

Get Out and Stay Out: Evaluating the Effectiveness of *Making Things Right*

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## Introduction

Nearly 55,000 youth were detained nationwide in residential placements in 2013 (National Center for Juvenile Justice 2015). While these youths are held in a residential placement, such as a detention facility, group home, or shelter, they are usually separated from their day-to-day life and their community. However, the juvenile justice system is based on the premise that youth have needs and capacities that are different from those of an adult because youth are still developing mentally, physically, and socially (National Center for Juvenile Justice 2015). For my internship, I would like to evaluate a program that is supposed to help keep youth out of detention and offer suggestions for redesigning the program to help it meet its goals. The program works with the premise that since youth are still developing, it is more beneficial for them to remain connected to the community rather than be detained.

The Coconino County Juvenile Court provides services to youth who are on probation or in detention. According to their webpage, the mission of the Coconino County Juvenile Court is to “increase the ability of youth to achieve success, promote citizen safety from juvenile crime, [and to] reduce juvenile delinquency” (Coconino County 2016). In line with this mission, they have created a community service-learning alternative to detention titled *Making Things Right*. Essentially, this means that instead of holding more youth within the detentions facility, the program serves to keep youth out of detention by having them engage in community service. Probation officers and judges can assign youth on probation to the program instead of having them be detained.

According to the rules the youth sign up for this program, *Making Things Right*. The program aims to teach participants about the legal system, help them understand the effects or consequences of their actions, develop problem-solving skills that will help them stay out of

trouble, build a positive support system by working in the community, and give back to their victims and the community through community service. However, currently this program seems to only focus on community service, as their schedule does not have any sort of classroom based learning or programming. I would like to evaluate this program and create additional programming designed to fit the objectives of the program. I would also like to answer the following questions: does the program *Making Things Right* help to keep youth out of detention and teach them these life skills? How can this program be improved to help more youth stay out of detention?

### **Coconino County Juvenile Court Center**

The Coconino County Juvenile Court (CCJCC) views itself as a progressive agency “committed to the belief that each youth grows and learns in a nurturing environment.” Their mission is to increase the ability of youth to achieve success, promote citizen safety from crimes committed by juveniles, and to reduce juvenile delinquency. Their philosophy is to utilize the balanced and restorative justice models to take a cognitive approach to juvenile delinquency. Their response to each juvenile offender is “guided by assessment, community protection considerations, obligations of the juvenile as a result of the offense, and intervention allowing the juvenile to leave the system, less likely to return.”

During my internship with the CCJCC, I will be helping to run the program *Making Things Right* on the weekends for sixteen hours each week. I will also complete other tasks as required to average out to twenty hours per week in order to meet the requirements for six credits of internship hours. If I am able to, I would like to help set up the folder for the program each week. This folder contains the list of youth who are assigned to attend, whether or not staff needs to pick up the youth from their homes, and the addresses of the youth that need to be picked up.

The folder also contains the schedule for the weekend, and I would like to work with the program coordinators to help develop the schedule for the weekends.

## **Literature Review**

### *Juvenile Detention*

Between 2000 and 2009, juvenile arrests dropped 20% nationally whereas adult arrests decreased 1% (Youth Justice 2012). Despite this trend, the amount of juvenile court cases only declined by a small percentage, which means that youth are still entering the system at around the same rate as they were when more youth were being arrested. However, entering the system does not necessarily mean that they will be detained. In 2013, 173 juveniles per 100,000 were in residential placements, whereas 356 juveniles per 100,000 were in residential placements in 1997 (National Center for Juvenile Justice 2015). So despite entering the system at the same rate as previous years, many youth are being diverted from detention. It is unclear as to how exactly they are being diverted, but we do know that fewer youth are being detained now than they were over a decade ago.

Juvenile detention centers are similar to jails in the adult's criminal justice system. These facilities are intended to "temporarily house youth who pose a high risk of re-offending before their trial, or who are deemed likely to not appear for their trial" (Holman & Ziedenberg 2006: 2). However, these facilities are also used to hold youth who have violated the terms of their probation, are waiting for their pre-adjudication or disposition, or are waiting for housing at a different facility, such as a behavioral treatment facility. Youth can spend anywhere from a few days to a few months waiting for their trial or placement (Holman & Ziedenberg 2006). While waiting in detention, youth are separated from their community and family. These facilities are

often overcrowded and understaffed, which leads to an environment that “breeds neglect and violence” (Holman & Ziedenberg 2006: 2).

### *Alternatives to Detention*

Alternatives to detention are approaches or programs that prevent youth from being placed in a detention facility through the use of an appropriate community-based sanction (Development Services Group 2014). These types of programs, first launched in the mid 1990s in response to an increase of adolescents being confined, parallel the increase of adults being incarcerated (Mendel 2007). Alternative programs are designed to alleviate the burden on the detention facilities and reduce unnecessary confinement of youth. Detention facilities are packed with youth who do not meet any high-risk criteria: about 70% are detained for nonviolent charges (Holman & Ziedenberg 2006).

In many jurisdictions, judges and probation officers have “only one of two options when faced with a youth who has been arrested and charged with an offense: they can either release the youth to his or her parents or another responsible adult or lock up the youth in a secure detention facility” (DeMuro 1999:10). However, high-quality community-based programs yield better results than out-of-home placements, such as detention facilities, for a fraction of the cost (Mendel 2007; Teitelman & Linhares 2013). Community-based programs, including diversion programs, have been shown to help youth stay out of trouble and to not re-offend (National Center for Juvenile Justice 2015). As such, it is important to provide alternatives to detention to communities, as their youth will experience more success in these programs.

While the program Making Things Right does not identify itself as a diversion program, it does share many of the same characteristics as one. Youth are to accept accountability for their actions and agree to participate in programming, which is also true of youth who are signed up

for a diversion process (Wilson & Hoge 2013). *Making Things Right* identifies itself as an alternative to detention rather than a diversion, but there is still an attempt to divert youth from further contact with detention facilities.

### *Outcomes for Youth*

Additionally, many youths do worse after being in detention than those who are never placed in detention. Detained or incarcerated youth are more likely to use alcohol and drugs after getting out, and they are more likely to drop out of high school than youth who are similarly situated and have never been detained or incarcerated (The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2015). Being detained also has a negative impact on the youth's psychological and social development (Mendel 2007) and also can lead to depression or other negative self-perceptions (Development Services Group 2014; Mendel 2007).

According to Mendel, “without enough freedom to exercise autonomy, the gradual process of maturation – the opportunities to learn self-direction, social perspective, and responsibility – is effectively cut off” (2007: 42). Without this ability to learn responsibility and to be able to mature, youth will be unable to leave the system successfully. When these youths are released, they tend to return because they have not been taught better ways to engage with the world. If the goal of juvenile justice is to rehabilitate the adolescents that enter the system, it is important that juvenile justice courts and probation offices understand what makes an alternative program effective so that youth do not keep coming back into detention with new charges or offenses.

### *Social Control Theory*

Currently, the program *Making Things Right* is attempting to utilize social control theory in hopes of keeping youth from reoffending. Social control theory “focuses on social forces

restraining individuals from committing criminal or deviant acts” (Costello et al. 2006: 36).

Essentially, the stronger an individual’s bond is to society, the less likely they are to deviate from the norms or engage in criminal behavior. This bond has four components: attachment to others, commitment to long-term goals, involvement in conventional activities, and belief in the moral validity of the law (Costello et al. 2006; 36).

Attachment to others is thought to keep people from breaking the law because those with strong attachments to parents or friends are likely to consider how their parents and friends would react if they were to break the law (Costello et al. 2006; Matsueda & Heimer 1987). Since “a single moral order exists, that reaction will always be negative” (Matsueda & Heimer 1987: 828). Therefore, individuals with strong attachments to others will most likely refrain from committing unlawful acts because they do not want to elicit a negative reaction from those they are attached to. If youth do not have strong attachments to individuals who would negatively view their deviant behavior, they are more likely to continue to engage in that behavior. Therefore, the program should focus on helping youth build connections with community members that will encourage them to obey the law.

Commitment to long-term goals helps to prevent unlawful behaviors because those behaviors may jeopardize an individual’s ability to attain their goal (Costello et al. 2006). Long-term goals typically refer to educational or occupational pursuits. The greater the investment an individual has to these goals, the less likely they are to commit deviant or unlawful behaviors that may prevent them from achieving these goals (Costello et al. 2006; Matsueda & Heimer 1987). In order to develop this commitment, the program should help youth identify their passions and goals for the future and allow for discussion of how to reach these goals and what might set them back.

Involvement in conventional activities reduces the likelihood of individuals committing deviant behaviors because they have less time to get involved in those activities (Costello et al. 2006; Matsueda & Heimer 1987). Keeping individuals busy with positive and legal activities helps to ensure they do not keep committing the same unlawful behavior. However, if individuals skip out on these activities or otherwise do not participate it is difficult to keep them from engaging in deviant or unlawful acts. The program itself will keep youth busy for roughly twelve hours over their weekends, but it should also help them find activities to keep themselves busy with during weekdays.

The final aspect is belief in the moral validity of the law. This refers to the extent that individuals believe the law should be obeyed (Costello et al. 2006). The more they believe that the law should be obeyed, or that a particular law should be obeyed, the less likely they are to deviate from that law. Educating the youth to understand the laws and why these laws are in place may help them to believe they should be obeyed. However, this belief cannot be forced upon someone.

If youth feel attached to others in their community, focus on attaining a long-term goal such as getting their degree or attaining and keeping a job, thereby keeping themselves busy in a conventional activity, they will be less likely to reoffend. This basis will be used as a reference for how the program should tie the youth to their community, as well as what topics the program should focus on to help youth be successful and stay out of detention. This theory will also inform the questions the youth are asked by their probation officer after they participate by asking about youth's activities outside of probation. Are they utilizing resources in the community to keep themselves busy? Are they actively working towards a long-term goal? If



they are, is this helping them to stay out of trouble and make positive choices, or are they still reoffending?

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Symbolic interactionism “emphasize[s] the actor’s role in defining and interpreting situations” (Birkbeck & LaFree 1993: 113). In other words, these situations are given meaning through the subjective experiences of the individual. For example, we learn to associate a green light with ‘go’ based on our interactions with others and how other people behave. For criminal or deviant behavior, individuals may interpret the act as cool or desirable based on the people they interact with, and thus commit these behaviors despite society labeling them as illegal or deviant.

The term “situation” generally refers to the immediate setting in which the behavior occurs (Birkbeck & LaFree 1993). For example, someone sitting in their office alone is one situation, but when the phone rings and the individual answers the phone, that is a new situation. Situations can last for a few moments or for several hours (Birkbeck & LaFree 1993). For criminal or deviant acts, the setting could change from the youth being at a park to the youth buying marijuana or other drugs.

In looking to understand crime and deviance, symbolic interactionism focuses attention on the meaning of the situation for the individual by “linking offender motivation and situational opportunities, and by conceptualizing crime and deviance as situationally precarious outcomes” (Birkbeck & LaFree 1993: 120). People give meaning to situations and experiences through role-taking or viewing situations from the perspectives of others (Heimer 1996). In delinquent situations, youth anticipate the likely reactions from their parents and peers to delinquency as

well as their own attitudes about the rules and laws (Heimer 1996). In this way, social control ties into the symbolic interactionist frame.

Charles Horton Cooley adds to the symbolic interactionist frame through his development of the looking glass self. The looking glass self is the idea that we evaluate and judge ourselves as we believe others evaluate and judge us (Cook & Douglas 1998; Nurra & Pansu 2009; Winterer 1994). Three groups of people affect youth the most: parents, teachers, and peers (Nurra & Pansu 2009; Cook & Douglas 1998). Therefore, if youth believe their parents or teachers evaluate them negatively, as delinquents, they will see themselves as delinquents and continue to act in that manner.

Youth who are committed to delinquent peer groups are also less likely to expect that their peers would disapprove of delinquency and are more likely to have acquired attitudes favoring delinquency (Heimer 1996). Therefore, these youths are more likely than other youth to break the law, just as control theory states. Symbolic interactionists focus on the subjective beliefs and experiences of youth as they relate to their delinquent behavior. For their subjective beliefs to change and for youth to align themselves with legal and non-deviant behaviors they need to associate with those who do not approve of deviant behaviors (Heimer 1996). Not only do they need to associate with them, but they need to be committed to those groups and to be attached to those individuals.

From examining the values from social control theory and symbolic interactionism, the program should encourage youth to identify positive peers and adults in their community that share their interests and provide transportation to facilities and activities that promote positive alternative behaviors. If they can find common ground, they are much more likely to stay committed to this positive support system and are less likely to engage in deviant behaviors.

After participating in the program and these activities, are they continuing to engage in these activities? Or are they returning to their old peer groups and activities once they are finished with the program? If they do continue to attend or participate in positive activities in community locations, are they not reoffending?

### **Internship Goals and Methodology**

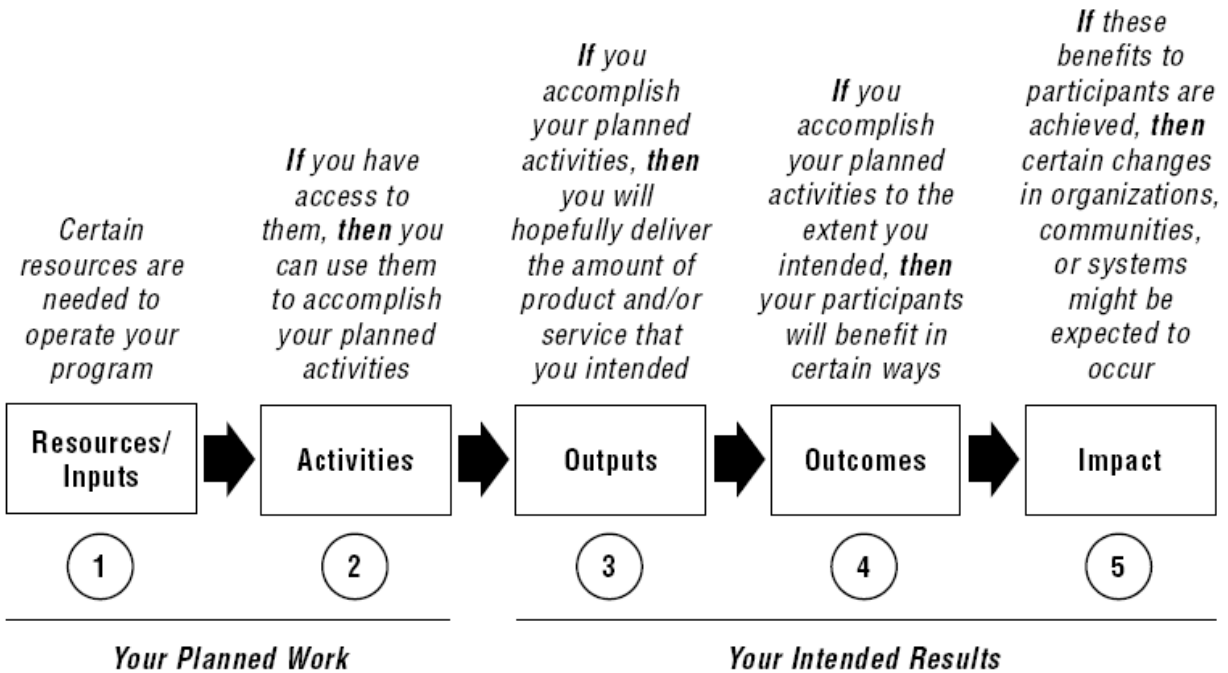
I would like to conduct a program evaluation of the detention alternative *Making Things Right*. This program is an alternative to detention, meaning that youth are assigned to this program rather than being held in the detention facility. If youth do not do well during the program, that may cause them to be held in detention over weekends, or for a certain amount of time as determined by the judge. This program is typically run by one to two staff members on Saturdays and Sundays and is organized by an individual within the Intensive Skill Development (ISD) unit.

Youth are assigned to participate in this program through the judges of the juvenile court or through their probation officer. Currently, the program picks up youth in the morning, takes them to cross-fit for one hour, serves them lunch, and then has them volunteer at a predetermined location by the overall supervisors of the program. This current structure is not in line with the goals of the program, which aims to teach youth about the legal system and to teach them or help them further develop the five life skills taught through probation and detention

In order to collect the data I need to evaluate the program, I will utilize semi-structured interviews of the probation officers, judges, and program coordinators, and create a classroom-based programming schedule. I will also fill out a logic model for the program while I conduct my informal content analysis. A logic model is a visual tool that helps evaluators assess the

inputs, activities, outputs, and impacts of a program. Figure 1 shows a template for a logic model.

Figure 1



*Logic Model*

For program evaluation, a logic model is helpful to grasp the components of the program. The logic model will help me identify the activities and processes of the program to the short-term and long-term outcomes of the program. I plan to fill one out in the very beginning of the project, verifying the information with the program coordinators and with the director of the Coconino County Juvenile Court. If they do not agree with the information in my model, then I will continue to edit it until we reach an agreement. I suspect that as I get closer to the field level, there will be more changes to the logic model to show how the program is actually working versus how it is ideally supposed to work. I will most likely create a second model that mimics the first, but points out where problems or differences are occurring on the field level.

Logic models are often used in program evaluations because they help evaluators to clearly define the processes of a program. A logic model is also beneficial when you do not know all of the aspects of a program, as it helps you to identify where you are lacking knowledge. I hope to utilize this method to inform the focus of my interviews later on. If the logic model cannot be filled out, then I will talk with the program coordinators and reach a consensus of what the processes and goals of the program are supposed to be.

### *Semi-Structured Interviews of Coordinators and Judges*

The first phase of the program evaluation will include conducting semi-structured interviews with the program coordinators, judges, and the director. These interviews will be conducted near or in their offices, to allow them to have some control over the situation and so that they feel comfortable. These interviews will help shape the programming that will be implemented, as the program coordinators and judges both have ideas of how this alternative program should be structured and what youth should be getting out of *Making Things Right*. Judges are one of the two categories of individuals who can assign youth to attend the program, the other being probation officers. The difference with the judges, however, is that when a judge assigns a youth to attend, that youth is court-ordered and the consequences are more immediate if the youth does not attend or fails the program. For this reason, I want to integrate the judges' desires for the program as well. There are two judges for juvenile court and I would like to interview both of them, as they both assign youth to this program.

Interviewing the program coordinators and the director will allow me to understand what they identify as the goals of the program and to have a discussion about their expectations of the program's outcomes. Based on these interviews I will be able to devise measures to look for in the youth's behaviors and attitudes. If the program is effective, then the youth will display or

otherwise demonstrate these outcomes through their behaviors. If the goal of the program is to keep youth out of detention, then I can follow up on the Juvenile Online Tracking System (JOLTS) to see whether or not they stay out of detention for the duration of the program evaluation. Additionally, I can utilize JOLTS to see how youth are behaving, since their probation officer will post updates on their status as they meet with their assigned probationers. As there are only two program coordinators, I also plan on interviewing both of them as well as the director, giving me five interviews to conduct for the first phase.

These interviews will focus on answering the following main questions:

1. In your words, what is the program 'Making Things Right'?
2. What do you want youth to get out of the program?
3. Why assign youth to this particular program instead of a different consequence?
4. What type of activities would you like youth to participate in as part of this program?
5. What are your overall goals for the program?

Conducting interviews provides an opportunity to obtain in-depth information from the participants about their expectations of the program, which is more beneficial than having them answer short survey questions. Since the interviews are semi-structured, this will allow me room to follow tangents or leads I believe are valuable to the evaluation of the program and the creation of new programming for the youth to participate in. This structure will also allow me to ask questions that I did not consider until the interview began. The downside to conducting semi-structured interviews is that they are time consuming, especially in comparison to administering a survey. Additionally, it is possible for the interviewer to affect how participants answer

questions by asking leading questions. However, by keeping questions open-ended I can reduce the risk of leading participants to answer a certain way.

After these four interviews are completed, I will do a brief analysis of the interviews and create a programming schedule that is four-to-six weekends long and show it to the coordinators for their approval before it is implemented. The initial analysis will include coding the rules and guidelines document for the program, as it also states the goals for youth who attend the program. I will also code the Coconino County Juvenile Court mission statement, vision, and philosophy, as well as the interviews with the program coordinators and judges. Coding all of these comprehensively will allow me to understand what the overarching goals are for court programs as well as the principles that inspire these goals. When the five-week programming schedule completes one cycle, I will then interview the probation officers and code their interviews in a similar manner. I will also utilize the program's attendance records and notes to log whether or not youth received credit and how their overall behavior was for the day. I will then look at JOLTS to determine if youth are being detained, if they are committing new offenses, or if they are successfully completing the steps necessary to get off of probation.

In order to code and analyze this data, I will be utilizing a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory “originates from sociology, specifically from symbolic interactionism, which posits that meaning is negotiated and understood through interactions with others in social processes” (Starks & Trinidad 2007: 1374). Grounded theorists aim to construct theory from the data they are working with, often collecting data and analyzing data simultaneously (Starks & Trinidad 2007; Charmaz 1983). To keep the analysis organized and on track, I will be writing memos as I start to analyze my data. Memos are “written elaborations of ideas about the data and the coded categories” (Charmaz 1983: 120). I can also utilize memos to keep track of ideas that I

found interesting during interviews and areas where I could ask more questions to generate more data.

Coding will be an iterative process. As I obtain more interviews, I will be able to further refine my coding scheme, but I want to develop a coding scheme that will apply to all of the written documentation as well. First, I will do an initial coding for the interviews and written documents. During initial coding, “researchers look for what they can define and discover in the data” (Charmaz 1983: 113). Here I will look to see what general ideas and concepts appear within the data before I move on to focused coding. Focused coding allows researchers to look for “leads, ideas, and issues in the data themselves” (Charmaz 1983: 113). Here I will look at specific issues and ideas that are brought up by the interviewees and the documents. I will also be able to organize codes based on similarities and create overarching themes, which may cause me to revise my initial codes and go through the process again.

### *Classroom-Based Program*

Based on the answers that the program coordinators and judges’ give, I will create a cycle of programming that fits the goals of the coordinators and judges. By creating a cycle, this will prevent most youth from becoming bored and detached due to repeating the same programming every time they attend. While most youth are only assigned one or two weekends, some are assigned to attend for a longer period of time, which is why I propose to create a five-week schedule. This programming will reflect the life skills that are taught by both probation and detention, which are Positive Daily Routine (PDR), Staying Out of Trouble (SOT), Planning For the Future (PFF), Making Things Right (MTR), and Positive Support System (PSS). The schedule will also integrate the concepts of social control theory: attachment to others,



commitment to long-term goals, involvement in conventional activities, and belief in the moral validity of the law.

By having youth focus on these five life skills, they will also be focusing on long-term goals and identifying their attachments to the community, which are two of the four parts of social control theory. Additionally, by engaging in community service, they will be participating in a conventional activity, which is a third part of social control theory. It is difficult to teach youth to believe in the moral validity of the law, as that is something they have to internalize on their own. However, this programming can provide the basis for them to explore this concept and decide whether or not they want to believe it themselves. The classroom component will take place at the Coconino County Juvenile Court Center in one of the multi-purpose rooms. The goal is to make the classroom aspect engaging, so youth will be participating in group activities and games that will reflect the five life skills listed above.

#### *Semi-Structured Interviews of Probation Officers*

After the program runs for the length of one cycle of the proposed programming, I will interview three-to-four probation officers. The probation officers of the youth who attended during the test cycle will be the ones selected for interviews. If there are more than four probation officers who have youth who attended the program, I will rank them by how many of their youth attended and interview the top four.

Interviews with the probation officers will also take place near or in their offices to allow them to be comfortable. These interviews will be fairly brief, but their semi-formal structure will allow me to follow up on tangents and leads that come up during the interviews. Additionally, this structure allows for the probation officers to tell stories about their probationers and their

impressions of the behavior of their probationers both before and after they were assigned to the program.

The interviews with the probation officers will focus on the following questions:

1. What are your expectations for youth who attend *Making Things Right*?
2. Do you feel that *Making Things Right* had a positive impact on your probationer?
  - a. If yes, how so? If no, what do we need to change?
3. Is your probationer working towards a long-term goal?
  - a. If yes, what are they working on? Has this goal affected their behavior?  
How so?
  - b. If no, do you think that having a long-term goal would help keep them out of trouble? Why or why not?
4. Is your probationer utilizing any of the resources in the community to keep themselves busy?
  - a. If yes, what resources are they using? How much time do they spend there? Do you think this activity is beneficial for them? Why or why not?
  - b. If no, do you think participating in activities in the community would be helpful for them? Why or why not?
4. Is there anything you would like us to change about the program?
  - a. If yes, can you please explain? If no, can you discuss what you think is effective about the program currently?
5. Did your youth reoffend between attending the program and now?
  - a. If yes, were they detained? (How long?)

## Timeline

The first round of interviews should be finished sometime in January. I propose to give myself a few weeks to conduct these, as the interviews with these groups of people influence the programming that is created, and I want to make sure I have time to work around their schedules. This way I also have time to start transcribing my interviews and doing some preliminary coding. This will also give the program coordinators time to give feedback on the proposed programming.

After conducting the preliminary interviews in January and getting approval for the proposed programming schedule from the coordinators, I would be ready to move on to implementing the programming schedule. This schedule will consist of ten days' worth of content, which is equivalent to five weekends of *Making Things Right*. To create this schedule, I will pull from the five life skills that are integrated into probation: positive daily routine, staying out of trouble, making things right, preparing for the future, and positive support systems.

Positive daily routine refers to keeping yourself on a schedule so that you can be successful. This usually entails waking up at a certain time, eating breakfast, attending school, making time for hobbies or exercise, going to work, and getting to bed at a certain time. Staying out of trouble refers to identifying problematic peers or activities that tend to get you in trouble. Once these peers and activities are identified, youth might then be asked to come up with a plan to avoid these peers or situations, as well as how to stay out of trouble when they do come across them. Making things right refers to taking accountability for your actions, which usually entails asking youth to write a letter of apology or have a mediated discussion. Preparing for the future refers to looking ahead and figuring out what youth would like to accomplish and what they need to do in order to accomplish their goals. These can be small short-term goals as well as long-term

goals. Finally, positive support systems refer to the people in their lives that help them succeed. These positive individuals can be peers, teachers, parents, coaches, or other positive adults in their lives.

The content will be created during and after the interviews with the program coordinators and judges. Based on the types of activities they would like to see youth participate in and the goals they have for the youth overall, I will create small activities and games for the youth that are based on the five life skills. Each weekend will focus on one of the five life skills. The program will be allowed to run for one cycle, five weeks, before moving on to collect interviews from the probation officers and the youth who attended the program during that time. This would likely run during all of February and potentially part of March, leaving the rest of March for conducting interviews with the probation officers and analyzing the data comprehensively. Then I will organize and write up my findings. I plan to utilize memos and other notes to keep myself up to date and make writing everything up a smoother process. It is my goal to have my literature review, most of my methodology, and potentially part of my introduction completed in this fall semester. This will also allow me more time to focus on writing my findings during the spring.

### **Conclusion**

As a whole, this project will provide an overview of the alternative to detention program that is utilized in Coconino County as well as point out strengths and weaknesses of the current model. Since I will be examining the history of the program and the transformations it has made over the years, it will be easier to identify components that do not work and have not worked in the past. I will also be able to identify components that have not changed since the inception of the program. From this understanding of what has already happened, it will allow the new program coordinators to change the program in beneficial ways rather than repeating the same

processes that past coordinators have employed. This historical view will also allow the program coordinators to understand the aspects of the program that should remain as they are.

This project will also be able to demonstrate what the desired outcomes that the program coordinators, judges, and probation officers hold for the program. If these desired outcomes are not experienced at the field level by staff and the youth who participate, then the project will be able to point out where the problems are occurring and provide discussion for possible solutions to improve the program. Additionally, this project will serve to show the current strengths of the program so that the new coordinators can see what is working rather than completely overhauling the entire program, which is more work for them.

Conducting an evaluation of a program that is an alternative to detention can also serve to support the idea of more agencies investing resources in these types of programs instead of resorting to detaining youth. This project will be able to explore the costs and benefits of investing in a similar type of program that produces positive results for youth who are on probation. As studies have shown that detaining youth does not serve to help them, providing research that supports alternative methods may help future youth who find themselves in the position of potentially being detained.

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