as a part of their avoidance of a criminal record and ultimate restoration, are frequently required to attend two interview sessions of other youth offenders as a functioning member of the community volunteer panel. The youth participants on the panel are provided with basic training on policies and procedures that govern the RNAB sessions and are encouraged to participate by sharing their opinions, perspectives and personal testimonies about the offenses they committed and life experiences they have encountered as a result. Nine out of the twelve participants of this study commented about how they were impacted as a result of another youth being in the room. Donna suggested that having other young people as a part of the board fostered an atmosphere of “intergenerational learning”, where young people were gaining insight and knowledge from the experience of people of a diverse age group. She continued that she “didn’t feel alone” because she was able to make a generational connection with people her age who she felt possibly understood her circumstances on a deeper level than the adults. Donna made this observation:

*“When I first went into the program, it wasn’t what I expected though. They had girls in there my age. I didn’t expect that. I thought it was going to be like grown people, but it was just regular teenagers talking to me, explaining to me what could happen and stuff, instead of me going to jail, they just took me through the program. It was alright.”*

John commented that having young people in the room was “enlightening and transformative” because hearing a cautionary word about the potential detriment of having a criminal record and engagement with the criminal justice system from a peer

caused him to think more seriously about the consequences of his action. Hector said the youth participant on the board admonished him sternly about his behavior and the respect due his parents for their sacrifice for him, and the comments affected him deeply and increased his ability to focus on self-improvement. John said the youth admonished him in this manner:

*“I would say you got to respect your family, your peers, and you can never talk back to your family or like your mom or your parents because that’s disrespectful, and even though you might have the right to say so, it’s not worth it.”*

Lewis suggested that seeing someone close to his age on the board fostered a sense of relatability and helped him open up to advice and direction from everyone on the board, whereas he may have been “closed minded to only adults”. Lewis shared these thoughts about the impact of youth volunteers:

*“I would say have the participants have more one-on-one time with people who have gone through the program so they have someone that could help them understand it. You know, so it’s not like a whole bunch of adults talking to them, because most of the time children don’t respond well to adults, but when it’s their own age and same experiences, they listen a lot better.”*

The importance of peer diversity in the accountability process was dramatically emphasized by one youth offender who was not privileged to have young people participate in her interview session with the community volunteers. Becky stated that she felt “ambushed” when she walked in the room and saw all of the adults sitting around the room. This sense of being ambushed equated to a feeling of “intimidation”, “uncomfortableness”, and being “overwhelmed” by the number of adults. “It felt like a thousand people were in the room”, according to Becky’s description of the encounter:

*“When like you first get here and it’s like about 10 people in there, that’s kind of like, just cut down on the people that is. I can’t explain the word, but it’s around 1000 people I get a little shy. Even like, I’m not going to say ambush, but it’s just cut down the people a little bit more. It’s too many people.”*



The benefit of having youth presence on the community volunteer board is to promote age identification as well as language identification. The following phrase or manners of speech were used repeatedly by the participants in articulating their lived experiences with the volunteers: Becky “faze you”, Gail “ok, ok”, Hector “stuff like that”, Irving “see what I’m saying”, and Ken “for real, for real”. These variations of speech were used as conversation fillers, attempts at formulating a desired thought, or slang expressions to add emphasis to a particular thought. These colloquial sayings and expressions amplify the comment made by Donna who suggested that “the advice and warnings from other youths are more effective and relevant because they speak our language”. The reference to “speak our language” is the figurative equivalence of saying youth identify with other youth, underscoring the inferred relevance of youth involvement in the community volunteer process. Donna made this observation:

*“I would probably suggest more teens in the program. Like instead of having, because I know it was ran by adults sometimes, but I say let the teens kind of, because it’s more understanding when you have somebody that is going through what you’re going through, you’re more willing to talk to them and stuff because they speak our language. I say have for more teens involved.”*

The presence of youth on the community panel appeared to give licenses and create a space of comfort for the youth offenders to use their voice and be heard. A significant amount of the initial resentment, reticence, and resistance to compliance with the program and nervous tension overwhelmingly present in practically all of the RNAB sessions, was generally overcome by the volunteer’s giving opportunity for the youth offenders to use their voice and provide their perspectives. This phenomenon was more evident in the session where youth were present on the panels. The initial inquiry about the nature and scope of the offense produced opening dialogue and reference points that

were purposeful in problem diagnosis and sanction recommendation. But beyond the initial inquiries, participants were asked to share details about their lives, families, dreams, hopes, aspirations, disappointments and failures in life. Youth were given the opportunity to challenge the assumptions of the volunteers and to push back on preconceived notions that were not based in fact. Cathy felt that she was “heard” and they really “listened to what I had to say”. Edna shared that she “did not agree with everything” but was “allowed to tell her story”, and although initially what was said to her “went in one ear and out the other”, the “forth-right” approach by the volunteers help her to see things from a broader perspective. Here is the complete statement made by Edna:

*“They asked me, you know, what happened. I told them what happened. They asked me what do I think I could have done better, what I think I should have been better. There was like 2 people. I forgot what their name was again. Two people that said, “Hey, well I’ve been in this predicament before, and let me tell you this is not the right route to go down. You should try anger management classes. You should try to open up to people,” because they said one of my problems was. Well my mom told them one of my problems was keeping everything in and not letting it out, so when it finally comes out everything just comes out. So that was one of the things that they also taught me about. Yes, it was a good conversation. I really did learn things. I learned a lot.”*

Participants indicated that many of the sanctions recommended by the community volunteers were a direct result of things which they had shared during their time of interpersonal engagement. Recommendations for family counseling, anger management classes, community service with youth or the elderly were a direct offshoot of information derived from the honest and open dialogue that the youth were encouraged to engage in. Edna also noted that the “organization of the room” with everyone facing each other created an “atmosphere for open dialogue” and drew a stark comparison to a court room where the state and the defendant are in adversarial positions, and everyone faces

the judge who represents ultimate and unquestioned authority. Although she used terminology associated with retributive justice, Edna's retelling of her experience appeared to embrace the engaging dynamics of the room:

*"Yes, I had a really good engagement walking in there. You know, it was like a jury table, because it was like people on this side. I was on this side. It was me, my mom, and my mom's friend. There was a man all the way at the end. They had me stand up, state my name, what I was there for, asked me what I did wrong, asked me what should have been different, asked me what I can do to improve, because they said I had anger management problems."*

The potential for youth offenders to feel intimidated, overwhelmed or excessively anxious when confronted with a room full of adults during an accountability session is always a threat to a positive outcome and personal transformation of the offender. Participants described feelings of being "outnumbered", "ambushed", and "feeling alone" when the volunteer panel consisted of only adults. Consequently, the participants reported feelings of relatability, generational identification and having someone that "spoke their language" when young people were included in the accountability panel. Overall, the lived experiences of the youth participants suggest that age diversity should be a primary consideration in the formulation of accountability boards.

#### **Theme 4: The volunteer's requirement of an apology to parents was redemptive**

All of the participants who were interviewed and provided a description of their lived experience as they engaged with the community volunteers were consistent in their assessment of the open RNAB apology required at the end of each interview session. During the interview process, volunteers inquire about the youth offender's relationship with his or her parent(s) and seek to determine from the youth's perspective how their offense has impacted their parents and relationships. After the interview session is

completed, community volunteers caucus to determine what sanctions will be administered in each individual case. After the sanctions are announced and any uncertainties or ambiguities are clarified, each youth offender is then required to perform an open RNAB apology to their parent(s) or guardian. The apology has to be made with a level of sincerity that is acceptable to the parent, guardian and the volunteers. Observation of the open RNAB apologies revealed that they have the potential to be life changing.

First, the apology was described as redemptive because it resulted in a dynamic shift in the relationship between the youth offender and their parent(s) or guardians. The offenses committed by most of the youth in the RNAB program are uncharacteristic based on their parents understanding of who their child is, and consequently, beyond the fear and anxiety of a child being subjected to the criminal justice system, the offense is shocking, surprising and tremendously disappointing to the parent or guardian. The open RNAB apology begins the healing process between the youth and parent. When asked about her experience with the open apology, Becky began to weep intensely and asked for a few minutes to leave and compose herself. When she returned, she said “I saw the hurt on his face” because of what I had done. “I felt bad for putting my father through this”, she continued. Becky released her emotional response with these words:

*“I just get emotional because I look at my dad. I don’t have my mom, so it’s like the stuff I put him through when I look at his face, I could feel it. What can kind of hurtful. I shouldn’t have put him through that, like I was just going through something at the time, so I just could feel all his hurt when I looked at him when I was reading that letter.”*

Cathy said that the apology “brought relief” to the tension between she and her mother that had existed since the police interceded after she committed the offense. Donna

indicated that the apology resulted in a “new freedom” to dialogue with her parents. Here is how Donna described the experience:

*“Actually when I did it, it kind of made me cry. It made me feel sad because when I was writing it at the time, I wasn’t thinking like about nothing that I was writing about until I actually read it out loud. I actually apologized to my parents for what I had done, but it changed me a little bit because it made me more open to them. It made me want to speak to them more. I actually gave them a formal apology and they accepted it. Everything worked out.”*

Irving suggested that the apology helped to “break down barriers” and felt like “a weight was lifted from my shoulders”. His exact words were:

*“It really lifted a weight off my shoulders. I didn’t really get why I get it because I hit a girl, but I didn’t really get why everything was going on, but then after experiencing the program and everything, everything came to me and now I’m like having to apologize, lifted a weight off my shoulders.”*

All of the participants described the apology as redemptive in that it helped to reestablish a sense of trust, communication and got the relationship between the youth and parent back on track.

Secondly, descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants revealed that they found the apology to also be transformative. The purpose of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board program is to circumvent the potential of youth offenders having a criminal record due to their childish indiscretions, to incentivize them to change their behavior, and to set them on the path that leads to life success and productive citizenship. Several of the participants testified that the open RNAB apology was the genesis of their behavioral turnaround. Forasmuch as the participants were moved by the disappointment their parents experienced as a result of their offenses, many of them were even more challenged to change because of the inconvenience their offenses brought on their parents. Fran stated that the opportunity to apologize “helped transform me” because it was “long overdue”. She went on to say “I only get one

mother” and she never wanted to put her through something like this again. Fran said this:

*“I’ve always been a momma’s girl. Growing up, all I ever had was my mother, and they made me do something that I needed to do for a very long time. I needed to apologize to my mom and tell her that I do care about her and how she is raising me, and that I know that she is struggling and that she is trying her best and she’s trying to be there and help me better myself versus letting me go down the wrong path.”*

Andy said the consequences faced by his family was enough to prevent him from reoffending because they had to go through “ALL” of this (“all” dramatically emphasized). Cathy talked about how “relieved and excited” her parents were to see her keeping the commitment she made during the open apology which became an extremely powerful incentive for her to not reoffend. In discussing the apology, Edna made an unsolicited comment about the “absence of my father”, and the regret she felt because of the “inconvenience my mom had to endure” because of my actions when she has “always been there for me”. Edna added that “my mother having to drive me everywhere” was a definite deterrent to any future criminal behavior. She expressed her sentiment regarding the impact of the apology in following manner:

*“It didn’t make me feel good because I felt like my mom okay cool because she has to go through all this. She has to take off work, come to this class with me, because at the time I was under age so she had to come to this class with me and it was like every month that I had to do it because I think I had to do it for 6 months or 6 weeks. I really don’t remember, but I couldn’t go there without my mom. Then I had to go through the court system and everything that I did, community service also, so everything that I did she had to go through with me, so the apology to my mom, yes.”*

Ken stated how “proud I am” that my mom can “see the positive changes I have made” in his overall behavior. Consequently, a predominance of the participants either directly or figuratively suggested that a significant contributing factor to their behavioral change and

commitment to avoid criminal activity in the future is attributed to the hardship, inconvenience and suffering their first offense caused their parents or guardians. Here is how Ken described his experience:

*“I’d say like now we have a good relationship. It’s like I’m doing better and like nowadays she sees that I’m doing better and like I’m trying to better myself and hang around the right crowd. She feels like that is a good thing. She tells me the way I was going either I was going to be dead or in jail, and she didn’t want to see that. So now I can say like we got a good relationship.”*

Lastly, the open apology made by the youth offenders to their parents appeared to engender a sense of remorse and empathy as described by the participants. Based on the description of their experiences, the participants developed an understanding of “what my dad went through”, as stated by Becky. She said, “I felt his pain”; “I regret putting my father through this” (verbatim comments also in paragraph on redemption). John stated that the apology brought on a series of “mixed emotions” but primarily he felt “sadness” and a sense of understanding of what his mom goes through. John suffered from anger issues and would break things in the house during fits of rage. The incident which caused his engagement with law enforcement resulted because his mother called the police to their home to help get him under control. John said he “understands” why his mom acted as she did, and he has a “new level of respect” for her and authority. He said this about his experience:

*“Well one day me and my mom had a disagreement and I kind of like punched a hole in the wall, and so she called the police and I had to leave the house for like a night and then the next few days I went to the church and talked to like the board about my situation and what was going to happen to me..... Yes, sir. It helped me out a lot because they gave me good advice and because they were in the same steps I was in, and they was like these are your parents and you got to respect them too even if sometimes you disagree.”*

Cathy indicated that the “shock” experienced by her parents when learning of her “uncharacteristic behavior” gave her a taste of what parents must feel when disappointed by their kids acting in a manner contradictory to how they were raised. Cathy described the experience in this manner:

*“Seeing how disappointed I think my grandma and my mom were there, seeing how disappointed they were in me and surprised that I even did what I did, it was kind of hard apologizing to them. It wasn’t hard apologizing or just admitting what I did, but I felt relieved when I was able to apologize to them and they could see that I made progress in the program and I was able to get through it, so it was like relief but it was also just hard apologizing, because I shouldn’t have done anything like that in the first place and they taught me way better than that.”*

Although she admitted she didn’t initially understand, the apology helped Edna develop a newfound “empathy” for the school administrator who was deemed a victim in the incident because he was responsible for interceding and controlling her behavior until the police arrived. Although she had initial reservation, she described her revelation regarding how her actions impacted the greater community:

*“Yes, like I said, at the time those was my thinking at the time when I was doing it to my mom, okay cool, but as far as the victim and the principal, at first I’m just like I don’t understand why I have to apologize to all these people when I didn’t do anything, but it was just the principle of the matter, you have for the principal. You have the whole school coming to see this fight. You’re interrupting the whole school, classes. You’re interrupting classes. You’re interrupting lunches. You’re interrupting people trying to do their work and their job because you want to fight. So to the principal yes. To the victim I mean I did put my hands on you. I probably messed up your skin. Fighting does not solve everything. So, yes, I do understand why they wanted me to apologize for everything. I just personally felt like I shouldn’t have had to at the time.”*

The open NAB apology was described by several of the participants as a “turn around point” in their personal behavior and their relationship with parents. Several participants indicated that this occasion was the first time they were confronted with the extreme disappointment of their parents caused by the knowledge of their offense gave them resolve to openly commit to avoid similar behavior in the future. The NAB apology



also helped to open lines of communication between some parents and youths and help to break the tension that had existed since the commission of the offense. And for some participants the hurt and agony demonstrated by their parents, which was heightened by the high drama of the open NAB apology, served to reenforce their pledge to avoid future encounters with the criminal justice system.

**Theme 5: The authentic confrontation by the community volunteers initiated  
reintegrative shame**

Based on the lived experiences of the participants in this study, shame is also a significant motivator of interpersonal change. Several of the participants recounted to the researcher the tremendous sense of shame they felt when required to apologize in an open setting to their parents. One of the most shocking, heartbreaking, and frightening discovery for a parent is to learn their child is experimenting with drugs. The apology prompted Becky to admit in front of her father that she had used drugs which caused her extreme “embarrassment”. The pitch of her voice fell to just above a whisper when she began to speak about her father having to meet with the police to secure her release into his custody and seeing “the hurt on his face” when he was advised she was charged with possession of a controlled substance. Her retelling of this encounter caused her to retrieve several tissues from the box and to wipe the tears which had begun to flow freely from her eyes again. Drying her eyes frequently, she gave this description of her experience:

*“Right, it did result in bad consequences which I was in the back of the police car for a long time and that was not a great feeling at all..... I could have avoided that situation, just went a different route..... I just get emotional because I look at my dad. I don’t have my mom, so it’s like the stuff I put him through when I look at his face, I could feel it. What can kind of hurtful. I shouldn’t have put him through that, like I was just going through something at the time, so I just could feel all his hurt when I looked at him when I was reading that letter.”*

Cathy stated that, “I knew I should not have been there in the first place”, which made the apology that much harder because I knew how “uncharacteristic” this behavior was. The embarrassment of having to admit wrongdoing before her parents drove her to the conclusion that “it’s not worth it”. This is how she described her feelings:

*“.....so it was like relief but it was also just hard apologizing, because I shouldn’t have done anything like that in the first place and they taught me way better than that..... Just think about yourself first..... Don’t let your friends influence you, make you do something that you’re not supposed to do, because it’s not worth it.”*

Becoming sexually active is probably the second biggest secret that most children attempt to prevent their parents from discovering. Gail committed a sexual offense at school which necessitated her participation in the RNAB and ultimately confessing her actions and apologizing to her mother in the open forum of the RNAB. Gail was reluctant to even specifically identify her offense to this researcher and had to be asked three times before she admitted it involved sexual indiscretions. “I was embarrassed”, “for myself and my parents” she said. The “hurt on my parental unit’s faces” made it difficult to look at them. The researcher interpreted that “parental units”, which was used twice in this interview, represented a method of diffusing the shame by describing parents with an objective label. Gail said this about her experience:

*“For me, it was hard. I got emotional at the same time. It was hard because I felt embarrassed because I never apologize for my actions because I’m not going to sit here and say I’m the perfect child going through school, because I’ve always been in trouble for fighting or for just something in school, but just like having an open apology in front of the board so my friends \_\_\_\_\_ 5:57 were just like, “Wow.” Like it had me in shock because I’m just like, “Okay, I’m not only just apologizing for this. I’m sincerely apologizing for everything I ever got in trouble for while I was in school.” It just made me realize like it’s not only affecting me, but it’s affecting my parental units as well.”*

Irving’s offense was not sexual in nature but stated that his apology opened the door for his father to go on a diatribe in front of the community volunteers rehashing old “I told

you so” lectures about the potential of him going to jail. The “embarrassment” of this scene was enough to change his behavior in order to not go through this again. Irving gave some excerpts from his father’s retort:

*“Oh he took it well. He took it well. He was like, “Everything you do have consequences, you know.” So yeah, he took it well..... Always think twice and don’t act on instinct, you know. You got to think about what you’re doing before you act. You got to listen to that voice that saying, “No, don’t do it.” If you have to second guess yourself, listen to the voice in your head.”*

A consistent theme woven through all of the descriptions of the lived experiences of the youth participants engagement with the community volunteers is the reality that all youth have secrets. Whether these are secret relationships, secret activities or secret habits, they all desire that they are not exposed to their parents. The conversations with the community volunteers force them to talk about these secrets, to analyze the underlining rationale behind them, and to ultimately confess their actions in an open forum before their parents. “I was embarrassed”, this was so “out of character for me”, and “I should not have been there in the first place” were common phrases used by the participants to express the shame that resulted from the process. Consequently, the participants experienced a sense of healing and personal transformation through the process as voiced in several narratives.

#### **Theme 6: The sanctions required by the community volunteers fostered new life perspectives**

Community volunteers review the civil citation case files of youth offenders and engage them in meaningful and probative discussion to analyze their understanding and rationale for committing the offense, their decision-making process, family history and background, life goals and objectives, and potential underlining issues that may be

informative to their overall assessment of the individual. At the end of the RNAB interview, volunteers impose sanctions on the youth offenders designed to hold them accountable for their actions, provide information and training on relevant criminal statutes, foster empathy for the victim, develop life skills, and foster an appreciation for their responsibility to positively contribute to community and society. The responses from the participants of this study overwhelmingly applauded the community volunteers for implementing sanctions that were life changing.

Participants stated that the first thing which became apparent during the sanction stage, was that the sanction requirements had been designed to address specific problems discussed during the interview process. Andy said, “they listened”, and wanted to “know what actually happened”. The board “chose sanctions specific to my offense”, he continued. Andy’s offense involved the negative influence of peer groups and the requirements of the sanctions taught him how to “watch my circle” and to be “more selective” about who he associated with. In addition, the sanction process helped him understand how “my actions hurt the community”. He said that the volunteer’s “familiarity with my life experiences” enabled them to assign sanctions that were meaningful and addressed specific life issues; “it was not just busy work”. Andy gave this experiential recounting:

*“I feel like with the resources they had, they have every type of resource they can give to somebody, you know what I’m saying, and they do what they can. But it’s just off of every individual, you know what I’m saying, resources can’t be given to every individual, but I felt like the overall experience and the rating of the program it was very helpful. I mean, if you’re trying to get to know kids that is being in tough situations and you’re trying to fix certain things in the city.”*

Becky stated that the anger management classes were tremendously beneficial and gave her “coping strategies” that empower her to “walk away from conflict” rather than engage. She described the learning experience in this manner:

*“It was because I chose to be young and wild and go show out at McDonald’s when I wasn’t supposed to and using things that I wasn’t supposed to use as well. .... I learned that everything does not need a reaction at all. It’s okay to walk away from things before it gets worse sometimes. It is always okay to walk away.”*

Donna said that the educational classes on drugs and alcohol went beyond the customary “just say no” approach and really stressed the importance of maintaining a “clear mind” and promoting self-confidence by being “healthy on the inside”. Donna provide the following details of her experience:

*“I would say it changed me for the better because it showed me that not everybody is your friend even like just because cool people do certain stuff you don’t have to do it, you know, just have your own mind, and try to stay healthy with yourself too because that’s what it taught me to like if you’re not healthy on the inside, you’re your emotional state, you’re not always going to make the best decisions .... You have to have a clear state of mind.”*

Gail said that the volunteers diagnosed low self-esteem as an underlining issue affecting her behavior and required her to attend counseling sessions that were “very effective” in changing her perspective. As a result, her “analytical and decision-making skills” have improved, and she has a greater understanding and appreciation of “action versus consequences”. Gail was very transparent when she recalled her experience as follows:

*“With the community volunteers, it went well for me because it was just like, “Okay, I’m going before this board, facing what I have to do, and doing all these assignments.” It really just had me sit down and just think about like, “Okay, I know not to do this next time,” but these assignments also taught me like different skills, like okay, “You can do this.” It also helped with my writing skills, my thinking process, being open minded, being a risk taker with different things. It just helped me in positive ways. It even lifted me up like in a different way because like I even struggled with low self-esteem sometimes, so it even helped me with that area as well.”*

In addition to addressing specific issues which may have been underlying causes of aberrant behavior, the participants also stressed that the sanctions were structured to help promote personal growth, maturity and purposeful community reengagement. Ken stated that a specific focus of the sanctions required of him was on decision making, independent thinking and leadership. Strategies which he acquired during the sanction process, coupled with his lifestyle changes garnered him “gainful employment and economic advancement”. Here’s how Ken described the impact of the program:

*“.....so when we were inside I was getting mad and angry because I didn’t want to be there, but then after a while like most of the stuff that they were telling me and then throughout the program most of that stuff I was like, “Yeah, this is going to help me out in life.” So after I completed the program and all of that, I had ended up getting a job and I started playing football. That kept me out of a lot of trouble from hanging around all the bad people I was hanging around with. Kept me focused.”*

Ken’s interview for this study was conducted at his place of employment and interaction between him and coworkers suggest that he is a valuable member of the team and a positive contributor to community wholeness. One element of John’s sanctions was performing community service with elderly. The community service requirements partnered with anger management counseling helped him develop “empathy and respect” for people, property and helped heal relationships that were often disrupted by his periodic outbursts of anger. Hector stated that the tasks assigned to him in the sanction process was a significant determinant in him “graduating from high school”. The strict requirements of the program to consistently show up, be on task and timely complete assignments were transferrable to the daily demands required for high school graduation. Hector talked about the benefits gained from the experience in this manner:

*“.....it’s a good program, for you all to do it, like it keeps you safe. I would tell them it keeps you safe. It’s a good program. It helped me learn a lot of things about doing the thing that I did, and it benefit you all because it breaks you the thing that you did..... It helped me stay in school.”*

Edna was required to keep a daily journal recording her interpersonal thoughts, fear, anxieties, hopes, etc. She indicated that the daily writing “helped me to know me better”:

*“.....when they gave me all those papers and I had no choice but to read them it just made me say, “Okay, well this says this, this says that.” As I’m writing, I’m just like, Edna, you really needed this. You needed this to come out of your shell. You needed this. If you have to write, if you have to say, whatever you have to do, this is a good program to be to because you’re able to come out of your shell. No one’s there to judge you. Everyone is there to make a better you, help you be a better you.”*

Cathy indicated that the program materials she was required to complete will “be useful post-sanction” because they teach “life skills not taught in school”.

Lastly, the participants who described their lived experiences with the community volunteers of the RNAB adamantly suggested that the sanctions served a preventative or corrective purpose as well. Becky indicated that she was “initially overwhelmed” by the amount of work required. Becky had shed tears several times during the interview and began to cry again but with simultaneous laughter, which she said were “tears of joy” for being able to complete the rigors of the work and experience the interpersonal change which resulted. Donna said the “difficulties of the program is a definite deterrent”. She emphatically stated, “I don’t want to go through this again”. This is how she emphasized this point:

*“The program was kind of hard at first because all the paperwork and stuff, but when I got through it, it was kind of worth it because it made me not want to do anything else like, no more mistakes, nothing like that.”*

Edna indicated that she learned the interconnection between “student behavior and the successful functioning of the school”, which increased her respect for the educational

system and its critical importance as a vehicle for overcoming adverse socio-economic conditions. This is her description of the impact of the program:

*“You have the whole school coming to see this fight. You’re interrupting the whole school, classes. You’re interrupting classes. You’re interrupting lunches. You’re interrupting people trying to do their work and their job because you want to fight..... So I really do appreciate the program because it really did help me..... I came a long way since that program, a long way.... I graduated college ready. It was a lot of pros. There wasn’t too many cons. I don’t think there was a con, but there was a lot of pros going through the program. It brought me to a new life.”*

Fran described the sanctioned work as a “burden”. She was not able to complete the work within the 90-day period because she “procrastinated”. But the encouragement of the program facilitators helped her to complete the program and she said “it transformed me”. Here are her specific comments:

*“In the beginning, it was rough, and I was pretty much not wanting to do any of it, and it took me 6 months before I actually started everything they gave me. They wanted me to do journals about what I go through every day and write essays and all kinds of stuff. They wanted me to do everything, from what I got they seen a better person than where I was going. They brought out in the good in me honestly. I really enjoyed being in the \_\_\_\_\_ 2:04 after I opened up and got comfortable. It get me off of the path that I was doing and the bad things that I was doing and put me better..... It made me realize that being an adult or becoming an adult comes with more responsibilities and that yes they gave me a second chance to better myself”*

Ken stated that the “community service developed an appreciation for giving back” to the community but indicated that it was a severe “infringement on my time”. The requirements of community service although “rewarding”, were rigorous enough to “deter me from reoffending”.

The descriptions of the lived experience of the youth participants appears to give considerable validity to the value of the accountability process. Ten youth participants described the manner in which community volunteers engaged them in meaningful and reflective dialogue around the circumstances of their offense. The volunteers were



described as “active listeners” who structured sanctions, educational modules and counseling when deemed appropriate that addressed the underlining social, emotional and mental components of the offense. The end result as described by the participants was the revelation of a new perspective on life based on the opportunity given them through this process, the developing of coping strategies that empowers behavioral conformity, and a renewed commitment to never go through this again.

### **Chapter Summary**

This purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of juvenile offenders who were sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) to evaluate their perceptions of the impact of community volunteer’s personal engagement in the restorative justice process. Interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology was used to explore how the participants made sense of their experiences with the community volunteers in promoting increased feelings of community connectivity, a sense of community support and a stronger bond and reintegration with the community following successful completion of the sanctioning period (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

The researcher reported six conceptual themes that were derived from analysis of the lived experiences described by the twelve participants of this study employing the process of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. This analysis involved critical critique and examination of the descriptive, linguistic and conceptual observations recorded from the participant’s retelling of their experiences. The researcher documented the emerging themes, investigated and record potential connections between themes and

patterns that develop across individual participant interviews (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The themes reported in the Finding section of this document are as follows:

1. The volunteer's emphasis on the value of a second chance was a transformative dynamic in the experience
2. The interpersonal engagement with the volunteers was a driver of successful program completion
3. The engagement with the volunteers revealed the importance of intergenerational participation
4. The volunteer's requirement of an apology to parents was redemptive
5. The authentic confrontation by the community volunteers initiated reintegrative shame
6. The sanctions required by the community volunteers fostered new life
7. perspectives

In chapter 5, the researcher will discuss the research finding in relation to the central questions of the research and the literature review as outlined in chapter number 2. In addition, the researcher will discuss the relevance and implication of these findings to the discipline of conflict analysis and resolution as well as provide recommendations for future research regarding restorative justice neighborhood accountability boards and community volunteerism.

## Chapter 5: Analysis, Recommendations, and Conclusions

### Findings

This study explored the lived experience of juvenile offenders who are sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (RNAB) to evaluate their perceptions of the community volunteer's personal engagement in the restorative justice process. The lived experiences of twelve youth offenders who participated in this study were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis as a theoretical framework to provide the researcher flexibility to interact with the participants as "experiential experts" of the phenomenon under study and to record the meaning of their experiences as related in the own voices (Willig & Rogers, 2017). The use of interpretative phenomenological analysis permitted the researcher to formulate themes based on the data collected from descriptions of the experiences of the participants without influence and bias or preconceived hypothesis while maintaining a broad understanding of generally accepted theories relevant to the particular methodology (Charmaz, 2006).

As outlined in chapter 4, the following themes were formulated from the analysis of the lived experiences of the twelve participants of this study:

1. The volunteer's emphasis on the value of a second chance was a transformative dynamic in the experience.
2. The interpersonal engagement with the volunteers was a driver of successful program completion.
3. The engagement with the volunteers revealed the importance of intergenerational participation.
4. The volunteer's requirement of an apology to parents was redemptive.

5. The authentic confrontation by the community volunteers initiated reintegrative shame.
6. The sanctions required by the community volunteers fostered new life
7. perspectives.

The convergence of these six themes is grounded in the reality that they derive from the description of the participant's lived experiences with the community volunteers during the RNAB. A basic premise of restorative justice is that human engagement and interaction has the potential to transform conscious behavior and the dynamics of social relationships. This conjecture was initially tested by Mark Yantzi and Dave Worth in Ontario, Canada when they proposed that two youth offenders who had committed thousands of dollars in property damage in Emira, Canada, be required to face the victims of their crimes. The logic behind their recommendation for an alternative method of justice seeking in this case was the notion that dialogue between the offenders and victims could potentially result in a deeper understanding of the impact of the crime, an acknowledgement and acceptance of wrongdoing by the offenders, and a negotiated sentence that would bring a greater sense of healing to all affected parties and the community as a whole. The fact that Worth was a member of the Mennonite Central Committee and was operating out of the convictions and tenets of his faith holds tremendous significance and commonality with the ideals and functionality of the RNAB.

The volunteers of the RNAB are members of the local community and faith communities associated with the Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE). The board members volunteer their time, undergo extensive training, and invest their personal resources in the ICARE organization and operation of

the RNAB. Consistent with their faith beliefs, they commit to the task of interpersonal engagement with youth offenders who commit non-violent misdemeanors and are referred to the RNAB as a means of affording these youths a second chance and restoring wholeness and health to the community by affecting one life at a time. The themes derived from the youth participant's lived experiences give validation to the phenomenon of attitudinal transformation through interpersonal engagement, dialogue and conversation. A deficit of this study is the lack of long-term examination of subject behavior but within its limited parameter the participants of the study have held consistent with their commitments to positive modification of behavior and reoffender avoidance.

The concept of a second chance is embraced as a valued commodity garnered through the benevolent work of the volunteers. The care, concern and genuine commitment to their wellbeing and future was cited as a significant catalyst of participant's transformation, renewed relationship with parents, development of meaningful relationship with those instrumental in their avoidance of the criminal justice system, and evolution of life perspectives more aligned with societal norms. Sense making of the phenomenon as articulated through the lived experiences of the participants suggests that engagement with members of the community impacted them personally and inherently has the potential to change behavioral dynamics in a more profound manner than the sterile, impersonal and generic processes of the retributive justice system. Authentic confrontation of wrongdoing facilitated through the dialogue with the community volunteers was cited in participant's lived experiences as engendering shame, remorse and repentance without self-condemnation, which ultimately

created the possibility for restoration and reconnection with the community. The proposition that community healing, renewal and restoration can emerge from the interpersonal engagement between offender and victim was the genesis of Yantzi and Worth's Victim-Offender Reconciliation Project in 1993 and the diverse restorative justice models that have since evolved. Albeit in the RNAB scenario the community is deemed victim rather than an individual, the interpersonal engagement with parties that are indirectly affected by crime but have a vested interest in the overall restoration of the offender and community nevertheless demonstrates the consistency and potency of the foundational principles of restorative justice.

A thorough discussion will follow in the remainder of chapter 5 and will include a detailed analysis of the connection of the research findings in chapter 4 to the theoretical framework, the literature review, the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and provide thoughts on the implication for future studies.

### **Research Findings Connection to the Theoretical Framework**

Interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology was used to explore juvenile offenders' experiences with community volunteers to determine their attitudes and opinions relative to the impact of the community volunteers promoting increased feelings of community connectivity, a sense of community support and a stronger bond and reintegration with the community following successful completion of the sanctioning period. Interpretative phenomenological analysis proved to be an extremely appropriate methodology for the exploring the lived experiences of the youth offenders as they engaged with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board and the community volunteers who provided coaching and counseling for these youth. According to the

German philosopher Edmund Husserl, human engagement with people, things or their environment formulate meaning which is discoverable through examination of the lived experiences of the principal humans involved (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009).

Consequently, the lived experiences of the participants of this study were evaluated based on the following foundational questions to unearth the meaning of their experiences:

1. Please tell me about your experience with the Neighborhood Accountability Board.
2. Please tell me about your experience with the community volunteers.
3. Please describe how this experience has impacted your understanding of your community.

Follow up questions were posed to ensure clarity and elicit elaboration of the responses.

Responses provided by the participants enabled the researcher to examine the descriptions of their lived experiences that provided both general and universal application for this study and potential future investigations (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Becoming A Different Person**

The most relevant and dynamic connection between the IPA theoretical framework and the finding derived from the lived experiences of the youth offender's engagement with the RNAB and the community volunteers was confirmation of Jean-Paul Sartre's theory that human existence is always in a state of becoming. Sartre suggests that the engagement and experience of human beings with their environment, people, places and things, ushers them into a new reality of self that may not have been possible or been non-existent absent the particular experience or engagement (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009). This phenomenon was evident in the descriptions the

participants provided from which theme number 1, “the value of a second chance” was derived. As a result of their experiences with the community volunteers and the RNAB, many of them viewed themselves in a new light. Fran described the experience as “lifesaving”, offering a chance at a new beginning. Cathy was led to perform self-analysis and introspection through her engagements with the volunteers and experienced a new self-awareness and transformation from a childish minded kid performing pranks to a mature thinking individual who took full responsibility for her actions. She described her personal growth in this manner:

*“I wouldn’t ever think about doing any criminal activity like that again. It just made me think. Some of the stuff in the online program I do think about. There was this one part and it told me that if I think before I do anything the outcome will be different, which is obvious, but it’s a lot of words that I learned from there. I think I still have my notebook from when I did it, but I did learn a lot of valuable stuff as far as developing character and values.”*

Ken described the destructive trajectory his life was on as opposed to the dramatic change he experienced that resulted in him “becoming a positive influence in my community”.

Ken said:

*“I want to say they helped me a lot. It helped me a lot. Before I started and got into the program, I was getting in a lot of trouble. After I got in the program, I started slowing down on what I was doing and then I got a job. Started looking forward to better things. Doing better things. Moving on in life”.*

Sartre theorizes that the development of a new human reality can be manifested through human experience and interaction or the lack thereof (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009).

The relevance of this theory was documented in the narratives of Gail and Becky who both suggested that “the avoidance of the criminal justice system was the big motivator for change”. Because these youth offenders avoided engagement with the criminal justice system, they are now contributing to their communities, mentoring other youths, and as



Fran stated, embracing the “responsibility to be better”. The interpersonal change experienced by Gail was described in this manner:

*“With the community volunteers, it went well for me because it was just like, “Okay, I’m going before this board, facing what I have to do, and doing all these assignments. ....but these assignments also taught me like different skills, like okay, “You can do this.” It also helped with my writing skills, my thinking process, being open minded, being a risk taker with different things. It just helped me in positive ways. It even lifted me up like in a different way because like I even struggled with low self esteem some times, so it even helped me with that area as well.”*

Kierkegaard underscored Sartre’s theory by suggesting that “an existent individual is always in the process of becoming something” (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009). The existence of the youth offenders in their engagement with the community volunteers and the resulting sanctions further accelerated their metamorphosis into a new reality of self. The lived experiences documented in theme number 6, “sanctions foster new life perspectives” gave validation of the developmental changes that resulted from the participant’s engagement with the RNAB environment. Participants recounted in their narratives how the experience with the volunteers and resulting sanctions helped identify underlying causes of aberrant behavior but also promoted growth, maturity and purposeful attitude towards community reengagement.

Ken described the transformation he experienced in his critical thinking skills, feeling of independence from peer influence and leadership abilities. Ken recounted his experience with these sentiments:

*“After I got in the program, I started slowing down on what I was doing and then I got a job..... I learned was like hang around better people and make better decisions. Be a leader. That’s really what they were trying to get me to do. Be a leader, hang around better people and make better decisions.”*

Becky described the impact of anger management counseling and coping strategies she acquired that enable her to manage conflict in a more productive manner rather than just allowing anger to control her. Becky described what she gleaned about change through critical thinking in this manner:

*Right, it did result in bad consequences which I was in the back of the police car for a long time and that was not a great feeling at all. It just showed that I could have avoided the situation and I do agree. I could have avoided that situation, just went a different route. Like I said just diffuse myself or the situation before it resulted to the way it did.*

Edna stated that her personal transformation resulted from the requirement placed on her to journal her feelings during the 90-day sanction period which ultimately helped her “to know myself better”. She said this about the experience:

*“Now when I was sitting there listening to everybody. When I was sitting there listening to everybody, it was going out one ear and into the other. But when they gave me all those papers and I had no choice but to read them it just made me say, “Okay, well this says this, this says that.” As I’m writing, I’m just like, Janae, you really needed this. You needed this to come out of your shell. You needed this. If you have to write, if you have to say, whatever you have to do, this is a good program to be to because you’re able to come out of your shell. No one’s there to judge you. Everyone is there to make a better you, help you be a better you.”*

In addition, Hector describes the new existential reality for him as “high school graduate”, which he completely attributes to the rigorous requirements of the program which helped him develop skills that were immediately transferrable to the requirements necessary for high school graduation. Hector stated that:

*“It’s a good program. It helped me learn a lot of things about doing the thing that I did, and it benefit you all because it breaks you the thing that you did..... It helped me stay in school..... I am fixin’ to graduate now.”*

Several of the youth offenders who participated in this study noted that one of the most important personal transformation was the newfound respect for humanity and for the law. Becky, who shed tears on several occasions during the interview, again cried “tears

of joy” for what she described as an interpersonal change from who she was to the person she is now. Through her tears Becky said this:

*“I think my attitude changed a lot. I started caring about stuff a little more. I stopped hanging out with the wrong crowd. I just removed myself from any negative that was affecting me that I felt like it was bringing me down, so I just removed all negativity and focused on me for a couple of months. I just isolated myself from the world for a few months and just stayed in the house and I felt like that helped me a lot because I don’t feel like I would be this person I am today. I have a good job. I have my own car. Even hanging around positive people now.”*

A second chance provides opportunity for individuals to start over, to recreate themselves, and begin a new chapter of life free from the vestiges of past indiscretions or impulsive behavior. The concept of becoming something or someone new and different was a consistent theme expressed through the lived experiences of the participants of this study.

### **Changed by New Associations**

The participants of this study were viewed as experiential experts relative to engagement with the RNAB and the community volunteers from which new and relevant knowledge and understanding could be derived from their experiences. The researcher asked open-ended questions to provide the participant with an opportunity to describe the relevance, importance and impact of their experience in a manner that made sense to them and was meaningful for their individual experiences. From the description of the lived experiences of the participants, a conscious awareness of the personal sensibilities of the community volunteers involved in the restorative process was tantamount to personal transformation of each of the participants. German philosopher Edmund Husserl suggests that the manner in which individuals experience events and are stimulated by such events and are capable of providing a conscious description of such experience is in and of itself phenomenological (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009).

Because humans are always conscious of their experiences, examination of their lived experiences reveals behavioral theories that are not subject to pre-categorization or presumptive classifications (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009). This presupposition was evident in the participant's description of the relevance of the interpersonal relationship between the participants and the community volunteers as a catalyst for change and transformation within the individual.

Above and beyond the requirements, regiment and rigors of the RNAB program, participants consistently described the interpersonal connection made with the volunteers and their individual characteristics, persona and behavior as the foundational impetus that initiated change, development, growth and transformation. Andy perceived that the volunteers were not just participating in the program for personal gratification or monetary gain but had a "sincere concern" for him and saw him as more than "a name on a piece of paper". Andy's description of his engagement with the community volunteers suggests that the involvement and investment of people who are disassociated with him personally but have an interest in his redemption and restoration dramatically impacts his assessment of self. Engagement with the community volunteers impacted Andy in this manner:

*"....they were more willing or caring more than anything and just trying to figure out the main problems or what the situation actually was. They tried to give me the best advice and actually get to know what actually happened, you know what I'm saying, and while the choice was actually made and how it wasn't just a one-sided story but to look at it from both perspectives. I felt that when they put the regulations on me for the 90-day period that they tried to pick the best things that would actually be helpful for me in the long run and not just basic 90-day probation."*

Lewis dramatically used economist language to describe his experience saying, "they invested in me". Lewis viewed this "investment" as exceeding the normal expectations of

judges, lawyers and other components of the criminal justice system, which is often viewed as impersonal, bureaucratic and inflexible. Lewis countered the narrative of the traditional indifference in the administration of a juvenile case through the retributive system of justice by describing his experience with the volunteers as, “they were hands on with me”. He further described the experience like this:

*‘They explained everything. They were very hands on. They always made sure that they would explain things that I didn’t understand, and they would honestly help me get through it.’*

Several of the participants experienced a subconscious “knowing” of the volunteers in which they perceived an authenticity that permeated the time spent engaging them in dialogue. Donna perceived the volunteers as “cool” because they did not “try to be cool”, which in other words meant the volunteers attempted to “stay in their cultural lane” in their advisory capacities without attempting inauthentic cultural identification with the youth offenders. She worded the encounter like this:

*“I thought they were actually kind of smart and intelligent to because and they weren’t like trying to be cool or anything. They just really sat down and talked to me and what I could do better, how not to make the same mistakes again. I thought they were pretty cool.”*

Andy was impacted by the authenticity of the volunteers who transparently told stories about their own youthful indiscretions, suggesting a commonality between all generations to make mistakes while retaining the innate human capability for ultimate redemption. He stated:

*“You take in every person’s vibe, you take in, you know what I’m saying, just by what you’re presenting and then also how they speak and how they come across. I mean, so, if one lady says something about their past to open up to you, and you can relate to it back, that’s how you make a connection with new people.”*

Cathy expressed an appreciation for the authenticity of the volunteers from the perceptive of them rising above personal platitudes and accommodating behavior that created

personal connection, trust and rapport, to the business of accountability. Cathy stated they held me “accountable” for my actions as opposed to a “slap on the wrist”, which is a general perception of the outcome of restorative justice diversion program by its detractors. She gave these details of her experience:

*“It was a lot of work, but I learned from the work that they gave me. It teaches you a lot of life skills that they don’t teach you at school. A lot of that stuff I haven’t even seen at school before.”*

The descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants of this study indicated that they had a conscious appreciation of their engagement with the community volunteers and the overarching meaning derived transcended presumptive categorization in its assessment of the importance of interpersonal connection in behavioral transformation (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009).

### **Life Has Intrinsic Worth**

A theoretical connection was also revealed in the description of the lived experiences of the participants who proffered the notion that within the context of mentorship, guidance and advice provided through engagement with the community volunteers is an inherent need for the youth to be heard. Narrative descriptions of several participants documented the relevance of youth being given a voice and active inclusion within the process of their own personal healing and restoration. This concept of participatory engagement in their own plight and life outcomes stemming from the engagement process is closely associated with Martin Heidegger’s theory concerning the ontological question of existence itself. Whereas Husserl’s concern for phenomenological inquiry centered around the concept of consciousness, Heidegger believed that an appreciation for life and the essential question of what it meant to be human was inherent

in everyday experiences and particularly within the context of interpersonal experiences (Smith, Flowers and Larkins, 2009). Consequently, the participants verified the importance of “telling their story” as an important factor in interpersonal transformation and change.

The personal histories, back grounds and individual perspectives relayed by the participants concerning their lives and thoughts and perspectives on the crime they had committed was instrumental in creating a holistic understanding of who they were. The descriptive narratives, linguistic usages, syntax, body language and personal temperament all constructed a personal portrait of the humanistic characteristics of the participant that proved essential in formulating recommendations and directives designed to manifest behavioral change. Cathy commented on the idea of “being heard” and the volunteers “really listening to me” as being the conduit to open, honest authentic dialogue that provided necessary clues to birth corrective remedies and solutions. Perceptions of value, identity and self-worth were drawn from non-verbal engagement with the community volunteers in relations to seemingly mundane occurrences such as the organization of the room and seating assignments of NAB participants. As described by Edna, the open seating arrangement with all participants facing each other created a sense of connectivity and community that validated the humanity, dignity and inherent value of each youth offender as opposed to the dispassionate adversarial structure of a courtroom and officials in the retributive justice system. She described the experience as follows:

*“....it was like people on this side. I was on this side. It was me, my mom, and my mom’s friend. There was a man all the way at the end. They had me stand up, state my name, what I was there for, asked me what I did wrong, asked me what should have been different, asked me what I can do to improve”*

The ontological question of existence and the appreciation for the essence of life was also documented through the descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants who were engaged with community volunteer panels on which youth volunteer counselors served. Youth offenders visualized themselves in the youth that were seated across the table providing advice, counseling and personal accounts of their experiences as potential motivator of changes, growth and development for those currently going through the process. Several of the participants described a virtual “generational connection” with the youth counselors, as recounted by Donna. Donna suggested that the connection she experienced with other youth in the room validated her existence and worth as a young person and fostered a sense of “relatability” and an innate, intrinsic purpose that was transcendent beyond the potential detriment resulting from the criminal offense that necessitated her to be there. She said because of the youth in the room “I didn’t feel alone”. The researcher interpreted Donna’s usage of the term “being alone” as representing a sense of human devaluation, “otherness”, and individualist isolation which stands in stark contrast to ontological premise of being or personal evolution which is the desired intent of the restorative process. Here is how Donna described her experience with youth panel members:

*“They had girls in there my age. I didn’t expect that. I thought it was going to be like grown people, but it was just regular teenagers talking to me, explaining to me what could happen and stuff, instead of me going to jail, they just took me through the program...”*

Donna details her initial perception of the adult panels in this manner:

*“When like you first get here and it’s like about 10 people in there, that’s kind of like, just cut down on the people that is. I can’t explain the word, but it’s around 1000 people I get a little shy. Even like, I’m not going to say ambush, but it’s just cut down the people a little bit more. It’s too many people.”*



The experiences described by Donna juxtaposed to Becky's description, who voiced sentiments of feeling "ambushed", "intimidated," "uncomfortable", and "overwhelmed", because there were only adults in the room, demonstrates the impact of interpersonal engagement with those who ostensibly validate humanity and self-worth by virtue of their presence.

### **Research Finding's Connection to the Literature Review**

Restorative justice is based on the foundational premise that crime is a violation against individuals and their relationships as opposed to a violation against the state as viewed through the lens of traditional retributive justice systems. Consequently, restorative justice programs seek to hold offenders accountable for their offenses, provide restitution and healing to the victims, repair the harm done, and restore the offender's standing back into the community (Zehr, 2005).

Restorative justice programs such as the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board utilize the volunteer services of community members to manage and process juvenile offender cases that meet restorative justice criteria. These community members see themselves as stakeholders who enhance the safety of the community, help to repair harm done to the community, and facilitate the reintegration or restoration of offenders back into the community (Karp, Brazemore and Chesire, 2004). Reintegration of the youth offender back into society is a key component of the restorative justice process because the ultimate goal of restorative justice is to circumvent the life altering consequences and perpetual stigma associated with a conviction and record, but also to provide opportunity for the youth offenders to be productive citizens of the community.

Reintegrative shaming facilitates the process of community reintegration of the youth offender.

### **Reintegrative Shaming**

When state sanctioned punitive actions are utilized through retributive justice system to address youth criminal behavior, arrest, isolation, incarceration and the resulting criminal records that follow youth for the rest of their lives causes stigmatization that detaches the youth from the community (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). As a result, youth may experience a sense of being socially outcasted and ostracized from mainstream society and the morals, values, social consciousness and cultural behaviors that develops through the socialization process (Lemert, 2010). Durkheim describes this lack of social cohesion or relative normlessness, where bonds break down or are unidentified as anomie. According to Durkheim this blurring of societal bonds causes members of society to become detached from societal regulatory constraints that govern and control behavior and aspiration, leaving them with no set guideline within which to act or aspire (Emile Durkheim & Giddens, 1972). Consequently, the antisocial behavior committed by youth has the propensity to become normative, repetitive and escalate in its severity in ways which are unacceptable and contrary to societal morals and values (Lemert, 2010).

Reintegrative shaming represents an alternative methodology to stigmatization which results from retributive justice systems, yet purposes to hold youth offenders accountable for their actions, produce guilt, and social consciousness while reconnecting the offender back to the community through forgiveness, reconciliation and affirmation (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). Because restorative justice views crime as a

violation against the community and individuals as opposed to a crime against the state as interpreted by retributive justice systems, the shame that results from violating the trust of individuals connected by community or familial associations and the desire to not further damage or violate these relationships is the impetus to reintegrative shaming reinforcing values, modifying behavior and reintegrating youth back into the community (Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 2008). This was powerfully demonstrated in the description of Becky's lived experience when she was released into her father's custody and had to admit her guilt in using drugs. She described the experience as "embarrassing" because the hurt on her father's face was deep and pain ridden. Becky began to weep freely reliving the experience and indicated that it was the primary reason for changing her behavior and committing to avoid future criminal behavior. Becky said:

*"I just get emotional because I look at my dad. I don't have my mom, so it's like the stuff I put him through when I look at his face, I could feel it. What can kind of hurtful. I shouldn't have put him through that, like I was just going through something at the time, so I just could feel all his hurt when I looked at him when I was reading that letter."*

Gail was charged with committing a sexual offense at school and had to apologize in an open NAB session admitting her guilt and commitment to personal improvement. She said, "I was embarrassed". In discussing the incident with the participant, she had to be asked three times to define the offense before she could openly state that the offense was sexual in nature. After the third inquiry about the offense that brought her to the accountability board, Gail reluctantly admitted *"It was a situation where it was sexual misconduct with male at school"*. Reintegrative shaming in effect cognitively reinforces rules, values and community standards that promotes behavioral compliance resulting from the desire of the offender to not experience the sense of embarrassment inherent in committing future offenses that break trust with the community (Braithwaite and

Braithwaite, 2008). Cathy suggested that the embarrassment she felt derived from the reality that the offense committed was so “uncharacteristic”, that it engendered a determination for personal improvement because the momentary thrill of the offense “was not worth it”. This is how Cathy labeled her shame:

*“Seeing how disappointed I think my grandma and my mom were there, seeing how disappointed they were in me and surprised that I even did what I did..... I shouldn’t have done anything like that in the first place and they taught me way better than that.”*

Irving’s session with the community volunteers created an opportunity for his father to publicly scold him which he described as so “embarrassing” that the avoidance of a repeat of that experience was enough to change his behavior. The lived experiences as described by these participants underscored the impact of reintegrative shaming as a valuable tool for forcing offenders to personally confront their wrongdoing, reinforce community values and beliefs and to hold them accountable for their behavior in a manner that was cognitively reinforcing the bonds of community, family individual self-worth.

### **Empathy Through Apology**

Community members are viewed as having an inherent connection with the offender because they are often from the community in which the offender lives. Consequently, offenders generally express having stronger personal and authentic connection with community members versus officials of the criminal justice system primarily because community members are viewed as having a vested interest in the offender’s success and reintegration into the community (Karp, Brazemore and Chesire, 2004). Youth offenders described a connection with the community members that reminded them of their parents. In the closing moments of the RNAB sessions youth

offenders are required by the sanctions of the community volunteers to provide an open apology to their parents, guardians or support persons who were affected by their offense. Within the context of the apology stage of the sanctions, the lived experiences as described by the youth offenders document that a sense of empathy formulates in the consciousness of the offenders that is transformative.

Empathy is the cognitive ability of deriving understanding and appreciation of the sensibilities, emotional responses, perspectives, feelings or lived experiences of others through interpersonal association or engagement (Mulford, 1992). More simply defined, the observation of one individual's experience by another has the ability to create empathy. The phenomenon occurs as a result of the neuroplasticity of the brain, which causes a mirror reaction in the individual observing the emotional reaction of another. Consequently, the implicit suggestion is that empathy can be taught or the atmosphere for its development can be manufactured (Gerdes and Segal, 2011). The open NAB apology appeared to be an appropriate laboratory for testing the validity of this theory. A substantial number of the youth offenders who participated in this research study reported that the genesis of their transformation and commitment to avoidance of future criminal behavior was borne within the context of the open NAB apology. Becky described her experience as very emotional stemming from a new-found understanding of "what my dad went through". The commitment she made to her father to never be involved in criminal activity in the future came as a result of her reaction to "feeling his pain" and "seeing the expression of his face". "I regret putting my father through this", were her concluding remarks. Becky's described her experience in this manner:

*‘I just get emotional because I look at my dad. I don’t have my mom, so it’s like the stuff I put him through when I look at his face, I could feel it. What can kind of hurtful. I shouldn’t have put him through that, like I was just going through something at the time, so I just could feel all his hurt when I looked at him....’*

John commented that the anger, violent outburst and fits of rage at home exhibited by him in past occurrences escalated to the point where his mother called the police to intervene. The requirement to openly admit his wrongdoing and apology to his mother gave him a profound sense of “what she had gone through”. He said, “I understand why she did what she did” and as a result has developed a new level of respect for her and authority in general. Here is John’s specific description of the experience:

*“Because me and my mom go through this whole teen program when she should never did the first time because I should have respected her the first time. But I felt happy like saying sorry because it made me feel like a better person and like we can move past this.”*

Empathy is defined as an innately human characteristic (Gerdes and Segal, 2011) and is applicable to a broad spectrum of people or entities who suffer victimization as a result of an offense committed by a youth. The restorative justice NAB process and resulting open apology engendered a sense of remorse and empathy in Edna, who was not only repentant because of the pain inflicted upon her parents but also for the school administrator who dealt with the conflict she was initially involved in and the resulting aftermath. She was required to write a letter of apology which after the NAB experience she indicated was not only appropriate but done with sincere intention. Here is how Edna described empathy she experienced from the engagement with the volunteers:

*“.....at first I’m just like I don’t understand why I have to apologize to all these people when I didn’t do anything, but it was just the principle of the matter, you have for the principal. You have the whole school coming to see this fight. You’re interrupting the whole school, classes. You’re interrupting classes. You’re interrupting lunches. You’re interrupting people trying to do their work and their job because you want to fight”*

## **Impact of Community**

As indicated in the opening statements of the section on empathy, community members are viewed as having an inherent connection with youth offender because they are often from the community in which the offender lives or may be associated by a social, faith based or familial relationships (Karp, Brazemore and Chesire, 2004). The connection between community and offender provides a foundational grounding for the successful engagement of the two parties which has a dynamic impact on the behavior of youth offenders in facilitating the repair of harm primarily because people do not want to disappoint those with who they are connected, care about or have some type of symbiotic relationship with (Braithwaite, 2000). Additionally, the involvement of community members in the process of addressing youthful criminal behavior has documented effectiveness because it harkens back to an era when local communities held minor criminal offenders accountable, imposed consequences and restored wholeness to the community through peaceful informal processes that did not involve the criminal justice system (Bazemore, 2001). According to Emile Durkheim's mechanical society theory, the engagement between the community and juvenile offenders represents a healthy functioning society where the commission of crime creates opportunity for society to enforce its moral code and effect societal solidarity, change and innovation. Community intervention in the correction of crime demonstrates a parallel to Durkheim's concept of the mechanical society which he suggests existed before the modern industrial era where communities were smaller, societal bonds were stronger and people shared collective norms and values which he described as collective consciousness (Durkheim, ed Giddens, 1972). Consequently, the descriptions of the lived experiences of the

participant' engagement with the community volunteers of the RNAB revealed a concrete connection between the community members involvement and the behavioral evolution and personal transformation of the participants.

Cathy described the "level of concern" and connectivity that she perceived from her experience with the community volunteers and described how she was moved in a dramatic way by the experience:

*"I wouldn't ever think about doing any criminal activity like that again. It just made me think. Some of the stuff in the online program I do think about. There was this one part and it told me that if I think before I do anything the outcome will be different, which is obvious, but it's a lot of words that I learned from there. I think I still have my notebook from when I did it, but I did learn a lot of valuable stuff as far as developing character and values."*

Fran described how she perceived that the community volunteers were intentional in make her feel comfortable and inclusive within the larger community. She stated:

*"At first, I was like they got attitudes with me. They're not helping me. They're not doing anything for me. Once I got to know the people on a better basis of not just meeting them and trying to talk about everything. They showed me that they do have a heart and they do care about me and about my future. I was all in all really impressed with how they treated me. They didn't treat me as an outcast or outsider or anything like that just because of my color or anything of that nature. They showed me that they do care about me and they do care about my future, so I was really impressed with them. They were all really nice. I was just stuck in my ways."*

Durkheim posits that human beings are more vulnerable to self-destruction the more they are detached from the collective of meaningful groups, therefore the community's figurative inclusionary embrace of the youth offender as part of the larger and more compliant community served to defuse potential anomie which can result from misidentification caused by societal detachment (Durkheim, ed Giddens, 1972).

The descriptions of these lived experiences underscore the relevance of Durkheim's theories on the value of societal connectivity as well as give validity to the concept of



“community of cares” which people with relationship that are categorized by a broad definition of community, i.e. mutual commonality, familial relationship, social background, and geographical location, can develop a reciprocal network of respect, interpersonal connection and accountability (Walters, 2014). Community members who invest their time, talent and expertise into restorative justice program designed to transform the lives and change the trajectory of youth who have committed minor offenses often help to create a sense of “extended family” that engenders trust and interpersonal connectivity that facilitates the process of holding the offender accountable while underscoring the notion that the offender is still a vital part of the community (McLaughlin, et al., 2003). The symbiotic familial connection experienced by Edna was interpreted by her as a holistic concern for her personal, emotional and overall wellbeing. And the concern of the community volunteers resulted in Becky developing “new relationships” with community members that extended beyond the requirements of the program providing further documentation of the potential impact of the community of cares promote interpersonal change in youth offenders (Walters, 2014). Becky described her engagement with the community volunteers in this manner:

*“They were awesome. I forgot the lady’s name who was my main person, but she was excellent, and she called me a few months ago right when I started my job, and it was so great talking to her. I wish I remembered her name, but she was awesome. She was the best. They made sure that I was comfortable. I wasn’t uncomfortable, so I really liked everybody.”*

In addition to functioning as an agent that promotes informal social conformity and behavioral change, the community volunteer’s engagement with youth offenders engenders a sense of solidarity that strengthens the bonds of community (Strickland, 2004). Advancing Durkheim theory on the interaction between the offender and community as an essential component of a healthy society, Robert K. Merton categorized

this phenomenon as a strain towards anomie, or societal instability resulting from a breakdown of broadly accepted values (Merton, 1957). Merton posits consistency with Durkheim in theorizing that societal conformity is the preferred adaptive behavior in response to strain resulting from divergence between culturally prescribed aspiration and the socially structured avenues for realizing them, which is a critical aspiration of the accountability process. In addition, the accountability process serves as a deterrent to what Merton describes as “Innovation” or the pursuit of established cultural goals outside of the legal means to attain them (Merton, 1957).

The lived experiences as recounted by the youth offenders demonstrated the impact of community volunteers’ engagement in promoting a deeper understanding of the human impact of the offender’s behavior, facilitated acceptance of responsibility, expression of remorse and empathy for the victim even if the victim was the community, empowering the offenders in repairing the damage and facilitating the reengagement of the offender back into the community (Umbreit, 1997).

### **Contributions to the Field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

The principles of conflict analysis and resolution are at the very core of the restorative justice process. Restorative justice revolves around the concept of intentional and intimate community involvement in the decision making and solution-brokering process of severed relationships between individuals and the community resulting from disputes, wrongdoing, or the actual commitment of crimes. Under the construct of community justice, victims and offenders are led by designated representatives of the community into mediated, negotiated or arbitrated acceptable solutions of the offenses causing the breach in relationships that appropriately holds the responsible party

accountable for the act committed while simultaneously working to restore the offender back into right relationship within the community (Zehr, 2005). In this community oriented restorative process, the administration of justice is derived through a fair and equitable process of mediation and or negotiation as opposed to the strict application of rules and regulations and the imposition of retributive consequences (Zehr, 2005). The successful application of the restorative justice principles by community intercessors underscores a foundational principle of conflict analysis and resolution which proffers the notion that conflict emanates from the fact that we all live with multiples realities that must be successfully negotiated into a common reality for us to coexist peacefully within the bounds of community and society. Consequently, conflict analysis and resolution is one process by which the divide between opposing parties is defined, clarified, mediated, and or negotiated to reach an amicable common reality of understanding that repairs the breach between disputed parties (Augsburger, 1992).

This research study's contribution to the field of conflict analysis and resolution is grounded in its thorough demonstration of the critical importance of the intangible element of human engagement and interaction as a foundational principle for bridging differing realities and fostering a common understanding between opposing parties that is mutually beneficial for the parties and society as a whole. The goal of this study, as intimated in the title, was to assess the impact of community volunteer's personal engagement in the restorative justice process. Based on the participant's descriptions of their lived experiences with the restorative justice process, their human engagement with the community volunteers was the primary motivator and genesis of their behavioral change and personal transformation. The participants described the overall attitude,

reasoned approach, fact-based arguments, genuine concern and even body language of the community volunteers as instrumental elements of the process that broke down barriers of resistance, opened channels for new learning and promoted accountability measure that help them transcend the myopic thinking that initiated the offense which necessitated their sanctioning through the neighborhood accountability process. The lived experiences of the participants of this study revealed a compelling way of viewing the contributions of the community volunteers to the restorative process as human investment in humanity in that several participants described the efforts of the volunteers as a personal “investment” in them. In addition, the participants noted that the transparency of the volunteers was another critical element that accentuated the human connection between the participants and volunteers and facilitated personal growth, understanding and ultimate transformation.

Secondly, the data derived from the descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants of this study also provides a basis for future researchers to consider the relevance of values, principles and societal norms as useful tools within the realm of conflict analysis and resolution. A contributing factor to the commission of juvenile offenses has been cited as a divergence from societal values and norms manifested by the egotistical self-centered nature of human beings to seek their own individualist interest rather than the interest of the whole (Lemert, 2010). These interests may include but are not be limited to the desire for self-expression, rebellion against established societal norms, or the attempt to mediated perceived disparities within one’s cultural environment. The data from this study suggests, however, that irrespective of the causation of deviant behavior necessitating correction or sanctioning, relatively there are

inherent morals, values and norms consistent within a broad spectrum of society. The inherent nature of these values and morals were dramatically demonstrated by the refocusing of the participants to these values by the community volunteers, parents and guardians who participated in the restorative process. Because these values, norms and morals were not foreign to the youth offenders, shame for their behavior and empathy for the victims and community were engendered in the consciousness and minds of the offenders. Shame is the by product of a conscious acknowledgement of the understanding between right and wrong and the admission of individual guilt and culpability in behaving in a manner that was contradictory to what was understood to be the correct course of behavior. Empathy is the cognitive ability of deriving understanding and appreciation of the sensibilities, emotional responses, perspectives, feelings or lived experiences of others through interpersonal association or engagement (Mulford, 1992). The lived experiences of the participants of this study documented these two emotional elements as substantive in the transformation of their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors towards society and community. Hence, this study provides foundational evidence for future researchers to employ the use of values, norms and morals as a ground for evaluating conflict and formulating theoretical resolutions constructs.

Lastly, this research study will contribute to the discipline of conflict analysis and resolution by expanding the understanding of the interaction between human ontological identification and individualism and conflict deriving from behavior that supersedes the bounds of societal norms. The findings of this study revealed that a consistent theme woven through the experiences of all of the youth offenders who participated was the aspiration to evolve into something beyond their current existential selves. Descriptions

of the lived experiences of the youth offenders included attempts to mimic their counterparts or peers, to possess things they did not have the resources to buy, to engage in risky behavior, drug and alcohol use or intimate male-female relationships that society dictates are reserved for mature adults. In all of the offenses committed by the youth participants of this study there was an underlying attempt to accomplish something that would invariably create a new image or persona. As researchers, understanding that the ontological desire of becoming is innate to every human can potentially lead to a broader perspective relative to the behavior of individuals engaged in conflict. Abraham Maslow described this phenomenon within his theory of the hierarchy of needs as the human need for self-actualization or the drive to become (Katz, Lawyer and Sweedler, 1992). Researchers as well as practitioners in the field of conflict analysis and resolution will benefit from the in-depth accounts and discussion of the participants of this study that detailed their interpersonal transformations resulting from the identification of the unconscious and unmet ontological need of becoming.

### **Limitations**

This study was conducted on the basis of purposeful sampling. The twelve participants of the study represented a homogeneous sampling with a particular perspective that could provide a data rich perspective relative to their lived experience with the community volunteers of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board. Ribault High School of Jacksonville, Florida is 95% African American, hence this study was comprised of eleven African American participants and one white. The Duval Teen Court director served as the gate keeper and referred participant to the researcher for potential enlistment into the study. Referrals were based on observable measures that

included completions of all requirements of the program, communication skills, cooperativeness, availability and the level of engagement with community volunteers and Teen Court staff.

The researcher's familiarity with the neighborhood accountability program created the impossibility of approaching this study from an unbiased perspective but the researcher took precautions to bracket his perceived understanding of the descriptive experiences provided by the participants and to avoid injecting commentary into the interviews or asking leading questions that provoked a predictable response. All questions posed to the participants were open-ended and designed to solicit an authentic response that was not prescribed by the format of the question. The researcher had no relationship, familiarity, interaction or communication with the participant prior to referral by the Teen Court director.

### **Future Research**

The research questions raised in this study were designed to explore the lived experiences of youth offender's engagement with the community volunteers of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board. Several findings of this study as described by the participant's responses to these questions revealed that engagement with the community volunteers was extraordinarily impactful for youth offenders gaining an understanding and appreciation for the value of the second chance they had been given and to be restored to the community in order to fulfill their life aspirations without the burden of a criminal record following them for the remainder of their lives. As several of the participant's narratives dictated, their encounters with the community volunteers facilitated a generational transfer of wisdom from those with extensive life experiences to

those who were young and prone to make immature and ill-advised life decisions. The findings of the study has the potential to inform future work and extensive examination and inquiry into the extrapolated benefits of mentorship between the experienced volunteers of the restorative justice process and the youth offenders who are seeking to move beyond a youthful indiscretion. These areas may potentially include:

1. Exploring alternative methods for strengthening interpersonal relationships between community volunteers and youth offenders.
2. Examining appropriate avenues for community volunteers' engagement in sanctioned community service-oriented tasks that facilitate learning, reintegration, reengagement into the larger community.
3. Broadening understanding of how individual transformation of the offender can lead to transformation of the greater community.
4. Examination of youth-oriented, peer-directed restorative models.
5. Providing deeper analysis of the impact of reintegrative shaming as a restorative tool for implementation in non-structured environments and personal applications.

Studies suggest that the overall impact of mentoring programs on youth development have been positive in relationship to interpersonal behaviors and attitudes, self-perception, reduced truancy, dropout rates, and substance abuse (OJJDP Annual Report 2012: How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety, n.d.).

Additionally, mentoring has the potential to foster or promote the type of relationship between the youth and their social world that can enhance adolescent life skills, provide opportunity for making contributions to self and society, and advance



interpersonal growth and development (Lerner, et al., 2014). The literature review which included an examination of model restorative justice programs across the country revealed that continuation of mentoring relationships beyond the family group counseling, mediation or accountability board sessions was not an extensively utilized component. Inasmuch as research reveals that intergenerational mentoring has the potential to promoted self-worth and awareness in youth, and enhance adolescence life skills, and develop societal and community connectivity (DuBois and Karcher, 2014), the logical consequence would dictate that future studies examined the potential for substantive mentoring relationships between youth and adult mentors that extend throughout the NAB sanctioning process and beyond.

### **Conclusion**

Restorative justice programs provide a creative approach to responding to criminal offenses and correcting behavior by holding the offender accountable for their actions while restoring them to full connection within the community. Since 2010, the Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE) has advocated, petitioned and prompted public and elected official to establish restorative justice programs in Duval County for juvenile offenders. The tireless effort of ICARE was rewarded with the establishment of the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board and subsequent passage of the Florida civil citation legislation allowing juvenile offenders to avoid arrest and be sanctioned through the accountability board process.

This researcher enjoyed the wonderful privilege and honor of working with the ICARE organization since the inception of its mission to establish a restorative justice program in Duval County. I met with scores of experts in the field of criminology, law

enforcement officials, judges, schools official, politicians and state attorneys attempting to make the case for addressing youth offenses in a less punitive and more restorative manner. I served as a moderator for dozens of accountability board sessions and witnessed countless young men and women come before the community volunteer panels, navigate the rigorous requirements of the program, and successfully graduate and go on to college, careers in the military and public and private sector without a criminal record albatross hanging around their necks. Consequently, acting as the researcher for this study of the impact of community volunteer's personal engagement in the restorative justice process had personal implications for me.

Data reveals that the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board has achieved tremendous success since its inception. The recidivism rate for youth who received civil citation and successfully completed the accountability board process in Duval County is less than 3% (Florida Juvenile Delinquency Data Visualization | Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, n.d.). The overwhelming success of this program established Duval County as a national leader in alternatives to arrests for youth offenders. This success has not been without its challenges, however. Law enforcement officers still exercise exclusive discretion when considering the option of arrest or issuance of a civil citation for a juvenile offense. COVID-19 interrupted the flow of cases and face to face engagement between youth and community panels which is essential in gauging the attitude, temperament and authenticity of the youth offender's receptivity of the program designed corrective measures. And confidentiality laws and regulations prohibit identification of youth offenders for the purpose of long-term tracking to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative to arrests interventions over a significant span of time.

Considering the overwhelming success the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board has experienced, there are systemic and incremental modification that can be made to improve the overall process and reduce recidivism even farther. The goal of this study was to evaluate the potential of these conceptual improvement.

The interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology is categorized as a double hermeneutic, which involves the researcher making sense of the participant's narrative while the participant makes sense of the experience (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). During the interview process, this researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the participants engagement with the community volunteers as well a deeper connection with my personal feelings, attitude, excitement, disappointment and frustrations revealed within the context of the descriptions of the participants experiences. Ultimately the goal was to evaluate their lived experiences which I believed revealed substantive findings that are relevant to the discipline of conflict analysis and resolution and lay the groundwork for further studies in the field of restorative justice and alternative to arrest concepts. The work required to conduct this study provided an interpersonal challenge for me to extend beyond the known limits of my capabilities and to focus all of my collective knowledge, skills and abilities to the application of this task. This experience has helped me come to grips with my own strengths and insecurities and help me to have a greater understanding of my own existential complexities. It has truly been a privilege not afforded to many to engage in this learning experience and to realize my own ontological transformation as a result of the engagement with the youth participants and others who assisted in the effort.

## References

- 4th Judicial Circuit Court - Teen Courts. (2021). Jud4.org. <https://www.jud4.org/Court-Programs/Teen-Courts.aspx>
- Abrahamson, Lauren and Beck, Elizabeth. (2011). Using conflict to build community: Community conferencing. In E. Beck, N.P. Kroph and P.B. Leonard (Eds), Social work and restorative justice: Skills for dialogue, peacemaking, and reconciliation. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Aertsen, I., Mackay, R., Pelikan, C., Willemsens, J. and Wright, M. (2004). (Eds.) Rebuilding community connections – mediation and restorative justice in Europe. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Article 404 - The Florida Times-Union - Jacksonville, FL. (n.d.). The Florida Times-Union. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://www.jacksonville.com/article/20121123/OPINION/801243038>
- Ascani, Nathaniel (2012) "Labeling Theory and the Effects of Sanctioning on Delinquent Peer Association: A New Approach to Sentencing Juveniles," Perspectives: Vol. 4, Article 10. Available at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/perspectives/vol4/iss1/10>
- Augsburger, David W. (1992). Conflict mediation across cultures. John Knox Press: Louisville, KY.
- Bazemore, Gordan. (2001 Dec). Young people, trouble, and crime: Restorative justice as a normative theory of informal social control and social support. Youth and Society, 33.2.

- Bazemore, Gordon S. &, Walgrave, L. International Network for Research On Restorative Justice For Juveniles. (1999). *Restorative juvenile justice : repairing the harm of youth crime*. Criminal Justice Press.
- Bazemore, Gordan and Umbreit, Mark. (1998). Guide for implementing the balanced and restorative justice model. Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Boveland, Pamela Jae. (2002). The impact of corrective response on juvenile recidivism. University of Houston, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Braithwaite, John. (1994). Thinking harder about democratising social control. In C. Alder and J. Wundersitz (Eds.), *Family conferencing and juvenile justice: The way forward or misplaced optimism?* (pp. 199-216). Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Braithwaite, John. (2000, Jul). Shame and Criminal Justice. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 42.3.
- Braithwaite, John. (2002). *Restorative justice and responsive regulation*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Braithwaite, John., Ahmed, E., Braithwaite, V. (2008). Shame, Restorative Justice, and Crime. *Advances in Criminological Theory*, suppl. Taking Stock: The Status of Criminological Theory, 15, 397.
- Brooks, Johnny. (2014). The utility of restorative justice in urban communities for African American males 12-17. (Doctoral Program). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (UMI 3613461).

- Chambers, J. E. (2009). The experience of the operation Iraqi freedom wartime deployment for military wives: A qualitative analysis (Order No. 3378873). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305158900). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/305158900?accountid=6579>.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis. Los Angeles, CA Sage Publications.
- Chang, Won Kyung. (2009). The practice of restorative justice: An ethnographic exploration of one community's attempt to implement a community-based system (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieve from ProQuest Database. (UMI Number 3386666).
- Charlotte County, Florida. Neighborhood accountability board volunteers. Retrieved from: <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/services/familyservices/Pages/NABVoluteer.aspx>
- Chernoff, N., & Watson, B. (n.d.). *An Investigation of Philadelphia's Youth Aid Panel: A community-based diversion program for first-time youthful offenders*. Retrieved October 14, 2021, from <http://ppv.issuelab.org/resources/11945/11945.pdf>
- Christie, N. (1977). Conflicts as property. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 17(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjc.a046783>
- Consedine, Jim. (1999). Restorative justice : healing the effects of crime. Ploughshares Publications.

- Crawford, A. and Newburn, T. (2002). 'Recent developments in restorative justice for young people in England and Wales', *British Journal of Criminology*, 42: 476-495.
- Creswell, J.W. (2006). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Document Center • Spokane County, WA • CivicEngage. (n.d.). [www.spokanecounty.org](http://www.spokanecounty.org). Retrieved October 8, 2021, from <https://www.spokanecounty.org/DocumentCenter>
- DuBois, David L and Karcher, Michael J., ED. (2014). *Handbook of youth mentoring*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Duval District Map - Bing images. (n.d.). [Www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com). Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Duval+District+Map&form=IRIBIP&first=1&tsc=ImageBasicHover>
- Durkheim, Émile, & Giddens, A. (1972). *Selected Writings. Emile Durkheim. Ed., Transl., And With An Introduction By Anthony Giddens*. London Cambridge Univ. Pr.
- The Evolution of Criminal Justice | Criminal Lawyer Group. (2015, March 13). Criminal Lawyer Group. <https://www.criminallawyergroup.com/the-evolution-of-criminal-justice/>
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2020. Civil Citation and Similar Diversion Program Best Practice Guide. Retrieve from: <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/probation-policy-memos/civil-citation-and-similar-diversion-program-best-practices-guide-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

Florida Juvenile Delinquency Data Visualization | Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

(n.d.). Ww.djj.state.fl.us. Retrieved October 8, 2021, from

<https://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/reports-and-data/interactive-data-reports>

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2021. Civil citation & other alternatives to arrest dashboard. Retrieve from:

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=florida+dept+of+juvenile+justice&form=ANNTH1&refig=24f8a75f043949cc865857032325098d>

Feeman, M. (2008). Hermeneutics. *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, 1: 385-388.

Fuller, Lon L. (1971). Mediation: Its forms and functions, *South Carolina Law Review* (44), 305-339.

Galloway, Burt and Hudson, Joe. (1996) *Restorative justice: International perspective*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Criminal Justice Press.

Gavrielides, Theo. (2007). *Restorative Justice Theory and Practice: Addressing the Discrepancy*. Helsinki: European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control affiliated with the United Nations.

Gerdes, Karen E & Segal, Elizabeth. (2011, Apr). Importance of Empathy for Social Work Practice: Integrating New Science. *Social Work*, 56.2.

Gold, R. (2015). The influence of spirituality on resilience in postmenopausal women: A qualitative study (Order No. 3704180). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1690277023). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/1690277023?accountid=6579>.



- Groenhuijsen, M.S. (2000). 'Victim-offender mediation and procedural safeguards experiments and legislation in some European jurisdictions', in The European Forum for Victim-Offender Mediation and Restorative Justice (ed.), *ictim-Offender Mediation in Europe*, Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Hadley, M. L. (2001). *The spiritual roots of restorative justice*. State University of New York Press.
- Hayes, H., Maxwell, G. and Morris, A. (2006). Conferencing and restorative justice. In D. Sullivan and L. Tifft (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice: A Global Perspective*. (pp. 91-104). London: Routledge.
- Hyde, K. F. (2000). Recognizing deductive processes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research*, 3(2), 82-89.
- Interfaith Coalition for Action Reconciliation and Empowerment.  
<https://thedartcenter.org/jacksonville/>
- Jacksonville. (2020, December 21). DART.  
[https://thedartcenter.org/jacksonville/Jacksonville Arrest, Court, and Public Records](https://thedartcenter.org/jacksonville/Jacksonville%20Arrest,%20Court,%20and%20Public%20Records). (n.d.). State Records. Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <https://florida.staterecords.org/duval/jacksonville>
- Jacksonville, FL Profile: Facts & Data. (n.d.). [Florida.hometownlocator.com](http://florida.hometownlocator.com/fl/duval/jacksonville.cfm). Retrieved September 25, 2021, from <http://florida.hometownlocator.com/fl/duval/jacksonville.cfm>
- Jacksonville Sheriff Office,  
[https://jacksonvilleso.mycusthelp.com/WEBAPP/\\_rs/\(S\(3r5stvw3lmow3fo115jsjs2\)\)/support/home.aspx](https://jacksonvilleso.mycusthelp.com/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(3r5stvw3lmow3fo115jsjs2))/support/home.aspx)

Kaleidoscope of Justice. Highlighting restorative justice: Spotlight on Dakota County, Minnesota. Retrieved from:

<http://www.barjproject.org/documents/KJ1%20no1%20Summer%201999.pdf>

Karp, David R., Brazemore, Gordon, and Chesire, J.D. (2004, Oct). The role and attitudes of restorative board member: A Case study of volunteers in Community Justice Crime and Delinquency, 50.4. DOI: 10.1177/0011128703260262

Katz, Neil H., Lawyer, John W., and Sweedler, Marcia Koppelman. (1992).

Communication & conflict resolution skills (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendell Hunt Publishing Company.

Kawakami, R. K. (2016). Experience becoming a role model among male African

Americans, 18–30 years, who are role models to male African Americans, 6–18 years (Order No. 10253211). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest

Dissertations & Theses Global. (1868419746). Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/1868419746?accountid=6579>.

Knapp, K. (1999). *An evaluation of community conferencing: The central city*

*neighborhoods partnership restorative justice program*. Minneapolis: Central City Neighborhoods Partnership.

Lakes Area Restorative Justice Project. Retrieved from:

<https://www.lakesarearestorativejustice.org/>

Lemert, Charles. (2010). Social theory: The multicultural and classic readings (4th ed).

Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Lerner, Richard M., Napolitano, C.M., Boyd, M.J., Mueller, M.K., and Callina, K.S. (2014). Mentoring and positive youth development. In D.L. DuBois and M. Karcher, (Eds), *Handbook of youth mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc
- Lieberman, A. M., Kirk, D. S., & Kim, K. (2014). Labeling Effects of First Juvenile Arrests: Secondary Deviance and Sanctioning. *Criminology*, 52(3), 345–370. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12039>
- Luthar, Suniya S., Barkin, Samuel H., and Crossman, Elizabeth J. (2013). “I can, therefore I must”: Fragility in the upper-middle classes. *Development and Psychopathology*, 25, 1529-1549. doi: 10.1017/S0954579413000758
- Magnusson, Eva and Marecek, Jeanne. (2016). Doing interview-based qualitative research: A learner’s guide. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Maiden, Kristin M. (2009). Second Chances: An Examination of Juvenile Offenders’ Experiences with a Restorative Justice Program (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (Accession Order No. 2009. 3360243).
- Marshall, Catherine and Rossman, Gretchen B. (2016). Designing qualitative research (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage
- McCold, Paul. (1999). Restorative Justice: The state of the field. Presented at the "Building Strong Partnerships for Restorative Practices" Conference, August 5-7, 1999, Burlington, Vermont.
- McCold, Paul. (2001). ‘Primary restorative justice practices’, in A. Morris – G. Maxwell [eds], *Restorative Justice for Juveniles*, Oxford: Portland Oregon: 41-59.

- McElrea, F.W.M. (1998). The New Zealand Model of Family Group Conferencing. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 6(4), pp. 527-543.
- McGlynn, C., & Westmarland, N. (2018). Kaleidoscopic Justice: Sexual Violence and Victim-Survivors' Perceptions of Justice. *Social & Legal Studies*, 28(2), 179–201.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663918761200>
- McLaughlin, Eugene. Ferguson, R. Hughes, G. and Westmarland, L., Ed. (2003). *Restorative justice: Critical issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- McLeod, John. (2001). *Hermeneutics and phenomenology: The core of qualitative method*. In *Qualitative research in counseling and psychotherapy*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.4135/9781849209663.n4>
- Merton, Robert M. (1957). *Social theory and social structure; toward the codification of theory and research*. Glencoe, Ill., Free Press.
- Melton, A. (1995). Indigenous justice systems and tribal society. *Judicature*, 79(3), pp. 126-133.
- Harry Mika, The Practice and Prospect of Victim-Offender Programs, 46 SMU L. Rev. 2191 (1993) <https://scholar.smu.edu/smulr/vol46/iss5/12>.
- Mitchell, N. (2015). Phenomenological study of the mentoring behaviors of the four quadrants of situational leadership within the department of defense (Order No. 3724514). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1730385984). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/1730385984?accountid=6579>.

- Mongold, Jennifer & Edwards, Bradley D. (2014, Sep). Reintegrative Shaming: Theory and Practice. *Journal of Theoretical & Philosophical Criminology*, Special Edition 6.3.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mulford, Carrie Freid. (2004). *Restorative Justice and the Development of Empathy, Remorse and Moral Disengagement in Adolescent Offenders* (Doctoral Program). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (Accession Order No. 2004.3108815).
- Nader, L. and Combs-Schilling, E. (1977). 'Restitution in Cross-cultural Perspective', in J. Hudson and B. Galaway (eds) *Restitution in Criminal Justice*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Nicholl, Caroline G. (2000). *Toolbox for implementing restorative justice and advancing community policing*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
- O'Brien, Sandra. Maloney, Dennis. Costello, Judge Don Owen. & Landry, Dale. R. (2003). Bringing Justice Back to the Community. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 54(3), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-6988.2003.tb00079.x>
- OJJDP Annual Report 2012: *How OJJDP Is Working for Youth Justice and Safety*. (n.d.). Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved October 7, 2021, from <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/library/publications/ojjdp-annual-report-2012-how-ojjdp-working-youth-justice-and-safety>
- Juvenile Arrest Rate Trends. (n.d.). [www.ojjdp.gov](http://www.ojjdp.gov). Retrieved September 25, 2021, from [http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/JAR\\_Display.asp?](http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?)

- Palevka, Sandra. (2016, Fall). Restorative justice in the states: An analysis of statutory legislation and policy. *Justice Policy Journal*, 2.13.
- Pavlich, G. (2002). Towards an ethics of restorative justice. In L. Walgrave (Ed.). *Restorative Justice and the Law* (pp 1-18). Cullompton: Willan Publishing.
- Peachey, D. 1989. "The Kitchener experiment." In M. Wright and B. Galaway (eds.). *Mediation and Criminal Justice. Victims, Offend-ers and Community*. London: Sage.
- Pelikan, C. and Trenczek, T. (2006). Victim offender mediation and restorative justice: the European landscape. In D. Sullivan and L. Tifft (Eds.), *Handbook of Restorative Justice: A Global Perspective* (pp. 63-86). London: Routledge.
- Peterson, Stacy. (2015). Civil Citations in Duval County. Paper presented at the meeting of Duval County Teen Court, Jacksonville, FL.
- Pleiss, Mary K. & F. Feldhusen, John. (1995). Mentors, role models, and heroes in the lives of gifted children. *Educational Psychologist*.
- Postal, Leslie and Travis, Scott. (2013, Feb. 9). Students arrested for throwing spitballs, lollipops Orlando Sentinel. Retrieved from: [http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2013-02-09/news/fl-school-arrests-jail-pipeline-20130209\\_1\\_school-arrests-show-disabled-students-school-bus](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2013-02-09/news/fl-school-arrests-jail-pipeline-20130209_1_school-arrests-show-disabled-students-school-bus).
- Pranis, K. and Stuart, B. (2000). Establishing shared responsibility for child welfare through peacemaking circles. In G. Burford and J. Hudson (Eds.), *Family group conferences: Perspectives on policy, practice, and research*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Primeau, L.A. (2003). Reflections oneself in qualitative research: Stories of family.

*American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 57, 9-16.

Reed, E. E. (2009). Masculinity and counseling with young non-collegiate men: A

phenomenology (Order No. 3399698). Available from ProQuest Central;

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304984237). Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/304984237?accountid=6579>.

Roberts, S. (n.d.). *Program Name: Neighborhood Accountability Boards Department*

*Name: Teen Court, Court Administration, 4 th Judicial Circuit Court*. Retrieved

September 25, 2021, from [https://www.coj.net/getmedia/2931f4a1-d589-44e1-](https://www.coj.net/getmedia/2931f4a1-d589-44e1-b781-3a22bc179df4/JJ-Neighborhoods-Report-February-2016.aspx)

[b781-3a22bc179df4/JJ-Neighborhoods-Report-February-2016.aspx](https://www.coj.net/getmedia/2931f4a1-d589-44e1-b781-3a22bc179df4/JJ-Neighborhoods-Report-February-2016.aspx)

Ross, R. (1994). 'Dueling paradigms? Western criminal justice versus Aboriginal

community healing', in R. Gosse- J.Y. Henderson -R. Carter [eds], *Continuing*

*Poundmaker and Reil's Quest*, Purich, Saskatoon:241-268.

Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory & practice*. SAGE.

Ryan. (2017, November 14). "The People vs..." — Why the State Claims To Be a Victim

of Crime. Mises Institute. [https://mises.org/wire/people-vs-why-state-claims-be-](https://mises.org/wire/people-vs-why-state-claims-be-victim-crime)

[victim-crime](https://mises.org/wire/people-vs-why-state-claims-be-victim-crime).

Saldana, Johnny. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles,

CA: Sage Publications, Ltd.

- Schiff, Mara. Bazemore, Gordon and Brown, Martha. (2011). Neighborhood accountability boards: The strength of weak practices and prospects for a “community building” restorative model. *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy*. 36. Retrieve from:  
[https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.bing.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1041&context=law\\_journal\\_law\\_policy](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.bing.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1041&context=law_journal_law_policy)
- Seward Neighborhood Group*. (n.d.). Seward Neighborhood Group. Retrieved October 8, 2021, from <https://sng.org/>
- Silani, G., Lamm, C., Ruff, C.C., and Singer, T. Right. Supramarginal Gyrus Is Crucial to Overcome Emotional Egocentricity Bias in Social Judgments. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 2013; 33 (39): 15466 DOI: [10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1488-13.2013](https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1488-13.2013)
- Smith, Jonathan A., Flowers, Paul, and Larkin, Michael (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, methods and research. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Strickland, Ruth Ann. (2004). Restorative justice. NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.
- Tsui, Judy C. (2014, Fall). Breaking free of the prison paradigm: Integrating restorative justice techniques into Chicago’s juvenile justice system. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 104 (3), 635-666.



Turpin, G., Barley, V., Beail, N., Scaif, J., Slade, P., Smith, J.A., Wash, S. (1997).

Standards for research projects and thesis involving qualitative methods:

Suggested guidelines for trainees and courses. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 108, 3-7.

Umbreit, M. S. (1995). The development and impact of victim-offender mediation in the United States. *Mediation Quarterly*, 12(3), 263–276.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.3900120307>

Umbreit, Mark S. (1997). Restorative justice: Interventions' impact varies; manner of implementation critical. *The Crime Victim Report*.

Umbreit, Mark S. (1998). Family Group Conferencing: Implications for Crime Victims, Washington, DC: The Office for Victims of Crime/ US Department of Justice. — (1998) 'Restorative Justice Through Juvenile Victim-Offender Mediation', in L. Walgrave and G. Bazemore (eds) *Restoring Juvenile Justice: An Exploration of the Restorative Justice Paradigm for Reforming Juvenile Justice*, Monsey, New York: Criminal Justice Press. — (2001) *The Handbook of Victim Offender Mediation*, San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

Umbreit, Mark and Armour, Marilyn P. (2010). Restorative justice dialogue: An essential guide for research and practice. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company

Umbreit, Mark S. and Greenwood, Jean. (2000) Guidelines for victim-sensitive victim-offender mediation: Restorative justice through dialogue. Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking.

Umbreit, M. S., Vos, B., & Coates, R. B. (2005). Restorative Justice Dialogue: A Review of Evidence-Based Practice. *Offender Programs Report*, 9, 49-56.

U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Duval County, Florida. (n.d.). [Www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/duvalcountyflorida>

Van Ness, Daniel. (1990). In Galaway, Burt and Hudson, Joe, (Eds.), *Criminal Justice, Restitution and Reconciliation* (7-8). Monsey, New York: Criminal Justice Press.

Van Ness, D. (2000). Restorative Justice Around the World, Vienna, Austria: Expert Group Crime Congress: Ancillary Meeting.

Van Ness, D. & Strong, K.H. (2002). Restoring justice. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing CO.

Walgrave, Lode. (2002). From community to dominion: In search for social values for restorative justice. In E. Weitekamp, and H.-J. Kerner (Eds.), *Restorative Justice. Theoretical Issues* (pp. 71-90). Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Walgrave, Lode. (Ed). (2003). Repositioning restorative justice. Willan Publishing.

Wall, C., Glenn, S., Mitchinson, S., & Poole, H. (2004). Using a reflective diary to develop bracketing skills during a phenomenological investigation. *Nurse Researcher*, 11, 2229.

Walters, Mark Austin. (2014). Hate crimes and restorative justice: Exploring causes, repairing harm. Oxford, UK: University Press of Oxford.

Warner-Roberts, A. and Masters, G. (1999). Group conferencing: Restorative justice in practice, Center for RJ and Mediation, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota.

- Watts, R. P. (2012). The lived experience of a spiritual transformation in the everyday lives of alcoholic men new to recovery: A phenomenological study (Order No. 3505760). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1013613912). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/docview/1013613912?accountid=6579>.
- Wenzel, Michael. (2008, October). Retributive and Restorative Justice. *Law and Human Behavior*, 32 (5), 375-89.
- Willig, Carla & Rogers, Wendy Stainton. (2008). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. In *The sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.4135/9781848607927.n11>.
- Willig, Carla & Rogers, Wendy Stainton. (2017). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis*. In *The sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxylocal.library.nova.edu/10.4135/9781526405555>.
- Yin, Robert K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Zehr, Howard. (1990). *Changing lens: A new focus for crime and justice*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.
- Zehr, Howard. (2005). *Changing Lenses: A new focus for crime and justice*. Scottsdale PA: Herald Press.
- Zehr, Howard. (2005). *Changing Lenses: Restorative justice for our times*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press.

## Appendix A: IRB Approval



NSU IRB APPROVED:

Approved: May 24, 2019

Expired: May 23, 2020 IRB#: 2019-309-Non-NSU

**General Informed Consent Form**  
**NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled**

Assessing the Impact of Community Volunteer's Personal Engagement in the Restorative Justice Process

**Who is doing this research study?**

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Principal Investigator: Tan C. Moss, Bachelor of Science Political Science, Masters Applied Social Science, Masters of Divinity

Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair: Ismael Muvingi, Ph.D., M.A., LL.B., LL.B.

Co-Investigator(s): None

Site Information: Duval County Teen Court Program, 501 West Adams Street, Ste 2321  
 Jacksonville, FL 32202-2921

Funding: Unfunded

**What is this study about?**

This is a research study, designed to test and create new ideas that other people can use. The purpose of this research study is to assess the impact of community volunteer's personal engagement with youth sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB). Neighborhood accountability boards have demonstrated tremendous success in preventing youth offenders from becoming victims of the criminal justice system and community volunteers play a vital role in this process. This study will explore the interaction between youth offenders and community volunteers to better understand the interpersonal dynamics between these two groups and to formulate ideas for improving the NAB process.

**Why are you asking me to be in this research study?**

You are being asked to be in this research study because you have successfully completed the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability sanctioning process and have personal experience with the program and the community volunteers.

This study will include about twelve (12) people.

**What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?**

While you are taking part in this research study, you will be interviewed by the primary investigator to discuss your experience with the NAB. This will be a one-time interview that will last approximately 1 hour.

Research Study Procedures - as a participant, this is what you will be doing:

You will be interviewed by the principle investigator who will ask several questions about your experience with the NAB and the community volunteers. The interview will last approximately 1 hour.

**Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?**

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.

**What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?**

You have the right to leave this research study at any time, or not be in it. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to be in the study anymore, you will not get any penalty or lose any services you have a right to get. If you choose to stop being in the study, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the end of the study but you may request that it not be used

**What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by the investigators. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form, if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

**Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?**

There are no direct benefits from being in this research study. We hope the information learned from this study will provide new ideas and insights concerning the effective management of accountability boards and interpersonal engagement between youth and community volunteers.

**Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?**

You will receive a twenty-dollar (\$20.00) Visa gift card at the completion of the interview. This gift card will reimburse you for any expenses related to travel to the interview.

**Will it cost me anything?**

There are no costs to you for being in this research study.

### **How will you keep my information private?**

Information we learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. You will be provided a number that will be recorded on your individual hard copy and tape recording of your survey. Other identifiable demographics will be maintained under strict confidentiality by the investigator.

This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any regulatory and granting agencies (if applicable). If we publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, we will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet in the office of the investigator. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by shredding of paper document and magnet erasing and incineration of tape recordings.

### **Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?**

This research study involves audio recording. This recording will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution, and any of the people who gave the researcher money to do the study (if applicable). The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above. Because what is in the recording could be used to find out that it is you, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording.

### **Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?**

If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:

Primary contact:

Tan C. Moss, B.S., M.S., M.Div. can be reached at (850) 566-0692

If primary is not available, contact:

Ismael Muvingi, Ph.D., M.A., LL.B., LL.B. can be reached at (954) 262- 3023

### **Research Participants Rights**

For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:

Institutional Review Board

Nova Southeastern University

(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790

[IRB@nova.edu](mailto:IRB@nova.edu)

You may also visit the NSU IRB website at [www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-researchparticipants](http://www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-researchparticipants) for further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

**All space below was intentionally left blank.**

**Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section**

Voluntary Participation - You are not required to participate in this study. In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time. If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research study, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

**SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:**

- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research.

**Adult Signature Section**

I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person Obtaining  
Consent and Authorization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent &  
Authorization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B: Participant Informed Consent Form

### **Assessing the Impact of Community Volunteer's Personal Engagement in the Restorative Justice Process**

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study that will attempt to assess the impact of community volunteer's personal engagement with youth during the restorative justice process. You can decide not to participate. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not you would like to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate in this study because you have been assigned to Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board diversion program.

**Project:** Assessing the Impact of Community Volunteer's Personal Engagement in the Restorative Justice Process

**Purpose of the Project:** This project will assess the impact of community volunteer's engagement with youth offenders sanctioned through the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board.

**Procedures:** During your initial interview with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board you were asked numerous questions about yourself and about the offense you committed. This process was conducted by a lead moderator and several community volunteers. Because you have successfully the sanctioning process and graduated from the program, you are being asked to participate in an interview about your experience in the program. This interview will be conducted at the neighborhood accountability site or a more convenient place of your choosing. The interview should take approximately one (1) hour to complete. Your name will not be included on the interview documents and any identifiable information will be held in strict confidence.

**Risks and/or Discomforts:** There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

**Benefits:** The information gained in this study may help us better understand the impact of community volunteer's engagement with youth during the restorative justice process and may led to improved practices and procedures.

**Confidentiality:** You will be assigned a number that will be recorded on your individual survey instead of your name. Other identifiable demographic information will be maintained under strict confidentiality standards by the investigator. All interview data will be maintained in a locked cabinet in the office of the investigator and once the interview data has been entered into a database, it will be destroyed. The information obtained during this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be prepared as aggregate data.



**Compensation:** You will receive a twenty five dollars (\$25.00) gift card as compensation for your travel expenses and participating in this study.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:** You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or any time during the study. All questions should be directed to Tan Moss at (850) 566-0692 or emailed to [tm1176@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:tm1176@mynsu.nova.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or desire to report concerns about the study, you may contact the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board at telephone number (800) 541-6682.

**Freedom to Withdraw:** You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board, Teen Court, the researcher or the Nova Southeastern University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled to.

**Consent:** You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In my judgment, I am voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Tan C. Moss, MDiv  
Department of Conflict Resolution Studies  
10258 Glennfield CT  
Jacksonville, FL 32221

Office: (904) 764-5992  
Cell: (850) 566-0692

Interview Protocol – Participants

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant ID \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol (Questions)

### INTRODUCTION

- Introduction of Investigator
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide informed consent
- Provide structure of the survey process (form, time requirement, collection, confidentiality)
- Ask if there are any questions
- Initiate interview questions

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender?                      Male                      Female
3. Please tell me about your experience with the Neighborhood Accountability Board.

Secondary question:

3a. What did you learn from your experience?

4. Please tell me about your experience with the community volunteers.

Secondary question:

4a. In what ways were the community volunteers beneficial to your experience?  
(or non-beneficial to your experience?)

5. Please describe how this experience has impacted your understanding of your community?

Secondary Question:

- 5a. How has your understand of your role in the community changed?

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| <b>CONCLUDING ACTIONS</b> |
|---------------------------|

- Ensure Interview responses are complete
- Answer any remaining questions
- Thank the participants for their time

## Appendix D: Site Approval Letter

**DUVAL COUNTY TEEN COURT PROGRAM**

**Court Administration  
Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida  
501 West Adams Street, Ste 2321  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202-2921**

**SITE APPROVAL LETTER**

Nova Southeastern University  
3301 College Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314-7796

**Subject:** Site Approval Letter

To whom it may concern:

This letter acknowledges that I have received and reviewed a request by Tan C. Moss to conduct a research project entitled "*Evaluating the Impact of Community Volunteers' Personal Engagement in the Restorative Justice Process*" at Ribault Neighborhood Accountability Board and I approve of this research to be conducted at our facility. When the researcher receives approval for his research project from the Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board/NSU IRB, I agree to provide access for the approved research project. If we have any concerns or need additional information, we will contact the Nova Southeastern University's IRB at (954) 262-5369 or [irb@nova.edu](mailto:irb@nova.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stacy Peterson".

Ms. Stacy Peterson  
Teen Court Director  
(904) 255-1032

## Appendix E: Memorandum of Understanding

### Memorandum of Understanding Juvenile Civil Citation Program, Fourth Judicial Circuit, in and for Clay, Duval and Nassau Counties

---

#### 1. Authority

A "Juvenile Civil Citation Program" has been established for the Fourth Judicial Circuit pursuant to section 985.12, Florida Statutes.

#### 11. History

Since 2011, law enforcement agencies within the Fourth Judicial Circuit have used pre-arrest diversion for Juvenile Offenders who commit misdemeanor crimes and municipal ordinance violations. The law enforcement agencies, the Court, and the State Attorney's Office for the Fourth Judicial Circuit, via this Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), agree that it is appropriate to continue to divert Juvenile Offenders who are eligible for the issuance of a Juvenile Civil Citation (a "Citation") through the Juvenile Civil Citation Program ("the Program").

This MOU seeks to expand and enhance the Program and streamline the process by which a Citation is issued to a Qualified Juvenile Offender. The stakeholders have agreed upon the procedures outlined below to achieve these goals. This MOU supersedes and replaces all previous Memoranda of Understanding governing the Program in the Fourth Judicial Circuit.

#### III. Definitions

As used in this MOU, the term:

"Juvenile Offender" means any person who is alleged to have committed a misdemeanor or municipal law violation occurring prior to the time that person reached the age of 18 years.

"Qualified Juvenile Offender" means a Juvenile Offender who commits a Qualifying Offense and who: (1) has two or fewer prior Citations; (2) does not have a pending Citation or an outstanding warrant or custody order; (3) has never been adjudicated delinquent for a felony or been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony as an adult; and (4) is not a gang member as defined in section 874.03(3), Florida Statutes.

"Qualifying Offense" means any misdemeanor or municipal ordinance violation except any offense that involves the use or possession of any firearm or deadly weapon, or any traffic offense proscribed by chapters 316, 320, or 322, Florida Statutes.

---

"Stakeholders" mean the signatories to this MOU.

"Teen Court" means a program within the Fourth Judicial Circuit designed to provide an alternative disposition to arrest and prosecution, as well as necessary intervention services for Qualified Juvenile Offenders.

#### IV. Purpose

This MOU establishes the procedures that will be used by the Fourth Judicial Circuit to promote the proper use and expansion of Juvenile Civil Citations throughout the Circuit and provide Qualified Juvenile Offenders, who commit certain misdemeanors and municipal ordinance violations, the opportunity to participate in the Program, pursuant to section 985.12, Florida Statutes.

The MOU establishes the procedures for the issuance of Citations; the referral of the Qualified Juvenile Offender to Teen Court; the process by which Teen Court imposes appropriate sanctions for a Qualified Juvenile Offender's delinquent act(s); and provides access to intervention services designed to prevent future delinquent acts. Further, the MOU addresses how Qualified Juvenile Offenders will be issued a Citation; criteria for participation in, or rejection from, the Program; and the record-keeping procedures to document the Qualified Juvenile Offender's participation in the Program.

The Program will:

- Promote accountability and immediate intervention;
- Provide swift consequences for Qualified Juvenile Offenders;
- Increase public safety by assessing and refining "at-risk" Qualified Juvenile Offenders to intervention programs with the goal of reducing recidivism;
- Ensure appropriate resource allocation;
- Save taxpayer dollars by producing cost-effective outcomes for Qualified Juvenile Offenders;<sup>1</sup>
- Prevent life-long consequences associated with an arrest, adjudication, or conviction;<sup>2</sup>
- Result in no arrest record upon successful completion of the Program;
- Assist in ensuring consistent treatment of Juvenile Offenders throughout the Circuit;

---

<sup>1</sup> AIF Foundation, "Getting Smart on Juvenile Crime in Florida: Taking it to the Next Level, " November 2010; Juvenile Services Department Cost Analysis, Miami-Dade County, Office of Strategic Business Management.

<sup>2</sup> ABA Criminal Justice Section, State Policy Implementation Project, "Civil Citation for Minor Offenses" and National Juvenile Justice Network, Snapshot — "Civil Citations, " December 2016.

---

- Seek to reduce repeat offenses by Qualified Juvenile Offenders;
- Encourage more efficient use of law enforcement, the court system, and the State Attorney's Office;
- Reduce the number of Juvenile Offender referrals to the justice system;
- Reduce costs associated with administration of the criminal juvenile justice system; and
- Reduce the number of pending cases within the criminal juvenile justice system.

V. Procedures

A. Law Enforcement Agency

1. When a law enforcement officer ("Officer") has probable cause to believe a Juvenile Offender has committed a Qualifying Offense, the Officer should determine whether the Juvenile Offender is a Qualified Juvenile Offender by contacting the Juvenile Assessment Center or by conducting a search on CJNet.
2. If the Officer determines the Juvenile Offender is a Qualified Juvenile Offender, the Officer will advise the Qualified Juvenile Offender that he or she may participate in the Program subject to Teen Court's approval. The Officer will advise the Qualified Juvenile Offender of his or her rights and confirm that the Qualified Juvenile Offender admits guilt and agrees to participate in the Program.
3. If restitution is owed and can be determined at the time the Citation is issued, the Officer will request the victim, or the parent or guardian of the victim, to provide an estimate of the amount of restitution due.
4. If restitution is owed and cannot be immediately determined, the Officer shall include on the Citation that payment is "due and owing" to the victim in an amount to be determined by Teen Court.
5. If the Qualified Juvenile Offender agrees to participate in the Program, he or she will sign the Citation.
6. The parent or guardian of the Qualified Juvenile Offender will be contacted by the Officer and will be advised that the Qualified Juvenile Offender is the subject of a Citation. If the parent or guardian is available, the Officer will request the parent or guardian sign the Citation indicating agreement to participate in the Program.
7. In cases where there is a victim, the Officer will advise the victim, or the parent or guardian of the victim, that the Qualified Juvenile Offender will be issued a Citation in lieu of arrest. If the victim, or his or her parent or guardian, does not agree with the issuance of the Citation, the Officer will advise that an objection to Teen Court may be submitted within three (3) business days of the issuance of the Citation.

8. The Officer's agency will provide copies of the Citation to the Qualified Juvenile Offender, the Qualified Juvenile Offender's parent or guardian, the victim, the State Attorney's Office, and Teen Court. The Officer's agency will retain a copy for its records.
9. If a Juvenile Offender is arrested for a Qualifying Offense, the Officer must include in the police report, pursuant to section 985.12, Florida Statutes, why an arrest was warranted.

#### B. Teen Court

##### i. Participation in the Program

1. Upon receipt of the Citation from the Officer's agency, Teen Court will make a preliminary determination as to whether it is appropriate for the Qualified Juvenile Offender to participate in the Program. If relevant, Teen Court will consider any objections presented by the victim, or the parent or guardian of the victim, with regards to the Qualified Juvenile Offender's participation in the Program.
2. If Teen Court determines the Program is appropriate, Teen Court will contact the Qualified Juvenile Offender, and the parent or guardian of the Qualified Juvenile Offender, to schedule an intake hearing within six (6) business days from its receipt of the Citation.
3. During the intake hearing, the Qualified Juvenile Offender and a parent or guardian must be present. The Qualified Juvenile Offender will be subject to an interview, assessment, and urinalysis. These procedures will be used to determine what clinical or intervention services may be appropriate. The Qualified Juvenile Offender will also sign an Acceptance of Responsibility Form.
4. In domestic assault and domestic battery cases, Teen Court will determine what, if any, contact the Qualified Juvenile Offender may have with the victim and whether such contact, if allowed, will be supervised or unsupervised.
5. Upon acceptance into the Program, the Qualified Juvenile Offender and the parent or guardian will be scheduled to attend either Teen Court or a Neighborhood Accountability Board, where the Qualified Juvenile Offender will sign the Teen Court contract and be assigned sanctions to complete the Program. Teen Court will ensure that payment of any restitution owed to the victim is a sanction imposed through the Program.
6. A written contract will be prepared by Teen Court and signed by the Qualified Juvenile Offender, the parent or guardian, and a Teen Court representative. The contract will include an explanation of the statute of limitations and the rule governing speedy trial generally applicable to misdemeanor offenses. By signing the contract, the Qualified



Juvenile Offender waives the application of the statute of limitations and any right to speedy trial.

7. Teen Court will monitor the progress of each Qualified Juvenile Offender in completing the Program. Teen Court will maintain a confidential file in a secure locked area that contains the following: information pertaining to the Citation, any sanctions imposed, progress reports from providers, urinalysis drug testing results, disposition forms, and all other information obtained through its management of the Qualified Juvenile Offender's case.
8. Teen Court will document the disposition of each Citation.
9. Teen Court will promptly enter all data into the Juvenile Justice Information System regarding the issuance of Citations, as well as successful completion of, and rejections from, the Program.

ii. Restitution Obligation

- I . Before restitution is awarded, Teen Court may require documentation supporting the estimated amount of restitution requested. In that event, Teen Court will ask the victim, or the victim's parent or guardian, for documentation from the victim, or the victim's parent or guardian, substantiating the amount of restitution. This information must be provided within five (5) business days after the request from Teen Court is received, unless additional time is specifically given by Teen Court. Upon receipt of the supporting documentation, Teen Court will determine the reasonable amount of restitution to be paid. Teen Court will develop a system which allows for restitution to be collected, remitted to a victim, and recorded.
2. Teen Court will ensure that the parent or guardian of the Qualified Juvenile Offender is advised of the amount, if any, of restitution due to the victim. If the parent or guardian does not agree to pay restitution as established by Teen Court, a disposition form will be sent to the State Attorney's Office within two (2) business days of the Qualified Juvenile Offender's rejection from the Program.
3. In cases involving restitution, acknowledgement of the existence of restitution and the Qualified Juvenile Offender's obligation to pay such restitution, shall be included in the Teen Court agreement executed by the Qualified Juvenile Offender and his or her parent or guardian.
4. No Qualified Juvenile Offender who is issued a Citation will be deemed to have successfully completed the Program until any restitution imposed as a sanction is paid in full.

iii. Rejection from the Program

1. If the Qualified Juvenile Offender is arrested while in the Program, Teen Court may reject the Qualified Juvenile Offender from the Program.
2. In the event that the Qualified Juvenile Offender is rejected from the Program based on a subsequent arrest, and formal charges are not filed or are dropped, Teen Court may permit the Qualified Juvenile Offender to re-enroll in the Program subject to successful completion of all previously imposed sanctions.
3. If the Qualified Juvenile Offender fails to complete or is rejected from the Program, Teen Court will submit a disposition form to the State Attorney's Office within two (2) business days of the Qualified Juvenile Offender's dismissal from the Program.

iv. Objection to Civil Citation Issuance

1. In the event the victim, or the parent or guardian of the victim, does not agree with the issuance of the Citation, they may file a written objection with Teen Court to the Qualified Juvenile Offender's participation in the Program within three (3) business days of the issuance of the Citation.
2. Teen Court will advise the victim, or the parent or guardian of the victim, of how to file their objection. Once the objection has been filed, the Teen Court Administrators for Clay, Duval, and Nassau counties will review the objection and make a final determination as to whether to reject the Qualified Juvenile Offender from the Program. The Teen Court Administrator for the county in which the offense was committed will notify the victim, or the parent or guardian of the victim, of the Administrators' decision within two (2) business days of the submission of victim objection.

C. State Attorney's Office

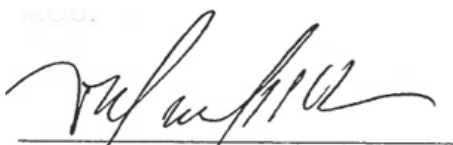
- L The State Attorney's Office will review all Citations issued to Qualified Juvenile Offenders who are rejected from the Program to determine the appropriate disposition of the offense.
2. The State Attorney's Office may, upon request, provide training to law enforcement agencies regarding the use and benefits of non-arrest diversion methods, including Juvenile Civil Citations.

VI. Agreement

The MOU will become effective upon its execution by the respective Stakeholders and will remain in effect for two (2) years unless any statutory amendment of section 985.12, Florida Statutes mandates otherwise.

The Stakeholders commit to coordinate their efforts in support of the Program. The Stakeholders shall review the Program every six (6) months, within their respective agencies and counties, to ensure the Program is being administered in accordance with this MOU. The Stakeholders agree to assign staff members within their agencies to administer the Program.

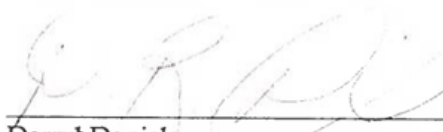
Wherefore, the Stakeholders agree to administer the Program as stated within this MOU:



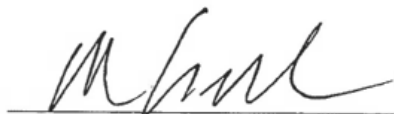
Mark Mahon  
Chief Judge, Fourth Judicial Circuit



Melissa Nelson  
State Attorney, Fourth Judicial Circuit



Darryl Daniels



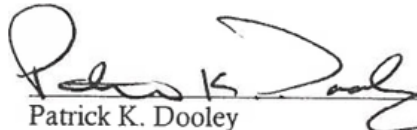
Mike Williams

Mike Williams

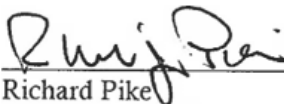
Sheriff, Clay County Sheriff's Office

// (-4.4/1

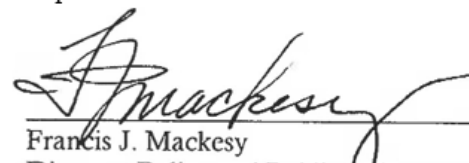
Bill Leeper  
Sheriff, Nassau County Sheriffs  
Office



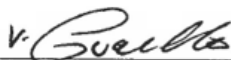
Patrick K. Dooley  
Chief, Jacksonville Beach Police  
Department



Richard Pike  
Chief, Neptune Beach Police  
Department



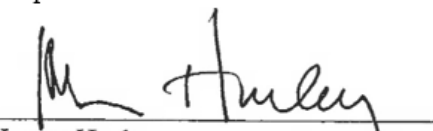
Francis J. Mackesy  
Director, Police and Public Safety, UNF



Victor Gualillo  
Interim Chief, Atlantic Beach Police  
Department

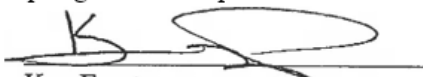


Gary Goble  
Chief, Orange Park Police  
Department



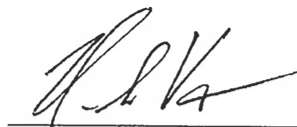
James Hurley  
Chief, Fernandina Beach Police  
Department  
Sheriff, Jacksonville Sheriffs Office

Derek Asdot  
Acting Chief of Police, Green Cove  
Springs Police Department






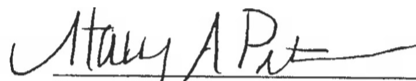
Ken Frost  
Special Agent in Charge  
CSX Railroad Police



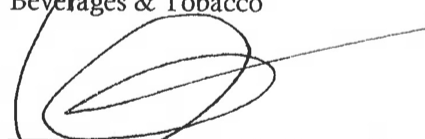
Nikolai Vitti  
Superintendent, Duval County Public  
Schools



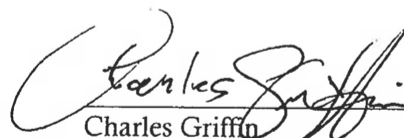
Thomas Philpot  
Director, Division of Alcoholic  
Beverages & Tobacco



Stacy A. Peterson  
Program Director  
Teen Court, Duval County



Debbie Mueller  
Program Director  
Teen Court, Clay County

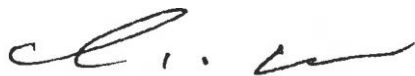


Charles Griffin  
Program Director  
Teen Court, Nassau County

Dated this day of May, 2017

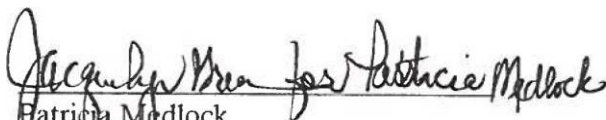
There are other juvenile justice stakeholders that concur in the establishment of a Juvenile Civil Citation Program, including the Department of Juvenile Justice for the Fourth Judicial Circuit, the Office of the Public Defender for the Fourth Judicial Circuit, the Office of Regional Conflict Counsel in Jacksonville, and the Florida Department of Children and Families for the Fourth Judicial Circuit. The agencies agree to support law enforcement efforts to use Citations in appropriate cases.

Specifically, the Department of Juvenile Justice agrees to provide a point of contact for all law enforcement agencies within the Fourth Judicial Circuit to assist in determining whether a Juvenile Offender qualifies for the Program. The Department of Children and Families agrees to provide a point of contact for any dependent Qualified Juvenile Offender who receives a Citation.




Charlie Cofer  
Public Defender, Fourth Judicial Circuit

Donna Webb  
Chief Probation Officer  
Department of Juvenile Justice Services

Patricia Medlock  
Northeast Regional Director



Janet Abel  
Managing Attorney, Regional Conflict

Managing Attorney, Regional Conflict  
Department of Children and Families

Janet Abel Northeast Regional Director  
Counsel

Dated this day of May, 2017

---

## Appendix F: Neighborhood Accountability Board Moderator's Manual

### NAB PARTICIPANTS:

Case Manager greets family, conducts assessment, presents paperwork to moderator/board

Spokesperson takes seat at desk with sentencing form

Moderator sits at the head of the table with needed paperwork

Juvenile Offender and Parents/Guardians seated on one side of the table.

Victims seated on the other side of the table.

NAB Members are seated in chairs lined up horizontally to the table so that they can view the faces of both the juvenile offender and the victim.

**██████████**:(30-40 minutes)

1. Prior to starting, make sure all necessary paperwork has been collected by the Case Manager and presented to the board. Paperwork includes: Citation or DATA referral, blue youth information sheet, Teen Assessment form, youth summary (optional if short on time), victim statement (if applicable)
2. Case Manager will present youth's assessment summary to the board.
3. Once all paperwork has been presented, ask the case manager to bring all parties involved in the current case into the hearing room.
4. After everyone is seated, give the following opening comments:

Good afternoon/evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you to The \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Accountability Board. The goals of a neighborhood accountability board are to involve the community in the decision making process to restore the community after an offense has taken place by a juvenile, as well as to:(pick one of the following)

CC: keep the juvenile out of the criminal justice system. If the juvenile completes this program successfully this offense will be kept off his/her record. I cannot stress how important this is to this young person's future. •  
DATA: keep the juvenile in his/her school. If the juvenile completes this program successfully the juvenile will be given the opportunity to remain in their current school and continue to get their education. I cannot stress how important this is to this young person's future.

5. Introduce yourself and your role in the community (i.e. parent, grandparent, student, teacher, business owner or concerned citizen), then invite brief introductions by the board.

I would like to start off by introducing myself. I am \_\_\_\_\_. I will be the moderator for today's sessions. At this time, I would like for each NAB member to introduce themselves along with stating what vital role you play in the community.

6. Administer the Oath of Confidentiality to the board:

At this time, I would ask all board members to raise your right hand to take an oath of confidentiality. This oath simply states that you agree not to discuss the details you hear today with anyone outside of this room. I will recite the statement and if you agree with it, you will respond with a simple "I do."

Do you each solemnly swear or affirm that you will not divulge any information that comes to your knowledge in the course of these proceedings, and that you will maintain the confidentiality of such proceedings to the best of your ability? Again, if you agree with that statement please respond 'I do'.

(NAB MEMBERS: "I do.")

7. Introduce all parties at the table:

At this time, we will have introductions of all parties at the table, starting with the juvenile offender. Please stand, and in a clear and audible voice, please introduce yourself by stating your name, age, grade, the school you attend, and the offense that brought you in front of our board today.

Next we will have the parent(s)/guardian(s) introduce themselves. (do not need to stand)

Last but not least, we will have an introduction by the victim in this case. (do not need to stand)

Have we missed introducing anyone? (If not, thank everyone for being here and proceed to the next step.)

8. Swear the youth in:

At this time we swear in the offender. (Juvenile Offender's name), please stand and raise your right hand. Do you agree to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, during these proceedings? (pause for affirmative response from youth)

(JUVENILE OFFENDER: "I do")

You may be seated.

9. Summarize the case for the board:

Let it be stated that this is case number \_\_\_\_\_. A case involving (Name of Juvenile Offender). (Name of Juvenile Offender) is charged with (pick one of the following):

CC: (type of offense and corresponding statute number) which is a violation of Florida Statutes.

DATA: (code of conduct violation and corresponding number) which has caused a disruption in his/her learning environment.

Let it also be stated that the juvenile offender is said to have (briefly state incident or list details). Do you (Juvenile Offender's Name) admit to and accept responsibility for this charge? (pause for affirmative response from youth)

(JUVENILE OFFENDER: "I do")

10. Youth Statement:

With that stated, we will allow you to make a statement to explain what occurred on the day the offense took place. Before you begin, please understand the importance of giving us rigorous honesty in your account. The information you provide us today will help us to make recommendations that we feel are the most appropriate and helpful to you. Additionally, we have the discretion to return this

case to your referral source if we feel that we cannot get straight and honest answers from you. Do you understand? (pause for affirmative response from youth)



(JUVENILE OFFENDER: "I do")

(continued on next page)

When you are ready, please stand, and in a clear audible voice, explain to the Board members the details that transpired on the date of the incident. Please include what was going on before, during, and after the event, and the response you received from your parents. Also tell us how you believe this incident may have affected the community.

(Allow youth to speak) Thank you. Please be seated

12. Victim Statement:

At this time the Board will allow a statement by the victim in regards to what type of impact this offense had on him/her personally.

(Allow victim to speak) Thank you.

### 13. Questioning period:

Juvenile Offender's name) at this time, I am going to allow the accountability board members to question you. I would encourage you to answer the questions as accurately and honestly as possible, since your assigned sanctions will largely be based on your responses to these questions. Do you understand? (pause for affirmative response from youth)

(JUVENILE OFFENDER: "I do")

Board members, please raise your hands to be recognized by the Board in order to question the juvenile. Any Questions? (Juvenile can remain seated for questioning)

(Call on board members. Ensure questions are succinct and appropriate. After questions have been exhausted or halted by Moderator, say the following):

Thank you members. (If more information is needed to bring out key points) At this time I will now ask a few questions in order to clearly understand the facts of the case.

(Examples of appropriate questions to ask are listed below)

Were there any special reasons for you committing the offense? If so, what?

Did anyone influence you to commit this act?

Are you still associated with them?

How would you feel if someone did this to you?

How would you feel if someone did this to someone you love?

What could you have done differently?

What is your plan for the next time you are placed in this situation?

(continued on next page)

How do you feel you can make this right?

Are you in any extracurricular activities? (sports, clubs, social, etc.) What, if any, are your post-H.S. plans? Or goals?

What steps do you plan to take to reach these goals?

Have you been in trouble before? If so, what were the circumstances?

Are there any last questions or comments by the NAB Members?

(Allow for one or two final brief, pertinent comments if time permits)

14. Final Comments for victim, youth, and parent/guardian of youth:

Victim: (Victim's name), do you have any last comments you would like to make before (Juvenile Offender's Name) receives their sanctions?

(Allow the victim to briefly state any comments.) Thank you.

Youth: (Juvenile Offender's name), do you have any last comments you would like to make before being assigned your sanctions and restorative requirements?

(Allow the Juvenile Offender to briefly state any comments.) Thank you.

{Optional} Parents/Guardians: Sir/Madam, is there any pertinent information that you would like to add that has not been stated?

(If yes, you may allow the Parent/Guardian to briefly state the comments.) Thank you.

15. Prepare for deliberation by explaining the following to the case:

At this time, the NAB members will convene in order to decide on an individualized response to your situation. We would ask that the juvenile offender and victim be excused to the wait area (if available) during deliberations. This NAB Session will be in recess (for a few minutes) while the NAB Members deliberate. (Ask the family to follow Teen Court Staff to the waiting area)

16. Deliberation:

The board will deliberate on the sanctions appropriate for the offense in question as well as individualized treatment responses based on the youth's needs. After a unanimous decision is made on sanctions and all sanctions are written down on the designated Sanction form by the NAB spokesperson, Teen Court Staff will escort the youth and family back to their seats at the table. It is the Moderators responsibility to ensure the deliberation process does not exceed 10 minutes.

17. Once all involved parties are back in their seats, you can resume the session by the following statement:

The \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Accountability Board is again in session. Will the NAB Spokesperson and the Juvenile Offender please rise; all others may be seated. (Name of Juvenile Offender), you have been charged with a violation of:

- ☐ CC: Florida Statutes
- ☐ DATA: School code of conduct

18. Announce the Board's decision to the youth and family.

A decision has been made based on the facts and your statements here today. NAB Spokesperson, has the Board arrived at a unanimous decision? (pause for affirmative response from spokesperson)

Mister/Madam Spokesperson, please announce your decision to the Board.

(NAB Spokesperson: "We assign the Juvenile Offender the following:")

(Pause while the spokesperson reads the assigned sanctions. After the sanctions have been read, the spokesperson can be seated.)

To Youth: (Name of Juvenile Offender), do you understand the sanctions that were just read to you? Do you have any questions?

(Allow the Juvenile Offender to answer)

To Parent(s) or Guardian(s): Do you, as Parent/Guardian, understand the recommendation or sentence? Do you have any questions or comments?

(Allow the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to answer)

19. If the defendant DOES understand the sentence, read the following:

In addition to the sentence I have explained, you must also refrain from violating any laws, whether Federal, State or Municipal. You must obey all lawful and reasonable demands of your parent(s) or guardian(s). You must attend school regularly, with no unexcused absences, tardies, suspensions, or skipping classes, with passing grades and with no Conduct Code violations. You shall not use or possess alcohol or illegal drugs, or associate with anyone using/possessing alcohol or illegal

drugs. You shall not associate with any known juvenile delinquents (including any co-defendant in your case). Violation of these sanctions may result in you being terminated from the program. Do you understand these rules? (pause for affirmative response from youth)

(JUVENILE OFFENDER: "I do")

## 20. Open NAB Apology to Parent/Guardian:

If the defendant is mandated to make an apology to the parent/guardian and a parent/guardian is present, read the following. If not, skip to #21.

Next we will complete one of your assigned sanctions right here. One of the most important sanctions that you have received today is the open NAB apology. This is an opportunity for you to apologize to your family for this incident. Oftentimes young people overlook the impact that their poor decisions have on their family. This is a time for you to gather your thoughts and tell your family why you are remorseful for your behavior. In addition, please explain what you will do differently in the future to avoid this type of issue happening again. Take a moment to gather your thoughts and when you are ready, please stand, face your parent/guardian, and proceed in a clear and loud voice.

To Parent(s) or Guardian(s): Do you accept this apology as being sincere? (allow the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to answer) Thank you.

To Youth: Thank you for making the apology. You may be seated again.

## Open NAB Apology to Victim:

If the defendant is mandated to make an apology to the victim and the victim is present, read the following. If not, skip to #22.

Now we will complete one of your assigned sanctions right here. This is an opportunity for you to apologize to the victim in person for this incident.

Oftentimes young people overlook the impact that their poor decisions have on their victims, emotionally, physically, and financially. This is a time for you to gather your thoughts and tell the victim why you are remorseful for your behavior.

(continued on next page)

In addition, please explain what you will do differently in the future to avoid this type of issue happening again. Take a moment to gather your thoughts and when you are ready, please stand, face the Victim, and proceed in a clear and loud voice.

To Victim: Do you accept this apology as being sincere? (allow the Victim to answer) Thank you.

To Youth: Thank you for making the apology. You may be seated again.

## 22. Closing Remarks

The Moderator at this time may make some positive remarks to the Juvenile Offender, wishing the Juvenile Offender luck, etc. before directing family to meet with the Teen Court Case Manager:

EXAMPLE: I would like to congratulate (Juvenile Offender's Name) and his/her parents/guardians for making the decision to attend this Neighborhood Accountability Board to take responsibility for your actions and to hopefully increase your chances of having a positive outcome in your adult life. The NAB desires to help you gain an appreciation for the importance of attaining a quality life and respecting the rights of others to have a quality life. Again, this program is designed specifically to keep you out of Criminal or Juvenile Justice System. It also seeks to assist you in restoring the community (and/or making a victim whole.) We hope that the assignments that we have given you will help you to learn some new tools to help you become a productive member of society and your community. I think we made some progress in doing that today. Please put time and effort into the assignments so that you might be able to use the information in your everyday life. We look forward to seeing you again to review all the progress that you have made.

(If victim present): I would also like to thank (Victim) for attending and participating in (Juvenile Offender's) hearing today. I hope this meeting has allowed you to start the healing process and feel the support of the community around you. Can we get the juvenile and (name of victim) to shake hands? I truly wish you both well moving forward.

To the youth and family: At this time, please join the NAB Case Manager to complete the reminder of the paperwork and to get copies of your contract. The Case Manager will be able to answer any additional questions that you may have.

To the board: I would like to remind all of those in attendance that the business of the NAB is confidential, and is not to be discussed outside this room. (pick one of the following):

As there is no further business to come before the Board today, I hereby declare this Neighborhood Accountability session adjourned We do have another case today. (Start again at #1)

23. [REDACTED]

Below are some examples of special situations that could arise during a Neighborhood accountability Board session. Included with each is the suggested appropriate response.

[REDACTED]

- o Participation in Teen Court is voluntary. At any point during the hearing or even following sentencing, the juvenile or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) may exercise their right to withdraw from participation in the Teen Court Program.
- o Withdrawal from participation may occur in a subtle form. For example, rather than standing before the Board and directly informing them of his/her intent to withdraw from participation, the juvenile may merely deny his/her testimony that he/she committed the act in question. This denial is tantamount to withdrawing from the program because an admission of guilt is required to participate in the program.
- o If any situation occurs in which the juvenile or his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) indicated a desire not to continue participation in the Teen Court Program, state the following:

Based upon your statements or actions before the Board, it appears that you have shown an intent to withdraw from participation in the Teen Court Program. To assist you in making an informed decision, I wish to provide you with the following information: First, Teen Court is a voluntary program and you can withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from participation in the Teen Court program, your case will be referred to :(pick one of the following)

CC: the State Attorney's Office for possible Criminal or Juvenile Court activity. Do you have any questions?

- DATA: the Duval County School Hearing Office for further action. Do you have any questions?

(Once questions have been answered by the moderator and/or Teen court Case Manager) At this time, is it your desire to withdraw from any participation in the Teen court Program?

(Responses to potential answers):

YES: Thank the family for their participation to this point and ask them to join the Case Manager to provide the family with further directions. No: Continue with the hearing at whatever point you paused.

There appears to be a conflict of whether the juvenile should continue participation in the Teen court Program. At this time, I will postpone the hearing until the matter can be resolved by the Teen court Administrator and the Referral Source. Board members, thank you for your patience and service. This session is adjourned (unless there is another case to follow; then begin at #1).

### NAB PARTICIPANTS:

Case Manager greets family, conducts assessment, presents paperwork to moderator/board

Spokesperson takes seat at desk with sentencing form

Moderator sits at the head of the table with needed paperwork

Juvenile Offender and Parents/Guardians seated on one side of the table.

Victims seated on the other side of the table.

NAB Members are seated in chairs lined up horizontally to the table so that they can view the faces of both the juvenile offender and the victim.

**[REDACTED]: (10-15 minutes)**

1. Prior to starting, make sure all necessary paperwork and updates have been given to the Moderator by the Case Manager. Paperwork includes: Citation or DATA referral, youth's contract, victim statement (if applicable), as well as any of the following: Case Manager file notes, any completed sanctions, grade and attendance reports, etc.

2. Case Manager will present youth's status to the board.



3. Once all paperwork and updates has been presented, ask the case manager to bring all parties involved in the current case into the hearing room.
4. After everyone is seated, give the following opening comments:

Good afternoon/evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you to The \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood Accountability Board. We are here today for a review session. A review session is an opportunity for a young person who has previously been sanctioned by the Board to explain his/her progress on their assigned tasks.

5. Introduce yourself and your role in the community (i.e. parent, grandparent, student, teacher, business owner or concerned citizen), then invite brief introductions by the board.

I would like to start off by introducing myself. I am \_\_\_\_\_. I will be the moderator for today's sessions. At this time, I would like for each NAB member to introduce themselves along with stating what vital role you play in the community.

6. Administer the Oath of Confidentiality to the board:

At this time, I would ask all board members to raise your right hand to take an oath of confidentiality. This oath simply states that you agree not to discuss the details you hear today with anyone outside of this room. I will recite the statement and if you agree with it, you will respond with a simple "I do."

Do you each solemnly swear or affirm that you will not divulge any information that comes to your knowledge in the course of these proceedings, and that you will maintain the confidentiality of such proceedings to the best of your ability? Again, if you agree with that statement please respond 'I do'.

(NAB MEMBERS: "1TWe do.")

7. Introduce all parties at the table:

At this time, we will have introductions of all parties at the table, starting with the juvenile offender. Please stand, and in a clear and audible voice, please introduce yourself by stating your name, age,

grade, the school you attend, and the offense that brought you to the board initially.

Next we will have the parent(s)/guardian(s) introduce themselves. (do not need to stand)

Last but not least, we will have an introduction by the victim in this case. (do not need to stand)

Have we missed introducing anyone? (If not, thank everyone for being here and proceed to the next step.)

8. Swear the youth in:

At this time we will swear in the juvenile offender. (Juvenile Offender's name), please stand and raise your right hand. Do you agree to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, during these proceedings? (pause for affirmative response from youth)

(JUVENILE OFFENDER: "I do")

You may be seated.

9. Summarize the case for the board:

Today we will be reviewing case number \_\_\_\_\_, a case involving (Name of Juvenile Offender). This juvenile offender was initially seen and sanctioned by the Neighborhood accountability Board on (date on contract).

## Appendix G: Neighborhood Accountability Board Brochure

### Volunteers needed!

All of the Neighborhood Accountability Boards consist of concerned citizens that want to make a difference in their own communities by helping our youth remain out of the criminal justice system and onto a path of productivity and success.

If this sounds like a program you want to be a part of, please contact us. We need your help!

For more information on our program  
or to sign up as a volunteer,  
please call (904) 255-1030  
or visit our website at  
<http://www.jud4.org/Court-Programs/Teen-and-Family-Courts.aspx>.



Court Administration, Fourth Judicial Circuit  
State Attorney's Office, Fourth Judicial Circuit

United Way of Northeast Florida

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

Interfaith Coalition for Action,  
Reconciliation & Empowerment (ICARE)

Gateway Community Services

PACE Center for Girls

Empowerment Recourses Inc.

Duval County Public Schools



### Neighborhood Accountability Board



Court Administration  
Fourth Judicial Circuit  
Jacksonville, Florida

## What is a NAB?



Neighborhood Accountability Boards represent a community based decision making process designed at repairing harm brought on by crime. This process incorporates Restorative Justice principles such as focusing the attention on what harm was done, what needs to be done to repair the harm, and what level of repair the responsible party can realistically accomplish. The response to harm should meet the needs of the victim, offender, and community.



This process is designed exclusively for juvenile offenders. The NAB receives a referral from law enforcement indicating that a non-violent offense has been committed by a juvenile resident of a targeted community OR the offense has been committed within that targeted community.

## Duties Schedule Board Members

Members of the community will participate in restorative conferencing between victims, offenders and their families in order to repair harm caused by crime that impacts their neighborhood. Each member will participate in this consensus building process, focusing on three main principles resulting in a time limited case plan to restore the harm caused by the offense:

- ⇒ Offender accountability
- ⇒ Victim/community restoration
- ⇒ Youth competency development

Initial volunteer training includes: orientation to the Neighborhood Accountability Board process, training on available community resources, and Restorative Justice principles.



**Ribault**

*1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 2:00 pm*

**Westside**

*1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 2:00 pm*

**Beach**

*2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at 2:00 pm*

**Arlington**

*2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 2:00 pm*

**Contact:**

Cortney Boesdorfer

904-255-1035

Cboesdorfer@coj.net



Appendix H: Emerging Theme Graphic Chart

Conceptual Comments

Youth Participant 1

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1A (D:5:20:20)</b><br>It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions         | <b>THEME DEVELOPMENT</b><br><b>History and life experience helps guide sanctions</b>  |
| <b>1B (D:5:20:20)</b><br>It appears that this supports 1A on meaningful sanctions   | <b>1A (D:5:20:20) YP 1</b><br>It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions  |
| <b>1C (L:9:24:20)</b><br>Youth used words "Vibes" and "I felt them" which suggest that the approach of the community volunteers and chemistry felt by the youth facilitates more productive engagement  | <b>D:5:22.20 YP 5</b><br>It is possible that providing youth a greater opportunity to express their perception of life gives the community volunteer more information upon which to base recommendations/ sanctions/ help   |
| <b>1D (D:5:20:20)</b><br>It would appear that this youth gained an enhanced understanding of the importance of deliberation in the decision making process from the engagement with the comm volunteers | <b>D:5:25.20 YP 6</b><br>It appears that the increase in familiarity between the youth offender and comm volunteers reduces the barriers of resistance to the program purpose and intent (Possible integration for videos, tools, pre-session prep for youth and board members) |
| <b>1E (5:20:20) Also noted in 1A</b>  |   |



It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions

**1B (D:5:20:20)**

It appears that this supports 1A on meaningful sanctions

**1C (L:9:24:20)**

Youth used words "Vibes" and "I felt them" which suggest that the approval of the community volunteers and chemistry felt by the youth facilitates more productive engagement

**1D (D:5:20:20)**

It would appear that this youth gained an enhanced understanding of the importance of deliberation in the decision making process from the engagement with the comm volunteers

**1E (5:20:20) Also noted in 1A**

Is it important for the youth to feel a sense of "caring" on the part of the comm volunteer as an element of constructive engagement?

**1A (D:5:20:20) YP 1**

It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions

**D:5.22.20 YP 5**

It is possible that providing youth a greater opportunity to express their perception of life gives the community volunteer more information upon which to base recommendations/ sanctions/ help

**D:5.25.20 YP 6**

It appears that the increase in familiarity between the youth offender and comm volunteers reduces the barriers of resistance to the program purpose and intent (Possible integration for videos, tools, pre-session prep for youth and board members)

1F (L:9:24:20)

It appears the youth perceived all components of the NAB process as essential requirements by virtue of the emphatic use of the word "ALL" in describing the inconvenience of the work as having redemptive value.

D:5.25.20 YP 6

It appears that the more information the community volunteers have prior to the initial engagement with the youth offender, the greater potential for success. (pg 29)

1G (L:9:24:20)

It appears that the concept of "caring" is an important element of the success of the process as seen in the youth suggesting they were not "just a name on a piece of paper".

**Youth Participant 2**

**Impact of Open NAB Apology**

1H (5:20:20)

It appears that the body language of the comm volunteers impacts the effectiveness of the engagement with youth.

1J (D:5:20:20) YP 1

It appears that hardships and inconveniences experienced by the parents because of this youth offenses may be a preventative factor against future offenses.

1I (D:5:20:20)

It appears that the stories of personal experiences of the comm volunteers creates potential for interrelated connectivity with the youth.

2E (D:5:21:20) YP 2

It appears that the open apology to the parent is an emotional event that may initiate healing.

1J (D:5:20:20)

It appears that hardships and inconveniences experienced by the parents because of this youth offenses may be a preventative factor against future offenses.

2H (L:11:11:20) / (D:5:221:20) YP 2



Is it possible that redemptive shame is a potential result of pressing the youth to specifically described the offense committed? **[Bracket: Redemptive shaming is a concept that the researcher encountered and may effect the objectivity of the analysis of this potential theme.]**

**2A (D:5:21:20)**

It appears that the interpersonal change and growth of the youth in the program overcomes their initial reluctance or hesitance.

**2B (D:5:21:20)**

It appears that this youth values the primary goal of the program which is to prevent the youth from having a criminal record.

**2C (D:5:21:20)**

The drug offense which the youth was charged with appears to demonstrate the universal application of the NAB process in a variety of offenses.

**2D (D:5:21:20)**

It appears that a genuine sense of "caring" on the part of the comm volunteer is valued by the youth in their engagement

**2I (L:1:1:1:20) YP 2**

It appears that the lowering, softening and reflectiveness expressed in the youth's voice gave evidence of the shame, embarrassment and self disappointment felt as a consequence of the youth's actions.

**2K (L:1:1:1:20) YP 2**

It appears that the hurt expressed by the parent during the open apology may be a deterrent to future offense indicated through the youth's words "I could feel it"

**3E (D:5:21:20) YP 3**

In that parental disappointment appears to be a motivator towards change for the youth, should there be an increased amount of parent youth engagement beyond the NAB session?

**D:5:22:20 YP 4**

It appears that this youth also felt some sense of transformation or change as a result of the open NAB apology to parents

2E (D:5:21:20)

It appears that the open apology to the parent is an emotional event that may initiate healing.

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

2F (D:5:21:20)

It appears that the number of adult community volunteers in the room may be intimidating to the youth participant.

D:5.22.20 YP 4

It appears that the open NAB apology process created or opened the channels for dialogue and communication between this parent and youth offender

2G (L:1:1:1:20)

The youth described the initial reaction to the engagement as feeling "ambushed", which may give further credence to the notion of perceived adult intimidation by the youth.

D:5.22.20 YP 5

Is there a connection between the open NAB apology and the improved relationship between parents and youth offender

2G (L:1:1:1:20) pg 6

Term "1,000 people" and "ambushed" used again i.e. intimidation.

D:5.22.20 YP 5

It appears that the open NAB apology affects the youth participant in a number of ways

2H (L:1:1:1:20) / (D:5:22:1:20)

Is it possible that redemptive shame is a potential result of pressing the youth to specifically describe the offense committed? [Bracket: Redemptive shaming is a concept that the researcher encountered and may affect the objectivity of the analysis of this potential theme.]

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

It appears that a strong motivator for change is the embarrassment felt by youth offenders when confronted with behavior.

### Youth Participant 3

2I (L:1:1:1:20)

It appears that the lowering, softening and reflectiveness expressed in the youth's voice gave evidence of the shame, embarrassment and self disappointment felt as a consequence of the youth's actions.

2K (L:1:1:1:20)

It appears that the hurt expressed by the parent during the open apology may be a deterrent to future offense indicated through the youth's words "I could feel it"

3A (D:5:2:1:20)

It would appear that the inclusion of petty theft committed by the youth suggest that the NAB has universal application to a variety of offenses.

3B (D:5:2:1:20)

It would appear that the program instills in the youth the appreciation of avoiding a criminal record and having a "Second chance".

3C (D:5:2:1:20)

Is it possible that the youth offenders develop an appreciation for being held accountable?

3D (D:5:2:1:20)

It appears that this youth experienced Redemptive Shaming in the open NAB apology which help to repair relationship with parents.

D:5:25.2020 YP 8

It appears that the pain felt by parents / grandparents is a motivating factor in youth change (scared with grandma in the room, pg 37)

L:6:4.2020 YP 9

It appears that the open NAB apology had a positive impact on youth/ parent relationship as described by youth as a "weight off my shoulders", helped repair relational breach of damage.

L:6:4.2020 YP 9

It appears NAB apology process broke tension of repaired break in relationship between father/ son as described by term "weight off my shoulder".

D:6:4.2020 YP 9

It appears that the transference of knowledge is a key component of the NAB process (NAB apology open door for father to revisit old teaching on description making.

D:6:15.2020 YP 10



It appears that the ability to tell one's story in a key element in the youth transformation.

**3E (D:5:21:20)**

In that parental disappointment appears to be a motivator towards change for the youth, should there be an increased amount of parent youth engagement beyond the NAB session?

**3F (D:5:21:20)**

It appears that the youth views the NAB as a better alternative than the criminal justice system but still describes it as "hard".

**3G (D:5:21:20)**

It appears that making independent decisions vs being influenced by peers or friends is a valuable skill derived from the NAB process.

**3H (D:5:221:20)**

Are there valuable life taught or transferred during the NAB that are not taught in school?

**3I (D:5:21:20)**

It appears that parent reached a point where they felt police needed to be involved; i.e. disrespectful behavior towards mom (youth was shocked by reality of police involvement)

**D:6.15.2020 YP 10**

It appears that the NAB apology creates opportunity for genuine remorse for behavior and redemptive rebuilding of relationship with mother.

**L:6.26.2020 YP 11**

It appears that NAB apology had life changing effect on youth as he describes it as "an initial turning point" in relationship with mom and start to behavior change.

#### **Youth participation / intergenerational identification**

**2F (D:5:21:20) YP 2**

It appears that the number of adult comm volunteers in the room may be intimidating to the youth participant.

**2G (L:11:11:20) YP 2**

The youth described the initial reaction to the engagement as feeling "ambushed", which may give further credence to the notion of perceived adult intimidation by the youth.

#### **Youth Participant 4**

**2G (L:11:11:20) pg 6 YP 2**

It would appear that the youth is lead to do reflective and critical thinking during the NAB as indicated by the statement "I shouldn't have been ther in the first place."

Term "1,000 people" and "ambushed" used again i.e. intimidation.

3J (L:11:11:20) pg 10

It appears that the youth benefit greatly by the accountability demanded by the program but also by its flexibility suggested in the youth's comment: "They worked with me"

D:5.22.20 YP 4

It appears that youth participation in the community boards creates comfort and identification for youth participants

The caution and warnings from the youth board members appear to have a greater impact than the adults (Intergenerational learning)

3K (L:11:11:20)

It would appear that the engagement process had a profound impact on the youth as demonstrated by the youth's deliberate, thoughtful and calm manner in choosing the right words to describe the youth's experience.

3L (L:11:11:20)

Is the description of the program as "hard" indicate that it si not a "slap on the wrist" as described by opponents of NAB (restorative justice)

D:5.22.20 YP 4

It appreas that youth who sit on the board that share similar experiences are effective in promoting transformation of the youth offenders

D:5.22.20

It appears that the difficult of the worked assigned as a part of the sanction is a deterrent to repeat offense

D:5.22.20

L:11.11.20 YP 4

It appears that youth participation in the community boards creates comfort and identification for youth participants

The caution and warnings from the youth board members appear to have a greater impact than the adults (Intergenerational learning)

D:5.22.20

The NAB process appears to have application across a broad and varied set of offenses (drug offense)

D:5.22.20

It appears that youth have observed the connection in community and school cooperation in reducing the school to prison pipeline

L:11.11.20

The word "cool" by the Youth participant appears to indicate an appreciation and respect for the authenticity of the adult board members

D:5.22.20

It appears that youth who sit on the board that share similar experiences are effective in promoting transformation of the youth offenders

D:5.22.20

It appears that a key to success in the NAB process is to involve diverse age groups for connectivity and identification

D:5.22.20 YP 5

It appears this youth views the telling of their story as a key to transformation (pg 20)

L:11.11.20 YP 6

It appears that the lack of diversity of the board makeup was an initial concern for the youth offender suggested by the use of the words, "same color as me", "made me scared", and "because of the color of my skin". (Diversity a key issue with this interview)

D:5.25.20 YP 6

It appears that the youth perceived race would be a factor in this process and she would be treated differently based on the reference "her color".

D:5.25.20 YP 6

Again the use of the word "cool" appears to suggest an appreciation of the adult board members being authentic and not appear conversant of understanding of youth culture

**D:5.22.20**

It appears that authenticity, intellect and caring nature of the adult board members is an important component in fostering change in youth behavior

**D:5.22.20**

It appears that community responsibility is possibly a learned virtue or commodity transferred through the youth adult engagement

**D:5.22.20**

It appears that this youth also felt some sense of transformation or change as a result of the open NAB apology to parents

**D:5.22.20**

It appears that the open NAB apology process created or opened the channels for dialogue and communication between this parent and youth offender

It appears that the youth perceived race would be a factor in this process and she would be treated differently based on the reference she felt "everyone was against me". (Diversity should be the focus of this THEME)

**D:5.25.2020 YP 8**

It appears that stories told by other youths would be beneficial in offending youth seeing value of program and changing behavior

**D:6.4.2020 YP 9**

It appears that generational identification is seen as a potential useful tool for shaping and changing youth behavior (youth telling their stories)

**D:6.15.2020 YP 10**

It appears that youth participation as community volunteers facilitated youth offender increased participation, listening and identity with personal stories of youth.

**L:6.26.2020 YP 12**

It appears that Intergenerational identification is seen as effective in helping youth connect with other youth and discover the errors of their ways (other youths should be on the board) pg 51

**NAB Applicable to Variety of Offenses**

**Youth Participant 5**



L:11.11.20

It appears that a key to success in the NAB process is to involve diverse age groups for connectivity and identification

2C (D:5.21:20) YP 2

The drug offense which the youth was charged with appears to demonstrate the universal application of the NAB process in a variety of offenses.

D:5.22.20

Is there a connection between the open NAB apology and the improved relationship between parents and youth offender

3A (D:5.21:20) YP 3

it would appear that the inclusion of petty theft committed by the youth suggest that the NAB has universal application to a variety of offenses.

D:5.22.20

The NAB process appears to have application across a broad and varied set of offenses (Battery offense)

D:5.22.20 YP 4

The NAB process appears to have application across a broad and varied set of offenses (drug offense)

L:11.11.20

Is there any connection between engagement with the community board at an early age (7th grade) and the effectiveness of preventing recidivism (18 yrs) see pg 19

D:5.22.20 YP 5

The NAB process appears to have application across a broad and varied set of offenses (Battery offense)

L:11.11.20

Is there a connection between the success experienced by the youth in the NAB program and his or her excitement about the future and endorsement of the program

D:5.25.2020 YP 8

It appears that the NAB process is effective for a varied number of offense (petty Theft)

L:11.11.20

Is there any relevance when a youth speaks of themselves in 3rd person?

D:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appears that NAB has application for a broad range of offenses i.e. trespassing was charge.



**D:5.22.20**

Should the community members promote self-diagnosis and proposed remedies offered by youth participants and if so, what best-practices strategies should be employed?

**D:5.22.20**

It appears this youth views the telling of their story as a key to transformation (pg 20)

**D:5.22.20**

It appears that the open NAB apology effects the youth participant in a number of ways

**D:5.22.20**

It appears that performing the sanctions required by the NAB program helps the youth see the broader implication of how their offense effects society/school

**D:5.22.20**

It is possible that providing youth a greater opportunity to express their perception of life gives the community volunteer more information upon which to base recommendations/ sanctions/ help

**D:5.22.20**

**D:6.26.2020 YP 12**

It appears that NAB has application for a broad range of offenses i.e. battery of sibling.

### **Personal Engagement with Community Volunteers**

#### **Youth Participant 6**

**1C (L:9:24:20) YP 1**

Youth used words "Vibes" and "I felt them" which suggest that the approach of the community volunteers and chemistry felt by the youth facilitates more productive engagement

**1D (D:5:20:20) YP 1**

It would appear that this youth gained an enhanced understanding of the importance of deliberation in the decision making process from the engagement with the community volunteers

**1E (5:20:20) Also noted in 1A YP 1**

Is it important for the youth to feel a sense of "caring" on the part of the community volunteer as an element of constructive engagement?

**1G (L:9:24:20) YP 1**

It appears that the more specific the program sanctions are to the youth's offense or needs, the more effective the overall program is in changing behavior

D:5:22.20

Is there a connection between the personal stories of the comm volunteers and the development of empathy in the youth participants? Empathy is a key theme in restorative justice (may need to bracket here)

D:5:23.20

Researcher should bracket feelings and perceptions for this youth participant because several words/phrases used by youth engendered thoughts of racial undertones between the youth and community volunteers

L:1.1.11.20

Is the use of the words "initially uncomfortable with the process" concealing racial undertones

L:1.1.11.20

Does the youth participant description of engagement with the comm volunteers by saying "they had an attitude with me" suggest an initial reluctance to participate because of the racial make up of the board?

D:5:25.20

It appears that the concept of "caring" is an important element of the success of the process as seen in the youth suggesting they were not "just a name on a piece of paper".

1H (5:20:20) YP 1

It appears that the body language of the comm volunteers impacts the effectiveness of the engagement with youth.

1I (D:5:20:20) YP 1

00

It appears that the stories of personal experiences of the comm volunteers creates potential for interrelated connectivity with the youth.

2A (D:5:21:20) YP 2

It appears that the interpersonal change and growth of the youth in the program overcomes their initial reluctance or hesitance.

2D (D:5:21:20) YP 2

it appears that a genuine sense of "caring" on the part of the comm volunteer is valued by the youth in their engagement

3C (D:5:21:20) YP 3

It appears that the youth's preconceived notion about the intent or feelings of the board was an initial hindrance to the timely completion of the sanction of the board

L:11.11.20

it appears that the youth overcame initial reservations and came to appreciate the worth of the program demonstrated by words used i.e. "life saver" and "second chance".

L:11.11.20

It appears that the use of the words "you all" suggest some racial undertones or initial tension at the beginning of the program.

L:11.11.20

It appears the youth felt prejudged by the board members based on the use of the words, "don't judge a book by its cover". (Bracket understanding here as racial in nature as perceived by the researcher)

L:11.11.20

It appears that the lack of diversity of the board makeup was an initial concern for the youth offender suggested by the use of the words, "same color as me", "made me scared", and "because of the color of my skin". (Diversity a key issue with this interview)

D:5.25.20

Is it possible that the youth offenders develop an appreciation for being held accountable?

3I (D:5.21:20) YP 3

It would appear that the youth is lead to do reflective and critical thinking during the NAB as indicated by the statement "I shouldn't have been there in the first place."

3J (L:11.11:20) pg 10 YP 3

It appears that the youth benefit greatly by the accountability demanded by the program but also by its flexibility suggested in the youth's comment: "They worked with me"

L:11.11.20 YP 4

The word "cool" by the Youth participant appears to indicate an appreciation and respect for the authenticity of the adult board members

D:5.22.20 YP 4

Again the use of the word "cool" appears to suggest an appreciation of the adult board members being authentic and not appear conversant of understanding of youth culture

D:5.22.20 YP 4



It appears that the increase in familiarity between the youth offender and comm volunteers reduces the barriers of resistance to the program purpose and intent (Possible integration for videos, tools, pre-session prep for youth and board members)

D:5.25.20

It appears that the youth perceived race would be a factor in this process and she would be treated differently based on the reference "her color".

D:5.25.20

It appears that the youth perceived race would be a factor in this process and she would be treated differently based on the reference she felt "everyone was against me". (Diversity should be the focus of this THEME)

D:5.25.20

Do the preconceived notions about the purpose and intent of the NAB process and board members prohibit of promote the effectiveness of dialogue and youth success

D:5.25.20

It appears that the more information the community volunteers have prior to the initial engagement with the youth offender, the greater potential for success. (pg 29)

It appears that authenticity, intellect and caring nature of the adult board members is an important component in fostering change in youth behavior

D:5.22.20 YP 4

It appears that community responsibility is possibly a learned virtue or commodity transferred through the youth adult engagement

D:5.22.20 YP 5

Should the community members promote self-diagnosis and proposed remedies offered by youth participants and if so, what best-practices strategies should be employed?

D:5.22.20 YP 5

Is there a connection between the personal stories of the comm volunteers and the development of empathy in the youth participants? Empathy is a key theme in restorative justice (may need to bracket here)

L:11.11.20 YP 6

Does the youth participant description of engagement with the comm volunteers by saying "they had an attitude with me" suggest an initial reluctance to participate because of the racial make up of the board?

D:5.25.2020

It appears that the youth participant made a connection between the second chance given through the NAB and her future role in the community.

D:5.25.2020

It appears that the youth participant notes value of the program in improving analytical skills and evaluating actions and consequences.

D:5.25.2020

It appears that a strong motivator for change is the embarrassment felt by youth offenders when confronted with behavior.

D:5.25.2020

It appears that follow up by the NAB counselors is an important factor for the youth participants continued success.

D:5.25.2020

It appears that the diversity and expertise of the community volunteers was a determinant factor in youth participant's overall success

D:5.25.2020

D:5.25.20 YP 6

It appears that the youth's preconceived notion about the intent or feelings of the board was an initial hindrance to the timely completion of the sanction of the board

L:11.11.20 YP 6

It appears the youth felt prejudged by the board members based on the use of the words, "don't judge a book by its cover". (Bracket understanding here as racial in nature as perceived by the researcher)

D:5.25.20 YP 6

Do the preconceived notions about the purpose and intent of the NAB process and board members prohibit of promote the effectiveness of dialogue and youth success

D:5.25.2020 YP 7 FOLLOW UP

It appears that follow up by the NAB counselors is an important factor for the youth participants continued success.

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

It appears that the diversity and expertise of the community volunteers was a determinant factor in youth participant's overall success

D:5.25.2020 YP 7 FOLLOW UP

#### Youth Participant 8

It appears that NAB program instills sense of responsibility youth participant have for providing leadership to future generations.

D:5.25.2020

Continuation of previous concept: It appears that this youth is providing mentorship to other young women (this YP violation was sexual in nature and she indicated that aspiring to greater sense of morality as a young woman was her goal)

D:5.25.2020

It appears that this youth experienced Redemptive Shaming in the open NAB apology which help to repair relationship with parents.

D:5.25.2020

It appears that post follow up by NAB counselors is a critical key to continued success and reengagement into the community.

D:5.25.2020

It appears the youth participant realized the value of avoiding a criminal record and entering the criminal justice system as value of the program

D:5.25.2020

It appears that the NAB process is effective for a varied number of offense (petty Theft)

It appears that post follow up by NAB counselors is a critical key to continued success and reengagement into the community.

D:6.4.2020 YP 9

It appears that youth participants comfort and cooperation with program are facilitate by the engaging nature of the community volunteers.

D:6.4.2020 YP 9

It appears that community volunteers are viewed as mentors and maturity, personal experiences help motivate change

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears that discussions with comm volunteers was useful in identifying anger issues which NAB made recommendations for treatment/ counseling

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears the youth's ability to do reflective thinking and decision making skills were improved by engagement with comm volunteers.

L:11.11.2020 YP 10

It appears that the youth participants view the comm volunteers in a similar manner as parents



D:5.25.2020

It appeared that youth participant was unable to clearly articulate thoughts but was passionately attempting to express positive thoughts on program by repeating "stuff like that" or "like, like" as fill in words to help complete thoughts.

D:5.25.2020

It appears that the pain felt by parents / grandparents is a motivating factor in youth change (scared with grandma in the room, pg 37)

D:5.25.2020

It appears that stories told by other youths would be beneficial in offending youth seeing value of program and changing behavior

D:5.25.2020

It appears that "going to jail" is a pervasive thought during the NAB process and avoidance of criminal justice system is preventive measure for behavioral change.

#### Youth Participant 9

D:6.4.2020

It appears that youth participants comfort and cooperation with program are facilitate by the engaging nature of the community volunteers.

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears that approach of comm volunteers created atmosphere of comfort and trust

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears that the engagement with comm volunteers help to reinforce the teaching of parents as a consistent and valued lesson.

D:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appears that appearances that resemble court or justice system proceedings may be counter-productive; NAB should explicitly emphasize the non-punitive purpose of NAB process.

D:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appears that upfront confrontation of aberrant behavior by comm volunteers is effective in changing behavior ("Youth was sangered by it but "knew they were right")

D:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appears that the NAB engagement with comm volunteers cemented / gave extra confirmation of mom's cautions concerning the possibility of jail if behavior did not change.

L:6.26.2020 YP 12

It appears that the interpersonal approach of comm volunteers has positive effect on youth as he described it as "very hands on".

L:6.26.2020 YP 12

It appears that a deliberate and non-rushed approach by comm volunteers is viewed as "Caring" and and "Investment" by the youth offender, i.e. "they were willing to take time out of their day."

### Importance of Diversity

L:11.11.20 YP 6

It appears that the lack of diversity of the board makeup was an initial concern for the youth offender suggested by the use of the words, "same color as me", "made me scared", and "because of the color of my skin". (Diversity a key issue with this interview)

D:5.25.20 YP 6

It appears that the youth perceived race would be a factor in this process and she would be treated differently based on the reference "her color".

D:5.25.20 YP 6

D:6.4.2020

It appears that community volunteers are viewed as mentors and maturity, personal experiences help motivate change

L:6.4.2020

It appears that the open NAB apology had a positive impact on youth/ parent relationship as described by youth as a "weight off my shoulders", helped repair relational breach of damage.

D:6.4.2020

It appears to be an effective collaboration between school and community for schools to refer to NAB.

D:6.4.2020

It appears that the concept of the NAB helps avoid charges as an adult and engagement with the criminal justice system is impactful on behavior change.

D:6.4.2020



It appears that the youth perceived race would be a factor in this process and she would be treated differently based on the reference she felt "everyone was against me". (Diversity should be the focus of this THEME)

### Meaningful Sanctions Key To Behavior Change

1A (D:5:20:20) YP 1

It appears that this youth feels that familiarity with their life experiences, history and perspective on the incident is essential in developing meaningful sanctions

1B (D:5:20:20) YP 1

It appears that this supports 1A on meaningful sanctions

1F (L:9:24:20) YP 3

It appears the youth perceived all components of the NAB process as essential requirements by virtue of the emphatic use of the word "ALL" in describing the inconvenience of the work as having redemptive value.

It appears that the inconvenience of the NAB requirements serves as preventative for recidivism and positive behavior change.

L:6.4.2020

It appears NAB apology process broke tension of repaired break in relationship between father/ son as described by term "weight off my shoulder".

D:6.4.2020

It appears that independent decision making and choosing friends wisely are critical lessons derived from NAB process.

D:6.4.2020

It appears that the transference of knowledge is a key component of the NAB process (NAB apology opened door for father to revisit old teaching on decision making.

D:6.4.2020

It appears that generational identification is seen as a potential useful tool for shaping and changing youth behavior (youth telling their stories)

D:6.15.2020

Youth Participant 10

3L (L:11:11:20) YP 4

It appears that discussions with comm volunteers was useful in identifying anger issues which NAB made recommendations for treatment/ counseling

D:6.15.2020

It appears the youth's ability to do reflective thinking and decision making skills were improved by engagement with comm volunteers.

D:6.15.2020

It appears that community service engenders the value of giving back and contributing to the community as opposed to being negative influence.

D:6.15.2020/ L:11.11.2020

It appears that youth learned anger management techniques and strategies through NAB process ("just count to 10, coping skill discovered)

L:11.11.2020

It appears that the youth participants view the comm volunteers in a similar manner as parents

D:6.15.2020

Is the description of the program as "hard" indicate that it is not a "slap on the wrist" as described by opponents of NAB (restorative justice)

D:5.22.20 YP 5

It appears that the difficult of the worked assigned as a part of the sanction is a deterrent to repeat offense

L:11.11.20 YP 5

It there a connection between the success experienced by the youth in the NAB program and his or her excitement about the future and endorsement of the program

D:5.22.20 YP 5

It appears that performing the sanctions required by the NAB program helps the youth see the broader implication of how their offense effects society/ school

D:5.22.20 YP 7

It appears that the more specific the program sanctions are to the youth's offense or needs, the more effective the overall program is in changing behavior

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

It appears that parent reached a point where they felt police needed to be involved; i.e. disrespectful behavior towards mom (youth was shocked by reality of police involvement)

D:6.15.2020

It appears that approach of comm volunteers created atmosphere of comfort and trust

D:6.15.2020

It appears that youth participation as comm volunteers facilitated youth offender increased participation, listening and identify with personal stories of youth.

D:6.15.2020

It appears that the engagement with comm volunteers help to reinforce the teaching of parents as a consisten and valued lesson.

D:6.15.2020

It appears that the NAB apology creates opportunity for genuine remorse for behavior and redemptive rebuilding of relationship with mother.

D:6.15.2020

It appears that the time requirements of the NAB program and impengement on time has curative and preventative value.

It appears that the youth participant notes value of the program in improving analytical skills and evaluating actions and consequences.

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

It appears that NAB program instills sense of responsibility youth participant have for providing leadership to future generations.

D:5.25.2020 YP 9

Continuation of previous concept: It appears that this youth is providing mentorship to other young women (this YP violation was sexual in nature and she indicated that aspiring to greater sense of morality as a young woman was her goal)

D:6.4.2020 YP 10

It appears that the inconvenience of the NAB requirements serves as preventative for recidivism and positive behavior change.

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears that community service engenders the value of giving back and contributing to the community as opposed to being negative influence.

Youth Participant 11



D:6.15.2020

It appears that On-line anger management programs are beneficial for addressing issues and changing behavior.

D:6.26.2020

It appears that economic benefits that may result from success in program may be driving factor in behavior change and recidivism prevention

L:6.26.2020

It appeared the youth was proud of personal changes and of growth; allowed interview to be conducted at work and boasted about the new job as positive outcome (beep, beep, beep continuously going off in background)

L:6.26.2020

It appeared evident by youth's use of phrase "for real, for real" that there was a sense of pride in accomplishments and personal life changes

D:6.26.2020

It appears that independent thinking and decision making is a critical factor in preventing recidivism or continued negative behavior.

D:6.26.2020

D:6.15.2020/ L:1.1.1.2020 YP 10

It appears that youth learned anger management techniques and strategies through NAB process ("just count to 10, coping skill discovered)

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears that the time requirements of the NAB program and impingement on time has curative and preventative value.

D:6.15.2020 YP 10

It appears that On-line anger management programs are beneficial for addressing issues and changing behavior

### Importance of Telling Your Story

3D (D:5:21:20) YP 3

It appears tat NAB has application for a broad range of offenses i.e. trespassion was charge.

It appears that the abulity to tell one's story in a key element in the youth transformation.

D:6.26.2020

It would appear that youth offender valued community he lived in although he saw it as a negative influence with descturctive things occurring.

L:6.26.2020

It appears that younth's behavior had a dramatic change for the better illustrated by the youth's out loud laughter when asked about how much he had changed.

D:6.26.2020

It appears that appearances that resembly court or justice system proceedings may be counter-productive; NAB should explicitly emphasize the non-punitive purpose of NAB process.

D:6.26.2020

It appears that upfront confrontation of abberant behavior by comm volunteers is effective in changing behavior (Youth wa sangered by it but "knew they were right" )

L:6.26.2020

3K (L:11:11:20) YP 3

It would appear that the engagement process had a profound impact on the youth as demonstrated by the youth's deliberate, thoughtful and calm manner in choosing the right words to describe the youth's experience.

L:11.11.20 YP 5

Youth Participant 12

Is there any relevance when a youth speaks of themselves in 3rd person?

D:5.25.2020 YP 8

It appeared that youth participant was unable to clearly articulate thoughts but was passionately attempting to express positive thoughts on program by repeating "stuff like that" or "like, like" as fill in words to help complete thoughts.

Avoidance of Criminal Justice System or 2nd Chance

2B (D:5:21:20) YP 2

It appears that NAB apology had life changing effect on youth as he describes it as "an initial turning point" in relationship with mom and start to behavior change.

It appears that this youth values the primary goal of the program which is to prevent the youth from having a criminal record.

D:6.26.2020

It appears that the NAB engagement with comm volunteers cemented / gave extra confirmation of mom's cautions concerning the possibility of jail if behavior did not change.

3B (D:5:21:20) YP 3

It would appear that the program instills in the youth the appreciation of avoiding a criminal record and having a "Second chance".

D:6.26.2020

It appears the comm volunteer engagement help form a clear benefit of the NAB diversion versus the criminal justice system.

3F (D:5:21:20) YP 3

It appears that the youth views the NAB as a better alternative than the criminal justice system but still describes it as "hard".

D:6.26.2020

it appears the youth has concluded that the benefit of a second chance comes with the responsibility of redemptive change or community contribution.

D:5.22.20 YP 4

It appears that youth have observed the connection in community and school cooperation in reducing the school to prison pipeline

D:6.26.2020

It appears tat NAB has application for a broad range of offenses i.e. battery of sibling.

L:6.26.2020

It appears that the interpersonal approach of comm volunteers has positive effect on youth as he described it as "very hands on":

L:11.11.20 YP 6

it appears that the youth overcame initial reservations and came to appreciate the worth of the program demonstrated by words used i.e. "life saver" and "second chance".

L:6.26.2020

It appears that Intergenerational identification is seen as effective in helping youth connect with other youth and discover the errors of their ways (other youths should be on the board) pg 51

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

It appears that the youth participant made a connection between the second chance given through the NAB and her future role in the community.

D:5.25.2020 YP 8

It appears the youth participant realized the value of avoiding a criminal record and entering the criminal justice system as value of the program

D:5.25.2020 YP 8

It appears that "going to jail" is a pervasive thought during the NAB process and avoidance of criminal justice system is preventive measure for behavioral change.

D:6.4.2020 YP 9

It appears to be an effective collaboration between school and community for schools to refer to NAB.

D:6.4.2020 YP 9

It appears that the concept of the NAB helps avoid charges as an adult and engagement with the criminal justice system is impactful on behavior change.

L:6.26.2020

It appears that a deliberate and non-rushed approach by comm volunteers is viewed as "Caring" and and "investment" by the youth offender; i.e. "they were willing to take time out of their day.



D:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appears that economic benefits that may result from success in program may be driving factor in behavior change and recidivism prevention

L:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appeared the youth was proud of personal changes and of growth; allowed interview to be conducted at work and boasted about the new job as positive outcome (beep, beep, beep continuously going off in background)

D:6.26.2020 YP 12

It appears the comm volunteer engagement help form a clear benefit of the NAB diversion versus the criminal justice system.

D:6.26.2020 YP 12

it appears the youth has concluded that the benefit of a second chance comes with the responsibility of redemptive change or community contribution.

### Independent Thinking/ Decision Making

3G (D:5:21:20) YP 3

It appears that making independent decisions vs being influenced by peers or friends is a valuable skill derived from the NAB process.

L:11.11.20 YP 5

Is there any connection between engagement with the community board at an early age (7th grade) and the effectiveness of preventing recidivism (18 yrs) see pg 19

D:5.25.2020 YP 7

It appears that the youth participant notes value of the program in improving analytical skills and evaluating actions and consequences.

D:6.4.2020 YP 9

it appears that independent decision making and choosing friends wisely are critical lessons derived from NAB process.

D:6.26.2020 YP 11

It appears that independent thinking and decision making is a critical factor in preventing recidivism or continued negative behavior.