



Evaluation of the Violence Intervention Program in Bernalillo County, New Mexico

**Robert B. Coates, Ph.D
Center for Restorative Justice
and Peacemaking**

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University of New Mexico**

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National Resource Center for Youth Mediation

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EVALUATION OF THE VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM
IN BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

**Robert B. Coates, Ph.D.
Steven S. Alley
April, 2000**

For the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution

Funded by The State Justice Institute

INTRODUCTION

VIPs (Violence Intervention Program) is a collaborative intervention effort focused on violence prone youth and their parents operated by the Juvenile Probation and Parole Office (JPPO) in Bernalillo County, New Mexico and the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution (NMCDR) in cooperation with the Juvenile Division of the Second Judicial Court. This cooperative effort between probation and the courts with a private non-profit community mediation agency was established to enhance the resources available for youth at risk of violent delinquent careers.

The program objectives are: 1) "improve the cognitive and social skills of juvenile offenders and their parents and enhance their ability to function effectively in interpersonal relationships; 2) provide a cost-effective community option for violent juveniles and those at risk for committing violent offenses; and 3) reduce the likelihood of subsequent violent offenses among program participants."

Approximately a dozen youth are processed at a time through the evening component of the program which lasts for eight weeks. These youth are under the supervision of two VIPs probation staff while on intensive probation, involving close supervision, face to face and phone check in, random urine samples, as well as individual and group activities. Central to the VIPs experience is a two hour meeting held on two evenings a week where NMCDR teachers/facilitators work with the youth and at least one parent/guardian on such topics as anger control, communication skills, choices, empathy, problem solving and so on. The Center has developed and revised its curriculum several times attempting to come up with a mix of content and experiences which will promote alternative kinds of thinking and behavior skills for youth and parents.

It is the intensity of the supervision coupled with focusing on youth in the context of their families that makes the VIPs program particularly interesting. Typical delinquency intervention efforts focus on youth with the hope that individual change will impact indirectly the systems in which the youth function, including families. Through training and close supervision VIPs attempts to impact directly the family system whatever its shape and makeup.

FIELD STUDY EVALUATION

This study began in January 1998. Data collection, other than recidivism checks, concluded in September 1999. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered by interviewing youth and parents ("parents" included grandmothers and adult siblings depending upon the youth's living situation). Four cycles of youth participating in the evening VIPs program were studied. They were interviewed prior to the first class, after graduation and three months later. Staff and administrators were also interviewed.

The number of completed youth interviews were pre-program, 46; post-program 31 (eleven youth dropped out of the program); and three months after graduation, 16. The number of completed parent interviews were pre-program, 45; post-program, 25; three months after graduation, 11.

Official records were examined to determine whether youth had reappeared in court after program graduation. Six month follow-up data is available on all the youth; twelve month follow-up data is available on twenty-eight youth. Records for a matched comparison group of youth on traditional probation were also examined. Recidivism data was also gathered for youth going through VIPs in 1995, 1996, and 1997.

RESULTS

Youth Characteristics:

- . At least one prior offense of assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, or possession of a weapon.
- . 74% have had a family member incarcerated.
- . 96% have been suspended or expelled from school.
- . 24% identified selves as gang members.
- . 83% male.

Parent Characteristics:

- . 76% female
- . 63% employed
- . 41% single parent
- . 35% have been in trouble with the law
- . 39% have other children in trouble with the law

Participant Satisfaction:

- . Youth and parents, on the whole, felt that the program was helpful, that staff were encouraging and respectful, and that the program helped youth stay out of trouble.
- . 100% of the parents and 90% of the youth would recommend the program to other parents and youth facing similar difficulties.

Participant Attitude and Behavioral Change:

- . Modest changes in attitude and behavior for both youth and parents were reported. Qualitative measures depict more change than do quantitative.
- . Percentage of parents believing that they need to change along with their child increases dramatically during the course of program participation.
- . 71% of youth believe that the program changed them by the end of the program. Over 80% believe that their parent has changed.
- . Two thirds of the parents believe that they have changed due to participating in the program and nearly 80% believe their child has changed.
- . Parents and youth report better listening skills, less shouting and yelling, and fewer physical altercations.

Recidivism:

- . Self-report data reflects a drop in delinquent activity including alcohol and drug use.
- . VIPs graduates reappear in court at a statistically significantly slower rate than the comparison group. Six months: VIPs – 51%; Comparison – 86%. Twelve months: VIPs – 71%; Comparison – 93%.
- . Fewer VIPs youth are sanctioned by the court. Six months: VIPs – 46%; Comparison – 57%. Twelve months: VIPs – 57%; Comparison – 75%.
- . The majority of both groups have not been charged with an offense as serious as their most serious charge before VIPs or being placed on traditional probation.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

A number of program development issues emerged that need to be considered by jurisdictions considering a program intervention like VIPs for working with violence prone youth. Choices about these issues will likely involve tradeoffs and compromise with in the context of available resources and political climate of any particular jurisdiction.

1. **Target population:** Maintaining a focus on violence prone youth without unnecessarily widening the net.
2. **Involvement of parents:** Will working with family systems foster more lasting change than the traditional approaches which focus only on the child?
3. **Support group or teaching model:** To what extent will one combine an emphasis upon training interpersonal skills with providing a supportive environment for youth and parents?
4. **Breadth or dept of skill development:** Will the class focus on a broad base of information and skills regarding anger management, communication skills, problem solving and so on, or will it focus on a smaller range of topics?
5. **Length of program.** How long will the training last? Many of the parents and some of the youth in this study felt that eight weeks was too short.
6. **Follow-up transition.** Can less intense supports be provided to youth and parents as they leave the program that reinforce the learning and changes which have taken place? Again this was a concern for many in this study.

7. Coordination. The kind of partnership envisioned with VIPs between a public and a non-profit agency will require considerable coordination and cooperation.

CONCLUSION

The Violence Intervention Program in Bernalillo County, New Mexico offers considerable promise for jurisdictions considering ways to impact violence prone youth. Parents and youth express considerable satisfaction with the program. They have demonstrated some modest changes in attitudes and behavior. And the youth appear to be reoffending at a slower rate than comparable youth on traditional probation.

Although the number of participants in this study is small, it seems likely that for some individuals, tendencies toward violence have been disrupted. For how long, we do not know.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A field study of any magnitude is a major challenge requiring the understanding and cooperation of many individuals. This study was certainly no exception.

The needs of action agencies often clash with those of research teams fostering frustration on all sides. In a field study, there is no expectation that the subject of interest will remain the same over time. It changes and is refined as the research continues. We have tried to point out some of those changes in the Violence Intervention Program which have occurred during our eighteen months of observing it. But no doubt it has changed some since we have left the field. Again, this is simply the nature of action research.

Given the ebbs and flows of the target of study, completion of this research has required the efforts of many. We are greatly indebted to the staff at the Juvenile Probation and Parole Office: Bob Silva, Mike Fluellen, and Tim Comacho as they worked to keep us informed about VIPs activities, arranged for parents and youth to gather to be interviewed, and gave us access and provided guidance regarding their computerized information system. We are equally grateful to the ongoing support from the staff at NMCDR: Melinda Smith, Sara Keeney, Susan Henoch, Rhonda Peterson, and Beverly Fowler for their support and assistance throughout the life of the study. To the teachers: Sarah Stuckey, John Nichols, Julie Zuniga, Judy Shannon, Ron Montoya, and Chris Moore. We want to express our thanks for graciously welcoming us as we observed their work with the parents and youth. We hope they didn't feel too much like fish in the proverbial fishbowl.

We have appreciated the support and professional regard of Judge Tommy Jewel, and Judge Michael Martinez who have shared their experiences and insights regarding working with troubled youth.

Our New Mexico based research team consisted of Steve Alley, Coordinator, Interviewer and Observer; Teresa Berry, Coordinator and Interviewer; Jeff Grant, Interviewer and Sidni Lamb, Interviewer. We cannot over state the dedication and determination of this group to obtain quality data for the project.

We also want to acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Mark S. Umbreit of the University of Minnesota and Dr. Jeff Jenson of the University of Denver for offering helpful suggestions regarding the design of this study. We also appreciate the efforts of Dr. Jenson as he also did the statistical analyses which fed into our overall quantitative analysis. We extend thanks to Dr. Betty Vos who has provided editorial assistance and input regarding analysis.

Finally, this study would have been impossible to do if it were not for the cooperation of the youth and parents who participated in VIPs. We hope we have presented their thoughts and reactions to the experience in a meaningful way. We wish each of them well.

INTRODUCTION

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The program objectives are: 1) "improve the cognitive and social skills of juvenile offenders and their parents and enhance their ability to function effectively in interpersonal relationships; 2) provide a cost-effective community option for violent juveniles and those at risk for committing violent offenses; and 3) reduce the likelihood of subsequent violent offenses among program participants."

Approximately a dozen youth are processed at a time through the evening component of the program which lasts for eight weeks. These youth are under the supervision of two VIPs probation staff while on intensive probation. Intensive is the operative word here involving close supervision, face to face and phone check in, random urine samples, as well as individual and group activities. Central to the VIPs experience is a two hour meeting held on two evenings a week where NMCDR teachers/facilitators work with the youth and at least one parent/guardian on such topics as anger control, communication skills, choices, empathy, problem solving and so on. The Center has developed and revised its curriculum several times attempting to come up with a mix of content and experiences which will promote alternative kinds of thinking and behavior skills for youth and parents.

It is the intensity of the supervision coupled with focusing on youth in the context of their families that makes the VIPs program particularly interesting. Typical delinquency intervention efforts focus on youth with the hope that individual change will impact indirectly the systems in which the youth function, including families. Through training and close supervision VIPs attempts to impact directly the family system whatever its shape and makeup.

This report focuses on the impact of the VIPS intervention. We will document the nature and flow of the program and participant reactions (resisting and embracing) to various program elements. We will also look at changes in family attitudes and behaviors during and after program participation. And we will explore any changes in self-reported delinquent behavior and recidivism.

This report is divided into the following sections: 1) How Study was Conducted, 2) VIPs Youth and Parents: Who Are They? 3) The Evolving VIPs Environment, 4) The VIPs Evening Program Component, 5) Youth and Parent Assessment of VIPs, 6) Youth and Parent Attitude and Behavior Changes, 7) Recidivism, 8) Parent Youth Suggestions and Recommendations, 9) Program Development Issues, and 10) Conclusion. For ease of reading, tables are used sparingly in the main text. Appendices contain additional tables, case descriptions of the evening program component, and youth and parent interview schedules.

HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

This field study evaluation effort began in January 1998. While the research is part of grant received directly from the State Justice Institute for this purpose, NMCDR contracted with Dr. Robert B. Coates, Senior Associate, Center For Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, University of Minnesota to formulate and direct the study. A research team based in Albuquerque was hired to coordinate the data collection tasks.

The study addresses four research questions:

1. How does the VIPs program work on a day-to-day basis?
2. Who participates in the program?"
3. What are the short-run consequences of participation in the program?
4. What are the long-run consequences of participation in the program?

Both qualitative and quantitative data are used to answer these questions. Four program cycles were examined between January 1998 and June 1999. Some forty-six youth started the VIPs program during that period. Each youth and a parent or guardian, whenever possible, was interviewed before the start of the program. It should be noted that "parent or guardian" occasionally included a grandparent or an adult sibling, depending on with whom the youth was living. These youth and parent/guardians were interviewed a second time at the conclusion of the program. And three months following program completion they were again contacted for a follow-up interview.

The number of interviews completed decreased at each stage. Eleven VIPs youth dropped out without graduating from the program. Typically these youth had either committed new offenses sufficiently serious for expulsion from the program and/or were on the run. Obtaining information from participants three months after program completion was much more

difficult than originally anticipated. By that point most of these youth were no longer under supervision of VIPs probation officers; some were on traditional probation, some were released, some were in treatment programs outside the county and others had moved.

Neither probation nor NMCDR personnel would permit research staff to attempt to interview respondents in their neighborhoods. Instead, nearly all interviews were conducted at the juvenile court building with arrangements made largely by VIPs probation staff. By time three, then, many potential subjects could not be contacted or did not want to be bothered with another interview. Initially the study was to consider only three cycles of VIPs youth. Given the drop in number of completed interviews at time three, a fourth cycle was added.

The total number of interviews completed with youth and parents over the four cycles was 174. For youth the numbers are: pre-program, 46; post-program, 31; three months after program, 16. For parents the corresponding numbers are: pre-program, 45; post program, 25; three months after program, 11. The vast majority of these interviews were conducted face to face. A few of the time three interviews were conducted by phone.

Official records were examined for this 1998-99 cohort to document the extent and seriousness of post-program delinquent/criminal activity. This involved six month and twelve month checks with the exception of the last cycle of youth which could only be followed for six months. A matched comparison group of youth on traditional probation was also followed during this time period in order to compare and contrast rates of recidivism between the two groups.

During the winter and spring of 1999, research staff systematically observed the evening component of the VIPs program which covered the third and fourth cycle of youth in this study. During the third cycle, eight Wednesday evening sessions were observed. During the fourth

cycle eight Monday evening sessions were observed. A VIPs instructor, John Nichols, also made available to the project his process observations recorded during the initial cycle of youth in this study who started the evening program in February, 1998. Sporadic observation of cycle two youth was also conducted in preparation for the more systematic effort undertaken in winter and spring of 1999. Taken together, these observations and related informal interviews of participants and instructors have provided rich descriptions of how this critical component of VIPs functions and how participants react to it. It should be noted that any names attributed to program participants or teachers in the data analysis sections that follow in this report are fictitious.

VIPs cohorts for 1995, 1996, and 1997 were also identified for the purpose of obtaining one year post program recidivism data.

In addition to this focus on youth and parent participants, interviews were conducted with those responsible for referring youth to the program and for its administration and operation. These included formal interviews with two judges, two Probation and Parole staff, two NMCDR administrators and program coordinators, and three curriculum developers and teachers. Numerous informal interviews occurred throughout the course of the project.

VIPs YOUTH AND FAMILIES: WHO ARE THEY?

Probation staff responsible for selecting youth for the VIPs program indicated that the youth typically are between the ages of twelve and fifteen, have had three to five prior referrals to juvenile court, at least one of those referrals of which is for an act of violence including domestic violence. The youth being referred to the program today tend to be a little younger

than those referred when the program started. And they tend to have a more pronounced history of domestic abuse.

Based on our interview data, we can say that the youth going through the VIPs program during this period of study were likely to be male (83%), Latino (61%), and attended regular school (59%) (See Table 1). Nearly all of these youngsters have been suspended or expelled from school at some time. Over half were living with two parents, either their natural parents or in a step-family. Seventeen percent were not living with either natural parent. Nearly three-quarters of this group has had a family member incarcerated.

Half of these youth had been referred to court five or more times before beginning the evening component of VIPs. They self report a rather modest level of delinquent or anti-social activity. These self report data are contained in Tables 8 and 9 appearing later in this document. In terms of violence, thirty-seven percent indicated that they picked a fight with someone. A quarter of these youth have attacked someone with the intent to seriously hurt them. Similar numbers have threatened to hit a teacher or have hit a parent. Four out of ten have sold drugs. And nearly a quarter claim to be members of gangs.

When we asked youth what led them to be in the VIPs program thirty-two (70%) mentioned fights, knife fights, violence, or weapons possession. Others indicated probation violation or referral by judge or probation officer without indicating the actual event or events which precipitated the referral to the program. Based on official records and information from probation staff, we know that each of these youth had at least one charge of assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, or weapons possession. The knife seems to be the weapon of choice.

Table 1
Characteristics of VIPs Youth Participants at Time 1
N =45

Item	% (N)	M (sd) ^{1.}
Age		14.7 (1.2)
Gender		
Male	82.6 (38)	
Female	17.4 (8)	
Ethnicity		
Latino	60.9 (28)	
Caucasian	17.4 (8)	
African American	10.9 (5)	
Other	8.7 (5)	
American Indian	2.2 (1)	
Attending regular school	58.7 (27)	
Attending alternative school	28.3 (13)	
Ever suspended or expelled from school	95.7 (44)	
Currently employed	10.9 (5)	
Current living arrangement		
Both natural parents	21.7 (10)	
Mother only	26.1 (12)	
Father only	4.3 (2)	
Parent and stepparent	30.4 (14)	
Other	17.4 (8)	
Number of people in the home		4.4 (1.5)
Number of brothers		1.6 (1.4)
Number of sisters		1.6 (1.2)
Antisocial behavior in the family		
Brother in trouble with the law	39.1 (18)	
Sister in trouble with the law	21.7 (10)	
Mother in trouble with the law	23.9 (11)	
Father in trouble with the law	37.0 (17)	
Family member has been incarcerated	73.9 (34)	
Member of a gang	23.9 (11)	

^{1.} M=mean(average) score; sd=standard deviation

Over a third of these youth indicated that what they liked least about their families was the bickering, shouting, arguing and fighting. As one girl put it, "We argue and mom and I get into fist fights. They don't know how to give me a fair punishment." And a boy said, "The worst are the arguments and the shouting. We take off when arguments happen."

While all of these youth agreed to participate in the program, at least given the options, about forty percent, when asked what they hoped would happen because of being in the VIPs program indicated that they simply wanted to get out, as quickly as possible. A male referred because of an assault and battery may reflect well this cluster when he commented, "I hope to get through it fast. I don't need help. They're acting like I do." Six out of ten youth did indicated a desire to change attitudes and behavior in order to stop arguing and fighting and to stay out of trouble.

As we describe the "parents" interviewed in this study, it should be remembered that while typically the word parent is a mom, dad, step-mom, or step-dad, it does also include seven grandmothers and one adult sister. The median age of this group is 38.5 (Table 2). Over three-quarters of the parents are female. A little over half are Latino and about a quarter Anglo. Nearly all had earned a high school degree or equivalency. About a quarter had been suspended or expelled from school in their youth. And sixty-three percent were employed. Over fifty percent were married or living with a friend. The average number of children was four. Thirty-five percent of these parents reported that they had been in trouble with the law at one time or another. And forty percent said that they had other children who were also in trouble with the law.

Table 2
Characteristics of VIPs Parent Participants at Time 1
N =45

Item	% (N)	M (sd) ¹
Age		41.7 (9.9) Median = 38.5
Gender		
Male	23.9 (11)	
Female	76.1 (35)	
Ethnicity		
Latino	52.2 (24)	
Caucasian	23.9 (11)	
African American	10.9 (5)	
American Indian	8.7 (4)	
Other	2.2 (1)	
Highest grade completed in school		11.9 (2.3) Median = 12.0
Ever suspended or expelled	23.9 (11)	
Currently employed	63.1 (29)	
Marital status		
Single	19.6 (9)	
Married	47.8 (22)	
Divorced or separated	21.7 (10)	
Living with friend	8.7 (4)	
Number of children		
Sons		1.9 (1.5)
Daughters		1.6 (1.5)
Ever been in trouble with the law	34.8 (16)	
Have your other children been in trouble	39.1 (18)	

¹. M=mean(average) score; sd=standard deviation

In response to a question about what they liked least about their family, some twenty-seven percent indicated arguing or fighting. One mother referred to "the chaos that goes on with three brothers fighting." A father disliked "the arguing between the boys and then the parents having to intervene." And a grandmother cited a litany: "Arguing, foul language, disrespect toward others, and name calling."

These parents, perhaps like most parents, have fears regarding being a parent. Nearly half those interviewed said that their greatest fear was having a child killed or caught up in the prison system. Three out of ten expressed a sense of guilt regarding their child's behavior. A father feared that, "I haven't taught them right – or that I'm not a good enough parent." A mother lamented, "I am responsible for how my sons grow up.... How could I have done things differently?" And a mother of a daughter with a history of violence feared that "I haven't set an extremely good example, and they (her children) will grow to hurt others or not care." Seven percent cited worrying about their children hurting others as their greatest fear.

Given that the VIPs program is intended to work on family relationships, we asked parents pre-program, "What do you hope happens because of you and your son/daughter being in the VIPs program." The standard response stressed changes on the part of the youngster. Many indicated that they were participating to support their child. As one father stated, "I love my kid; I want to see him make it." A mother hoped that her daughter would get an "attitude adjustment and learn to control her anger." A step-mom said, "I hope he learns his lesson and that he will have to pay."

Only eight of the forty-five parent respondents (18%) at time one replied that *they themselves* needed to change as well as their child. A mother was hopeful about participating in the program because, "We as a family need to deal with our son." A father stated, "I'd like to see

my daughter and I run on a longer fuse." And a grandmother longed for the possibility, "that we could quit hurting each other physically." To the program's credit, these numbers increased dramatically by the conclusion of the program.

THE EVOLVING VIP ENVIRONMENT

NMCDR has been working closely with Bernalillo County Probation and Parole Office and the Second Judicial Court since 1990 to develop and implement a program which would help "fill out the continuum of services for probation." The VIPs program has evolved over time both in focus and in clientele served.

Initially, the program was established to meet the needs of violence prone kids and their families. Clients exhibited impulsive, violent behavior in their backgrounds at home, school or community environments.

That emphasis has broadened increasingly of late to focus on domestic violence. NMCDR staff fear that this broadening of the client population may result in net widening and worry about what happens next for the youth who fail this program. The judges and probation, on the other hand, see domestic violence as lying at the heart of much violent behavior and feel that broadening the program criteria to include more domestic violence cases enhances the program's ability to prevent further violence. Increased awareness of domestic violence on the part of the public and the police since the start of the VIPs program has meant that more of these youngsters are being processed through the juvenile courts.

As one judge put it, "including domestic violence cases is a logical extension of the original VIPs concept." Another judge pointed out that "these kids are not bad kids; they are troubled kids," and therefore need a more therapeutic program than JIPs or traditional probation

can offer. One of the probation staff indicated that "eighty percent of the youth are learning abusive behavior by being abused or by seeing abuse." It is this type of understanding that leads another probation staff member to suggest that the program needs to expand even more into domestic violence intervention including "victims of violence and those around violence. If they are seeing violence, they likely need help."

This subtle shift in focus remains a tension point between the agencies responsible for the VIPs program. Each group has specific responsibilities for pieces of the VIPs program. Boundaries sometimes blur in the actual implementation, requiring good faith and good coordination skills on behalf of all involved.

A brief look at the process of referring youth to VIPs, the nature of the actual program, and what happens once youth complete the program will serve to provide a useful description not only of how the overall program functions but also of the overlapping responsibilities of those involved in its implementation.

Potential program clients are referred to a screening team of probation staff. Judges are the primary referral source, although police and probation officers may also make referrals. One judge indicated that he "referred specific kids to VIPs because he had faith in the probation personnel to handle those situations."

Once a referral is made VIPs probation staff will interview families and make clear the requirements of the program. There must be a commitment on the part of an adult to participate in the program along with the youngster. And the staff determine whether the youth fit the program criteria and are likely to take advantage of this opportunity. Youth with head injuries or severe learning disabilities are not eligible for VIPs.

As of January 1998, probation staff were considering twelve to sixteen year olds (male or female) who had demonstrated violent behavior such as battery or assault outside the home or had two or more charges of domestic violence. The typical youth would have had three to five prior referrals to probation. These criteria may be softened at the discretion of the probation team. As the class date approaches there is some pressure to assure that there are at least a dozen youth participating. On two occasions during our eighteen month data collection period, classes were postponed a week in order to fill the class rosters.

NMCDR staff are not involved in selection of clients for the program. They often do not know the make up of the class until the day of the initial session. Teachers sometimes feel uncomfortable and hamstrung because they often do not know the delinquent histories or home situations of the youth they are working with because of issues of confidentiality.

The program has two components, one operated by probation and the other by NMCDR. The first is the intensive supervision which the youth are exposed to day in and day out. This involves at the minimum five days a week face to face contact between VIPs probation officers and each youth as well as daily phone contact. A complete list of rules to which youth and parents must agree in order to participate in VIPs is contained in Appendix C. Youth agree to random drug tests, room searches, being scheduled with thirty-two hours of activity per week, a six o'clock curfew, and participation in the Interpersonal Skills Component Violence Intervention Probation Program (the twice a week evening class conducted by NMCDR). Intensive probation also involves daily contact with a parent. The youth may also be incarcerated in detention up to four days a month without cause. This happens if the youth violates conditions of the agreement or appears to be headed for trouble. Youth may also be expelled from VIPs and returned to court for further action.

While surveillance and security is a primary function carried out by VIPs probation staff, teaching staff are also centrally involved in providing supports to the youth and their parents. This will range from informal counseling and advice giving, to getting people to open up about things that are bothering them, to helping youth and parents think about alternative ways of solving problems. Probation staff also provide group activities once or twice a month to build camaraderie in the group. These activities include ice skating, roller blading, horses (grooming and riding), baseball games and basketball games, or playing basketball with the kids. VIPs probation staff consider one of their primary tasks to be "helping parents help kids understand their behavior needs to change."

The VIPs probation staff are typically present on the evenings when the NMCDR class is taught although they are not in the room. On rare occasions, they have had to come into settle a dispute. This did not happen while we were observing the evening program. Probation staff may be involved in getting some youth and parents to the group. They are often seen joshing with participants as they gather at the juvenile court for the meeting. And on occasions, they are also quite active enforcing the rules of the program. If a youth does not show for the evening class, VIPs probation staff will find out why, often tracking down the youth.

NMCDR staff certainly feel the tensions around security. They as well as probation desire a safe place in which to work. Probation staff are not in the room during these evening sessions but remain available for contact during breaks or in case of an emergency. Ability to work with troubled violence-prone youth and families in crisis is a principle criterion for identifying potential teacher/ facilitators.

More discussion of content of these classes will appear later in this report, but it is not surprising that encouraging youth and parents to talk about bottled up feelings, anger and anger

management, consequences of good and poor choices might from time to time lead to heightened frustration and conflict. It is also not surprising that conflicts within families will spill over into the content of the seminar and that these living examples provide great grist for teaching. During one of the sessions we observed, a mother had that day been given a restraining order not to touch her son because she had tried to beat him. Son and mother sat across from each other as group facilitators embarked on a discussion of how to express disagreement without name calling and thereby escalating the heat of the conflict. There was much frustration expressed by parents as they were reminded that they are their children's first role models and must slow down the rate of escalation, sometimes by walking away. They must "change the pace of the dance." As one woman responded, that's difficult because "when you have a teenager in your home, you are the bone your teenager sharpens their teeth on." The woman with the restraining order maintained a semblance of measured control in the class, but afterward she sought out the probation officer to vent her ire with him for getting the judge to issue the order on behalf of her son.

The boundaries between probation and NMCDR responsibilities blur at times during these evening sessions. Given that all the youth have gathered in one place it is an ideal time from probation perspective to collect urine samples. Teachers believe that such a practice is quite upsetting for youth just before they are expected to come in to group setting and deal with emotions and consequences of decision-making. Therefore the task of teaching and enabling youth to open up about problems is made even more difficult. Probation staff have backed off some in terms of collecting samples at that time, although the practice was observed during our data collection period.

Though tension is to be expected between the agencies on a number of issues, there is little disagreement among the agencies regarding the need for better follow-up once a youth completes the program. Many of these youth are released from probation upon completion of the class, or their supervision is transferred to a probation officer with an already traditionally high caseload of between fifty and sixty youth. NMCDR staff, judges and probation personnel would like to see a transition program building directly on the supports established within the intensive VIPs program. When we look at the reactions of parents and youth to participating in VIPs, we will discover that many of the parents and even some of the young people are also distressed either that VIPs is too short or that little exists afterwards to reinforce what was learned in the program.

Stability is difficult to maintain in any long term program. Such has been the case with VIPs. During our eighteen month data collection period there has been an unusually high number of personnel changes which have impacted the program. NMCDR has had a change in Executive Director, VIPs Program Coordinator and two facilitator/teachers who had been with the program for a number of years. In addition, the administrator within the Probation and Parole Office who supervises VIPs has also changed. These kinds of personnel changes are frequent occurrences in any social service field and will likely have an impact on programs as individuals enter administrative and service delivery positions with differing visions and skills as well as their own commitments to continuing decent programming for juveniles and their families. Upper level administrative changes are often followed with reassessment by boards or higher level administrators to evaluate whether the organization or system should continue or expand a given program emphasis. Rumblings have been heard in both NMCDR and Probation

and Parole about the desirability of continuing the VIPs vision. It is likely that major personnel changes in either system will require reassessment of mission and recommitment of resources.

VIPs: THE EVENING PROGRAM COMPONENT

The evening component of VIPs is comprised of two hour sessions twice a week for eight weeks. These sessions are run by three teacher/facilitators. Each VIPS youth is expected to attend along with at least one parent/guardian. As noted earlier, parent/guardian is interpreted loosely, depending upon the youth's living situation, to include grandparent, uncle/aunt, and occasionally an adult sibling.

Each evening session is organized around a theme or themes. The three teacher/facilitators typically move in and out of teaching or leadership roles during the course of a session. Often the first hour, after check-in or a warm up experience, is spent working on a topic with the entire group. After a ten minute break, the group may meet as a whole, or often it is divided into two allowing for youth and adults to work separately. The group usually reconvenes as a whole before the session is finished. While this is a typical pattern, in actuality any given session can be quite fluid as teacher/facilitators move with the group to determine what will be emphasized and how it will be handled. There are sessions which begin with youth and parent breakout groups, and there are sessions in which family units are grouped for a particular exercise like reflective listening.

Different points of view have shaped the content and delivery of content in this family intervention program since its inception. Initially, a fairly straight forward educational model was adapted. Very detailed curriculum is available: *Violence Intervention Curriculum for*

Juveniles (1996); Violence Intervention for Families (1996). These documents contain a step by step approach to training including both content and exercises.

Within the original vision of VIPs, the persons in charge of the training were called teachers or instructors. Over time, NMCDR staff became disenchanted with the implementation of that model which tended toward being too rote and inflexible. Youth and parents were reportedly less than enthralled and it was felt that too often the probation officers were being called upon to control the group.

A new focus emerged which was reflected in hiring and shaping of content. No longer was it desirable to search for "school teachers." Instead, "people workers" were sought, folks who could interact well with troubled youth and their parents and who would need less direct support from the probation officers. There was a greater emphasis on hiring persons with mental health or social service experience and who could shape and reshape the curriculum material as the dynamics of the group unfolded. These persons were expected to possess facilitating, non-controlling styles; to understand the principles of conflict resolution "in their bones as well as in their heads;" and to have the ability to read a group and be flexible for meeting its needs. It was common to hear these folks referred to as "facilitators" rather than teachers.

This struggle over intention and focus continues. Over the last two years, the curriculum has been reviewed and revised again to better meet the needs of a more facilitative format. While staff continue to seek out individuals well experienced in youth work with facilitative styles, there seems to be a search for a middle ground where facilitators place more emphasis on modeling appropriate conflict resolution behaviors and emphasize skill learning along with providing adequate support for families prone to violence. Some would prefer a coaching educational model relying much more on experiential training and "homework" for parents and

youth to document their experiences with new skills for averting old problems. There is concern that while parents may come out of the eight week experience feeling good about the group and often better about themselves "they do not get enough skills and practice of skills."

While there are clear content expectations for the evening program, it is difficult to say that specific topics will be covered in Session 5 and others in Session 12. It is fairly safe to say that during the sixteen session experience youth and parents will be exposed to at least the following topics:

- 1) What is violence and what are its consequences;
- 2) Trust;
- 3) Parenting styles and skills such as lenient parent, rigid parent, and problem solving parent (all parents in the initial cycle of our study believed they were either too rigid or too lenient);
- 4) Intergenerational discipline styles;
- 5) Discipline without violence or threat of violence;
- 6) Taking charge of one's own behavior (ACT: "A" = acknowledge your feelings; "C" = Calm down, and "T" = think before you act in any situation);
- 7) How to avoid unsafe situations;
- 8) Communication skills;
- 9) Listening skills;
- 10) Reflective listening;
- 11) The power of family secrets;
- 12) Negotiating differences;
- 13) Being non-judgmental;

14) Drug and alcohol addictions and their impact on the family system;

15) Maintaining appropriate parent child boundaries;

16) Empathy.

An area which staff identified for more development was that of victim awareness. This is clearly a natural for NMCDR with its longstanding commitment to mediation and restorative justice.

While this list of topics is formidable, it is hardly exhaustive and should underscore the huge task confronting these teacher/facilitators as they attempt to provide meaningful help to troubled families in an eight week time frame. As one parent said, "There is so much to learn and so much to unlearn."

In order to provide the reader with a sense for the dynamics of this training process, we offer here a series of vignettes of actual experiences. It should be noted that chairs are typically set up in a horseshoe shape with the instructors moving in and out and easily about the horseshoe. On occasion, chairs were arranged in a circle. Never did we see them set up in the traditional lecture style of classroom rows.

What is violence? (Session 1, Cycle 1)

Participants were asked to define violence while staff listed the responses on a flip chart for group review. Statements ranged from, "hitting" to "blood and bruises." Parents of one youth were observed whispering behind George's back while all three were seated. His mother was asked to speak up and stated, "You don't want to go there." Staff pressed for her to speak openly about what violence meant to her and she stated, "When parents buy drugs in front of their children." This statement upset George who stormed out of the room angry.

"The probation officers were available to intercept George and speak with him about the incident. (Instructors) also checked on him three times and after approximately ten to fifteen minutes, he had calmed down to the point of being able to return to the group." (John Nichols, Process Notes, 1998).

My Family (Session 4, Cycle 3)

"For this assignment, adults and then kids will have one piece of paper," the facilitator/teacher says. "Draw a dot somewhere on the paper that represents you. Then, draw a circle that represents your family. Draw a dot inside the circle for each family member. Draw another circle that represents community. Again, draw a dot for the various people that stand out for you in your community. Then, one more circle that will show how everyone inside your community affects you in some way. Then we'll put it on the wall with tape."

One youth says that he's not putting his on the wall. Instructor say yes, he has to. The youth says no and the teacher does not pursue the matter further. When people get up to begin the task, six remain seated. Then three more get up, including the individual who said no. Within minutes, everyone is working.

Some youth are overheard comparing images, dots and circles. "What's that. . . ?" "I put my brothers there. . . ." Instructors says loudly, "Oooohh, I should have brought music." Parents and youth smile.

The next layer of the assignment is announced. One parent says, "Wait a minute." The instructor says, "Keep working and listen." A youth sneezes and another teacher says, "God bless you."

The facilitator says, "Listen up, this is important, this makes or breaks this exercise. I'm going to use Jack's drawing, do you mind?"

"No," responds the youth.

"What did you do to get in VIPs," she asks.

The youth's response is muffled.

"Louder"

"I had a knife at school."

"So," the instructor says, "draw connections of how that event affected other people throughout the community."

He begins while others look on. Shortly, the other youth are directed back to their drawings to do the same thing. Several stand at their drawings looking around, confused, but most attempt the task, some with great gusto, drawing bold circles, lines and ripples through their drawings and explaining the meaning to others watching.

A number of parents and youth talk about the meaning of their drawings. The instructor asks a mother how a dot at the fringe of the her community circle is connected to everything else. The mother replies, "He's not; that's my ex-husband." As one youth begins to explain his drawing he becomes confused about how he has depicted two of his family members. Another youth offers a suggestion to improve the drawing. "Shh," the instructor interrupts, "that's the way he drew it."

The instructor sums up by pointing to a picture and asks, "What surrounds this youth?" She offers her own response, "surrounded by people who love him."

"Who does his actions affect?" she asks. Parents respond, "Family, community."

The facilitator goes on, "Throw a rock into a pool of water (two moms are nodding), ripples go out and hit the bank and you've got to think about what comes back. It all begins with you. Be the change you want to see."

I Feel Good When I do Right (Session 5, Cycle 2)

After a discussion on taking care of oneself because that impacts the entire family, a father who had been in and out of the justice system himself at a young age, talks about the importance of support, love, good humor and good involvements. He is an example of making it and claims, "I feel good when I do right."

The instructors spin off of this statement to get parents to talk about what they were doing ten years ago. How did it feel emotionally then and now? What are they teaching their children about emotions through words and body language?

Just as the parents were once young people so the youth will hopefully grow into adulthood. The instructor asks the youth, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

The responses were: 1) don't know, 2) haven't thought about it, 3) anthropologist/archeologist, 4) electrician, 5) working with babies, 6) working with math, 7) artist, 8) electrician/actor, 9) mortician, 10) computer graphics/programming, 11) musician.

Frequently during this round, a proud hopeful parent would interject that her son reads widely in anthropology, or her daughter was good with children, or his son had only one decent subject in school but was excellent with math. The youngster who wanted to do computer graphics had a relative who worked in computer technology. And the youth who indicated a desire to be a mortician had a relative involved in that line of work.

While there was a feeling of pride and hope in the circle, there was also evident the foreboding reminder of why they were all there. Even though the career choices identified might have occurred in any collection of young people at a scout troop or a 4-H club, this was not such a group.

Jumping Rope (Session 10, Cycle 4)

An instructor takes youth outside for an exercise. The group has to figure out how all of them can jump rope at the same time while using one large rope. One youth jumps in while teacher swing the rope, then two more. Others hang back. Then the rest decide to all get in at the same time, before the rope starts. One still hangs back. "Come *!*, " shouts a youngster.

"Watch your language," says the instructor in directing the exercise. "Talk it out; what works best?"

The group tries different combinations. They stop and discuss how best to proceed. They start again.

"Look at the that hummingbird," says one boy panting.

Six out of nine have been in at one time so far. Two haven't tried yet.

"I know you can do this," encourages the facilitator. "Can you do this in five more attempts?"

The group agrees on ten. A pretty girl walks by; they all stop and the rope falls at their feet.

Seven in, eight, then fouled on the ninth person.

"Come on Dave, hurry up." It is the sixth attempt and he asks for more room in order to jump in. He fouls.

On the seventh attempt, they all make it for three revolutions.

The instructor asks, "Could we have done this on the first day?"

The group says, "No."

"What did it take to get that done?"

The kids respond all at the same time: "Practice." Teamwork." "Communication."

"Yeah. If you did it alone it would be a piece of cake. Doing it as a group is harder."

Back inside, the instructor asks, "Can you solve a problem with eight other people?"

He receives negative responses: "No." "Too complex." "You need fewer people."

One youth says, "I'd talk to several different people."

"That's excellent," the teacher responds.

Another youth talks about stopping a fight and a facilitator says, "Remember when we talked about those three things: aggressive, submissive, and um (he stammers as if searching for a word")

Three youth interject simultaneously, "assertive."

A youth fidgets in his chair wanting to go on break. Another youth leans over and quietly says, "Take it easy."

Throughout the course of the session there are direct and indirect reminders of group members having to help each other to make it through the evening just as they did in jumping rope.

Boundaries (Session 3, Cycle 4)

The following occurred during a parent breakout. Each parent standing in the circle was instructed to reach their right hand to a person across from them and then connect their left hand to a different person; the result was a large human knot. The task was to undo the knot without letting go. After a considerable amount of time and finally with the instructor's assistance the task was accomplished.

"What do we do when we problem solve? Do we give up?" asks the instructor.

There is little response.

One parent asks, "Why are you doing this to us?"

"There was no plan for getting yourselves untangled. It's like trying to solve a problem without a map. What do we do as parents? What is your map?"

Parents who talk do respond directly, but talk about the difficulty of parenting.

"I work hard to get him out of trouble, and he believes what he's doing isn't wrong," says one mother.

Another adds, "I've given him the excuses."

Still another responds, "You've given him the rope."

"Where do we learn to be parents?" asks the facilitator.

"Our parents," is the response.

"And that doesn't work now and you don't get anywhere saying that society fails you," states the instructor. "What can we do?"

"I want my kids to have a better life than mine," responds a father.

"There's too much pressure on parents to get their kids what others have."

A mother of five offers, "If he wants a pair of pants and I can't afford them, I worry that he will go steal them."

"Parenting is the hardest thing we will ever do," says the instructor. "It is the choice of a lifetime. We are the role models."

"I remember that I must hold up because I am the adult," says one man softly.

"But they don't respect me," complains a mother. "There is always shouting and yelling."

The facilitator looks around the room, while all the parents appear to be listening intently. "We have to take responsibility for our own actions, but we can only be responsible for ourselves."

There is much nodding of agreement.

"It's okay to think bad things, but it's not okay to say them to hurt, or to get our way. Nor can we accept that abuse from others, even our kids.

"Where do we start? We will pick up on this next time. I would like you to think about two things before you come back. One: complete the following sentence, 'I will not allow my child to _____. ' And two: complete this sentence, 'I am willing to change _____. '"

Moving On When Others Fail. (Session 10, Cycle 4)

The probation officer comes in before the session starts to say that one of the kids will not be there. "He got careless doing something stupid." Looking at one of the other boys, he continued, "Don't get too careless, nor too comfortable."

"Is it Jimmy?" a youth asks.

Without answering, the probation officer leaves. (We learned later from him that a youth in the group was caught in an auto burglary attempt and was beat up. He called the probation officer that morning for help, but there was nothing that could be done at that point.)

The kids continue to chatter trying to figure out what was going on.

An instructor asks, "Do we need to go over rules?"

The response is "no," and he has their attention.

The facilitator, who is a teacher at a local school, talks about how many folks mess up just before graduation.

Another instructor says, "Yes, this may feel like playtime to some of you, but all around us it's very serious."

Three fuller descriptions of evening sessions appear Appendix B. The first case describes a second session with the discussion of rules and some of the beginning efforts to make a group out of mostly strangers who would like to be any place else but where they are. The second case depicts a group exercise emphasizing team work, communication, and trust. The third details graduation "VIPs style."

During the fifteen sessions we observed, apart from two graduations, experiential techniques were used sixteen times. There were many more used which we could not see because when the group was divided we could only go with either the youth or the adults. In practice, we alternated which sub-grouping we observed. While some evenings tended to focus on discussion and lecture, for the most part there was considerable effort devoted to generating learning activities through joint problem solving and role plays. If the lecturing became lengthy, youth and some parents appeared quite blank as if they were no longer really present. With three teacher/facilitators working the group, two were typically left evaluating group responsiveness, and if the group lagged too much, they would break in and offer a different tack.

During the course of a cycle, there was little question that group cohesiveness was greatly increased. While the first sessions might be slow and instructors would have to work diligently to get everyone participating, most youth and adults soon overcame shyness and distrust to pitch in quite freely. Toward the later sessions the problem wasn't prolonged silence, it was keeping folks on task.

YOUTH AND PARENT ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM

Overall youth and parents express consistent satisfaction with their VIPs experience.

This is the case at follow-up time two and time three. Both the quantitative and qualitative data bear this out.

Table 3 summarizes the close ended interview questions where respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a number questions regarding their program experiences. Parents and youth found the program helpful and were favorably disposed toward staff. Respondents indicated that they felt respected and that program staff earned their respect. Youth agreed the program had helped them stay out of trouble and take more control over their lives.

Table 3
Youth and Parent Perceptions of the VIPs Program at Times 2 and 3

Item	Time 2		Time 3	
	Youth M (sd) N = 31	Parents M (sd) N = 25	Youth M (sd) N = 16	Parents M (sd) N = 11
The VIPs program was helpful for me	1.5 (.7)	1.8 (1.1)	1.6 (.6)	1.6 (1.2)
The program helped me (my child) stay out of trouble	1.7 (.9)	2.0 (1.1)	1.5 (.7)	1.8 (1.4)
The program helped me get along with my family	3.2 (.9)	1.7 (.8)	3.1 (.7)	1.9 (1.2)
The VIPs program was a waste of time	3.2 (.9)	3.4 (.8)	3.1 (.7)	3.7 (.6)
VIPs helped me (my child) get along with other kids	2.0 (.7)	2.0 (.8)	1.9 (.8)	2.3 (1.2)
Program staff encouraged me to do well	1.4 (.7)	1.6 (.9)	1.6 (.5)	1.7 (1.3)
Program staff earned my respect	1.8 (.8)	1.8 (1.2)	1.7 (.9)	1.8 (1.2)
Program staff showed me (my child) how to stay out of trouble	1.6 (.8)	1.9 (1.2)	1.7 (.7)	1.8 (1.2)
Program staff did not show me respect	3.4 (.9)	3.4 (1.0)	3.6 (.5)	3.4 (.9)
VIPs helped me take more control of my own life	1.8 (.9)	- -	1.6 (.6)	- -
I am now more hopeful about my child's future	- -	1.8 (1.0)	- -	2.0 (1.2)

Note: Responses were based on (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, and (4) strongly disagree.

Ironically, given the program's focus on family relationships, the youth did not believe that the program helped them get along better with their families. In contrast, parents felt that the program had helped family relations. Youth and parents believed that the program experience had helped the youth to get along with other kids. This is a curious difference of opinion between the sets of respondents which may become a bit more clear as we consider the qualitative data consisting of responses to opened ended interview questions, where respondents are freer to share more about their experiences in the program.

A variety of open-ended questions were asked at time one and time two to elicit opinions regarding what youth and parents found most and least helpful, what they liked most and least. To simplify these qualitative data, we have combined the responses for youth across time two and time three; we have done the same for parents. The result is a rough ranking of how often youth or parents identified a particular element of the program being liked or disliked, helpful or unhelpful.

Twenty five parents made one hundred and thirty-five responses about things they found helpful or liked in the VIPs program. Parents identified evening program staff twenty-one times as being helpful. Being with other parents and their kids also received twenty-one responses. Content regarding communication skills was mentioned sixteen times by parents as an element that they liked and/or found helpful. That was followed closely by content regarding anger management, which was mentioned fifteen times. Identifying content generally without specifying its nature followed with ten. Recognizing that they were not alone, that other families faced similar problems, was reported nine times. Parents noted juvenile probation offers as being a helpful element of the program eight times.

The following comments provide a richer picture of what these parents found helpful or liked about the program:

Mother: "It was good having PO's checking up on son; keeping him straight by showing him that choices have consequences. The classes helped me understand kids and in trying to see the kids' point of view. And the staff were respectful and helpful."

Mother: "Talking out our problems and how to do better. Seeing that there are other people in the same position. Everything was helpful."

Grandmother: "Learned to talk with grandson about things. We grew closer. I learned how to stay calm, communicate and listen. There's lots more respect – both ways."

Step-dad: "The program was very interesting and much needed. Having parents and kids together was the best thing. Started off with more distance between parents and kids. That distance closed over time. Helped me deal with my son."

Mother: "Learning new tools for dealing with anger. Further opening of channels of communication with my daughter and husband. Interacting with other parents with similar challenges."

Fewer responses were recorded regarding the least helpful or liked aspects of the program; thirteen parents offered thirty-two responses. Inconvenience was the most frequently identified dislike – noted ten times. How kids treated their parents was mentioned four times, as was the belief that the program was too short.

Youth responses to these open items were not greatly different from those of parents. Twenty-nine youth made one hundred and fifty-two comments regarding what they found most helpful or liked most about the program. Having the opportunity to be in a group of kids and parents was identified most often (28) by the youth. Anger management content (23) was the content area mentioned most often. Program staff (18), communication skills (17), and having their own family members with them in the program (16) were identified as helpful. Juvenile

probation officers and activities were each noted eleven times as being elements of the program that the youth liked or found helpful. Rather surprisingly, the control aspects were mentioned positively a half dozen times; references were made to having to call in and that drug testing helped them stay out of trouble.

The following comments from youth are indicative of what they liked about being in the program:

Male: "Learning how to love my grandmother better. Learning how to compromise in many situations. Learning how to deal with friends – how to pick better friends."

Female: "Anger management classes. That mom could go with me. That the staff were helpful."

Male: "Learning how to talk about problems without fighting. Mom and I learned how to talk to each other rather than yell. Learned how to talk about problems in a group."

Male: "Helped me change to not get mad at everyone. Taught me to teach others how to work problems out. Really helped me and my dad. We really don't yell at each other."

Male: "They helped me get a job and stay in school. There was someone checking up on me."

While there were fewer negative responses regarding the program (twenty youth offered forty-four responses), certainly some youth found the program to be very intrusive. Seventeen responses cited aspects of control (probation officers, curfew, drug testing, having to call in when they wanted to leave home, and being checked up on at home or at school) as the feature of the program which youth experienced as most distasteful.

Female: "VIPs probation officers getting on my case and placing me on house arrest for nothing."

Male: "JPO's going in and messing up your room for no reason."

Male: "PO's showing up at school."

Male: "Having that guy (probation staff) come to school to harass me. Didn't go to program because of the way I was treated. Didn't like the guy who came to tell me that I was going to be locked up.""

Constraining impact on use of free time was mentioned in this regard nine times. And even though youth, as a whole, were most pleased by being part of a group of parents and kids who tried to support one another, group interactions such as "being picked on" or "having to talk" were noted eight times as being unhelpful or disliked. Rock climbing and going to basketball games were also each mentioned five times.

The aspect of VIPs which received the most responses from youth and parents as being most helpful or best liked was the group itself. Many individuals commented on the value of having a place to go where they felt "supported" and "respected." While staff provided some of that support and respect, participants also pointed to each other as valuable resources. Some reported feeling less "alone." At least a few of the parents have remained in contact since the program. As one mother stated, "It was a chance of meeting parents in the same situation since single parents helped and listened to each other. The teachers were concerned with family problems and were very into it. They made you feel they really cared. It felt like one big family. Everyone was concerned for each other."

Some observers of the VIPs program worry that it may become more of a support group than a teaching environment. It does seem clear from the voices of both parents and youth that the group is regarded by many participants as supportive. Given the history of school difficulties and troubles with the law in many of these families, there was at times almost a registering of shock that "the system" would provide this kind of resource for them. A good number of respondents mourned the end of the program. A mother lamented that the least helpful aspect of

the program was, "The fact that it's over. When my son was in the program he watched his language, now no program, no program guides."

YOUTH AND PARENT ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

The hope of program planners and practitioners who assemble a team of teacher/facilitators to work with youth and their parents on such topics as controlling anger, communication and problem solving skills is that information will translate into changed attitudes and behavior patterns, that is, better anger management, more effective communication, and enhanced problem solving. In order to address the possibility of impact on participant behaviors, a series of questions were asked regarding participant satisfaction with their family and communication patterns. These individual questions and resulting scales were constructed by David Olson et. al. (*Family Inventories, 1992*). In the Parent Adolescent Communication scale items, the word mother was replaced with father, grandmother and so on when appropriate.

Time one measures taken before the start of the program appear in Tables 4 and 5. Overall, youth and parents seemed fairly satisfied with how things were in their families. Perhaps it is safer to say that they for the most part took a neutral or middle of the road posture toward their families. The only items for youth which fell outside the generally satisfied response category was "how much your parents argue" and "how chores are assigned in your family."

Table 4
Youth and Parent Self-Reports of Family Satisfaction at Time 1
Individual Item Analysis

Item	Youth Reports M (sd) N = 45	Parent Reports M (sd) N =45
How satisfied are you with:		
How close you feel to your family	3.8 (1.1)	3.8 (1.2)
Family's willingness to try things	3.2 (1.2)	3.6 (1.0)
How much your parents argue	2.6 (1.5)	3.1 (1.4)
The amount of time spent with your family	3.6 (1.1)	3.6 (1.2)
Your freedom to be alone	3.7 (1.4)	3.2 (1.3)
You family's acceptance of your friends	3.1 (1.4)	3.8 (1.3)
Your family's decision making process	3.2 (1.3)	3.3 (1.1)
The number of fun things your family does	3.2 (1.6)	3.5 (1.2)
Your ability to speak in your family	3.6 (1.1)	4.0 (1.2)
How often your parents make decisions	3.2 (1.9)	3.7 (.9)
How fair criticism is in your family	2.9 (1.3)	2.8 (1.2)
The way your family solves problems	3.0 (1.2)	3.0 (1.1)
How chores are assigned in your family	3.3 (1.9)	2.7 (1.3)
How clear rules are in your family	3.6 (1.0)	3.6 (1.2)

Note: Items are from the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, and Wilson, 1992). Responses are based on (1) dissatisfied, (2) somewhat dissatisfied, (3) generally satisfied, (4) very satisfied, and (5) extremely satisfied.

Table 5
Youth and Parent Self-Reports of Parent-
(Mother) Adolescent Communication at Time 1
Individual Item Analysis

Item	Youth Reports M (sd) N =45	Parent Reports M (sd) N =45
I am very satisfied with how my mother (child) and I talk	3.8 (1.3)	3.6 (1.3)
I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother (child)	3.6 (1.4)	3.7 (1.4)
My mother (child) tries to understand my point of view	3.7 (1.3)	3.3 (1.4)
It is easy to express my feelings to my mother (child)	3.4 (1.3)	3.6 (1.4)
My mother (child) is a good listener	3.6 (1.5)	3.0 (1.4)
If I were in trouble I could tell my mother (child)	3.6 (1.4)	4.3 (1.3)
I openly show affection to my mother (child)	3.6 (1.3)	4.5 (1.0)
I get honest answers from my mother (child)	3.9 (1.2)	3.1 (1.3)
I can discuss my beliefs with my mother (child)	3.9 (1.3)	4.3 (1.1)
My mother (child) can tell how I'm feeling	3.7 (1.4)	4.1 (1.0)
I have trouble believing everything my mother (child) tells me	2.6 (1.4)	3.6 (1.4)
I am sometimes afraid to ask my (mother) child what I want	2.5 (1.5)	2.0 (1.4)
My mother (child) says things to me which should be left unsaid	2.5 (1.4)	3.1 (1.7)
When we are having a problem, I give my mother (child) the silent treatment	2.8 (1.4)	3.1 (1.6)
I am careful about what I say to my mother (child)	3.9 (1.3)	3.5 (1.5)
I have a tendency to say things which should be left unsaid	3.4 (1.5)	2.9 (1.5)
There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother (child)	3.7 (1.4)	3.3 (1.5)
My mother (child) nags me	2.8 (1.5)	2.9 (1.6)
My mother (child) insults me when she is angry	2.3 (1.5)	3.2 (1.7)
I can't tell my mother (child) how I really feel about some things	2.7 (1.4)	2.8 (1.6)

Note: Items are from the Mother-Adolescent Communication Scale (Olson et.al., 1992). Responses are based on (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) moderately agree, and (5) strongly agree.

Parents were very satisfied with their "ability to speak in your family." They were somewhat dissatisfied with "how fair criticism is in your family" and "how chores are assigned in your family." On the communication scale, youth and parents average scores were in the neither agree nor disagree category.

These questions were also asked at time two (at conclusion of evening program) and again at time three (three months later). Resulting tables appear in Appendix A, Tables 1-4. They are placed there to save space in the body of text of this report and because they yield very few significant changes. We will simply note here that regarding family satisfaction, youth report at time two statistically significant higher levels of satisfaction with "the amount of time spent with your family," "your ability to speak in your family," and "how chores are assigned in your family." Parents also report a statistically significant higher level of satisfaction post program with the amount of time spent together. Responses to open-ended questions confirm the feeling on the part of both parents and youth that the program offered an opportunity for more interaction and bonding. There were, of course, some who resented the time the program required of them. These individuals did not like spending time together. One mother complained that the worst part of the program was "driving to the program with my kid in the car."

The individual items regarding family satisfaction are combined into a scale depicting perceptions of what Olson refers to as family cohesion and family adaptability. These two sub-scores are then totaled to obtain a summary family satisfaction score. Like wise the communication items are aggregated into two sub-scales: open family communication and problems in family communication. They then are summed a total family communication score.

On the family satisfaction scale and on the family communication scale, youth in this study are very similar to the norms established by Olson et. al. By interviewing over 2000 individuals. That is, VIPs youth appear to be as satisfied with their families as youth in general (Appendix, A, Table 5). The only sub-scale that shows any significant change related to participation in VIPs is family adaptability. Youth rate their families as being more adaptable at time two. That rating drops off again at time three.

Parents present an interesting puzzle as we consider their ratings of family satisfaction and family communication. In the first place, their scores are consistently lower than the norms for established for the scales. However, scores for family cohesion, total family satisfaction, open family communication and total family communication significantly drop at time two, that is, at the end of the program (Appendix A, Table 6). Each of these scores rebounds at time three, but not enough to yield statistical significance.

What might these data reflect? It is quite plausible that at time one these parents had an inflated or idealized image of their families. This suggestion would correspond with the fact that only eight parents before the program started hoped that they, themselves, might change as well as their child. Entering the program may have proven to be a needed reality check. It is also quite likely that for some of these parents staff provided enough information to prompt a desire for change. Change often requires hard work and frequently involves pain. It is not surprising that therapists often talk about darkness preceding the dawn. A mother lends credence to this explanation as she commented at time two on the helpfulness of the program, "The program hit some nerves which can appear negative at first." By time three, she wanted "more" and was concerned that effects might "vanish" without more elaboration.

Another way of getting at possible changes in behavior and attitude is to consider levels of youth responsibility and empathy. Results for the questions regarding these two areas appears in Appendix 9, Table. With one exception, there are no changes related to personal responsibility and empathy. The exception is that at time three more youth are likely to agree that they "accept punishment without getting mad."

Youth and parents were asked a series of questions regarding how likely in the next week they were likely to shout at another person or be shouted at or hit another person or be hit. Parents showed no change in responses over time (Appendix A, Table 10). Shouting received "somewhat likely" scores; hitting received somewhat unlikely to very unlikely scores. The youth reported being significantly less liked to be shouted at time three and also less likely to shout at someone their own age (Table 6).

In addition to the above attempts to develop a quantitative base to address the issue of behavior and attitude change, a number of open-ended questions were also asked. It is likely already apparent to the reader as we have shared information about what participants liked best or found most helpful about the program that many respondents did believe that their attitudes and behaviors changed because of participating in the program.

Over seventy percent of the youth at time two and over eighty percent at time three believed that they had changed some due to their participation (Table 7). And eighty percent at time two and time three indicated that their parent had changed due to being in the program.

These perceived changes were not enough to keep many of these youth out of further trouble with the law or to magically wipe out difficulties within families, yet they were substantial enough for youth to cite specific changes.

Table 6
Youth Perceptions of Future Behavior at Times 1, 2, and 3

Item	Time 1 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 45	Time 2 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 31	Time 3 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 16
How likely is it that during the next week you will:			
Shout at someone in your family	2.4 (1.2)	2.5 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)
Be shouted at by someone in your family	2.3 (1.0)	2.5 (1.2)	3.0 (1.0)
Hit someone in your family	3.7 (.8)	3.7 (.6)	3.7 (.9)
Shout at a person your own age	2.6 (1.1)	2.5 (1.2)	2.9 (1.1)
Be shouted at by a person your own age	2.8 (1.1)	2.7 (1.2)	3.0 (1.0)
Hit someone your own age	3.1 (1.0)	3.3 (1.0)	3.4 (1.0)
Be hit by someone your own age	3.4 (.9)	3.4 (.9)	3.4 (.8)

Note: Responses were based on (1) very likely, (2) somewhat likely, (3) somewhat unlikely, and (4) very unlikely. Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

- a. Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 2 and Time 3.

TABLE 7
YOUTH AND PARENT PERCEPTION OF CHANGE

Post Program				Three Months Post Program			
Item	Yes	No	N		Yes	No	N
Youth:							
Changed Self	71% (22)	29% (9)	31		81% (13)	19% (3)	16
Changed Parent	81% (21)	19% (5)	26		81% (13)	19% (3)	16
Parents:							
Changed Self	67% (16)	33% (8)	24		80% (8)	20% (2)	11
Changed Child	79% (19)	21% (5)	24		91% (10)	9% (1)	11

While their responses were often cryptic, the youths' own words point to desired change.

Male: "Learned about drugs and stopped doing drugs."

Male: "Helped me communicate with dad more."

Male: "Yes, my temper is better. I don't blow my top as easy."

Male: "Yes, helped me realize how my getting in trouble affects everybody."

Male: "Yes, it's not like I'm a new person, but it changed me."

Female: "Yes, helped me control my anger and I see things in a different way. We get along better now."

For many of these youth it was easier to point to specific changes in a parent:

Male: "She (mother) makes eye contact with me. She's not wagging her finger at me."

Male: "Yes, controlling (grandmother's) anger. The program helped things by far."

Male: "Yes, Dad was more understanding from half way through [the program] to the end. Was a great weight off his shoulders to start dealing better with family issues."

Male: "Yes, changed my mom a lot because she had a chance to find out a lot of things about me she didn't know before."

Male: "Yes, helped mother a little. Helped her deal with her anger. She doesn't jump to conclusions as much. Much more into listening and communication."

The reader may recall that prior to the start of the evening program only eight of the parents (18%) indicated that they hoped the program would lead to changes in themselves as well as in their youngsters. At the end of the eight week program, over two-thirds of the parents said that the program had changed them in some way; eighty percent of those responding at time three indicated the same. It seems quite evident that one result of program participation was getting a fair number of parents to realize that they too had to change in order to make things better for themselves and their children. Of those initial eight who had hoped for change, four

reported having done so. Two were parents of youth who had dropped from the program. And the other two who had completed the program saw no change in themselves. So twelve additional parents by the end of the classes could be added to those who saw themselves not only as "part of the problem," but also as "part of the solution." The family systems orientation of the program content seems to have taken hold at least minimally.

Parents spoke to specific changes in the following ways:

Father: "I've learned to calm myself down. Not to jump at every action he (son) does, but to take some time before I react."

Grandmother: "Yes, sure did. Even helps with raising my other kids. Helps me deal with younger kids and grandkids."

Mother: "Yes, I learned I had to change myself rather than change my son."

Mother: "Yes, showed me how to spend more time with my son and showed me it is important to spend time with him."

Mother: "Yes, now we can talk about a lot of things in an easier way. Now I can control my temper in a way. It also helped his stepfather who is now more flexible."

Eighty percent of the parents at time two and ninety percent at time one saw changes in their kids, which they believed were tied into participating in the VIPs program.

Grandmother: "My grandson is doing better; he is trying harder. He learned how to connect to the PO's and others. It was good to see the PO's being stern but understanding of his plight. Seeing that helped me; it helped him. Learning sort of snuck up on you."

Mother: "Yes, it gave him (son) courage to take charge and participate in our relationship. He can call me on things now – if I'm not listening."

Mother: "Yes, gave her (daughter) new tools and heightened her awareness of dealing with her anger and issues. And she has more self-esteem."

Mother: "Yes, he's (son) better with other people and authority. He'll stop before he acts. He hasn't been suspended or kicked out of class."

Father: "Yes, he's (son) been helping me more at home. He is trying to be responsible. Now a reminder can do more. He understands that there are consequences for his actions."

Mother: "Yes, everyday screaming and door slamming has calmed; we've learned to talk better."

So why are the participants more likely to reflect changes in their attitudes and behavior when asked open-ended questions than when asked to respond to closed-ended questions? It is possible that the changes they talk about are not substantial enough to move aggregate numbers on a scale. Perhaps, those who believe that no change took place feel stronger about the absence of change than those who saw change. Perhaps there are more language difficulties with the closed-ended questions; we did have bilingual interviewers to draw upon if a significant language problem occurred, but this problem certainly remains a possibility. It is also possible that these respondents are more comfortable answering open-ended questions. Even in a time frame that allows only for snippets of information, these open-ended questions may encourage and permit parents and youth to share fragments of their own stories.

In any case, over two-thirds of each group, youth and parents, indicated that they had experienced change themselves and witnessed change in their youth or their parent because of the shared involvement in the VIPs program. They did not seem to suggest that they expected miracles within their families or in how their offspring will rub up against the system in the future, yet there was at least reason for some to be more hopeful than when they first entered the program. Perhaps, if nothing else, seeds for change were sown. And some of those may yet bear fruit.

RECIDIVISM

Self-report. Self-reported delinquent activity by VIPs youth reflected a drop in such behavior during the program. Much of this drop continued through the initial three months after completion of program. It must be remembered that eleven of the forty-six youth did not continue and graduate from the program. We only know of one of these youth who did not violate VIPs rules/commit a new offense.

In any case, for those completing the program there is a modest reduction in self-reported delinquent activity from time one to time two to time three. Particularly noteworthy is the drop in acts of violence: picked a fight with someone, hitting or threatening a teacher, attacking someone attempting to seriously hurt, and hitting a parent (Table 8). Although the number of youth is small, the percentage reduction in delinquent activity is often of a magnitude of half or more. Some of the reductions, however, may be attributed to differing lengths of time frames being considered: at time one, a year; time two, two months; time three, three months. Youth also report a drop in alcohol and drug use (Table 9). A few youth did indicate that the program caused them to cease using drugs. They were afraid of showing up dirty on the random urine samples and being sent to a residential program. As one boy plainly said, "The piss tests helped me stop doing drugs." It may seem surprising to some observers that these few youth considered this fairly intrusive surveillance mechanisms as one of the best aspects of their VIPs participation. Of course other participants resented deeply having to submit to random drug testing.

Table 8
Youth Self-Reported Delinquency at Time 1, 2, and 3

Item	Time 1 N =45 % (N)	Time 2 N =31 % (N)	Time 3 N =16 % (N)
Broken or tried to break into a building	21.7 (10)	10.9 (5)	4.3 (2)
Stolen or tried to steal something > \$50	28.3 (13)	4.3 (2)	2.2 (1)
Stolen money or other things from a family Member	30.4 (14)	8.7 (4)	- -
Taken a vehicle for a drive without permission	39.1 (18)	13.0 (6)	6.5 (3)
Damaged property on purpose	32.6 (15)	13.0 (6)	6.5 (3)
Picked a fight with someone	37.0 (17)	10.9 (5)	4.3 (2)
Hit or threatened to hit a teacher	23.9 (11)	- -	2.2 (1)
Attacked someone attempting to seriously hurt them	26.1 (12)	4.3 (2)	4.3 (2)
Run away from home	45.7 (21)	15.2 (7)	4.3 (2)
Been suspended or expelled from school	87.0 (40)	19.6 (9)	8.7 (4)
Hit one of your parents	23.9 (11)	4.3 (2)	4.3 (2)
Sold drugs	43.5 (20)	10.9 (5)	6.5 (3)
Member of a juvenile gang	23.9 (11)	17.4 (8)	13.0 (6)

Note: At Time 1, subjects were asked if they had participated in each of the activities in the past 12 months. At time 2, subjects were asked if they had participated in activities since they started VIPs. At Time 3, subjects were asked if they had participated since they completed VIPs

Table 9
Youth Self-Reported Drug Use at Time 1, 2, and 3

Item	Use in 12 months before VIPs <u>N</u>=45 % (<u>N</u>)	Use at Time 2 <u>N</u>=31 % (<u>N</u>)	Use at Time 3 <u>N</u>=16 % (<u>N</u>)
Frequency of alcohol use			
None at all	32.6 (15)	51.6 (16)	68.8 (11)
Less than once a month	26.1 (12)	22.6 (7)	12.5 (2)
Once a month	19.6 (9)	9.7 (3)	12.5 (2)
Once a week	10.9 (5)	12.9 (4)	--- ---
Once a day	10.9 (5)	3.2 (1)	6.3 (1)
Frequency of marijuana use			
None at all	30.4 (14)	67.7 (21)	81.3 (13)
Less than once a month	13.0 (6)	19.4 (6)	--- ---
Once a month	15.2 (7)	3.2 (1)	6.3 (1)
Once a week	10.9 (5)	3.2 (1)	6.3 (1)
Once a day	30.4 (14)	6.5 (2)	6.3 (1)
Frequency of hallucinogen use			
None at all	63.0 (29)	80.6 (25)	87.5 (14)
Less than once a month	26.1 (12)	6.5 (2)	12.5 (2)
Once a month	8.7 (4)	9.7 (3)	--- ---
Once a week	2.2 (1)	3.2 (1)	--- ---
Once a day	--- ---	--- ---	--- ---
Frequency of other drug use			
None at all	76.1 (35)	90.3 (28)	100.0 (16)
Less than once a month	17.4 (8)	3.2 (1)	--- ---
Once a month	2.2 (1)	3.2 (1)	--- ---
Once a week	4.3 (2)	3.2 (1)	--- ---
Once a day	--- ---	--- ---	--- ---

Note: Self-reported drug use at Time 2 and Time 3 assess use in the past three months.

Official Records. Three other measures of recidivism were obtained by checking official juvenile court records. The four classes of graduating VIPs youth numbering thirty-five were tracked for a six month period. Graduates (28) of the first three classes were followed for a twelve month period. The initial indicator of recidivism was whether the youth reappeared in court. A second indicator was "sanctioned by the court," that is, reappearance resulting in the court taking some kind of sanctioning action rather than dismissing the case. And a third indicator had to do with severity of offense. The most serious charge during the six or twelve month follow-up period was considered. Severity levels were none, less than the most serious charge leading to VIPs referral, same as, and more serious than.

Each VIPs youth was matched with a youth on traditional probation. These youth were matched on age (+/-three months); gender; ethnicity; prior referral to court; and presence of a "violence" referral similar to the VIPs youth with whom the comparison youth was matched. The median number of referrals to court for each group was five.

At six months after program completion (Table 10), VIPs youth were less likely to have reappeared in court than those youth in the matched comparison sample. While half of the VIPs youth had been referred to court during this six month time frame over eight out of ten of the matched sample had reappeared. This difference yields a statistically significant chi square at the .01 level. Although the number of youth reappearing by the end of the twelve months follow-up

TABLE 10
REAPPEARANCE IN COURT

Group	Six Months				12 Months		N
	Yes	No			Yes	No	
VIPs	51% (18)	49% (17)	35		71% (16)	29% (8)	28
Comparison	86% (30)	14% (5)	35		93% (26)	7% (2)	28

Chi square 9.6 $\geq .01$

Chi square 4.4 $\geq .05$

SANCTIONED BY THE COURT

Group	Six Months		N		Twelve Months		N
	Yes	No			Yes	No	
VIPs	46% (16)	54% (19)	35		57% (16)	42% (12)	28
Comparison	57% (20)	43% (15)	35		75% (21)	25% (7)	28

Chi square n. s.

Chi square n. s.

TABLE 11
SEVERITY OF OFFENSE PRE AND POST PROGRAM

Six Months			12 Months		
Severity	VIPs	Comparison		VIPs	Comparison
Less Severe	77% (27)	71% (25)		61% (17)	64% (18)
Same	20% (7)	23% (8)		26% (8)	32% (9)
More Severe	3 % (1)	6% (2)		11% (3)	4% (1)
N	35	35		28	28

period increased, the differences between the groups were maintained: 71% compared to 93%. And again this difference is statistically significant at the .05 level.

The VIPs youth, during the initial six month period, are about as likely to be sanctioned by the court as are the traditional probation comparison group (Table 12). At the conclusion of the twelve month period, VIPs youth (57%) are less likely to be sanctioned than their counterparts (75%), but these differences are not statistically significant at the .05 level.

In terms of offense severity (Table 13), there is hardly any difference between the VIPs youth and the comparison youth at six month or twelve month check points. In both groups, about a quarter of the youth reoffend at the same or higher levels of severity as before the program start up. And by the twelve month point, a little more than a third of each group has done so. The vast majority of youth in both groups either did not offend or did so in a less severe manner. There are no statistically significant differences between these groups regarding severity.

1995, 1996, and 1997 Cohorts. In order to obtain a broader picture of VIPs youth and their reoffending patterns, we set out to explore one year follow-up measures for youth who went through the program during the calendar years 1995, 1996, and 1997. List of participants were developed by conferring with NMCDR and Probation and Parole staff. Due to computer glitches and office moves over the ensuing years, it seems unlikely that we have a complete list of participants.

Thirty-seven youth were identified and followed for the 1995 cohort. There was no record information regarding two of these youth so we have data on thirty-five youth from that cohort. Numbers for the other two cohorts are as follows: 1996, twenty-three youth identified and twenty-one useable cases; 1997, thirty-four youth identified and thirty-two useable cases.

TABLE 14

**1995, 1996, 1997 VIPs YOUTH REAPPEARANCE IN COURT
AND SANCTIONED BY COURT**

Cohort	Reappearance 12 mos.		Sanctioned 12 mos.	
	% Yes	N	% Yes	N
1995	66% (23)	35	54% (19)	35
1996	76% (16)	21	62% (13)	21
1997	53% (17)	32	44% (14)	32

TABLE 15
SEVERITY OF OFFENSE PRE AND POST PROGRAM

Severity	1995	1996	1997
Less Severe	71% (24)	76% (16)	81% (26)
Same	15% (5)	9% (2)	16% (5)
More Severe	15% (5)	14% (3)	3% (1)
N	34	21	32

While for the 1998-99 VIPs youth the median number of court referrals before entering the VIPs class was five with a range of two to thirteen, for the 1995 group the median was four with a range of one to ten. For the 1996 group, half the youngsters had three or more court referrals with a range of one to eight. And for the 1997 group, the median was four with a range of one to ten. These numbers would suggest that the 1998-99 group had penetrated the formal juvenile justice system further than had their predecessors before entering the evening component of VIPs.

Table 14 depicts the percentage of these youth reappearing in court and the percentage of those sanctioned by the court within twelve months from completing the program. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the 1995 and 1996 youth had reappeared in court during this time frame and over half of them had been sanctioned by the court. These data are very similar to those reported above in Table 12 for the youth who are the primary focus of this study. The 1997 cohort rates of reappearances and being sanctioned are lower: 53% of the youth reappeared in court and 44% were sanctioned by the court.

Like the 1998-1999 youth, the youth from the earlier time periods do not reflect much increase in severity of charges after their VIPs participation (Table 15). Thirty percent of the 1995 cohort, twenty-three percent of the 1996 cohort, and nineteen percent of the 1997 cohort had charges that were as serious or more serious than the most serious charge prior to entry into VIPs.

Taken together the self-report data and the official record data regarding recidivism is at least encouraging. Many of these youth continue to be involved in delinquent activity, but their involvement appears to be at a slower rate with less severity than prior to participating in VIPs.

PARENT AND YOUTH SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggested changes by parents mirror rather closely their dislikes; twenty parents made twenty-six suggestions. The only cluster of responses (ten of twenty-six) favored lengthening the program and follow-up. A grandmother made that case most strongly: "Make it longer. PO's do a good job, but it isn't enough as the program needs more money and manpower to extend it. There are not enough dollars for counselors and PO's." A father offered, "Some follow-up would be useful for reinforcing courses that were taught." Another father pointed out that the problems families face will continue and "should get some help like that available in the program when problems resurface."

Other recommendations for change centered on scheduling, but there was no agreement among the respondents. Some wanted to shorten the sessions. A couple wanted the sessions to be held earlier in the day, and others wanted them later. No doubt as with most any meeting, scheduling will continue to be a problem no matter when the meeting is held.

A mother who was unhappy when we first interviewed her with being "mandated" to the program because her son was caught in possession of a knife made no suggested changes when interviewed at time three. Her response to whether she had suggestions: "No, I was glad to be a part of it even though I complained a lot at the beginning."

Youth had very little to offer in terms of making suggestions regarding program changes; sixteen youth made twenty suggestions. The only small cluster of four comments centered around having more field trips and including the parents on those trips. Two girls were particularly caustic with their remarks. "Lay off a little," said one. "[Probation officers] should get a sense of humor." And the other complained, "Change everything. Don't piss us off even more."

At the end of the evening program and three months later, we asked parents whether they would recommend this program to other youth in trouble, their parents and guardians. Similarly, youth were asked if they would recommend this program to other youth in trouble with the law.

All the parents at time two and time three recommended the program to others facing similar difficulties. Responses ranged from wholehearted enthusiasm to some qualifying reservations.

Step-dad: "Yes, I think it can really work to stop these kids; including the parents is a key element."

Mother: "Yes, because it teaches parents how to deal with the youth of today."

Mother: "Yes, but you get what you want out of it. So they need to be open to it."

Mother: "Yes, it might not have worked for me (son had reoffended), but it can work for some. If you get to one out of five, it's better than zero."

Grandmother: "Yes, I've seen the results. I haven't seen total results, but it makes a difference. We can keep applying the lessons to our benefit."

Many of these parents were initially apprehensive, reluctant or resistant to being involved in the VIPs program. They went along to support their child or because they felt they had to. VIPs was often regarded as the lesser of the bleak options available to them. Yet, by the end of the program, these same parents have become advocates for the program.

Youth were also quite willing to recommend the program to other youth in trouble. At the end of the evening program, twenty-eight of the thirty-one program graduates would refer other kids to the program. One youth indicated that he had actually done so. All sixteen youth interviewed three months later would recommend the program. Respondents at that time included four youth interviewed in detention or other residential settings.

As with the parents some of these recommendations depended upon the readiness of the youth being referred:

Male: "Yes, it's a good program. If you want it to work, it will; but you have to want it."

Female: "Yes, cause it helps. It can change your life (she stopped doing alcohol and drugs when she started the program). I'd be locked up if not for the program."

Female: "Yes, because it will help them so much. Makes you think twice before you act. Shows you how to make the right decisions."

Male: "Yes, if it's someone who needs it and is willing and wants to get off probation."

Male: "Yes, good cuz you get to talk about the future, and because they teach you skills."

The following female represents well the three youth who would not recommend the program to anyone. She declared, "No, it seems like a waste. You'll screw up on one of the agreements unless you give up all the enjoyable things in life."

Even with the qualifications and caveats given by parents and youth regarding willingness of any future referrals to be open to change, it is remarkable to find a juvenile justice program where ninety-five percent of its participants see enough promise in a program to recommend it to others. This is particularly true when we realize that the majority of these youth and parents are still dealing with the juvenile justice system. Evidently they value any kind of change, even incremental change.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

A number of issues emerge from this study which have implications for how any jurisdiction might want to develop a program similar to VIPs. As in Bernalillo County, New

Mexico, program developers will be faced with difficult choices requiring tradeoffs and compromises as they consider how to best manage scarce resources for working with violence prone youth.

1. Population to be served. On what kinds of youth and families the program will focus is an issue which will likely be revisited over and over again. In New Mexico, there is pressure from the judiciary to increasingly open the VIPs program to youth with impulse control problems, who are victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, and who are being raised in a "culture of violence." Some worry that this broadening will result in "widening the net" bringing into the program youth and families who would otherwise not be so deeply lodged in the formal justice system. To these folks, VIPs is a program designed and best suited for youth who have a substantial history of committing violence. The program would provide a last chance for youth before being committed to a residential program.

In this study, half the youth were before the court on at least their sixth referral. The range was from three to nineteen. Each youth had at least one charge involving violence or threat of violence. Delinquent careers are usually haphazard, that is, it is difficult to find individuals who only do violent deeds. A referral for violence may be followed by a number of referrals for less serious offenses before another referral for violence occurs. Therefore, the pure "violent delinquent" is hard to define and it is thereby difficult to construct a program solely for such youth. Furthermore, these purer forms of "violent youth" have likely already, because of their violent acts, penetrated further into the justice system than probation.

Careful screening is critical for the operation of a VIPs type program. First, placing a youngster in a program designed to reduce violence carries a fairly powerful label for the youth involved and for those decision-makers who will render decisions about the youth in the future.

Whether the youngster benefits or not from the program, the fact that he or she has been involved in a violence prevention program is a label that will likely stick. Thus attaching that label to a youngster must be done with care. Second, given the labor intensity of a VIPs program as well as limited programming resources, it is paramount to place youth and families in the program who both need and are most likely to benefit from the program.

We expect that part of the tension in any jurisdiction around who the program should serve hinges on how hopeful staff are in working with youth who have demonstrated chronic violent careers versus working with youth who appear on the verge of embarking on such careers. It seems likely that the former have already penetrated deeper into the system and would be regarded as too high risks and that VIPs, when successful, would prevent others from following that same path. Recent horrific examples of school violence have shown very clearly the stakes involved in screening for a program such as VIPs.

2. Involvement of Parents. The most unusual element of VIPs is that it directly involves the parents in the program. Changing the understandings and dynamics of the family system is as important to judges who refer, to probation officers who monitor, to instructors who teach and facilitate as is change in the behavior of a youngster. The two are inextricably tied, for good or bad.

Traditionally, a program such as VIPs would have been run solely for the youth with the hope that somehow with the knowledge of new ways of thinking about anger management, problem solving and so on, they would be able to return to their families and not be caught up in old patterns of behaving. With the focus being on parents and youth, there is at least a chance for some lasting impact.

Data from this study certainly suggest that parents and youth, even those who were reluctant in the beginning, appreciate the opportunity to learn new ways of working through family problems and conflict. While these families come to the program with a history of difficulties with schools and the justice system, they also come with their own strengths and resources including a desire for a less conflicted family and hope for their children. Can the modest changes observed among these families be enhanced? That is the question each jurisdiction can ask as it designs its own violence prevention program. It is doubtful that focusing resources only on the child will do so. A continuing concerted effort targeted at families holds considerable promise.

3. Support group or teaching model. Other jurisdictions attempting to replicate the VIPs model will likely experience similar tugs and pulls about the purposes of the evening program. Those who originally developed the program in Bernalillo County envisioned a teaching model where youth and a parent/guardian would gather and be taught a knowledge base and skills related to anger management, communication, problem solving and many other topics.

While this focus continues, there has been a growing sense that the evening classes have become a support group for families, particularly for parents. The shift away from formally trained teachers to youth workers has likely made this feeling more pronounced. And now there is a sense on the part of some program staff that the teaching component should be strengthened again.

Interviews with parents and youth make it quite clear that one of the aspects of the program most valued is that it is a supportive environment. Over and over, parents affirm their need for support and their feeling that they receive it in the VIPs program, often from the

instructors, from other parents and youth, and to the surprise of some, even from the probation officers.

In the context of that support, they pick up parenting tips, experience the value of teamwork, and come to a better understanding of how their own actions (both youth and parents) affect everyone around them. Based on what we have heard and seen, we expect that it is the feeling of support, respect, and warmth which caught these folks' attention first making it possible for them to be open to new information and new learning.

4. Breadth or depth of skill development. A perennial issue for any training program is the breadth and depth of curriculum content. A male youth commented that he had "learned a little about a lot" in the program. While this was intended and recorded as a positive comment, it also underscores the breadth/depth issue.

As we have seen from participant responses, many parents and youth believed that they had learned important skills about thinking before acting, controlling tempers, and being able listen better. There was also an expressed need for more: For more skills, for more coaching, for more information, for more support.

Availability of resources impacts the scope and nature of curriculum content. Yet, given a certain amount of dollars program staff still must decide to offer a survey approach or an intensely focused training. For example, one could spend the entire eight week period on anger management or on communication.

Data from this study do not inform us as to whether one approach is better than the other. We expect that either approach would be welcomed by many individuals like those participating in this study.

5. Length of program. Several parents and a few youth wished that the program would continue for a longer period of time. This desire may be driven, in part, by the issue of depth and breadth. That is, a longer time frame would allow for more in depth information. It may also express a wish to continue being part of an environment in which they found support and respect. And it may also reflect some fear as these families went back to doing things on their own with fewer outside linkages.

Length of program revolves largely around a resource allocation issue. How many youth and families can be impacted with "x" amount of dollars? Although the question goes beyond the scope of this study, it seems likely that longer training periods would have more lasting impact. In any case, eight weeks is a short time frame for expecting to change family relationships and behaviors that may have taken generations to develop. Would twelve weeks be more optimal? Twenty?

6. Follow-up transition. When we interviewed parents three months after their children graduated from the evening program, a grandmother reported that during the program she had seen changes in her grandson. "But it didn't stick. Nothing he did in the program carried on." These words, too often heard about juvenile justice programs, carry a lot of pain for many parents, program staff, and even for some of the youth.

Very few youth or parents reported contact with VIPs staff during the three month period after graduating from the evening program. Not only is the "support group" withdrawn, for most of them, so is the intense surveillance. And both elements of VIPs are reported by at least some individuals as helpful in keeping the youth out of further trouble. A few parents reported at time three that they had stayed in contact with a few of the other parents in their group; we do not know the nature of this support or whether it continues. Parents, in particular, see the need for

some kind of less intense follow-up transition component for the program. During the interviews at the end of the program, some parents and youth expressed a modicum of anxiety about the future without continuing support.

For most jurisdictions, the nature of any follow-up component will likely depend again upon availability of resources. Yet, a fair amount of resources will be expended for the intensive probation and the training. A transition program with systematic contact, perhaps further coaching, and even inviting the group to gather occasionally over a three to four month period may do much to reinforce learning and provide a cushion for parents and youth as they attempt to keep from falling back into old destructive behavior patterns.

7. Coordination. A program like VIPs managed by a public and a private not-for-profit partnership requires a significant amount of coordination in order to avoid the kinds of clashes and distrust which would threaten the continuing existence of the program. This commitment to coordination will be necessary at the administrative levels and at the levels where the program is actually implemented. Just about every activity in this kind of program involves a level of coordination whether it be scheduling, sharing information about working with particularly difficult families, changing curriculum content, or developing a transition emphasis.

The program will function at its best when juvenile probation officers and instructors respect and trust each other even though their primary functions might be quite divergent. Such respect and trust will be built by the participants sitting down periodically and talking about what they do and how what they do intersect with each other.

A number of parents and youth describe VIPs as being one large family. And as with any family, participants are quick to notice when those in charge are not presenting a united front. Ideally, staff have an opportunity to model for all youth and parents how a family can work

through inherent differences of opinion and differences in role. One of the worst things that could happen in this type of program is staff playing each other off against the other or being disrespectful of one another. In order to believe in a better way of dealing with conflict or in communicating with one another, parents and youth want to see staff "practice what they preach."

CONCLUSION

The joint effort by the Bernalillo County Juvenile Probation and Parole Office and the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution to develop a program to reduce violent behavior of youth who have demonstrated proneness toward violence has yielded at least some modestly encouraging results. Its dual focus on changing attitudes and behaviors of both youth and parents remains promising.

Youth and parents report some changes in attitude and behavior, particularly in terms of anger control and communication patterns. Youth report fewer incidences of delinquent acts during and after participating in VIPs. And they reappear in court at a slower rate than do youth in a matched comparison group of youth on traditional probation.

Parents, in particular, express satisfaction with the program and point to changes that have occurred in themselves and in their children as a result of being in VIPs. Their expectations regarding their children's chances of staying out of trouble remain quite tempered. Yet, most of these parents welcomed the efforts by probation staff and teachers to support them and teach them some alternative ways of thinking about discipline, communication and ways of controlling their own anger. Several parents indicated that they believe the VIPs experience will help them with their other children. Strikingly, all the parents and ninety percent of the youth interviewed

after completing the evening program would recommend it to other parents and youth facing similar difficulties.

It is a huge expectation to believe that an eight week program of teaching, coaching and support regarding interpersonal and parenting skills coupled with very intensive probation can alter family patterns that are likely the products of generations, particularly for families who have a history of difficulties in the schools and with the law. That the VIPs experience shows any positive results is rather surprising.

Although the number of participants in this study is small, it appears that for some individuals, tendencies toward violence have been disrupted. For how long, we do not know. Yet even a disruption may save a life.

APPENDIX A

Table A-1
Youth Self-Reports of Family Satisfaction at Times 1, 2, and 3
Individual Item Analysis

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N = 45	Time 2 M (sd) N = 29	Time 3 M (sd) N = 16
How satisfied are you with:			
How close you feel to your family	3.8 (1.1)	3.9 (1.1)	3.6 (1.2)
Family's willingness to try things	3.2 (1.2)	3.5 (1.7)	3.3 (1.4)
How much your parents argue	2.6 (1.5)	2.5 (1.6)	2.5 (1.3)
The amount of time spent with your family	3.6 (1.1) ^a	4.6 (1.7)	3.2 (1.0)
Your freedom to be alone	3.7 (1.4)	3.4 (1.7)	4.1 (.9)
You family's acceptance of your friends	3.1 (1.4)	3.2 (1.4)	2.9 (1.3)
Your family's decision making process	3.2 (1.3)	3.4 (1.3)	3.0 (1.0) ^b
The number of fun things your family does	3.2 (1.6)	3.5 (1.2)	2.9 (1.4)
Your ability to speak in your family	3.6 (1.1) ^a	4.0 (1.1)	3.9 (1.1)
How often your parents make decisions	3.2 (1.9)	3.3 (1.1)	3.1 (1.3)
How fair criticism is in your family	2.9 (1.3)	2.6 (1.4)	2.5 (1.0)
The way your family solves problems	3.0 (1.2)	3.2 (1.2)	2.9 (1.5)
How chores are assigned in your family	3.3 (1.9) ^a	4.1 (1.6)	3.6 (1.0)
How clear rules are in your family	3.6 (1.0)	4.0 (1.1)	3.6 (1.1)

Note: Items are from the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, and Wilson, 1992). Responses are based on (1) dissatisfied, (2) somewhat dissatisfied, (3) generally satisfied, (4) very satisfied, and (5) extremely satisfied. Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2.

^b Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 2 and Time 3.

Table A-2
Youth Self-Reports of Parent-(Mother) Adolescent Communication at Times 1, 2, and 3
Individual Item Analysis

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N=45	Time 2 M (sd) N=31	Time 3 M (sd) N=16
I am very satisfied with how my mother and I talk	3.8 (1.3)	3.8 (1.3)	3.8 (1.0)
I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother	3.6 (1.4)	3.7 (1.2)	3.7 (1.5)
My mother tries to understand my point of view	3.7 (1.3)	3.8 (1.3)	3.9 (1.3)
It is easy to express my feelings to my mother	3.4 (1.3)	3.4 (1.4)	3.1 (1.7)
My mother is a good listener	3.6 (1.5)	3.9 (1.3)	3.9 (1.3)
If I were in trouble I could tell my mother	3.6 (1.4)	3.7 (1.6)	4.2 (1.4) ^b
I openly show affection to my mother	3.6 (1.3)	3.7 (1.4)	3.5 (1.3)
I get honest answers from my mother	3.9 (1.2)	3.7 (1.6)	3.8 (1.4)
I can discuss my beliefs with my mother	3.9 (1.3)	3.6 (1.5)	3.4 (1.2)
My mother can tell how I'm feeling	3.7 (1.4)	3.7 (1.4)	3.1 (1.5) ^b
I have trouble believing everything my mother tells me	2.6 (1.4)	2.7 (1.5)	2.2 (1.3)
I am sometimes afraid to ask my child what I want	2.5 (1.5)	2.9 (1.6)	2.0 (1.0)
My mother says things to me which should be left unsaid	2.5 (1.4)	2.9 (1.5)	2.7 (1.5)
When we are having a problem, I give my mother the silent treatment	2.8 (1.4) ^a	3.0 (1.4)	2.4 (1.4)
I am careful about what I say to my mother	3.9 (1.3)	3.0 (1.4)	3.0 (1.5)
I have a tendency to say things which should be left unsaid	3.4 (1.5)	3.4 (1.5)	3.1 (1.4)
There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother	3.7 (1.4)	3.1 (1.5)	3.0 (1.5)
My mother nags me	2.8 (1.5)	2.8 (1.6)	3.2 (1.4)

My mother insults me when she is angry	2.3 (1.5)	2.3 (1.4)	2.3 (1.3)
I can't tell my mother how I really feel about some things	2.7 (1.4)	3.0 (1.4)	2.4 (1.7) ^b

Note: Items are from the Mother-Adolescent Communication Scale (Olson et.al., 1992). Responses are based on (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) moderately agree, and (5) strongly agree. Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. ^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2. ^b Significant difference between Time 2 and Time 3.

Table A-3
Parent Self-Reports of Family Satisfaction at Times 1, 2, and 3
Individual Item Analysis

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N = 45	Time 2 M (sd) N = 25	Time 3 M (sd) N = 11
How satisfied are you with:			
How close you feel to your family	3.8 (1.2)	3.9 (1.1)	4.0 (.9)
Family's willingness to try things	3.6 (1.0)	3.6 (1.0)	3.8 (.9)
How much your parents argue	3.1 (1.4)	2.9 (1.3)	2.8 (1.3)
The amount of time spent with your family	3.6 (1.2) ^a	3.8 (1.3)	3.7 (1.0)
Your freedom to be alone	3.2 (1.3)	2.9 (1.4)	3.3 (1.5)
Your family's acceptance of your friends	3.8 (1.2)	3.3 (1.0)	3.3 (.6)
Your family's decision making process	3.3 (1.1)	3.3 (1.2)	3.6 (1.0)
Your ability to speak in your family	4.0 (1.2)	3.9 (1.1)	3.9 (.8)
How often your parents make decisions	3.7 (.9)	3.5 (.9)	3.6 (.7)
How fair criticism is in your family	2.8 (1.2)	2.7 (1.2)	3.1 (.9)
The way your family solves problems	3.0 (1.1)	3.6 (1.0)	3.6 (.9)
How chores are assigned in your family	2.7 (1.3)	3.0 (1.3)	2.8 (1.4)
How clear rules are in your family	3.6 (1.2)	3.4 (1.0)	3.3 (1.2)

Note: Items are from the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson et al., 1992). Responses are based on (1) dissatisfied, (2) somewhat dissatisfied, (3) generally satisfied, (4) very satisfied, and (5) extremely satisfied. Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2.

^b Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 2 and Time 3.

Table A-4
Parent Self-Reports of Parent (Mother)-Adolescent Communication at Times 1, 2, and 3
Individual Item Analysis

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N = 45	Time 2 M (sd) N = 25	Time 3 M (sd) N = 11
I am very satisfied with how my child and I talk	3.6 (1.3)	3.3 (1.5)	4.0 (1.2) ^b
I find it easy to discuss problems with my child	3.7 (1.4)	3.6 (1.3)	3.8 (1.3)
My child tries to understand my point of view	3.3 (1.4)	3.4 (1.2)	3.6 (1.1)
It is easy to express my feelings to my child	3.6 (1.4)	3.4 (1.6)	4.0 (1.2)
My child is a good listener	3.0 (1.4)	2.8 (1.3)	2.9 (1.0)
If I were in trouble I could tell my child	4.3 (1.2)	3.9 (1.5)	4.3 (1.2)
I openly show affection to my child	4. (1.0) ^a	3.8 (1.6)	4.5 (1.2)
I get honest answers from my child	3.1 (1.3)	2.8 (1.5)	3.2 (1.5)
I can discuss my beliefs with my child	4.3 (1.1) ^a	3.6 (1.6)	3.5 (1.8)
My child can tell how I'm feeling	4.1 (1.0)	4.1 (1.2)	4.3 (1.0)
I have trouble believing everything my child tells me	3.6 (1.4)	3.1 (1.5)	3.2 (1.7)
I am sometimes afraid to ask my child what I want	2.0 (1.4)	2.2 (1.4)	2.2 (1.3)
My child says things to me which should be left unsaid	3.1 (1.7)	3.1 (1.6)	2.9 (1.6)
When we are having a problem, I give my child the silent treatment	3.1 (1.6)	3.1 (1.4)	2.6 (1.6)
I am careful about what I say to my child	3.5 (1.5)	3.3 (1.4)	3.9 (1.3)
I have a tendency to say things which should be left unsaid	2.9 (1.5)	3.4 (1.3)	2.4 (1.5)
There are topics I avoid discussing with my child	3.3 (1.5)	3.2 (1.4)	3.0 (1.5)
My child nags me	2.9 (1.6)	3.0 (1.5)	3.2 (1.7)
My child insults me when she is angry	3.2 (1.7)	2.9 (1.6)	3.0 (1.6)

I can't tell my child how I really feel about some things	2.8 (1.6)	2.9 (1.4)	3.0 (1.8)
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Note: Items are from the Mother-Adolescent Communication Scale (Olson et.al., 1992). Responses are based on (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) moderately agree, and (5) strongly agree. Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. ^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2. ^b Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 2 and Time 3.

Table A-5
Youth Self-Reports of Family Satisfaction at Times 1, 2, and 3
Family Cohesion, Adaptability, and Total Scale Scores

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N = 45	Time 2 M (sd) N = 29	Time 3 M (sd) N = 16
Family Cohesion	26.7 (6.6)	27.9 (6.3)	26.3 (6.2)
Family Adaptability	19.7 (4.7) ^a	21.1 (4.1)	19.1 (5.6)
Total Family Satisfaction	46.9 (10.3)	48.8 (9.3)	45.9 (11.8)

Note: Family Cohesion is an eight-item scale assessing youths' satisfaction with emotional bonding, decision making, and acceptance within their family (Alpha at T1=.79; T2=.76, T3=.75). Family Adaptability is a six-item scale assessing youths' satisfaction with family rules and roles (Alpha at T1 = .75, T2=.68, T3=.87). Items are from the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson et al., 1992).

Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2.

Table A-6
Youth Self-Reports of Parent (Mother)-Adolescent Communication at Times 1, 2, and 3
Open Communication, Problems in Communication, and Total Communication Scale Scores

Item	Time 1 M (sd) <u>N</u> =45	Time 2 M (sd) <u>N</u> =29	Time 3 M (sd) <u>N</u> =16
Open Family Communication	37.0 (10.3)	37.0 (10.2)	36.2 (9.9)
Problems in Family Communication	27.5 (6.3)	27.9 (6.4)	30.1 (5.5)
Total Family Communication	64.7 (13.9)	64.9 (14.3)	66.3 (13.8)

Note: Open Family Communication is an eleven-item scale assessing openness in family communication patterns (Alpha at T1=.76, T2=.71, T3=.79). Problem in Family Communication is a ten-item scale assessing problems in family communication patterns (Alpha at T1=.72, T3=.68, T3=.70). Items are from the Mother- Adolescent Communication Scale (Olson et. al., 1992). Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

Table A-7
Parent Self-Reports of Family Satisfaction at Times 1,2, and 3
Family Cohesion, Adaptability, and Total Scale Scores

Item	Time 1 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 45	Time 2 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 25	Time 3 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 11
Family Cohesion	27.0 (5.1) ^a	22.5 (4.5)	23.4 (4.5)
Family Adaptability	19.8 (4.8)	20.1 (5.1)	19.1 (5.6)
Total Family Satisfaction	46.1 (8.7) ^a	41.1 (8.5)	42.4 (6.9)

Note: Family Cohesion is an eight-item scale assessing youths' satisfaction with emotional bonding, decision making, and acceptance within their family (Alpha at T1=.72; T2=.75, T3=.81). Family Adaptability is a six-item scale assessing youths' satisfaction with family rules and roles (Alpha at T1 =.71, T2=.67, T3=.72). Items are from the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson et. al., 1992). Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2.

Table A-8
Parent Self-Reports of Parent (Mother)-Adolescent Communication at Times 1, 2, and 3
Open Communication, Problems in Communication, and Total Communication Scale Scores

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N=45	Time 2 M (sd) N=25	Time 3 M (sd) N=11
Open Family Communication	37.7 (8.1) ^a	34.2 (9.4)	38.5 (9.6)
Problems in Family Communication	29.7 (7.9)	29.8 (8.2)	30.6 (9.7)
Total Family Communication	67.3 (13.9) ^a	64.0 (11.7)	69.2 (13.2)

Note: Open Family Communication is an eleven-item scale assessing openness in family communication patterns (Alpha at T1=.81, T2=.69, T3=.68). Problem in Family Communication is a ten-item scale assessing problems in family communication patterns (Alpha at T1=.73, T3=.76, T3=.69). Items are from the Mother- Adolescent Communication Scale (Olson et. al., 1992). Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

^a. Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 1 and Time 2.

Table A-9
Youth Perceptions of Personal Responsibility and Empathy at Times 1, 2, and 3

Item	Time 1 M (sd) N = 45	Time 2 M (sd) N = 31	Time 3 M (sd) N = 16
When I am upset with someone I try to put myself in their shoes	2.6 (1.0)	2.5 (1.0)	2.4 (.1)
I accept punishment without getting mad	2.6 (1.0)	2.7 (1.0)	2.3 (.8) ^a
If I'm right about something I don't listen to others	2.3 (.9)	2.4 (.9)	2.5 (1.0)
I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them	1.6 (.5)	1.8 (1.0)	2.1 (.0)
I try to look at everyone's side of a conflict	2.3 (.9)	2.3 (.9)	2.4 (1.0)
When I'm upset with someone, I take responsibility for how I feel	2.3 (.8)	2.0 (.7)	2.4 (1.0)
I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them	2.0 (.7)	2.1 (1.0)	2.3 (1.0)
Victims of crime deserve to be victims	2.9 (1.0)	2.8 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)
I enjoy seeing people hurt	3.6 (.7)	3.6 (.8)	3.4 (1.0)

Note: Responses were based on (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, and (4) strongly disagree. Statistical tests conducted using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

^a Significant difference ($p < .05$) between Time 2 and Time 3.

Table A-10
Parent Perceptions of Future Behavior at Times 1, 2, and 3

Item	Time 1 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 45	Time 2 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 25	Time 3 M (sd) <u>N</u> = 11
How likely is it that during the next week you will:			
Shout at someone in your family	2.3 (1.2)	2.4 (1.1)	2.5 (1.0)
Be shouted at by someone in your family	2.5 (1.2)	2.2 (1.2)	2.5 (1.0)
Hit someone in your family	3.7 (.7)	3.8 (.7)	3.8 (.6)
Shout at a person your own age	3.3 (1.0)	3.2 (1.1)	3.2 (.9)
Be shouted at by a person your own age	3.4 (.9)	3.4 (.8)	3.1 (.9)
Hit someone your own age	4.0 (.2)	3.9 (.4)	3.8 (.6)
Be hit by someone your own age	3.9 (.3)	3.8 (.6)	3.8 (.6)

Note: Responses were based on (1) very likely, (2) somewhat likely, (3) somewhat unlikely, and (4) very unlikely.

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATIONS OF SESSIONS

Note: These observations are not intended to be verbatim transcripts, but do provide a fairly detailed account of what occurred during any given session. Each of these observations was conducted and prepared by Steve Alley.

Cycle Three, Session Two

VIP Youth

Eight youths (of ten) were in attendance, all male

Additional Youth

The sister (~16 yrs old) of one VIP youth will come to sessions at the parent's request and with the VIP JPO's urging.

The younger brother of one VIP youth (~10 yrs old) attended due to child care problems.

VIP Parents

Nine adults were in attendance (2 male, 7 female). One VIP youth and his sister were accompanied by both mother and stepfather. One VIP youth was accompanied by a grandmother this night only.

I arrived about 6:20 and entered the building. Several VIP parents were standing outside of entrance but were not interacting. In the lobby, VIP youth were standing around, in close proximity. The VIP Juvenile Probation Officer (JPO) and Surveillance Officer (SO) were in the process of conducting drug tests on each of the youths. The JPO was filling out paperwork while the SO walked youth to the restroom to obtain urine samples. This activity was proceeding at a concerted pace, probably due to the short time remaining before the session was to begin. Both JPO and SO greeted me but immediately turned back to the task at hand. While drug testing was taking place, youth strolled about, some leaned casually against the counter, another spoke with his mom, and two young brothers talked excitedly. There was little if any interaction between youth. The JPO and SO were uncharacteristically silent-again, they seemed quite busy. Parents in the lobby were equally dispersed. A mother and stepfather talked quietly to the side, two parents stood quietly with their children, and a group of moms sat quietly on two benches. Two VIP instructors emerged from the classroom to check the sign-in sheet. Alice greeted me and introduced me to the new instructor, Tom. Tom is a youth worker at one of the local youth programs. Alice interacted with several of the youth individually in an engaging and animated fashion. "Heh, how ARE you??" (really LOOKING at the youth). And to another, "Did you bring your baby picture? Look at this picture-you're so cuuuute!"

At 6:30 the instructors moved towards the classroom. Instructors arranged seats in a large horseshoe shape, opening towards the instructors and dry-erase board, and Tom left to call the

youth and parents to the session. Children and youth began to be seated, choosing their placement without direction. As the room filled, Alice announced that parents must sit with youth and no empty seats must remain between any individuals. With this, two youths removed empty chairs next to them and returned to their seats. The third instructor arrived.

At about 6:45, the session formally began. Alice remarked that there were some new faces in attendance-two youth and two parents who had not attended the first session. As such, she wanted to go through introductions once more and review the agreement they had made (ground rules). But first, there was an assignment to complete. Alice announces the first assignment for the evening. "Finish the following statement.... I used to be _____, but now I am _____." Some participants shift in their seats, some look around, one youth sighs and shifts sideways in his seat. Alice provides examples-"you know, like I used to be young, but now I'm old, or I used to be in good shape, but now I'm a couch potato". With Alice walking around, several minutes pass-the other instructors stand in front.

Starting with the participant on one end of the horseshoe, Alice then has this person read his/her "I used to be" statement with the person next to them responding with the "but now I am" statement. That second person then was to begin with their "I used to be" statement, to be completed by their neighbor. Alice walked around with each one, easing them in to it. There was some confusion with the first several folks messing up the order of things. Most of the statements from youth were "I used to be young, but now I'm old". Parents spoke of various things including young/old, free/tied-down, happy/tired. As they finished, Alice admitted it was a corny exercise by made the following point. Basically, we all identify that we used to be one way but now find ourselves otherwise and that we need to work with who we are now and understand that we can be another way in the future. That thinking about this gives us evidence of change, and therefore gives us hope for future change. This was a lecture, there was no interaction or dialogue during or following the exercise.

The instructors then asked for a volunteer to read aloud the agreement (ground rules) to the session e.g., I will not touch another person if that person does not want to be touched, I will listen when others are speaking, all that we do here will remain confidential-Alice really elaborated and emphasized confidentiality/privacy issues. Tom elaborates on the tendency for individuals to speak for the group and argues for making "I" statements rather than "we" statements when voicing opinions. Alice asks if everyone still agrees. There was no comment. Instructors then pass around notes and an outline to everyone covering what they did the session before.

At 7:00, the instructors go over introductions for any new attendees. By way of introduction, Alice speaks of her investment in the program and her desire to participate in an attempt to "keep kids further away from the juvenile justice system". Gloria spoke of the skills they would learn and how the program would help participants learn to help themselves. Tom talked of getting beyond selfishness and how participants would get whatever they were willing to take from the program.

Participants were then instructed to begin introducing themselves by first having a youth introduce the parent by name and then to declare one thing they really liked about their parent. Parents then reciprocated. The most frequent comment coming from the kids as to what they liked best about their parent was that the parent was "always there for me". One attempt to get by with an 'I don't know what I like about my parent' was challenged by Alice in such a way that the kid answered (e.g., 'come ON, tell us something!'). This challenge elicited a smile from the youth. Parents frequently said "He/she is a good kid..." followed by some positive 'and' statement (e.g., and real smart, and real helpful, etc.) and in several cases by a 'but' qualification (e.g., but I just wish that he would stay out of trouble, etc.). In all cases, comments from youth and parents about what they liked about the other were acknowledged without evaluation by the instructors and two instructors evidenced an effort to gain elaboration/clarification from participants.

As one youth introduced his mom, Alice rushed up and asked him for his baby picture which she had seen outside. Exclaiming loudly, she began showing it around the group, commenting on what a cute little boy he was, and look at him now. This prompted two other parents to pull out baby pictures of their children. One youth stands up and asks for permission to use the bathroom. Gloria says to wait for break while Alice says OK-they mock a huddled conference and finally say OK.

Alice announces another exercise-another "weird thing" as she described it. She asked everyone to close their eyes. "Parents and young people-Think back to a time when you're younger. A time when you were carefree, innocent, unworried. Think of where you are-a vacation maybe, a family event, and think of how that felt". As she is saying this, her voice is getting soothing and soft, and she is walking around the perimeter of the group. She suddenly says, "shut your eyes, I can see you looking around!" to one youth. Continuing... "how did that moment happen? Now think about being here in this room. How this is now and that was then and how that younger person is still there." Parents were then asked to look at their child. Some do, some don't. Alice asks them to look again, and goads a parent that wasn't ("come on, look at that child!").

Alice asks, "how many of you have been totally at ease and happy and then suddenly got violent?" Six youth raise their hands, no parents. "Explain that to me?" asks Alice, pointing at one youth. "Just to be mad" says the youth. "Does that get you what you want" Alice replies, "all emotions serve some kind of need". "Yeah" says the boy. Returning to the blackboard, Alice makes a separation between an emotion (anger) and a behavior (violence). Tom then begins to speak, as if on cue, and asks how many feel safe and warm while being violent (five youth raise hands). "Explain this to me" he says. One says it makes him feel powerful, another says it feels safe because other folks won't mess with him-Tom nods and says uh-huh. Tom then draws a distinction between victim and aggressor while Alice charts the distinction on the board. Tom says that when you are violent, your life spins on a dime. One youth, huffs and suddenly shifts in his seat. Alice immediately points at him and (I didn't catch the exact words) but the gesture and words clearly compelled him to explain his reaction. "I agree" he says..."it spins on a dime! One minute everything's cool and the next you're dead".

Tom begins speaking of choice, and how we might handle anger differently. With that, the instructors pass out the ACT hand-out (ACT=Acknowledge feelings, Calm yourself down, Think about problem & consequences). Alice announces that they are going to begin some specific skills-training relating to managing anger, and that after the break, parents & youth will separate to begin the task.

The break began at 7:35. As I leave the class, some of the youth and parents are in the lobby, but most are outside. I don't see the JPO or SO in the lobby. A parent approaches to say hi and I recognize her from a previous meeting during the preprogram interview. She had come to the interview complaining of being tired and overwrought because her daughter had come home drunk the night before, 'gone off' on her VIP son, hitting and scratching him, till she had to call the police. The daughter had been placed in a psych setting for the night and a juvenile referral was going to result. The JPO had her repeat her story to him, congratulated the VIP brother for not returning her aggression, looked over all of his scratches, and immediately told the mom that he would get the sister into the current VIP cycle and that he would work it so that the referral would eventually come to him. The mom had been greatly reassured by the JPO's swift intervention that Saturday and was relating her pleasure to me now, during break, that her daughter was going to be attending. The instructors called everyone back to class at about 7:45.

As soon as everyone was in class and settled down, the instructors split the group. Alice and Tom left the room with the youth, and the parents stayed along with Gloria. No overarching statement of the hour's intent was made. As the youth leave, Alice asks if the one female addition to the group (the sister referred to immediately above) had been formally referred to VIP. The girl said no, the parents said that she was going to come every time regardless. Alice paused a moment and told the girl to "sit by me". This interaction probably results from a sensitivity to her being the only female. I had heard from the JPO earlier that VIP has an overall concern regarding gender representation.

Alone with the parents, Gloria had the parents pull the chairs closer, making a smaller horseshoe arrangement. Again, Gloria sat in the open portion of the horseshoe. Gloria asks how everyone is doing and the parents respond modestly-a few nods, a few 'OK's', but no real resistance or apathy that I could discern. She talks about her background in social work-20+yrs working with families-and how she is a parent herself. Parenting, she says, is hard, and she relates that she has had her own hardships in that arena. She talks about how we are trained and thus achieve the skill required by most of our important activities but makes a strong point that parenting is an exception. That in fact, most of what we learn about parenting, we learn from our own parents and experiences within our families. As she speaks, her voice is soothing, familiar, and friendly, and her eye contact with each parent is generous. She mentions how we tend to repeat patterns we've learned from our parents and past family interactions. She goes on to talk about how we also have a tendency to changing our kid's behavior without seriously considering how we might change our own.

Gloria talks in general about the difficulty of confronting violence, how it involves the whole family, and how families are like the mobiles one hangs over a baby's crib. And that like a mobile, if one component is removed or falls out of balance with the other pieces, the whole

mobile becomes unstable. Families are like that, she says, and violence in the family throws the whole thing out of balance. A parent speaks out by saying that these days, kids aren't afraid of anything and you can threaten them with anything and it won't matter-other parents nod. Gloria springboards from this comment and says that some of the skills they will be introduced to might challenge some of their notions of how to change their kid's behavior. "You might have to throw out some of your old ideas" she says. With that, she admits to a bias that she wants to share. Specifically, that physical punishment just doesn't work and that alternative methods are superior-some of which they will have a chance to talk about.

At this point, Gloria has each of the parents, in turn, tell why they are here. This exercise immediately emerged as a story-telling with each of the parents imparting some glimpse into the their ongoing struggle with their youth and their families. In general, parents seemed quite forthcoming and participatory although it never evolved into a discussion. Each parent told his or her tale and everyone listened (or seemed to). Parents nodded, engaged the speaker with their eyes and bodies, but never 'jumped in' to add to any one speaker's story. At most, they might refer to a previous speaker's story in the telling of their own. Gloria listened to each without interruption and more often than not recapped some of the essential themes of story and related it to the introductory themes of parenting, family, confronting violence, or behavior modification described above. When connections between stories became obvious (e.g., kids not respecting their elders, peer pressure and gangs, etc.), Gloria explicated these themes to the parent's nodding agreement. The session proceeded in a most orderly fashion, everyone spoke in turn, everyone seemed to appropriately disclose, everyone seemed to demonstrate listening, and there was very little if any verbal interaction between parents.

As the hour approached 8:15, the youth attempted to reenter the class, only to be shooed out by Gloria. By 8:20, Gloria had rather hurriedly wrapped it up, lamenting that there was never enough time, and promising to return to more skills-based activities in future break-out sessions.

The youth reentered the classroom along with Alice and Tom. There seemed to be more animation in the youth than had been observed previously. Several were laughing, a few talking. Order was restored, along with the original seating arrangement. Nothing was said by either youth or the instructors that accompanied them about what they had done that half of the session. Alice simply lamented the lack of time, Gloria agreed, and both indicated to the other that they had not worked through the ACT exercise. Alice thanked them all, Tom related to the parents that he felt comfortable in assuring them that although he could not repeat what had transpired within the youth group, that the youths did indeed wish to change and that he felt hopeful. With that, the class was dismissed. The instructors immediately left for a debriefing in a smaller room next to the classroom, the youth and parents did not linger.

In general, I did not observe any instances of conflict between youth, youth & parents, or between instructors & participants. Nor did I ever observe what I would consider to be evidence of any real resistance towards participation or disclosure. There were probably no more than five times that either parent or youth just spoke up to interject an opinion or to make a point. Then again, I did not observe anyone failing to speak. In short, parents and youth initiated little if anything, but responded when called to.

VIP Youth

Eight youths in attendance, all male.

VIP Parents

Seven Adults were in attendance, 2 male, 5 female). One young female sibling.

I arrived at about 6:20. Three parents were standing outside smoking, and a knot of youths stood nearby. The boys were laughing and quite animated, and one of the adults was joining in. The JPO mingled through the group, joking and asking each one some kind of specific question. "Why didn't you call," or "have you bee going to school?" etc. I was waiting to talk with the JPO but a mom called the JPO aside and they talked quietly. The JPO broke away offering assurances that he was on it, and to tell her son to call him tomorrow.

The instructors called us into the room at 6:45. The chairs were arranged in a horseshoe shape in one half of the room, and in the other half, the instructors had constructed a floor to ceiling string 'spider web' reaching from floor to ceiling. The web had openings between the horizontal and vertical strings that were irregular in shape and just big enough for a person's horizontal body to move through. The instructors approached the group at the open end of the horseshoe seeming more formal than usual. Tom began by saying "we're going to start with introductions. My name is Tom, we're almost done with the program. I'm here for you guys". Alice approaches and says, "Monday is the last day". A youth in his ROTC uniform enters and Alice quips "Hello officer H".

Alice asks if there are any burning issues. A dad says "I hope I'm not back during the next sixteen weeks. I've been on probation too long". Everyone laughs. A youth turns towards her and Alice says, "tell it to your group". The youth says "I almost got in a fight with an adult." Another youth says, "I went to prison today". "I want to hear from you, but first let's hear about this fight. What was the conflict about?" "He got in my face about stuff and wouldn't stop". "What stopped you" asked Alice. "I don't know, I just walked away. I know it would've got me bad trouble". Tom asks, "Anyone else?" Gloria interrupts quickly and asks the youth's mom, "How did that make you feel?" "Pretty good" she says. The youth hangs his head and stares at the floor. "Sounds like he needs acknowledgement" Gloria suggests, looking at the mom. "I just found out on the drive over" said the mom. Alice said, "Not only did he not react, he thought it out, and he handled it on his own. Good job, good work". Some other parents nodded, one turned and said something to her son, and the other youths were watching.

"Anyone else" asks Alice. "Yeah, I went to jail today with a group and a guy gave me grief and I didn't do anything." "Now wait a minute" said Alice, "You mean to tell me someone gave you grief and you didn't talk back? Why not?" "Because" says the youth "I go to court this week and it would look bad." "All that stuff went through your head" said Tom, "good work". "You used your head and realized that was a small moment and you had a bigger moment coming up." The youth nodded, smiled, and looked around.

Another dad reported that his son went to court looking good, and that the dad validated how much he had been trying and they had brought along character witnesses". Alice asked if he thought he deserved all that support". The dad shrugged.

"Anyone else have anything, H, do you have anything?" "No", he says, "I'm good". "Where's your mom" asks Alice. "She's not feeling good so my sister came." "You came to support him?" Alice asked the sister. The sister nodded and Alice asked H if he was doing good in school. The boy said that he hates school. Alice continued, "You know what your probation officer told me? Just 3 weeks ago you were loving school. Things change. But you know what? Once you do something right... You're never the same after".

With that, the group breaks for the spider web. Its 7:05. Instructions were given. Divide up into 2 groups. You need to get all your members thru the web without touch a string. Once you use one hole, you can't use it again. A Mom asks, "what happens if you touch a string?" "Good question" replies Alice, "the whole team does it again". "How do you do it a youth asks?" "You must communicate" says Alice. A youth asks, "can I take my shirt off?" to which Alice replies, "I don't want to see that". "Spring to it!" says Alice, "communicate". Two dads, two youths talk. One kid tries, touches a string, a mom points something out. One dad tries, but touches. One youth makes it, then another. A dad tries and others stop him. He was going for a hole that had been used. One youth points out a big hole for a rather large mom. She hesitates and a youth takes the hole. Another parent goes through.

Gloria, watching, asks "are you guys listening to each other, talking to each other?" The boys discuss lifting the little girl through an upper hole and they do so. Lots of laughter from both the idle group as well as the group engaged. Members of the other group (3 youths) are talking about what they'll do when its their turn. The big mom goes low, one youth stops her and suggests going feet first. Everyone claps when she makes it and she laughs. One youth left. Everyone planning this one. Considerable talk about this because the easy holes have been taken. 7:20 and they are still planning. Alice says "come on!" While waiting, 3 youths on the other team practice lifting. The remaining youth attempts to step on the back of a chair that has been pulled next to the web while a mom on the other team offers advice. A youth on the opposing team points out a hole that has not been used. Alice says "Stop! Everyone! Shhh! This is where we talk about strategy. Planning throooooough your deeeecisssions. Think about it. Look at where you are now. Is there anything you could have done before that could be of help to you now?" A dad suggests that they send someone back through to help out on that side. "OOOOhh, oooooohh, ooooooh" croons Alice, and the team sends a youth back through. After considerable commotion, directions from all quarters, the remaining youth get into the hole, almost loses it, and is forcibly rescued by everyone around. He is beaming, and everyone is laughing. Applause all around.

Alice tells a story of one group that held hands going together through one big hole. A break is called at 7:35.

Folks drifting back in at 7:42, several have not left. Group is gathering around the web, talking about it. Alice quiets the bunch. "Look it over. These kids are not talking-Is this a team?" One

youth is just sitting in a chair on the fringe and a mom on the current team just walks over and helps him up by the arm, pulling him towards the group. One youth's mom, from the other team, shouts to her son "now Y, you have to use a chair, it won't work without a chair!" "Mom, would you quit rescuing that big boy" says Alice. The mom keeps talking and Alice sends Gloria to stand in front of her to screen her. They laugh but mom still tries to look. The team passes their smallest member through a small upper hole. Everyone claps.

Another youth goes through high and a parent calls to the boy just through to come up and help. The group brainstorms--two dads plan through their moves. Another youth is hoisted through high, and with considerable juggling and laughter, he makes it. One youth from the team has been goofing around, despite a few glances from Gloria, and he's now plucking one of the strings on the web. Alice says, "you touch that web again and your whole team starts over". "Come on dude" a teammate says, quit jerking off (Alice cuts her eyes at the offending language). Another youth squirms through a hole and Alice jokes, "you've been sneaking thru windows" and everyone laughs. Everybody is through and permission is given to take down the web. The youth that could not keep his hands off of it until admonished to do so by Alice now pulls it down with relish while other youth practice their high jump going for the tape on the ceiling.

Everyone pulls the chairs into a circle. Alice tells a youth to get up and sit with his dad, and has everyone else close the circle tighter. "So what did the second team learn from this exercise" asked Alice. "From our mistakes" said a youth. "You have a good point" remarks Alice, "they watched you". A mom said, "No, while the guys were going back and forth, we were planning it-we weren't even watching you." "Planning helped-you were getting yourselves together" said Gloria.

"So tell me", asks Alice, "how is doing the spider web like conflict in your life right now?" A dad says, "there's an element of trust-you lift someone thru and they trust." "So, you have a point", said Alice, "even in a conflict, you need to have trust-that you'll play fair." A youth's sister adds, "Cuz everything you do affects everyone else" and her brother leans in and whispers something and she bats him away, grinning.

Tom makes the point that "you touch the webs of other peoples lives. Smiles, handshakes, a tough. If you had added all of the elements you add to your lives you would have destroyed the web". A youth replies, "If I had not known them [these guys], I would have". A dad says "you can't shake a hand with a clinched fist-Ghandi said that." Gloria adds, "it takes trust to have an open hand."

Alice tells a story about seeing a Nightline recently regarding a Hispanic/Armenian conflict in a high school. They decided to pair an Hispanic and Armenian together to do something and found they had so much in common. There's been no conflict since. A mom asked, "Don't you think that parents taught that conflict?" Alice replied that sometimes kids behave differently when they leave home-school becomes there territory. Sometimes we think we know our kids but we don't. We have to take time.

It's 8:15 and Alice stays and talks about individual counseling with one of the youth. She Then talks to a parent about some trouble her child is in. Everyone else leaves.

Cycle 3 Graduation Night

VIP Youth

7 youths in attendance, all male.

VIP Parents

8 adults were in attendance (3 male, 5 female). One youth brings his baby nephew. One adult brings two daughters.

When I arrived about 6:20, the activity level in the lobby area was much higher than usual. Youth were in the process of getting drug-tested with the Surveillance officer fully involved and with the JPO bouncing around from talking with parents, youth, and the visitors in the building for graduation. Entertainment consisting of several guest speakers, a teen dance group, and a DJ had been arranged, and their preparations added greatly to the heightened activity. In the classroom, arrangements were being made to accommodate the dance group as well as a theater group and seating was arranged in four long rows facing the open area given to the performers. By 6:45, the VIP participants have entered the room and for the first time during my observations, were apparently allowed to sit wherever they wanted. The first row was left empty by all, 3 kids sat in the second row, 2 in the third, 2 in the fourth. The youth sit right together, and parents, observers, and entertainment are scattered throughout.

Gloria begins by introducing the DJ who introduces the Latin dance group (a high school group). The music starts loudly and the dance group begins. Lots of adults clapping to the music and two youth are clapping along by the second song. Everyone seeming very interested, paying attention, smiling, craning necks to watch the dancers, sitting relaxed in their chairs. Three girls do a dance number and one youth points out one of the girls to his companion and whispers something. They watch her intently as she dances. Alice comes up behind the youths watching the girls with such intensity and says something to which they laugh and look embarrassed. Another parent jokes with the youths as well.

A couple of VIP adults come in late with what looks like other siblings in tow. A series of songs end and 3 of the five youth I could see well clapped enthusiastically. Alice is making her presence known by walking between the aisles during the applause while Gloria and Tom stand well back, Gloria herself dancing during the music. The youths are really checking out the girls in the dance group. By 7:15, the music is over and applause is given by all, youth as well, as each dancer is introduced.

Two guest speakers take the front next, one man and one woman. Both are recovering addicts and both are HIV+. They tell their stories, the woman going first. She discovered her HIV during a pregnancy. Her narrative is very loose, phenomenological, and no real theme from my perspective. But, five minutes into the story, four of the youth are watching and all of the adults that I can see are paying close attention. The remaining youth look spaced out and are hard to

read. One of the dance girls comes back in the room and all but two of the youth turn and watch her until she leaves again. The male speaker tells his story: Recovering IV drug user, ex-con, HIV+. Most kids watching but seem restless and distractible. He speaks often at the D-Home and the theme of his talk is about running from problems and not taking responsibility. He urges the youth not to repeat his mistakes. There is general applause afterwards, but less passionate and prolonged as for the dance team.

At 7:45, a teen theater group called "Theatre in the Hood" is introduced. A girl enters the room with track marks on her arms, agitated, saying "why, why, why do I have Aids." She pulls out a pistol (two youth look at each other, smile big, and shake heads) and leaves room. A gunshot sound is heard from outside (four youth suppress big smiles). The scene changes and a youth is sitting on a bench with a jambox. He lifts his shirt and flashes his pistol. The same two youth look at each other and smile. Two girls enter the scene and they confront the 'pusher' who gave their friend AIDS. The youth are really watching, smiling, mouths open, waiting for the next move. Three youth are leaning forward in their seats, then five. The 'pusher' screams as he is apparently shot from off-stage in a drive-by. The young nephew accompanying our VIP youth cries loudly from the scream while the boys lean forward, smiling. At the end, four kids do not applaud.

At 8:00, the entertainment ends. The entertainers leave fairly quickly and food is being set up. Mostly pot-luck, but food from JPO and a cake from NMCDR as well. One youth circulates with cookies, another asks Gloria if she needs any help. Two youth help Alice move chairs into a circle. The JPO helps to round everyone up and youth/adults sit in the circle. Some parents are clearly comfortable messing with kids not their own, and vice versa. By now, lots of extra family are in the circle (some arriving late). Four or five parent/youth pairs have extended family or friends with them. Alice turns off half the lights, the JPO brings in four pizzas.

The surveillance officer (SO) begins with some announcements. First mentioning that all but a few are still on probation, and need to continue their calls, etc. Mentions that the guest speakers weren't just talking trash. That a lot of former VIP kids are in prison and he can count on both hands the number that are dead. He hopes something in the program sticks. Don't give up, it's not that hard.

The JPO takes the floor and thanks the instructors and reminds the group that gratitude is owed for their general care. Thanks and acknowledges his two SOs. The goal, he says, is to succeed. He's very proud of the work that's been done. Mentions that some of the kids will never get a 2nd chance. "They will send you away", he says, "guaranteed". He talked about a member of his own family and the effects that these things have on family. That they are the one's that are hurt the most. He said that he's always amazed when kids in the program end up before the judge and that it breaks his heart. He says that the youth should all know beyond a shadow of a doubt that their parents love them. "Even if you take nothing else from this, you'll know that for the rest of your life." "Do something with your lives!". If you try hard, he said, "I'll be proud to stand before the court with you when your time comes."

At that point, he hands out the diplomas to each youth, and everyone claps as each youth receives his. The youth look genuinely pleased-a little shy and uncomfortable, but almost all beam.

Alice mentions that she is really tired of going to young people's funerals. Gloria wishes everyone luck, tells them to show lots of love, and to never give up.

A parent asks if anyone wants to join an upcoming softball tournament, that they will leave a sign-up sheet around. Several adults & youth ask for specifics as if interested. Folks are hitting the buffet tables and families are mixing up in their seating. There is lots of discussion and laughter around the room, lots of mingling, and although there are differences in expressiveness, no individual seems at all avoidant or sullen.

By 8:30, several families have left, but others linger, eating and talking. They speak with one another, with the instructors and probation staff. By 8:45, I leave, and there are still about a third of the VIPs participants there, helping clean up.

APPENDIX C

RULES FOR PARTICIPATING IN VIPs

Child's agreement:

1. Each week, if required by my Probation officer, I will perform thirty-two (32) hours in any combination of the following activities: school, work, community service or Court ordered treatment program.
2. I agree to be confined in the Juvenile Detention Center for a period of 24 days to be served four days per month, as directed by my Probation Officer. I understand that my Probation Officer can give me credit for up to four days per month if my performance is complying with the terms and conditions of my probation is good.
3. I will report to my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer daily or upon request and will not leave my residence at _____ for any reason unless given prior approval by my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer.
4. I will submit to search and seizure of my person and/or my property by my Probation Officer, with or without probable cause and with or without a warrant, if my Probation Officer, while in my immediate physical custody so directs.
5. I will not own or possess any deadly weapon; possess or consume alcohol, marijuana, dangerous drugs, or narcotics, or be in the presence of anyone possessing a deadly weapon or any type of alcohol or drugs.
6. I will submit to random urine screenings to test for drugs and alcohol as directed by my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer during my probationary period.
7. I understand that my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer may restrict me from association with any individual(s), which include the following:
8. I will obey all laws.
9. I will do community service, attend substance abuse and family counseling, and also participate in any educational or vocational programs as designated by my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer. Attendance for any program designated will be mandatory.
10. I will pay restitution on a schedule and in a manner required by the Probation/Parole Office. I understand that the Probation/Parole Office may require that I attend and complete the

Victim/Offender Mediation Program. I will be given a copy of the restitution schedule after it has been approved by the Court.

11. My curfew period will begin with a 6:00pm. Curfew and can only be changed by my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer.

12. I will obey the demands of _____ and will not leave Bernalillo County without permission of my Probation Officer.

13. I will comply with all written and oral directions of my Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer.

14. I will attend, participate and complete the Interpersonal Skills Component of the Violence Intervention Probation Program.

15. I will not be in possession of beepers or other communication devices without first obtaining permission from my Probation Officer. I understand that beeps can be confiscated by my Probation or Surveillance Officer.

16. Specific orders of the Court _____

Parent agrees:

1. To provide for the supervision and care of this child.
2. To be a party to the Petition and this agreement.
3. To participate fully in the Interpersonal Skills Component of the Program and any counseling or treatment program as directed by my child's Probation Officer.
4. To assist the Court and Probation Officer in enforcing the terms and conditions of Probation, whether these be oral or written.
5. To immediately report to the Probation Officer or Surveillance Officer in regard to my child:
 - A. Any problems that arise.
 - B. Any violation of probation by my child.
 - C. Any problems I have in relation to my child's probation.
 - D. Any proposed changes of my address or employment.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

PROGRAM YOUTH (PY1) PRE-PROGRAM INTERVIEW

ID. NO. ___ CYCLE 1 2 3 GROUP PY P CY

The VIP program is a program for juveniles and their parents or guardians which has received much attention here in New Mexico and across the nation. There is much interest by others in knowing how this program works and what impact it has on the lives of those who go through it. Staff responsible for the program are interested in ways of improving how the program works. As a participant in the program, you will have information which is very important for understanding how the program works and how it may affect you.

Your willingness to help us in this research effort is very valuable to us. Your answers to our questions will be strictly confidential; they will not be shared with your parents, instructors, or probation officers or with anyone else. We do not work for the probation department or the courts. We are an independent research team doing this project for the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution. Answers which you and other youth give will be pooled together, that is, when a report is written it might read "50% of the VIP youth believe the sky is blue." Your name will not be linked to any specific answer.

In addition to this interview, we will interview you at the completion of the VIPs program and again three months after that. We not only value the information which you will provide, we also value your time. You will be paid \$5.00 for each interview completed. It is expected that the interviews will take 30 to 45 minutes.

Date: _____ Interviewer: _____
Location: _____

ID. _ _ _

I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about yourself.

1. What led you to be in the VIP program? Why are you in this program?

2. What do you hope happens because of your being in the VIP program?

3.. How old are you? _____

4. Gender

1. Male

2. Female

5. Which of the following best describes you:

1. Hispanic (Spanish, Chicano, Mexican, Cuban, Latin American)

2. American Indian/Native American

3. White/Anglo/Caucasian

4. Oriental/Asian American

5. Black/African American

6. Other _____

6. Please tell us your school status

1. Attending a "regular" school (high school or mid-school)

2. Attending alternative school

3. Dropped out

4. Attending GED program

5. High School Graduate or GED

6. Completed 2 years of college

7. College graduate

8. Post graduate

7. Have you ever been suspended or expelled from school?

1. No

2. Yes

8. Do you now have a job?

1. No

2. Part-time

3. Full-time

9. What kind of work do you do?

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about your family.

10. Do you live with:

1. Both natural parents
2. Mother only
3. Father only
4. Mother and step-father/boy friend
5. Father and step-mother/girl friend
6. Other adult relatives
7. Guardian
8. Other _____

11. How many people live in your home? _____

12. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

1. Brothers _____
2. Sisters _____

13. Have any of your family members ever been in trouble with the law? (Circle all that apply)

1. No
2. Brothers
3. Sisters
4. Mother
5. Father

14. Have any of your family members done time in a county jail or in a state prison, or youth center?

1. No
2. Yes

We would now like to ask you a set of questions about your family in which I will ask a question and you indicate your level of satisfaction. For example, I might ask you, "how satisfied are you with the food you eat for lunch?" Your responses may be 1) dissatisfied, 2) somewhat

dissatisfied, 3) generally satisfied, 4) very satisfied, 5) extremely satisfied. Here is a card with those choices.

How satisfied are you:

15. With how close you feel to the rest of your family? _____
16. With your ability to say what you want in your family? _____
17. With your family's ability to try new things? _____
18. With how often parents make decisions in your family? _____
19. With how much mother and father argue with each other? _____
20. With how fair the criticism is in your family? _____
21. With the amount of time you spend with your family? _____
22. With the way you talk together to solve family problems? _____
23. With your freedom to be alone when you want to? _____
24. With how strictly you stay with who does what chores
in your family? _____
25. With your family's acceptance of your friends? _____
26. With how clear is it what your family expects of you? _____
27. With how often you make decisions as a family, rather than
individually? _____
28. With the number of fun things your family does together? _____

We now want to ask you a series of questions about how you and your mother talk to each other. (INTERVIEWER: Choose parent who will be most likely attend training). Your answer choices are 1) strongly disagree; 2) moderately(try sometimes) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) moderately (try sometimes) agree, 5) strongly agree. Here is a card.

29. I can discuss my beliefs with my mother without feeling restrained
or embarrassed. _____
30. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my mother tells me. _____
31. My mother is always a good listener. _____
32. I am sometimes afraid to ask my mother what I want. _____
33. My mother has a tendency to say things to me which would be
better left unsaid. _____
34. My mother can tell how I'm feeling without asking. _____
35. I am satisfied with how my mother and I talk together. _____
36. If I were in trouble, I could tell my mother. _____
37. I openly show affection to my mother. _____

38. When we are having a problem, I often give my mother the silent treatment. _____
39. I am careful about what I say to my mother. _____
40. When talking to my mother, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. _____
41. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my mother. _____
42. My mother tries to understand my point of view. _____
43. There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother. _____
44. I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother. _____
45. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my mother. _____
46. My mother nags/bothers me. _____
47. My mother insults me when she is angry with me. _____

48. I don't think I can tell my mother how I really feel about some things. _____

49. What do you like best about being part of your family?

50. What do you dislike most about being part of your family?

As I ask each of the next several questions answer 1) very likely, 2) somewhat likely, 3) somewhat unlikely, or 4) very unlikely. (INTERVIEWER: HANDOUT CARD) How likely is it that

51. sometime during the next week you will get in an argument where you will shout at someone in your family? _____

52. sometime during the next week someone in your family will be in an argument and shout at you? _____

53. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone in your family? _____

54. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will shout at someone your own age? _____

55. during the next week you will be in an argument with someone your own age who will shout at you? _____

56. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone your own age? _____

57. during the next week you will be in an argument where someone your own age will hit you? _____

I will now read a number of statements to you. Please respond 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree. (INTERVIEWER: Handout appropriate response card.)

58. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her "shoes" in order to understand his or her point of view. _____

59. I accept punishment from adults without getting mad. _____

60. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste too much time listening to what other people have to say. _____

61. I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them. _____

62. I try to look at everybody's side of a conflict. _____

63. When I'm upset with someone, I take responsibility for how I feel. _____

64. When I get angry, I try to take time to think about what would happen if I reacted on the spot. _____

65. I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them. _____

66. Victims of crime deserve to be victims. _____

67. I enjoy seeing people hurt. _____

This next set of questions deals with behavior kids sometimes do which gets them in trouble with the law. I'd like to remind you that all your answers are confidential. I'll read a series of things some people do or have done. Please indicate whether you have done them in the past year, and if so, how many times.

	Y/N	#times
68. Broken or tried to break into a building or vehicle to steal or just look around	_____	_____
69. Stolen or tried to steal something worth more than \$50.	_____	_____
70. Stolen money or other things from your parents or other member of your family.	_____	_____
71. Taken a vehicle for a drive without the owner's permission.	_____	_____
72. Damaged property on purpose (such as slashing tires, breaking windows)	_____	_____
73. Picked a fight with someone you didn't know just for the fun of it.	_____	_____
74. Hit or threatened to hit a teacher or other school staff.	_____	_____
75. Used force or threat of force to rob a person, store, or other business.	_____	_____
76. Attacked someone attempting to seriously hurt him or her.	_____	_____
77. Had or tried to have sexual relations with someone against their will.	_____	_____
78. Had sex for money or pimped.	_____	_____
79. Run away from home.	_____	_____
80. Been suspended or expelled from school.	_____	_____
81. Hit one of your parents.	_____	_____
82. Sold drugs.	_____	_____

I would like to ask you a few more questions about people you hang around with. We are nearly done with the interview.

83. How many close friends would you say you have? _____

84. How many of these close friends you hang with have been in trouble with the law? (Circle)

1. None
2. A few
3. Some

- 4. Most
- 5. All

ID. NO. _ _ _

85. Do you have friends your own age that you admire and trust who do not get into trouble with the law?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

86. Do you have friends who are adults that you admire and trust who do not get into trouble with the law?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

87. How often do you share your real thoughts and feelings with your close friends?

- 1) never
- 2) rarely
- 3) sometimes
- 4) often
- 5) frequently

88. Do your close friends influence your decisions to do or not do illegal things?

- 1) influence me to do them
- 2) neutral C little influence
- 3) influence me not to do them

89. Have you ever felt pressure to join a gang?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

90. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a gang?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

91. How many times in the past twelve months have you used alcohol?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

92. How many times in the past twelve months have you used marijuana?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

93. How many times in the past twelve months have you used hallucinogens (Acid, LSD, Mescaline, Mushrooms, PCP, Peyote)?

- 1) none at all

- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

94) How many times during the last twelve months have you used other drugs (eg. heroin, cocaine, barbiturates, tranquilizers, amphetamines, inhalants)?

- 1) not at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

95) How many of your friends: 1)= none; 2)=a few; 3) some; 4) most; 5)all.

- 1) smoke marijuana _____
- 2) drink alcohol _____
- 3) use other drugs _____

This is our last question!

96) On a scale of 1-10 what chances do you think you now have of staying out of trouble with the law? Where 1 means not likely at all; 10 means highly likely of staying out of trouble.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS

YOUTH POSTPROGRAM INTERVIEW TIME TWO

We would like to begin by asking you some questions about your experience with the Violence Prevention Program.

1. What three things in the program were most helpful for you?
2. What three things in the program were least helpful for you?
3. Did being in the program change your life in any way?

If so, how?

4. Do you think the program changed your (mother, father, guardian) in any way?
If so, how?

I will now read a series of sentences. Please indicate whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree or 4) strongly disagree with the sentence.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 5. The VIPs program was helpful for me. | _____ |
| 6. The program helped me stay out of trouble with the police and courts. | _____ |
| 7. The program helped me get along better with my family. | _____ |
| 8. Being in the VIPs program was a waste of my time. | _____ |
| 9. The program helped me get along better with other kids. | _____ |
| 10. Program staff encouraged me to do well. | _____ |
| 11. Program staff earned my respect. | _____ |
| 12. Program staff showed me how to stay out of trouble. | _____ |
| 13. Program staff did not show me any respect. | _____ |
| 14. Program staff helped me take more control of my own life | _____ |

We would now like to ask you a set of questions about your family in which I will ask a question and you indicate your level of satisfaction at this point in time having completed the VIPs program. For example, I might ask you, "how satisfied are you with the food you eat for lunch?" Your responses may be 1) dissatisfied, 2) somewhat dissatisfied, 3) generally satisfied, 4) very satisfied, 5) extremely satisfied. Here is a card with those choices.

How satisfied are you:

15. With how close you feel to the rest of your family? _____
16. With your ability to say what you want in your family? _____
17. With your family's ability to try new things? _____
18. With how often parents make decisions in your family? _____
19. With how much mother and father argue with each other? _____
20. With how fair the criticism is in your family? _____
21. With the amount of time you spend with your family? _____
22. With the way you talk together to solve family problems? _____
23. With your freedom to be alone when you want to? _____
24. With how strictly you stay with who does what chores
in your family? _____
25. With your family's acceptance of your friends? _____
26. With how clear is it what your family expects of you? _____
27. With how often you make decisions as a family, rather than
individually? _____
28. With the number of fun things your family does together? _____

We now want to ask you a series of questions about how you and your mother talk to each other now that you have completed the VIPs program. (INTERVIEWER: Choose parent or significant person who will most likely attend training). Your answer choices are 1) strongly disagree; 2) moderately (try sometimes) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) moderately (try sometimes) agree, 5) strongly agree. Here is a card.

29. I can discuss my beliefs with my mother without feeling restrained
or embarrassed. _____
30. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my mother tells me. _____
31. My mother is always a good listener. _____
32. I am sometimes afraid to ask my mother what I want. _____
33. My mother has a tendency to say things to me which would be
better left unsaid. _____
34. My mother can tell how I'm feeling without asking. _____
35. I am satisfied with how my mother and I talk together. _____
36. If I were in trouble, I could tell my mother. _____
37. I openly show affection to my mother. _____

38. When we are having a problem, I often give my mother the silent treatment. _____
39. I am careful about what I say to my mother. _____
40. When talking to my mother, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. _____
41. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my mother. _____
42. My mother tries to understand my point of view. _____
43. There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother. _____
44. I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother. _____
45. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my mother. _____
46. My mother nags/bothers me. _____
47. My mother insults me when she is angry with me. _____
48. I don't think I can tell my mother how I really feel about some things. _____
49. What do you like best about being part of your family? _____

50. What do you dislike most about being part of your family? _____

As I ask each of the next several questions answer 1) very likely, 2) somewhat likely, 3) somewhat unlikely, or 4) very unlikely. (INTERVIEWER: HANDOUT CARD) How likely is it that

51. sometime during the next week you will get in an argument where you will shout at someone in your family? _____
52. sometime during the next week someone in your family will be in an argument and shout at you? _____
53. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone in your family? _____
54. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will shout at someone your own age? _____
55. during the next week you will be in an argument with someone your own age who will shout at you? _____
56. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone your own age? _____
57. during the next week you will be in an argument where someone your own age will hit you? _____

I will now read a number of statements to you. Please respond 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree. (INTERVIEWER: Handout appropriate response card.)

58. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her "shoes" in order to understand his or her point of view. _____
59. I accept punishment from adults without getting mad. _____
60. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste too much time listening to what other people have to say. _____

61. I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them. _____
62. I try to look at everybody's side of a conflict. _____
63. When I'm upset with someone, I take responsibility for how I feel. _____
64. When I get angry, I try to take time to think about what would happen if I reacted on the spot. _____
65. I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them. _____
66. Victims of crime deserve to be victims. _____
67. I enjoy seeing people hurt. _____

This next set of questions deals with behavior kids sometimes do which gets them in trouble with the law. I'd like to remind you that all your answers are confidential. I'll read a series of things some people do or have done. Please indicate whether you have done them since you *started in the VIPs program*, and if so, how many times.

	Y/N	#times
68. Broken or tried to break into a building or vehicle to steal or just look around	_____	_____
69. Stolen or tried to steal something worth more than \$50.	_____	_____
70. Stolen money or other things from your parents or other member of your family.	_____	_____
Taken a vehicle for a drive without the owner's permission.	_____	_____
72. Damaged property on purpose (such as slashing tires, breaking windows)	_____	_____
73. Picked a fight with someone you didn't know just for the fun of it.	_____	_____
74. Hit or threatened to hit a teacher or other school staff.	_____	_____
75. Used force or threat of force to rob a person, store, or other business.	_____	_____
76. Attacked someone attempting to seriously hurt him or her.	_____	_____
77. Had or tried to have sexual relations with someone against their will.	_____	_____
78. Had sex for money or pimped.	_____	_____
79. Run away from home.	_____	_____
80. Been suspended or expelled from school.	_____	_____
81. Hit one of your parents.	_____	_____
82. Sold drugs.	_____	_____

I would like to ask you a few more questions about people you hang around with now. We are nearly done with the interview.

83. How many close friends would you say you have? _____

84. How many of these close friends you hang with have been in trouble with the law? (Circle)

- 1. None
- 2. A few
- 3. Some
- 4. Most
- 5. All

85. Do you have friends your own age that you admire and trust who do not get into trouble with the law?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

86. Do you have friends who are adults that you admire and trust who do not get into trouble with the law?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

87. How often do you share your real thoughts and feelings with your close friends?

- 1) never
- 2) rarely
- 3) sometimes
- 4) often
- 5) frequently

88. Do your close friends influence your decisions to do or not do illegal things?

- 1) influence me to do them
- 2) neutral C little influence
- 3) influence me not to do them

89. Have you ever felt pressure to join a gang?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

90. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a gang?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

91. How many times in the past three months have you used alcohol?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

92. How many times in the past three months have you used marijuana?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

93. How many times in the past three months have you used hallucinogens (Acid, LSD, Mescaline, Mushrooms, PCP, Peyote)?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

94) How many times during the last three months have you used other drugs (eg. heroin, cocaine, barbiturates, tranquilizers, amphetamines, inhalants)?

- 1) not at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

95) How many of your friends: 1)= none; 2)=a few; 3) some; 4) most; 5)all.

- 1) smoke marijuana _____
- 2) 2) drink alcohol _____
- 3) use other drugs _____

96) What three things did you like most about the program?

97) What three things did you dislike most about the program?

98) Would you recommend this program to other youth in trouble with the law?

- A. Yes
- B. No

If yes, why?

99) What changes in this program would you suggest to staff?

This is our last question!

100) On a scale of 1-10 what chances do you think you now have of staying out of trouble with the law? Where 1 means not likely at all; 10 means highly likely of staying out of trouble.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS

YOUTH INTERVIEW THREE MONTHS AFTER PROGRAM

Now that three months have passed since you completed the VIPS program, we would like to find out what you think of that experience at this point.

1. What three things about the program have been most helpful for you since completing the VIPS program?

2. What three things about the program have been least helpful for you since completing the VIPS program?

3. Did being in the program change your life in any way?

If so, how?

4. Do you think the program changed your (mother, father, guardian) in any way?

If so, how?

I will now read a series of sentences. Please indicate whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3)disagree or 4)strongly disagree with the sentence.

Looking back on the VIPS program I believe....

5. The VIPs program was helpful for me. _____
6. The program helped me stay out of trouble with the police and courts. _____
7. The program helped me get along better with my family. _____
8. Being in the VIPs program was a waste of my time. _____
9. The program helped me get along better with other kids. _____
10. Program staff encouraged me to do well. _____
11. Program staff earned my respect. _____
12. Program staff showed me how to stay out of trouble. _____
13. Program staff did not show me any respect. _____
14. Program staff helped me take more control of my own life. _____

We would now like to ask you a set of questions about your family in which I will ask a question and you indicate your level of satisfaction at this point in time. For example, I might ask you, "how satisfied are you with the food you eat for lunch?" Your responses may be 1) dissatisfied, 2) somewhat dissatisfied, 3) generally satisfied, 4) very satisfied, 5) extremely satisfied. Here is a card with those choices.

How satisfied are you:

15. With how close you feel to the rest of your family? _____
16. With your ability to say what you want in your family? _____
17. With your family's ability to try new things? _____
18. With how often parents make decisions in your family? _____
19. With how much mother and father argue with each other? _____
20. With how fair the criticism is in your family? _____
21. With the amount of time you spend with your family? _____
22. With the way you talk together to solve family problems? _____
23. With your freedom to be alone when you want to? _____
24. With how strictly you stay with who does what chores in your family? _____

25. With your family's acceptance of your friends? _____
26. With how clear is it what your family expects of you? _____
27. With how often you make decisions as a family, rather than individually? _____
28. With the number of fun things your family does together? _____

We now want to ask you a series of questions about how you and your mother talk to each other now. (INTERVIEWER: Choose parent or significant person who attend training most). Your answer choices are 1) strongly disagree; 2) moderately (try sometimes) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) moderately (try sometimes) agree, 5) strongly agree. Here is a card.

29. I can discuss my beliefs with my mother without feeling restrained or embarrassed. _____
30. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my mother tells me. _____
31. My mother is always a good listener. _____
32. I am sometimes afraid to ask my mother what I want. _____
33. My mother has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid. _____
34. My mother can tell how I'm feeling without asking. _____
35. I am satisfied with how my mother and I talk together. _____
36. If I were in trouble, I could tell my mother. _____
37. I openly show affection to my mother. _____
38. When we are having a problem, I often give my mother the silent treatment. _____
39. I am careful about what I say to my mother. _____
40. When talking to my mother, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. _____
41. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my mother. _____
42. My mother tries to understand my point of view. _____
43. There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother. _____
44. I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother. _____
45. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my mother. _____
46. My mother nags/bothers me. _____
47. My mother insults me when she is angry with me. _____
48. I don't think I can tell my mother how I really feel about some things. _____
49. What do you like best about being part of your family? _____
50. What do you dislike most about being part of your family? _____

As I ask each of the next several questions answer 1) very likely, 2) somewhat likely, 3) somewhat unlikely, or 4) very unlikely. (INTERVIEWER: HANDOUT CARD) How likely is it that

51. sometime during the next week you will get in an argument where you will shout at someone in your family? _____
52. sometime during the next week someone in your family will be in an argument and shout at you? _____
53. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone in your family? _____
54. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will shout at someone your own age? _____
55. during the next week you will be in an argument with someone your own age who will shout at you? _____
56. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone your own age? _____
57. during the next week you will be in an argument where someone your own age will hit you? _____

I will now read a number of statements to you. Please respond 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree. (INTERVIEWER: Handout appropriate response card.)

58. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her "shoes" in order to understand his or her point of view. _____
59. I accept punishment from adults without getting mad. _____
60. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste too much time listening to what other people have to say. _____
61. I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them. _____
62. I try to look at everybody's side of a conflict. _____
63. When I'm upset with someone, I take responsibility for how I feel. _____
64. When I get angry, I try to take time to think about what would happen if I reacted on the spot. _____
65. I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them. _____
66. Victims of crime deserve to be victims. _____
67. I enjoy seeing people hurt. _____

This next set of questions deals with behavior kids sometimes do which gets them in trouble with the law. I'd like to remind you that all your answers are confidential. I'll read a series of things some people do or have done. Please indicate whether you have done them since you *completed the VIPS program*, and if so, how many times.

- | | Y/N | #times |
|--|-------|--------|
| 68. Broken or tried to break into a building or vehicle to steal or just look around | _____ | _____ |
| 69. Stolen or tried to steal something worth more than \$50. | _____ | _____ |
| 70. Stolen money or other things from your parents or other member of your family. | _____ | _____ |

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 71. Taken a vehicle for a drive without the owner's permission. | _____ | _____ |
| 72. Damaged property on purpose (such as slashing tires, breaking windows) | _____ | _____ |
| 73. Picked a fight with someone you didn't know just for the fun of it. | _____ | _____ |
| 74. Hit or threatened to hit a teacher or other school staff. | _____ | _____ |
| 75. Used force or threat of force to rob a person, store, or other business. | _____ | _____ |
| 76. Attacked someone attempting to seriously hurt him or her. | _____ | _____ |
| 77. Had or tried to have sexual relations with someone against their will. | _____ | _____ |
| 78. Had sex for money or pimped. | _____ | _____ |
| 79. Run away from home. | _____ | _____ |
| 80. Been suspended or expelled from school. | _____ | _____ |
| 81. Hit one of your parents. | _____ | _____ |
| 82. Sold drugs. | _____ | _____ |

I would like to ask you a few more questions about people you hang around with now. We are nearly done with the interview.

83. How many close friends would you say you have? _____

84. How many of these close friends you hang with have been in trouble with the law? (Circle)

1. None
2. A few
3. Some
4. Most
5. All

85. Do you have friends your own age that you admire and trust who do not get into trouble with the law?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

86. Do you have friends who are adults that you admire and trust who do not get into trouble with the law?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

87. How often do you share your real thoughts and feelings with your close friends?

- 1) never
- 2) rarely
- 3) sometimes
- 4) often
- 5) frequently

88. Do your close friends influence your decisions to do or not do illegal things?

- 1) influence me to do them
- 2) neutral C little influence
- 3) influence me not to do them

89. Have you ever felt pressure to join a gang?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

90. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a gang?

- 1) no
- 2) yes

91. How many times in the past three months have you used alcohol?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

92. How many times in the past three months have you used marijuana?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

93. How many times in the past three months have you used hallucinogens (Acid, LSD, Mescaline, Mushrooms, PCP, Peyote)?

- 1) none at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

94) How many times during the last three months have you used other drugs (eg. heroin, cocaine, barbiturates, tranquilizers, amphetamines, inhalants)?

- 1) not at all
- 2) less than once a month
- 3) once a month
- 4) once a week
- 5) once a day

95) How many of your friends: 1)= none; 2)=a few; 3) some; 4) most; 5)all.

- 1) smoke marijuana _____
- 2) drink alcohol _____
- 3) use other drugs _____

96) What three things did you like most about participating in the VIPS program?

97) What three things did you like least about participating in the VIPS program?

98) What kind of contact have you had with VIPS program staff since completing the program?

99) Would you recommend this program to other youth in trouble with the law?

- A. Yes
- B. No

If yes, why?

100. What changes in this program would you suggest to staff?

This is our last question!

101) On a scale of 1-10 what chances do you think you now have of staying out of trouble with the law?
Where 1 means not likely at all; 10 means highly likely of staying out of trouble.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS

PARENT (P1) PRE-PROGRAM INTERVIEW

ID. NO: _____

CYCLE: 1 2 3 4

GROUP: PY P CY

The VIP program is a program for juveniles and their parents or guardians which has received much attention here in New Mexico and across the nation. There is much interest by others in knowing how this program works and what impact it has on the lives of those who go through it. Staff responsible for the program are interested in ways of improving how the program works. As a parent participant in the program, you will have information which is very important for understanding how the program works and how it may affect you.

Your willingness to help us in this research effort is very valuable to us. Your answers to our questions will be kept strictly confidential; they will not be shared with your child, instructors, or probation officers or with anyone else. We do not work for the probation department or the courts. We are an independent research team doing this project for the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution. Answers which you and other parents give will be pooled together, that is, when a report is written it might read "50% of the VIP parents believe the sky is blue." Your name will not be linked to any specific answer.

In addition to this interview, we will interview you again at the completion of the VIPs program. We not only value the information which you will provide, we also value your time. You will be paid \$5.00 for each interview completed. It is expected that the interviews will take 20 to 30 minutes.

Date:

Interviewer:

Location:

ID. NO: _____

I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about yourself?

1. What led you to be participate in the VIP program? Why are you in this program?
2. What do you hope happens because of you and your son/daughter being in the VIP program?
3. How old are you? _____
4. What is you relationship to your child in the program, mother, father, or so on? _____
5. Gender
 1. Male
 2. Female
6. Which of the following best describes you:
 1. Hispanic (Spanish, Chicano, Mexican, Cuban, Latin American)

2. American Indian/Native American
3. White/Anglo/Caucasian
4. Oriental/Asian American
5. Black/African American
6. Other _____

7. What is the highest grade you completed in school? _____

8. Were you ever suspended or expelled from school?

1. No
2. Yes

9. Do you now have a job?

1. No
2. Part-time
3. Full-time

10. What kind of work do you do?

11. Are you

1. Single
2. Married
3. Divorced
4. Separated
5. Living with a significant other (friend)

12. How many people live in your home? _____

13. How many children do you have?

1. Sons _____
2. Daughters _____

14. Have any of your other children ever been in trouble with the law?

15. Have you ever been in trouble with the law?

16. On a scale of 1-10 what chances do you think your son or daughter has of staying out of trouble with the law? 1 means not likely at all; 10 means highly likely of staying out of trouble with the law.

We would now like to ask you a set of questions about your family in which I will ask you a question and you indicate your level of satisfaction. For example, I might ask you, "how satisfied are you with the food you eat for lunch?" Your response may be 1) dissatisfied, 2) somewhat dissatisfied, 3) generally satisfied, 4) very satisfied, 5) extremely satisfied. Here is a card with those choices.

How satisfied are you:

17. With how close you feel to the rest of your family? _____
18. With your ability to say what you want in your family? _____
19. With your family's ability to try new things? _____
20. With how often parents make decisions in your family? _____
21. With how much mother and father argue with each other? _____
22. With how fair the criticism is in your family? _____
23. With the amount of time you spend with your family? _____
24. With the way you talk together to solve family problems? _____
25. With your freedom to be alone when you want to? _____
26. With how strictly you stay with who does what chores in your family? _____
27. With your family's acceptance of your friends? _____
28. With how clear is it what your family expects of you? _____
29. With how often you make decisions as a family, rather than individually? _____
30. With the number of fun things your family does together? _____

We now want to ask you a series of questions about how you and your child talk to each other. Your answer choices are 1) strongly disagree; 2) moderately (try sometimes) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) moderately (try sometimes) agree, 5) strongly agree. Here is a card.

31. I can discuss my beliefs with my child without feeling restrained or embarrassed. _____
32. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my child tells me. _____
33. My child is always a good listener. _____
34. I am sometimes afraid to ask my child what I want. _____
35. My child has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid. _____
36. My child can tell how I'm feeling without asking. _____
37. I am satisfied with how my child and I talk together. _____
38. If I were in trouble, I could tell my child. _____
39. I openly show affection to my child. _____
40. When we are having a problem, I often give my child the silent treatment. _____
41. I am careful about what I say to my child. _____
42. When talking to my child, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. _____

43. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my child. _____
44. My child tries to understand my point of view. _____
45. There are topics I avoid discussing with my child. _____
46. I find it easy to discuss problems with my child. _____
47. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my child. _____
48. My child nags/bothers me. _____
49. My child insults me when he/she is angry with me. _____
50. I don't think I can tell my child how I really feel about some things. _____

51. What do you like best about being part of your family? _____

52. What do you dislike most about being part of your family? _____

As I ask each of the next several questions answer 1) very likely, 2) somewhat likely, 3) somewhat unlikely, or 4) very likely. (INTERVIEWER: HANDOUT CARD) How likely is it that

53. sometime during the next week you will get in an argument where you will shout at someone in your family? _____

54. sometime during the next week someone in your family will be in an argument and shout at you? _____

55. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone in your family? _____

56. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will shout at someone your own age? _____

57. during the next week you will be in an argument with someone your own age who will shout at you? _____

58. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone your own age? _____

59. during the next week you will be in an argument where someone your own age will hit you? _____

I will now read a number of statements to you. Please respond 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree. (INTERVIEWER: Handout appropriate response card.)

60. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her "shoes" in order to understand his or her point of view. _____

61. I accept criticism without getting mad. _____

62. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste too much time listening to what other people have to say. _____
63. I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them. _____
64. I try to look at everybody's side of a conflict. _____
65. When I'm upset with someone, I take responsibility for how I feel. _____
66. When I get angry, I try to take time to think about what would happen if I reacted on the spot. _____
67. I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them. _____
68. Victims of crime deserve to be victims. _____
69. I enjoy seeing people hurt. _____

70. What is your greatest fear in being a parent?

71. What is your greatest joy in being a parent?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS

PARENT POSTPROGRAM INTERVIEW

1. I'd like to begin by asking you what three things in the program were most helpful?
2. What three things about the program were least helpful?
3. Did participating in the program change your life in any way?

- a. yes
- b. no

If so, how?

4. Do you think the program changed your kid in any way?

- a. yes
- b. no

If so, how?

I will now read a series of sentences. Please indicate whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3)disagree or 4)strongly disagree with the sentence.

- 5. The VIP program was helpful for me. _____
- 6. The program helped my child stay out of trouble with the
the police and court? _____
- 7. Being in this program was a waste of my time. _____
- 8. The program helped me get along better with my family. _____
- 9. The program helped my kid get along better with other kids. _____
- 10. Program staff encouraged me. _____
- 11. Program staff did not show me any respect. _____
- 12. Program staff gave me some good ideas for working with
my kid. _____
- 13. Program staff earned my respect. _____
- 14. I am now more hopeful about my kid's future than before
being in the program. _____

We would now like to ask you a set of questions about your family in which I will ask you a question and you indicate your level of satisfaction at this point in time having completed the VIPs program. For example, I might ask you, "how satisfied are you with the food you eat for lunch?" Your response may be 1) dissatisfied, 2) somewhat dissatisfied, 3)generally satisfied, 4) very satisfied, 5) extremely satisfied. Here is a card with those choices.

How satisfied are you:

- 15. With how close you feel to the rest of your family? _____
- 16. With your ability to say what you want in your family? _____
- 17. With your family's ability to try new things? _____
- 18. With how often parents make decisions in your family? _____
- 19. With how much mother and father argue with each other? _____
- 20. With how fair the criticism is in your family? _____
- 21. With the amount of time you spend with your family? _____
- 22. With the way you talk together to solve family problems? _____
- 23. With your freedom to be alone when you want to? _____
- 24. With how strictly you stay with who does what chores in
your family? _____

- 25. With your family's acceptance of your friends? _____
- 26. With how clear is it what your family expects of you? _____
- 27. With how often you make decisions as a family, rather than individually? _____
- 28. With the number of fun things your family does together? _____

We now want to ask you a series of questions about how you and your child talk to each other now that you have completed the VIPs program. Your answer choices are 1) strongly disagree; 2) moderately (try sometimes) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) moderately (try sometimes) agree, 5) strongly agree. Here is a card.

- 31. I can discuss my beliefs with my child without feeling restrained or embarrassed. _____
- 32. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my child tells me. _____
- 33. My child is always a good listener. _____
- 34. I am sometimes afraid to ask my child what I want. _____
- 35. My child has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid. _____
- 36. My child can tell how I'm feeling without asking. _____
- 37. I am satisfied with how my child and I talk together. _____
- 38. If I were in trouble, I could tell my child. _____
- 39. I openly show affection to my child. _____
- 40. When we are having a problem, I often give my child the silent treatment. _____
- 41. I am careful about what I say to my child. _____
- 42. When talking to my child, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. _____
- 43. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my child. _____
- 44. My child tries to understand my point of view. _____
- 45. There are topics I avoid discussing with my child. _____
- 46. I find it easy to discuss problems with my child. _____
- 47. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my child. _____
- 48. My child nags/bothers me. _____
- 49. My child insults me when he/she is angry with me. _____
- 50. I don't think I can tell my child how I really feel about some things. _____

51. What do you like best about being part of your family?

52. What do you dislike most about being part of your family?

As I ask each of the next several questions answer 1) very likely, 2) somewhat likely, 3) somewhat unlikely, or 4) very unlikely. (INTERVIEWER: HANDOUT CARD) How likely is it that

- 53. sometime during the next week you will get in an argument where you will shout at someone in your family? _____
- 54. sometime during the next week someone in your family will be in an argument and shout at you? _____
- 55. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone in your family? _____
- 56. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will shout at someone your own age? _____
- 57. during the next week you will be in an argument with someone your own age who will shout at you? _____
- 58. during the next week you will be in an argument where you will hit someone your own age? _____
- 59. during the next week you will be in an argument where someone your own age will hit you? _____

I will now read a number of statements to you. Please respond 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree. (INTERVIEWER: Handout appropriate response card.)

- 60. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her "shoes" in order to understand his or her point of view. _____
- 61. I accept criticism without getting mad. _____
- 62. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste too much time listening to what other people have to say. _____
- 63. I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them. _____
- 64. I try to look at everybody's side of a conflict. _____
- 65. When I'm upset with someone, I take responsibility for how I feel. _____
- 66. When I get angry, I try to take time to think about what would happen if I reacted on the spot. _____
- 67. I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them. _____
- 68. Victims of crime deserve to be victims. _____

69. I enjoy seeing people hurt.

70. What three things did you like most about participating in the VIP program?

71. What three things did you like least about participating in the VIP program?

72. Would you recommend this program to other youth in trouble, their parents and guardians?

a. yes

b. no

Why or why not?

73. What changes would you suggest be made in the program?

74. At this point, on a scale of 1 to ten, what chances do you believe your son or daughter has of staying out of trouble with the law? 1 means very unlikely; 10 means highly likely of staying out of trouble.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS

PARENT THREE MONTH POST PROGRAM INTERVIEW

1. What three things about the program have been most helpful for you since completing the VIPS program?

2. What three things about the program have been least helpful for you since completing the VIPS program?

3. Did participating in the program change your life in any way?

a. yes

b. no

If so, how?

4. Do you think the program changed your kid in any way?

a. yes

b. no

If so, how?

I will now read a series of sentences. Please indicate whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree or 4) strongly disagree with the sentence.

Looking back on the VIPS program, I believe....

5. The VIP program was helpful for me.

6. The program helped my child stay out of trouble with the police and courts.

7. Being in this program was a waste of my time.

8. The program helped me get along better with my family.

9. The program helped my kid get along better with other kids.

10. Program staff encouraged me.

11. Program staff did not show me any respect.

12. Program staff gave me some good ideas for working with my kid.

13. Program staff earned my respect.

14. I am now more hopeful about my kid's future than before being in the program.

We would now like to ask you a set of questions about your family in which I will ask you a question and you indicate your level of satisfaction at this point in time. For example, I might ask you, "how satisfied are you with the food you eat for lunch?" Your response may be 1) dissatisfied, 2) somewhat dissatisfied, 3) generally satisfied, 4) very satisfied, 5) extremely satisfied. Here is a card with those choices.

How satisfied are you:

15. With how close you feel to the rest of your family? _____
16. With your ability to say what you want in your family? _____
17. With your family's ability to try new things? _____
18. With how often parents make decisions in your family? _____
19. With how much mother and father argue with each other? _____
20. With how fair the criticism is in your family? _____
21. With the amount of time you spend with your family? _____
22. With the way you talk together to solve family problems? _____
23. With your freedom to be alone when you want to? _____
24. With how strictly you stay with who does what chores in your family? _____
25. With your family's acceptance of your friends? _____
26. With how clear is it what your family expects of you? _____
27. With how often you make decisions as a family, rather than individually? _____
28. With the number of fun things your family does together? _____

We now want to ask you a series of questions about how you and your child talk to each other now. Your answer choices are 1) strongly disagree; 2) moderately (try sometimes) disagree, 3) neither agree nor disagree, 4) moderately (try sometimes) agree, 5) strongly agree. Here is a card.

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37. I am satisfied with how my child and I talk together. _____
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39. I openly show affection to my child. _____
40. When we are having a problem, I often give my child the silent treatment. _____
41. I am careful about what I say to my child. _____
42. When talking to my child, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid. _____
43. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my child. _____
44. My child tries to understand my point of view. _____
45. There are topics I avoid discussing with my child. _____
46. I find it easy to discuss problems with my child. _____
47. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my child. _____

48. My child nags/bothers me. _____
49. My child insults me when he/she is angry with me. _____
50. I don't think I can tell my child how I really feel about some
things. _____

51. What do you like best about being part of your family?

52. What do you dislike most about being part of your family?

As I ask each of the next several questions answer 1) very likely, 2) somewhat likely, 3) somewhat unlikely, or 4) very unlikely. (INTERVIEWER: HANDOUT CARD) How likely is it that

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argument where you will shout at someone in your family? _____
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in your family will be in an argument and shout at you? _____
55. during the next week you will be in an
argument where you will hit someone in your family? _____
56. during the next week you will be in an
argument where you will shout at someone your own age? _____
57. during the next week you will be in an argument with
someone your own age who will shout at you? _____
58. during the next week you will be in an argument where
you will hit someone your own age? _____
59. during the next week you will be in an argument where
someone your own age will hit you? _____

I will now read a number of statements to you. Please respond 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree, or 4) strongly disagree. (INTERVIEWER: Handout appropriate response card.)

60. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his
or her "shoes" in order to understand his or her point of view. _____
61. I accept criticism without getting mad. _____
62. If I am sure I'm right about something, I don't waste too much
time listening to what other people have to say. _____

63. I feel sorry for others when bad things happen to them. _____

64. I try to look at everybody's side of a conflict. _____

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how I feel. _____

66. When I get angry, I try to take time to think about what
would happen if I reacted on the spot. _____

67. I let friends know I like them by telling or showing them. _____

68. Victims of crime deserve to be victims. _____

69. I enjoy seeing people hurt. _____

70. What three things did you like most about participating in the VIP program?

71. What three things did you like least about participating in the VIP program?

72. Would you recommend this program to other youth in trouble, their parents and guardians?

a. yes

b. no

Why or why not?

73. What changes would you suggest be made in the program?

74. What kind of contact have you had with program staff since completing the program?

75. At this point, on a scale of 1 to ten, what chances do you believe your son or daughter has of staying out of trouble with the law? 1 means very unlikely; 10 means highly likely of staying out of trouble.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS



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