

DISSERTATION

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONFERENCE WITHIN A  
HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT

Submitted by

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## ABSTRACT

### PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONFERRING WITHIN A HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT

The focus of this dissertation was to understand the experiences of participants who engaged in restorative justice conferencing as part of a university's student conduct process. Student misconduct has long been a challenge within higher education, and some see restorative justice as an effective means of addressing student violations of university rules and norms. While restorative justice has been associated with positive outcomes for participants in criminal justice and K-12 educational settings, little research has been done on restorative justice within higher education. With more colleges and universities interested in incorporating restorative justice into their student conduct process, it is important to understand the experiences of participants who engage in restorative justice processes in these settings.

As part of this dissertation, a non-experimental quantitative study was conducted with victims, student offenders, and community members who participated in a restorative justice conference as part of Colorado State University's student conduct process. Participants were administered pre and post-conference surveys with quantitative questions designed to obtain information about their attitudes, perspectives, experiences, and motivations. Quantitative descriptive analysis was used to investigate the frequency and variation of their scores and connections were explored between participant responses and the restorative justice theoretical paradigm, empirical findings of restorative justice research, and contemporary student conduct

standards. The findings of this study suggest that it is possible for campus restorative justice programs to foster positive experiences for participants, follow contemporary student conduct standards, and be aligned with restorative justice theory. The dissertation concludes with recommendations for future research that are presented along with implications for practice to help colleges and universities operate effective restorative justice programs.

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## DEDICATION

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
DEDICATION.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Research Problem and Purpose .....	4
Research Questions.....	5
Study Delimitations .....	5
Limitations.....	6
Assumptions.....	7
Significance of the Study .....	8
Researcher’s Perspective .....	9
Overview of the Study .....	9
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	10
Review of Restorative Justice Literature .....	10
Theoretical Paradigm .....	11
Harms and Needs .....	12
Obligations.....	12
Engagement.....	13
Restorative Justice Processes.....	13
Victim–Offender Mediation.....	14
Restorative Justice Conferences .....	14
Circles .....	15
Applications of Restorative Justice.....	15
The Criminal Justice System .....	16
K-12 Education .....	17
Higher Education .....	18
Empirical Research on Restorative Justice.....	20
Victim Outcomes .....	21
Offender Outcomes.....	24
Community Outcomes .....	28
Challenges with Restorative Justice Research.....	32
Conceptual Challenges.....	33
Methodological Challenges .....	35
Review of Student Conduct Literature .....	35
Historical Overview .....	36
Colonial Period: In Loco Parentis.....	36
Post-Revolutionary War: Campus Violence.....	37
Reconstruction Era: Public, Secular Education .....	38

Countercultural Revolution: Civil Rights and Anti-War Movement.....	38
Late 20 <sup>th</sup> Century: Creeping Legalism.....	40
Turn of the Century: Professionalization of Student Conduct.....	41
Contemporary Student Conduct.....	41
Standards.....	42
Practices .....	44
Research.....	45
Summary .....	47
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	48
Research Design and Rationale .....	48
Participants and Site.....	48
Preconference.....	50
Conference .....	50
Postconference .....	51
Sampling .....	51
Data Collection .....	52
Measures .....	53
Data Collection and Analysis.....	63
Summary .....	64
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	65
Introduction.....	65
Participants.....	65
Participant Demographics.....	67
Victim Descriptives .....	69
Victim Preconference Survey .....	69
Victim Postconference Survey.....	74
Offender Descriptives .....	90
Offender Preconference Survey .....	90
Offender Postconference Survey .....	97
Community Member Descriptives.....	115
Summary .....	128
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	130
Summary .....	130
Connections to the Literature.....	131
Victim Outcomes .....	131
Offender Outcomes.....	135
Community Member Outcomes.....	139
Implications for Practice .....	141
Appropriate Referrals and Screening Procedures .....	142
Inclusion of Victims and Community Members.....	143
Investment of Resources .....	145
Recommendations for Future Research .....	147
Conclusion .....	149

REFERENCES .....	151
APPENDIX A – PARTICIPANT SURVEYS.....	164
APPENDIX B – INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION .....	194
APPENDIX C – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM .....	202

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 <i>Victim Variables</i> .....	55
Table 2 <i>Offender Variables</i> .....	58
Table 3 <i>Community Member Variables</i> .....	61
Table 4 <i>Number of Participant Surveys</i> .....	66
Table 5 <i>Number of Participants by Role in Complete Cases</i> .....	67
Table 6 <i>Participant Gender</i> .....	67
Table 7 <i>Participant Race/Ethnicity</i> .....	68
Table 8 <i>Gender of CSU's Student Population from Fall 2007-Summer 2009</i> .....	68
Table 9 <i>Race/Ethnicity of CSU's Student Population from Fall 2007-Summer 2009</i> .....	68
Table 10 <i>Victim Presurvey: Satisfaction with How Case is Being Handled</i> .....	69
Table 11 <i>Victim Presurvey: Is Participating in Conference Victim's Own Choice?</i> .....	70
Table 12 <i>Victim Preconference: Victim's Reasons for Participating in Conference</i> .....	71
Table 13 <i>Victim Presurvey: Victim's Perception of Likelihood Offender(s) Will Commit a Similar Offense</i> .....	72
Table 14 <i>Victim Presurvey: Is Victim Afraid Offender Will Commit Another Offense Against Them?</i> .....	72
Table 15 <i>Victim Presurvey: How Beneficial Victim Predicts Meeting with Offender in Conference Will Be to Them</i> .....	72
Table 16 <i>Victim Presurvey: Victim's Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)</i> .....	73
Table 17 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Satisfaction with How Case Was Handled</i> .....	74
Table 18 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did Victims Believe their Case was Handled Fairly?</i> .....	74
Table 19 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did Victims Believe their Story Was Heard?</i> .....	75
Table 20 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offender in their conference was sorry?</i> .....	75
Table 21 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offenders were sorry?</i> .....	75
Table 22 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the Offender Apologize to the Victim?</i> .....	76
Table 23 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the Offenders Apologize to the Victim?</i> .....	76
Table 24 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offender was held responsible? .....</i>	77
Table 25 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offenders were held responsible? ..</i>	77
Table 26 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe participating in conference was their own choice?</i> .....	77
Table 27 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Victim's Reasons for Participating in Conference</i> .....	78
Table 28 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did the Facilitator Sufficiently Prepare Victim to Meet with the Offender?</i> .....	79
Table 29 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Victim's Perceptions of the Tone of the Conference</i> .....	79
Table 30 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Was Victim Surprised by Anything that Occurred During Conference?</i> .....	80
Table 31 <i>Victim Postsurvey: What, if Anything, Surprised Victims about the Conference</i> .....	80
Table 32 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Was an Agreement Reached During the Conference?</i> .....	81
Table 33 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Did Victims Perceive the Agreement to be Fair?</i> .....	81
Table 34 <i>Victim Postsurvey: Do Victims Fear the Offender Committing Another Offense Against Them?</i> .....	81

Table 35	<i>Victim Postsurvey: Would Victims Recommend Conferencing to Other Victims?</i>	82
Table 36	<i>Victim Postsurvey: Victims' Perception of the Importance of the Following</i>	84
Table 37	<i>Victim Postsurvey: Victims' Level of Agreement with Following Statements</i>	86
Table 38	<i>Victim Postsurvey: Victim's Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)</i>	88
Table 39	<i>Victim Postsurvey: How Beneficial Victims Found Meeting with Offender in Conference</i>	89
Table 40	<i>Victim Postsurvey: Satisfaction with Outcome of Restorative Justice Conference</i>	89
Table 41	<i>Victim Postsurvey: Would Victims Choose to Participate in Conference if They Had to Do it Over Again?</i>	90
Table 42	<i>Offender Presurvey: Satisfaction with How Case is Being Handled</i>	91
Table 43	<i>Offender Presurvey: Do Offenders Take Responsibility for Committing Offense?</i>	91
Table 44	<i>Offender Presurvey: Do Offenders Feel Sorry for Committing the Offense?</i>	92
Table 45	<i>Offender Presurvey: Is Participating in Conference Offender's Own Choice?</i>	92
Table 46	<i>Offender Preconference: Reasons for Participating in Conference</i>	93
Table 47	<i>Offender Presurvey: How Beneficial Offenders Predict Meeting with Victims in Conference Will Be to Them</i>	94
Table 48	<i>Offender Presurvey: Perception of the Importance of the Following</i>	95
Table 49	<i>Offender Presurvey: Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit a Similar Offense Like this One</i>	96
Table 50	<i>Offender Presurvey: Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit Another Offense of Any Kind</i>	96
Table 51	<i>Offender Presurvey: Offenders' Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)</i>	97
Table 52	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Satisfaction with how Case was Handled</i>	98
Table 53	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Do Offenders Take Responsibility for Committing Offense?</i>	98
Table 54	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit a Similar Offense</i>	99
Table 55	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit Another Offense of Any Kind</i>	99
Table 56	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Do Offenders Feel Sorry for Committing the Offense?</i>	100
Table 57	<i>Offender Postsurvey: How Likely Offenders Believe It Will be for Them to Continue at CSU and Graduate</i>	100
Table 58	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Apologize to Victims?</i>	101
Table 59	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Is Participating in Conference Offender's Own Choice?</i>	101
Table 60	<i>Offender Preconference: Offenders' Reasons for Participating in Conference</i>	102
Table 61	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Feel Facilitator Sufficiently Prepare Them to Meet the Victim?</i>	102
Table 62	<i>Offender Postsurvey: How Beneficial Offenders Found Meeting Victim(s)</i>	103
Table 63	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Attitude Towards Victims</i>	104
Table 64	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Attitude About the Restorative Justice Conference</i>	104
Table 65	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Perceptions of the Tone of the Conference</i>	105
Table 66	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Was Offender Surprised by Anything that Occurred During Conference?</i>	105
Table 67	<i>Offender Postsurvey: What, if Anything, Surprised Offenders about the Conference</i>	106
Table 68	<i>Offender Postsurvey: Was an agreement reached during the conference?</i>	106

Table 69 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Did offenders perceive the agreement to be fair?</i> .....	107
Table 70 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)</i> .....	108
Table 71 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Perception of the Importance of the Following</i> .....	109
Table 72 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Believe Their Story was Heard?</i> .....	110
Table 73 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Believe Their Story was Considered in the Outcome of the Case?</i> .....	110
Table 74 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Level of Agreement with Following Statements</i> .....	112
Table 75 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders' Attitudes About Crime Change, as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?</i> .....	113
Table 76 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders' Attitudes about the Office of Conflict Resolution at CSU Change as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?</i> .....	113
Table 77 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Do Offenders Think Conferencing Would Be the Best Way to Handle Similar Types of Offenses Involving Others?</i> .....	114
Table 78 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Satisfaction with Outcome of Restorative Justice Conference</i>	114
Table 79 <i>Offender Postsurvey: Would Offenders Choose to Participate in Conference if They Had to Do it Over Again?</i> .....	115
Table 80 <i>Community Member Survey: Level of Satisfaction with How Case Was Handled</i> .....	115
Table 81 <i>Community Member Survey: Did Participants Believe the Offender was Held Accountable?</i> .....	116
Table 82 <i>Community Member Survey: Perception of Likelihood the Offender Will Commit Another Offense Like this One</i> .....	116
Table 83 <i>Community Member Survey: Perception of Likelihood the Offender Will Commit Another Offense of Any Kind</i> .....	117
Table 84 <i>Community Member Survey: Were Participants Surprised by Anything that Occurred During Conference?</i> .....	117
Table 85 <i>Community Member Survey: What, if Anything, Was Surprising about the Conference?</i> .....	118
Table 86 <i>Community Member Survey: How Beneficial Was the Conference, to Them, in Dealing with the Offense?</i> .....	119
Table 87 <i>Community Member Survey: Perception of the Importance of the Following</i> .....	119
Table 88 <i>Community Member Survey: Did Participants Believe Their Story was Considered in the Case?</i> .....	120
Table 89 <i>Community Member Survey: Were their Opinions Considered in the Case?</i> .....	120
Table 90 <i>Community Member Survey: Experience with Conferencing</i> .....	121
Table 91 <i>Community Member Survey: Was an Agreement Reached During the Conference?..</i>	121
Table 92 <i>Community Member Survey: Did They Perceive the Agreement to be Fair?</i> .....	121
Table 93 <i>Community Member Survey: Did Participants Believe the Case was Handled Fairly?</i> .....	122
Table 94 <i>Community Member Survey: Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)</i> .....	122
Table 95 <i>Community Member Survey: Level of Agreement with Following Statements</i> .....	125
Table 96 <i>Community Member Survey: Did Attitudes About Crime Change, as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?</i> .....	126
Table 97 <i>Community Member Survey: Did Attitudes about the Office of Conflict Resolution at CSU Change as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?</i> .....	126

Table 98 *Community Member Survey: Satisfaction with Outcome of Restorative Justice Conference* ..... 127

Table 99 *Community Member Survey: Would Respondents Choose to Participate in Conference if They Had to Do it Over Again?* ..... 127

Table 100 *Community Member Survey: Would Participants Recommend Restorative Justice Conferencing to Others Facing Similar Situations?* ..... 128

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In addition to fostering knowledge of academic subjects, higher education institutions have consistently assumed some degree of responsibility for shaping students' character and their behavior, both within and outside of the classroom. Since the first colleges were founded in the United States, college administrators have attempted to discourage and address problematic student behaviors that threatened the well-being of the campus community (Smith, 1994). Such attempts led institutions to implement a variety of measures, including student disciplinary practices and policies (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2021; Smith, 1994). These policies and practices have taken many forms, evolving over the last 300 years in response to changes in the landscape of higher education and the larger socio-political context of the United States (CAS, 2021; Dannells, 1997; Glick & Haug, 2020; Smith, 1994; Stoner & Lowery 2004). Today, there is an entire profession, known as *student conduct*, dedicated to upholding the behavioral expectations that higher education institutions have for those people who are enrolled (CAS, 2021; Dannells, 1997; Glick & Haug, 2020; Smith, 1994; Stoner & Lowery 2004). Nevertheless, colleges and universities struggle to effectively prevent and address instances of disruptive and harmful behaviors.

Student misbehavior continues to be a source of challenge and concern within higher education. Though technically adults, young students often lack the social-emotional skills that are critical to effectively navigating their newfound freedom and independence (Karp, 2004; Karp & Conrad, 2005). Compounding this problem is the fact that student culture normalizes excessive and underage use of drugs and alcohol (Karp, 2004), which is highly correlated with incidents of violence, sexual assault, drunk driving, and property damage (DeJong, 2004; DeJong

et al., 2007). Though universities attempt to define behavioral expectations via the publication and distribution of conduct codes, students may fail to internalize or legitimize these expectations if they perceive them to lack meaning or conflict with student culture (Karp, 2004; Karp & Conrad, 2005). The challenge of getting students to understand and adhere to campus policy is compounded by the fact that the student population is continually changing, and most institutions lack the resources to consistently monitor student behavior (Karp & Conrad, 2005). For these reasons, there is still a need for new approaches to responding to student misbehavior. One that has gained traction in recent years is restorative justice.

Restorative justice is a means of addressing and conceptualizing wrongdoing within the context of relationships. Since its emergence in the 1970s, restorative justice has become “a fast-growing state, national, and international social movement that seeks to bring people together to address the harm caused by crime, through empowerment of those involved” (Umbreit & Armour, 2010, p. 2). The United Nations (2006) broadly considered restorative justice processes to be any “in which the victim, the offender, and/or any other individuals or community members affected by a crime actively participate together in the resolution of matters arising from the crime, often with the help of a fair and impartial third party” (p. 2). Despite the use of the term *crime*, these processes can address a wide range of problematic behaviors. First used within the United States in the criminal justice context, restorative justice is now applied in a variety of other settings, most frequently within formal education within the United States (Gonzales, 2012; Hopkins, 2002; Karp 2013; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Morrison, 2013). While these applications primarily centered on primary and secondary educational institutions, there is growing interest in its use within higher education settings.

The restorative justice paradigm provides an alternative approach to dealing with wrongdoing. Unlike the retributive paradigm, upon which traditional criminal justice in the United States is based, it does not focus on punishing those responsible for wrongdoing (Bazemore, 1998; Umbreit et al., 2005; Van Ness & Strong, 2014; Wenzel et al., 2008; Zehr, 2005). Instead, restorative justice prioritizes reparation of the harm caused by an offense (Bazemore, 1998; Bazemore & Schiff, 2001; Karp, 2013; Pranis, 2013; Van Ness & Strong, 2014; Wachtel, 2016; Zehr, 2002, 2005). Zehr (2005) identified three foundational pillars of restorative justice theory: harms and needs, obligations, and engagement. Within restorative justice, crime and other offenses are viewed as behaviors that cause harm to people and relationships (Zehr, 2005). Justice is obtained when those harmed by an offense have the opportunity to express their needs and get those needs met (Karp, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2002, 2005). Those who have caused harm to others have an obligation to repair that harm, to the extent that is possible (Wachtel, 2016; Zehr, 2005). Finally, restorative justice emphasizes the active engagement of all those who have been impacted by wrongdoing (Koss et al., 2014; Schmid, 2003; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Wachtel, 2016; Zehr, 2005). These stakeholders include those who have been directly harmed (victims), those who have caused harm (offenders), and those who have been indirectly affected (community) (Bazemore, 1998; Wachtel, 2016; Zehr, 2002, 2005). The restorative justice paradigm will be explored in greater detail in chapter 2.

Restorative justice may be an effective means of addressing problematic student behavior within higher education. Proponents see many potential benefits of using restorative justice within student conduct settings. There is alignment between higher education institutions' mission of promoting student development and restorative justice's emphasis on fostering behavioral and attitudinal change through educational dialogue and reflection (Karp, 2004a,

2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp & Frank, 2016a). Additionally, restorative justice processes help institutions uphold students' legal rights to due process by giving students an active voice in both disciplinary processes and outcomes (Karp, 2004a, 2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp, & Frank, 2016a).

### **Statement of the Research Problem and Purpose**

Student misbehavior continues to be a source of challenge and concern within higher education. Though legally they are adults, students under the age of 25 lack the social-emotional skills that are critical to effectively navigating their newfound freedom and independence (Karp, 2004; Karp & Sacks, 2014). Restorative justice processes may be an effective means for higher education institutions to address misconduct by these students. Indeed, a growing number of colleges and universities have integrated restorative justice into their student disciplinary processes (Karp & Sacks, 2014). However, educators need to understand the experiences of these students when they participate in restorative justice processes.

If restorative justice is to be used by higher education institutions to address student misconduct, understanding the experiences of participants in these programs is important. Currently, no known study on higher education restorative justice programming has compared pre and post data from participants or examined outcomes of victim and community member participants. As such, scholars know little about the experience of all the participants in these restorative justice processes.

Based on a review of the literature and built upon the theoretical framework, the purpose of this study was twofold. First, it was designed to gain increased understanding of the attitudes, perspectives and experiences of student offenders, victims, and community members who participated in a restorative justice conference process held within the context of a higher

education institution's disciplinary process. Second, it was an examination of these responses in relation to restorative justice theory. Uniquely, this study was an investigation of data collected before and after the conference process. Ultimately, I hoped to gain insight into how to improve the conference process to meet the needs of participants.

### **Research Questions**

To fulfill the research purpose, the following research questions were investigated utilizing quantitative descriptive analyses: What is the frequency and variation of the scores for victims, offenders, and community members on the Colorado State University Restorative Justice Questionnaire? How do these scores differ from preconference to post-conference?

### **Study Delimitations**

A number of delimitations were placed on research participants. Results from analysis of the data collected for this study cannot be generalized to the broader population because the sample size is small ( $n=21$ ) and the research design does not provide for inferential statistical analysis.

Offenders who participated in the study were restricted to those people who:

1. were students at Colorado State University;
2. admitted responsibility for violating the school's code of conduct;
3. were deemed appropriate for, and referred to, the restorative justice program by student conduct hearing officers and the restorative justice coordinator;
4. voluntarily chose to participate in the restorative justice program.

The last three delimitations, in particular, threatened the study's validity by increasing the chances of selection bias. "A selection bias comes from any error in selecting the study participants and/or from factors affecting the study participation" (Tripepi et al., 2010, p. c95).

Offenders who were referred to restorative justice likely demonstrated different qualities and characteristics than those who did not receive referrals. For example, to be referred to the program, offenders needed to demonstrate remorse, take accountability for the offense, and be willing to meet with impacted parties (Shaff et al., 2007).

### **Limitations**

Creswell (2015) defined limitations as “potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher” (p. 199). One limitation of this research is the small sample size. Given the relative newness of the restorative justice program at Colorado State University and the size of the student conduct caseload, the sample for this study was relatively small and limited the researcher’s capacity to make inferences about the data or generalize the research results to the larger population.

Another limitation was the lack of demographic data collected about participants. Participants were only asked to provide their race/ethnicity and their gender, so researchers know relatively little about the participants’ characteristics, such as age, year in school, occupation, and socioeconomic status.

Additionally, offenders who voluntarily opted in to participate in the process may have had different attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and perspectives than the offenders who did not. As such, these offenders may not be representative of all student offenders who go through Colorado State University’s student conduct process. Because victims and community members also voluntarily opt into restorative justice, the same selection bias was a threat for these groups of participants.

## **Assumptions**

Assumptions are things one presumes to be true (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). The integrity of research is promoted when researchers make the assumptions that inform their study explicit (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). The two primary assumptions of this study were:

1. Respondents were honest and truthful when completing the surveys.

This assumption depends on the fact that the respondents' participation in the study and completion of the surveys was voluntary. Moreover, participants were assured, through information provided on a written consent form, that their decision to participate or not participate in the study would have no bearing on their ability to participate in restorative justice conferencing. Lastly, the surveys were anonymous.

2. The intervention, restorative justice conferencing, was facilitated in a manner that is consistent with the following operationalized definition of restorative justice conferencing adapted from Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al. (2015) and Sherman, Strang, Mayo-Wilson, et al. (2015): Restorative justice conferencing (a) is led by a trained facilitator; (b) involves the participation of offender(s) who take responsibility/do not deny responsibility for the offense they have been accused of; (c) involves the participation of those directly and/or indirectly impacted (victims, surrogate victims, friends, family members, community members) by the offense; (d) is voluntary for all participants; and (e) centers on a discussion of the offense, the harms that it caused, and what can be done to address these harms. This assumption depends on the fact that the original researchers' conception of restorative justice conferencing was aligned with this definition, and the facilitators of the restorative justice conference process had sufficient training to facilitate the process with integrity.

## **Significance of the Study**

While many studies have examined participant experiences of restorative justice within the criminal justice context, few have examined them within a higher education disciplinary context. Offenders, victims, and community members are considered important stakeholders within restorative justice and generally participate in restorative justice conferences. Thus, understanding the experiences of each of these groups is important in evaluating the effectiveness of restorative justice processes.

The little existing research done on participant experiences of campus restorative justice programs has all focused solely on offenders. Thus, while scholars' knowledge of offender experiences within these programs is limited, their knowledge of community member and victim experiences are nearly nonexistent. Additionally, previous studies on campus restorative justice processes have only examined participants' experiences postintervention. Thus, before this current study, variations in participant experiences before and after participating in a restorative justice conference were not compared.

This study provides two unique contributions to the research on campus restorative justice programs. This research was the first quantitative study of restorative justice processes within the context of higher education student disciplinary processes to: (a) examine the participant experiences of offenders, victims, and community members; and (b) analyze data collected from participants both pre and post participation in a restorative justice conference. Additionally, this study introduced a questionnaire instrument that may be useful to future research on campus restorative justice programming.

## **Researcher's Perspective**

I approached this research as a conflict resolution practitioner and former employee of the Student Resolution Center at Colorado State University. In this role, I regularly coordinated and facilitated restorative justice conferences related to student violations of the code of conduct. I was not involved in the design or implementation of this study, nevertheless, I am delighted to have the opportunity to use the archival data that was collected. I am a proponent of restorative justice, having seen from experience the powerful impact it can have on participants. While such anecdotal information has value, I believe that quantitative research is an important means of evaluating a program's effectiveness. I hope this study will contribute to further evaluation of restorative justice programming within higher education settings.

## **Overview of the Study**

This study is composed of five chapters. The intention of this first chapter has been to describe the purpose and significance of the study, as well as a brief overview of its context. Chapter 2 is a synthesis and analysis of theoretical, historical, and empirical literature that is related to the study. The third chapter describes the design of the study, and methods used to collect and analyze data. The findings from the data collection and analysis are described in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 examines how these findings relate and contribute to the literature, discusses limitations of the study, and provides suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study examined the perceptions of participants who engaged in a restorative justice conference provided through a university student conduct program. The goal was to help gauge the efficacy of these practices within this setting. To meaningfully assess the results, one must have a working understanding of both restorative justice and student conduct administration, two disciplines that, in their relatively nascent modern forms, lack firmly established academic frameworks and thus require extra care while studying. This chapter first examines the underlying beliefs and objectives that the extant literature suggested are most agreed upon within the restorative justice field, while establishing the particular definitions that are used in the remainder of this study. Then, in the second half, student conduct is placed within its historical setting, examining the developments that have shaped modern practices and have led to scholars' current theoretical understanding, while identifying the types of goals and objectives that restorative justice may or may not help achieve. I have not attempted to provide an exhaustive review of either area, but instead aim to provide an overview of the theoretical, empirical, and historical literature that is relevant to this study.

### **Review of Restorative Justice Literature**

Restorative justice is a complex concept. Considered to be a distinct justice paradigm, the term encompasses beliefs, concepts, principles, and practices related to addressing problematic behavior (Zehr, 2005). Although the term was likely coined during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept has no definitive point of origin but is thought to reflect aspects of traditional indigenous and aboriginal cultures (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Zehr, 2005). Contemporary conceptions of restorative justice emerged in the 1970s as part of criminal justice

reform efforts (Gavrielides, 2008; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Walker, 2012). In the following decades, it gained traction as a means of addressing a wide variety of problematic behaviors, both within and outside of the criminal justice system (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Zehr, 2005).

This overview examines the theoretical paradigm of restorative justice, well-established restorative justice processes, current applications both within and external to the criminal justice system, and, finally, empirical studies and the conclusions drawn in the existing literature.

### **Theoretical Paradigm**

Restorative justice is a means of addressing and conceptualizing wrongdoing within the context of relationships. These relationships exist among offenders, or those responsible for wrongdoing, victims who have been directly impacted by the offense, and the community who have been indirectly impacted by the offense (Braithwaite, 2002a; McCold, 2004; Rossner & Bruce, 2016). Due to both its breadth and lack of a definitive point of origin, the meaning of restorative justice has been difficult to pin down (Braithwaite, 2002b; Daly & Immarigeon, 1998; Gavrielides, 2008; United Nations, 2006). For this reason, restorative justice is often characterized in terms of what it is not; the values, principles, and practices of this paradigm are frequently contrasted with the retributive justice paradigm that informs criminal justice in the United States and much of the Western world (Bazemore, 1998; Umbreit et al., 2005; Van Ness & Strong, 2014; Wenzel et al., 2008; Zehr, 2005). Zehr (2005) identified three foundational pillars of the restorative paradigm: harms and needs, obligations, and engagement. Reviewing each of these pillars helps clarify what restorative justice is and how it differs from the retributive paradigm.

### ***Harms and Needs***

Foundational to the restorative justice paradigm is the assumption that justice efforts should center on the reparation of harm. While retributive justice equates offenses with violations of established laws and rules, restorative justice, in contrast, views wrongdoing as violations of people and relationships (Zehr, 2005). Such violations can cause harm to victims, offenders, community members, and interpersonal relationships (Zehr, 2005). These harms are often manifest as unmet physical, material, emotional, and relational needs (Karp, 2013; Zehr, 2005). By framing offenses in this way, restorative justice centers the personal and interpersonal dimensions of wrongdoing. It also provides insight into the nature and objectives of justice processes.

If violations cause harm, then, within this theory, justice efforts should be designed to heal. While retributive justice focuses on ensuring that offenders “get what they deserve,” restorative justice “seeks to repair the harm as much as possible, both concretely and symbolically” (Zehr, 2005, p. 32). Repair is fostered by attending to the physical, material, and emotional needs that contributed to, and resulted from, an offense (Karp, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). This allows for exploration of not only what has been done but also on what can be done.

### ***Obligations***

Although both retributive and restorative justice value accountability, they conceptualize it differently. While the retributive justice system attempts to hold offenders accountable through punishment, restorative justice encourages them “to be accountable in the ways that represent the natural consequences of their actions” (Zehr, 2005, p. 200). If the natural consequence of wrongdoing is harm, then those responsible for wrongdoing have the primary obligation to repair

that harm. Accountability is demonstrated through accepting this obligation and working to “understand and acknowledge the harm they have done and then taking steps, even if incomplete or symbolic, to make that wrong right” (Zehr, 2005, p. 197). In this way, those who have caused harm can be more than passive recipients of justice outcomes. By providing opportunities for active accountability, restorative justice can empower offenders and address the needs of victims and other impacted parties.

### ***Engagement***

The restorative justice paradigm assumes that those best suited to address offenses are those who have been most affected by them. Within the retributive paradigm, justice processes are primarily administered by representatives of the state, while impacted parties are regulated to peripheral roles (Bazemore & Schiff, 2001; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Zehr, 2005). Restorative justice processes, in contrast, center on the active participation of those who have been involved in, and impacted by, wrongdoing (Koss et al., 2014; Schmid, 2003; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Zehr, 2005). Through facilitated dialogue, victims, offenders, and community members can communicate with one another about their experiences and collaboratively develop resolutions (Zehr, 2005). Such resolutions can be customized to participants’ specific needs, interests, and circumstances.

### **Restorative Justice Processes**

There are a variety of types and categories of restorative justice processes, and debate as to the scope of what can be considered restorative justice. However, three specific models have gained widespread acceptance: victim offender mediation (VOM), restorative justice conferences (RJC), and circles (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Karp, 2004a; Karp & Frank, 2016b; Umbreit et al., 2005; United Nations, 2006; Van Ness & Strong, 2014). Further reference in this study to

restorative justice will be intentionally limited to practices that conform to one or more of these three, as the most recognized and best-defined models.

### ***Victim–Offender Mediation***

Victim–offender mediation (VOM) is, perhaps, the most well-established form of contemporary restorative justice. It is the first recognized application of formal restorative justice to be used in relation to Western criminal justice systems (United Nations, 2006). For over 30 years, this process has been used to address a variety of serious crimes (Koss et al., 2014). Unlike traditional mediation, in VOM the parties are not considered disputants, as “[one] has clearly committed a criminal offense and has admitted doing so. The other has clearly been victimized” (Bradshaw & Umbreit, 1998, p. 18). The process is intended to support victim healing, help the offender understand the impact of their offense, and assist both parties in establishing the terms of a reparative agreement (Bradshaw et al., 2006; Bradshaw & Umbreit, 1998; Warters, 2004). While this form of restorative justice is used by some institutions, it is still relatively rare in higher education (Warters, 2004). However, the number of campuses using VOM processes may increase in the coming years as more institutions begin using restorative justice to address higher-level offenses, such as sexual misconduct.

### ***Restorative Justice Conferences***

Restorative justice conferences (RJC or simply *conferences*) bring together impacted parties and community representatives to address a specific incident of wrongdoing (Gavrielides, 2007; United Nations, 2006). Through a structured, facilitated dialogue, participants “identify desirable outcomes for the parties, address the consequences of the crime, and explore appropriate ways to prevent the offending behavior from reoccurring” (United Nations, 2006, p. 20). Conferences frequently involve a stage where participants collectively develop a reparative

agreement that contains actions the offender must take to repair existing harm and prevent the recurrence of similar misconduct (Allena, 2004).

### ***Circles***

Circles are a versatile dialogue process. They can be used “proactively, to develop relationships and build community; or reactively, to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts and problems” (Wachtel, 2016, p. 7). The circle process emphasizes equality and inclusion (Pranis, 2005; Pranis et al., 2013; Wachtel, 2016). Sitting in a circle formation, each participant is given an opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives related to a specific topic without interruption (Pranis, 2005; Pranis et al., 2013; Wachtel, 2016). The order of speaking typically moves sequentially, which inhibits back-and-forth exchanges and promotes respectful listening (Pranis, 2005; Pranis et al., 2013; Wachtel, 2016). Circles have been implemented within a variety of organizations, including higher education institutions, as a mechanism for sharing ideas, building connections, discussing concerns, making decisions, and resolving problems (Wachtel, 2016).

### **Applications of Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice can be applied in a variety of contexts. First used within the criminal justice system, restorative justice is now used in corporate, nonprofit, educational, and community settings (González, 2012; Hopkins, 2002; Karp 2013; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Morrison, 2013; Paul, 2017). Outside of the criminal justice system, schools have been the biggest adopters of restorative justice, viewing it as a means to address student misconduct and improve school culture (Kara & McAlister, 2010). Although most school-based restorative justice programming is within K-12 settings, their use within higher education institutions is a subject of increasing interest (Dahl et al., 2014; James & Hetzel-Riggin, 2022; Karp & Sacks,

2014; Kayali & Walters, 2021; Llewellyn et al., 2015). The following section provides an overview of how and why restorative justice has been used within criminal justice, K-12 education, and college and university settings.

### ***The Criminal Justice System***

Contemporary restorative justice practices were first applied in the United States within the context of criminal justice. During the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dissatisfaction with mainstream justice methods led to exploration of alternative approaches to addressing criminal offenses (Beale, 2003; Braithwaite, 1998; Gavrielides, 2008; Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Marshall, 1999; Umbreit & Armour, 2011). During the 1970s and 1980s, experiments with justice processes diverted offenders from state-centric justice processes and emphasized victim-involvement, restitution, and dialogue among impacted parties (Armour, 2012; McCold, 2007; Strong, 2018). McCold (2007) explained that restorative justice emerged organically from these efforts:

In the evolution of restorative justice, practice has preceded theory. Mediation, circles, and conferencing were used to respond to criminal cases before there was an understanding that these practices were restorative justice. Each practice developed independently and each eventually influenced the others. (p. 24)

The confluence of these divergent justice efforts during this period suggests the presence of a collective paradigm shift among segments of U.S. society.

Use of restorative justice has expanded within the criminal justice system since the 1970s. Public support for incarceration and other punitive measures has substantially declined over the last 5 decades, replaced with greater demand for justice options that are victim-centered and rehabilitative in nature (Karp & Frank, 2016b; Sliva & Lambert 2015). Because restorative

justice is intended to benefit victims, offenders, and communities, it quickly gained “popularity as a policy solution” (Sliva & Lambert, 2015, p. 80). During the 1990s, restorative justice received formal endorsements from the American Bar Association, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, the Coalition for Dignity in Schools, and the Texas Public Policy Institute (Armour, 2012; Sliva & Lambert, 2015; Strong, 2018). At present, at least 32 states have incorporated legislation that supports these practices (Armour, 2012; Beale, 2003; Sliva & Lambert, 2015). Clearly, the potential of restorative justice processes appealed to a diverse array of constituents. Yet, so far, this widespread approval has not led to similar levels of widespread application.

Despite its seeming popularity, restorative justice largely remains at the fringes of the justice system. “While many states’ criminal and juvenile codes contain references to restorative justice generally or specific restorative justice practices, few provide detailed support and structure to ensure implementation” (Sliva & Lambert, 2015, p. 88). What support does exist is generally limited to the application of these processes in cases involving juvenile offenders and relatively low-level crimes that generally would not result in incarceration (Armour, 2012; Beale, 2003; Karp & Frank, 2016a, 2016b). Nevertheless, the marginal gains of restorative justice within this context have inspired applications in other sections of society.

### ***K-12 Education***

As restorative justice began to be used more within the criminal justice system, educators began experimenting with these approaches in their learning communities. The first documented use of restorative practices in schools was in 1994 in Australia (Cameron, & Thorsborne, 1999). Since that time, application of restorative practices has grown exponentially within the United States’ primary and secondary schools, fueled by concerns over school violence and the well-

documented failings of zero tolerance policies (Cameron & Thorsborne, 1999; Cavanagh, 2008; Drewery & Winslade, 2003; Gonzalez, 2012; Hopkins, 2002; Morrison, 2002; Nelson, 2008; Stinchcomb et al., 2006). Today, restorative practices are used in schools as a means of addressing the aftermath of problematic behavior, as well as proactively strengthening the community (González, 2012; Hopkins, 2002; Morrison, 2007, 2013). Programs often employ a whole-school approach in which restorative practices are applied at universal, targeted, and intensive levels: Universal practices strengthen the emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills necessary to foster positive relationships and community well-being; targeted practices address problematic behaviors through dialogue and collective problem-solving; and intensive practices center on repairing serious harm through processes involving stakeholders such as school leadership, students and family members (González, 2012; Hopkins, 2002; Morrison, 2007, 2013). The adoption of restorative justice within K-12 education has likely contributed to interest in its application within higher education settings.

### ***Higher Education***

Over the last 2 decades, restorative justice has expanded into college and university settings as a means of addressing problematic student behavior. The first known higher education restorative justice program was established in 1999 (Darling, 2011), and by 2015, at least 70 campuses had implemented some type of formal restorative justice (McMurtrie, 2015). These processes have most commonly been applied to lower-level disciplinary infractions, such as theft, trespassing, criminal mischief, noise violations, and drug and alcohol-related offenses (Clark, 2014; Karp, 2013; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Mangan, 2018). Because student conduct processes can deal with problematic behaviors that do not rise to the level of criminal violations, restorative justice has also been applied to academic misconduct, bullying, bias-related incidents,

and unethical behavior (Kara & MacAlister, 2010; Karp, 2004b; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Kayali & Walters, 2021; Mok, 2012; Wessler, 2004). Some institutions also use restorative justice to hold student organizations (e.g., fraternities, sororities, sports teams, clubs) accountable for behavioral violations such as hazing, underage drinking, drug use, violence, and gambling (Allena & Rogers, 2004; Baker-Zwerenz et al., 2004; Segrave, 2004). In recent years, a few colleges and universities have experimented with restorative justice approaches to more serious offenses such as assault, hate crimes, sexual misconduct, and other forms of interpersonal violence (James & Hetzel-Riggin, 2022; Karp et al., 2016; Kirkland, 2004; Koss et al., 2014; Llewellyn et al., 2015; Mangan, 2018; Wessler, 2004). These varied applications indicate a growing belief within higher education that restorative justice can be an effective means of addressing student misconduct.

Proponents see many potential benefits of using restorative justice within student conduct. Restorative justice processes help to ensure due process by giving students an active voice in both disciplinary processes and outcomes (Karp, 2004a, 2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp & Frank, 2016a). It may also foster the development of empathy and responsible decision-making by providing opportunities for students to learn how their actions impact others within the community (Karp, 2004a, 2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Oles, 2004). Additionally, by conceptualizing offenses as harms to individuals and relationships, rather than as violations of rules, students are better able to understand the purpose of campus behavioral standards, which may reduce recidivism (Karp, 2004a; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Oles, 2004). Finally, restorative justice contributes to the betterment of the campus community by providing opportunities for student offenders to repair harm caused by their misconduct (Karp,

2004a, 2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp & Frank, 2016a). Despite these benefits, how well these practices will catch on within higher education is yet to be determined.

Although an increasing number of campuses are using restorative justice, this approach has yet to become a core part of higher education disciplinary processes. Meagher (2009) found that less than 10% of U.S. colleges and universities were implementing some form of restorative justice. Those that do tend to use these practices to supplement, rather than replace, traditional campus disciplinary processes (Allena, 2004). “While the use of alternative models such as restorative justice and mediation practice has increased, the vast majority of institutions base their adjudication models on a quasi-adversarial approach” (Zacker, 2020, p. 259).

Misperceptions about restorative justice, liability concerns, and unwillingness to invest the time and resources necessary to establish these programs may account for this current state (Clark, 2014; Karp, 2004b). Whatever the reason, for now, restorative justice remains on the periphery of university student conduct.

### **Empirical Research on Restorative Justice**

Over the last few decades, researchers have devoted significant effort to assessing the effectiveness of restorative justice. However, the current research literature is primarily comprised of studies conducted within a criminal justice context. While there has been little research on outcomes of applications of restorative justice within higher education (Anderson, 2018; LaCroix, 2018; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Orcutt et al., 2020), findings are available regarding the effectiveness of these processes when applied within the context of the criminal justice system, particularly to juvenile offenses (Latimer et al., 2005; Sherman & Strang, 2007). Braithwaite (2002a) asserted that restorative justice outcomes fall into one of three

primary categories: impacts on victim, impacts on offender, and impacts on communities, which are reviewed individually in the next section.

### ***Victim Outcomes***

The first possible area of focus for studies is victim outcomes. A long-standing critique of the contemporary criminal justice system is its lack of focus on victims' interests, needs, and involvement (Dickson, 1984; Gavrielides, 2017; Kelly, 1983; Strang & Sherman, 2003; Wemmers, 2009). Numerous researchers who have examined what victims want from justice processes have found that victims commonly desire information, emotional reparation, fairness, and the opportunity to participate (Gavrielides, 2017; Sherman & Strang, 2003; Strang, 2002; Umbreit, 1988, 1989, 1994; Wemmers & Cyr, 2004). For many victims, a fair justice process is one which allows them the opportunity to participate and have input (Umbreit, 1988, 1989, 1994; Wemmers & Cyr, 2004). As Wemmers and Cyr (2004) stated, "victims place great emphasis on having a voice in the process, and having their voice heard. They want recognition, respect and consideration" (p. 268). Additionally, while it is commonly assumed that victims seek harsh punishment of offenders, this is often not the case (Gavrielides, 2017; Sherman & Strang, 2003; Strang, 2002; Umbreit, 1988, 1989; Wemmers & Cyr, 2004;). In fact, studies have found that many victims' want offenders to receive help that will assist in their rehabilitation (Strang, 2002; Umbreit, 1988, 1989; Wemmers & Cyr, 2004).

Given the emphasis that restorative justice places on victim inclusion and healing, some have hypothesized that it may lead to better outcomes for victims than traditional retributive justice (Umbreit, 1989; Van Camp & Wemmers, 2013; Van Wormer, 2009). Existing researchers have not only examined how victims experienced and are affected by restorative justice but how these outcomes compared with those of control groups (Latimer et al., 2005; Sherman & Strang,

2007; Umbreit, 1989; Van Camp & Wemmers, 2013; Wemmers, 2010). Overall, the findings for restorative justice are promising. Based upon their review of several evaluative studies, Sherman and Strang (2007) asserted that “on average, in every test available, victims do better when they participate in restorative justice than when they do not” (p. 22). The next section looks at two commonly measured outcomes for victims: satisfaction and restoration.

**Victim Satisfaction.** Victim satisfaction has been a particular focus of restorative justice research. In numerous studies, most victims have reported high levels of satisfaction with the process (Sherman & Strang, 2007; Strang et al., 2006, 2013; Shapland et al., 2007; Umbreit, 1989; Umbreit & Fercello, 1997; Umbreit et al., 1995; Umbreit et al., 2005). Research using randomized control trials (Latimer et al., 2005; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Strang, 2002; Strang et al., 2013) or comparison groups (Poulson, 2003; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Umbreit, 1989; Umbreit et al., 1995) showed higher satisfaction among victims who participated in restorative justice than those who did not. Additionally, the majority of victims who participated in restorative justice indicated they would do it again and would recommend the process to others (Bradshaw et al., 2006; Chatterjee, 1999; Gavrielides, 2015; Gehm, 1989; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Shapland et al., 2007). Although these findings came from research within the criminal justice system, it seems reasonable that restorative justice could also promote victim satisfaction when applied to student conduct violations within higher education.

**Emotional Restoration.** Given that restorative justice aims to repair the harm caused by crime, emotional restoration of victims is another important measure of the effectiveness of these processes. Victims of crime experience heightened levels of anxiety, anger, fear of revictimization, increased mistrust of others, self-blame, loss of self-esteem, sleeplessness, vengeful thoughts, and even posttraumatic stress syndrome (Angel et al., 2014;

Randall & Haskell, 2013; Strang et al., 2006; Sherman et al., 1998, 2015). Randomized control trial studies conducted by Strang (2002) and Sherman et al. (2005) showed that victims who participated in restorative justice were less likely to report harboring anger or a desire for vengeance toward offenders than those in control groups. Victims who engaged in these processes were also less likely to report fear of being revictimized by their offender than those who went through traditional court processes (Poulson, 2003; Sherman et al., 1998; Strang et al., 2003; Umbreit et al., 1995, 1996). Findings from a randomized control study by Angel et al. (2014) indicated that restorative justice may help reduce posttraumatic stress among victims of crime, as there were 49% fewer cases of posttraumatic stress syndrome among the group of victims whose intervention included restorative justice than among those who only had a court process. Victims indicated that receiving an apology from their offender was very important to their healing (Strang, 2002). In an analysis of four randomized controlled trials, Sherman et al. (2005) found that significantly more victims who participated in restorative justice received an apology from their offender than those who did not go through this process. In Strang et al.'s (2003) study, over 50% of victims reported feeling a sense of closure after restorative justice. However, a small number of victims had negative experiences with restorative justice, reporting that the process increased their fear of victimization, leading to them feel worse, and even causing them to feel revictimized (Choi et al., 2012; Morris & Maxwell, 1997; Strang, 2002; Umbreit, 1994; Wemmers, 2002; Wemmers & Cyr, 2005). While restorative justice may not be suitable for every circumstance, these studies indicate it can help foster victim healing and emotional well-being and may do so more effectively than traditional retributive justice.

## *Offender Outcomes*

Within the restorative justice literature, impact on offenders is often defined in terms of these outcomes: recidivism, compliance, and subjective experience.

1. Because justice efforts are intended to not only address but also prevent crime, the impact of restorative justice on offender recidivism is viewed as one of the most important measures of its effectiveness (Ernest, 2019; Latimer et al., 2005).
2. Compliance is also of interest as getting offenders to adhere with court-ordered requirements has proven challenging, even when significant legal consequences are at stake (Sherman & Strang, 2007). By providing the opportunity to hear from victims and have a say in justice outcomes, restorative justice may increase offenders' motivation to fulfill their obligations (Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005; Latimer & Kleinknecht, 2000; Sherman & Strang, 2007).
3. Although not subject to the same degree of research, offenders' subjective experiences in relation to restorative justice have also been explored (Abrams et al., 2003, 2006; McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Tyler et al., 2007; Umbreit, 1994). Positive experiences and attitudinal or perceptual shifts may not only discourage future offending, but they may increase offenders' capacity to be constructive members of their communities (Allena, 2004; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Zehr, 2002, 2005).

The following sections examine research related to each of these three outcome areas.

**Recidivism.** Reoffending, or recidivism, has been given considerable attention within restorative justice research. Nugent et al.'s (2001) reanalysis of data from studies featuring a

combined sample population of 1,298 juvenile offenders (roughly half of whom went through victim offender mediation and half who did not) found that recidivism for the VOM group was 32% lower than the comparison group. Further, subsequent offenses among the VOM group tended to be less serious than among those who did not participate in the process (Nugent et al., 2001). Multiple single studies, with either juvenile or adult offenders, have also found lower recidivism among those who participated in restorative justice than among those who did not (Daly et al., 2013; McGarrell, 2001; Rodriguez, 2007).

Meta-analyses and systematic reviews of comparison studies also found that restorative justice interventions (VOM or RJC) were associated with reductions in juvenile recidivism (Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005, Bradshaw et al., 2006; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Latimer et al., 2005; Nugent et al., 2004). Less clear were findings from Sherman and Strang's (2007) systematic review, in which the authors examined recidivism for property crime offenders who went through RJC with comparison groups who went through conventional criminal justice or alternative interventions.

Out of the seven studies which used face-to-face RJC, three revealed reduced recidivism, two showed increased recidivism, and two showed no difference in recidivism for offenders who went through RJ compared to those in comparison groups (Sherman & Strang, 2007). Other studies found less recidivism among offenders who participated in restorative justice; these differences were not substantial enough to be statistically significant (Han et al., 2021; Livingstone et al., 2013; Strang et al., 2015; Umbreit, 1998). While the findings regarding restorative justice's effect on reoffending are somewhat mixed, the majority indicate that restorative justice is generally at least, if not more, effective at reducing recidivism than traditional justice processes.

**Compliance.** Offender compliance is another outcome of interest in restorative justice research. Compliance refers to the fulfillment of offenders' obligations to court, victims, and treatment providers (Sherman & Strang, 2007). Instead of the court-ordered requirements, restorative justice gives offenders and impacted parties the opportunity to collectively determine offender obligations (Karp & Frank, 2016b; Sherman & Strang, 2007). By providing the opportunity to hear from victims and have a say in justice outcomes, restorative justice may increase offenders' motivation to fulfill their obligations (Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005; Latimer & Kleinknecht, 2000; Sherman & Strang, 2007). Umbreit et al.'s (2001) review of more than two decades of studies on VOM found that participants were able to successfully negotiate restitution and reparation agreements in ninety percent of these processes.

More importantly, meta-analyses and systematic reviews have consistently found that a high percentage (70% or more) of offenders effectively fulfilled the terms of these agreements (Latimer et al., 2005; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Umbreit, 1998; Umbreit et al., 2001). When compared to offenders who went through court-ordered restitution programs, offenders who engaged in VOM were significantly more likely to complete their restitution requirements (Cormier, 2002; Latimer et al., 2005; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Umbreit, 1998; Umbreit et al., 2001). Such findings indicate offenders may, indeed, feel an increased motivation to complete obligations they had a role in determining.

**Subjective Experiences.** Although not given the same attention as compliance and recidivism, researchers have also examined offenders' subjective experiences related to their engagement in restorative justice. Such studies used data from offender self-reports to measure offenders' satisfaction, perception, attitudes, and understanding (Abrams et al., 2003, 2006; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Tyler et al., 2007). Satisfaction and perceptions of fairness are the two

most researched aspects of offenders' subjective experiences with restorative justice (Abrams et al., 2006). Across multiple studies, a significant majority of offenders who participated in restorative justice reported being satisfied with the process (Abrams et al., 2006; Evje & Cushman, 2000; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Shapland et al., 2007; Umbreit et al., 2002). Offenders tended to perceive restorative justice as fair and, when compared to offenders who did not participate in restorative justice, they had higher levels of satisfaction and perceptions of fairness (Latimer et al., 2005; Latimer & Kleinknecht, 2000; McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Strang et al., 1999). Such satisfaction, however, does not necessarily mean they found the restorative justice process to be easy or pleasant.

Offenders have admitted to experiencing a high degree of discomfort, remorse, and shame while speaking with impacted parties (Abrams et al., 2003, 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010). Yet, for many, these conversations were cathartic, in that they also promoted feelings of relief and closure (Abrams et al., 2003, 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010). Such findings indicate that, despite finding the process challenging, offenders' overall experiences with restorative justice are generally positive.

Other inquiries into offenders' subjective experiences have found self-reported shifts in understanding, attitudes, and emotions related to their engagement in restorative justice. Offenders have reported that participating in restorative justice increased their awareness of the impacts of their offense and helped them understand the factors that led to its occurrence (Abrams et al., 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010; Shapland et al., 2007).

A quasi-experimental analysis using pre and post assessments, showed that offenders who participated in restorative justice had substantially greater increases in accountability, empathy for impacted parties, remorse for their actions, and dedication to make things right

(Calhoun & Pelech, 2010). Researchers have also found more positive attitudes toward victims among offenders who engaged in restorative justice than among comparison groups (Calhoun & Pelech, 2010; McCold & Wachtel, 1998).

Restorative justice also may impact offenders' perceptions of the law and future offending. The majority of those who participated in restorative justice believe they are unlikely to reoffend (Abrams et al., 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010; Shapland et al., 2007). Tyler et al.'s (2007) interviews with offenders, 2-years post assignment to restorative justice or traditional court adjudication, revealed that those who went through restorative justice viewed laws as more legitimate and were more likely to believe that reoffending would negatively impact their lives. While the existing research on offenders' subjective experiences with restorative justice is somewhat sparse, findings from existing studies suggest that these processes may positively impact offender attitudes, perceptions, and emotions.

### ***Community Outcomes***

The community is considered a central stakeholder within restorative justice theory. Offenses are viewed as both a cause and result of societal problems, and successful justice processes are intended to foster both individual and collective well-being (Braithwaite, 2002a; Marshall, 1999; Pranis, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). Indeed, restorative justice is believed to benefit communities by strengthening members' social bonds, community engagement, and capacity to collectively resolve problems and improve societal conditions (Beck, 2012; Pranis, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). Community can be conceptualized in a micro or macro sense within restorative justice (McCold, 2004). Micro-community consists of those who have direct ties to the victims or offenders, such as parents, friends, or relatives (McCold, 2004; Rossner & Bruce, 2016). Macro-community consists of those in the community

who do not have direct ties to the victim or offender but are indirectly impacted by the offense (McCold, 2004; Rossner & Bruce, 2016). Some restorative justice processes, such as conferencing, involve the participation of community members (McCold, 2004; Rossner & Bruce, 2016). Micro-community members may participate as supporters of the victim or offender while members of the macro-community serve as representatives of the community's interests and can to the larger scale impacts of the offense (McCold, 2004; Rossner & Bruce, 2016).

Yet, community participation and outcomes have not received much attention within restorative justice research. Few studies have examined outcomes for participants who engaged in restorative justice processes as members of the micro or macro-community (Rosenblatt, 2015). Additionally, larger scale community-level outcomes of restorative justice, such as improving societal conditions, are difficult to operationalize and measure (Ernest, 2019; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). Because restorative justice is currently applied infrequently and inconsistently within most communities, it is unlikely to have identifiable outcomes beyond individual participants (Beck, 2012; Ernest, 2019; Kurki, 2000; Martinez et al., 2022; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002; Sandwick et al., 2019; Stinchcomb et al., 2006). At present, few authors have attempted to examine outcomes of restorative justice on communities or community members (Beck, 2012; Ernest, 2019; Rosenblatt, 2015; Rossner & Bruce, 2016; Stinchcomb et al., 2006). Thus, there is little in the way of empirical evidence that either supports or contradicts the community-level benefits of restorative justice (Rosenblatt, 2015; Rossner & Bruce, 2016). The following section examines the outcomes of community members who participated in restorative justice as well as community-level outcomes of restorative justice.

**Community Member Participant Outcomes.** A review of the literature revealed only two studies examining outcomes for individuals who participated in restorative justice processes

in the role of community members. Both studies utilized restorative justice conferencing with juvenile offenders and the community member participants were parents or caregivers of the participating offenders (Palk et al.,1998; McCold & Wachtel, 1998). McCold and Wachtel's (1998) study utilized random assignment with offenders participating in restorative justice conferencing or formal adjudication through court process. Data was collected through surveys administered to participants who were assigned to restorative justice, assigned to formal adjudication, and those assigned to restorative justice but chose not to participate. Survey results indicate the vast majority of parents who participated in conferencing had positive perceptions and experiences with the process. Most parents indicated they were satisfied with conferencing and reported greater satisfaction than parents whose children went through adjudication (McCold & Wachtel, 1998). They were also more likely to report that both the justice process and resulting agreements were fair (McCold & Wachtel, 1998). Additionally, the majority of parents who engaged in conferencing felt their opinions were adequately considered in the case (more so than parents of children who went through adjudication. Additionally, while there were not statistically significant differences between their results and those of the control and decline group, it is worth noting that most parents who engaged in conferencing believed their child was held accountable and was unlikely to reoffend. The majority also indicated believing that both they and the victim now had a better opinion of their child (McCold & Wachtel, 1998).

The second study was by Palk et al. (1998), who administered surveys to assess participant perspectives of restorative justice conferencing, including parents of offenders. Specifically, they examined parents' perceptions of fairness and satisfaction with conference process and agreement. Respondents' self-reports indicate high satisfaction with the conference process. An overwhelming majority indicated that they thought the conference was fair and were

satisfied with the agreement that was reached (Palk et al., 1998). The conference also seemed to provide parents with a sense of closure or emotional restoration as nearly all agreed with the statements, “doing the conference means I can make a fresh start” and “the conference was just what I needed to sort things out” (Palk et al., 1998). Additionally, all but one parent indicated they would recommend conferencing to someone in a similar position. Although more research is clearly needed, the findings of these two studies indicate that restorative justice has potential to positively impact micro-level community members.

**Community-Level Outcomes.** The evidence that exists regarding community-level outcomes of restorative justice largely comes from research conducted on school communities. Schools have been a popular context for research on community-level outcomes of restorative justice. Restorative justice programs have been implemented in primary and secondary educational institutions as a means of addressing problematic behavior and improving school climate (Bonell et al., 2018; Cavanagh et al., 2012, 2014; González, 2015; Gregory et al., 2016; Jain et al., 2014; Morrison, 2007; Morrison et al., 2005). Outcomes associated with positive school climate include reduced instances of punitive discipline, aggressive behavior, and truancy, along with increases in academic performance, graduation rates, supportive relationships, and feelings of connection and belonging (Payne, 2018; Thapa et al., 2012, 2013). Interest in the effectiveness of such programming has led to research on the relationships between these outcomes and schoolwide restorative justice initiatives.

As the negative impacts of punitive discipline are well documented, reductions in the use of such methods are considered a measure of effectiveness for restorative justice programs. By providing an alternate means of dealing with problematic behavior and helping to rectify the conditions that contribute to the occurrence of problematic behavior, restorative justice programs

are expected to reduce schoolwide use of punitive discipline (Cavanagh et al., 2012, 2014; Morrison, 2002; Morrison et al., 2005). Existing evidence supports this assumption, both through examinations of school disciplinary records over time (Gonzalez, 2012, 2015; Stinchcomb et al., 2006) and through interschool comparison studies (Augustine et al., 2018; Gregory et al., 2016; Jain et al., 2014; Simson, 2012). It is also noteworthy that multiple studies have shown school-based restorative justice programs to be associated with reduced disparity of rates at which students of color are disciplined compared to their White peers (Augustine et al., 2018; Gonzalez, 2015; Gregory et al., 2016; Jain et al., 2014; Simson, 2012).

Restorative justice programs may also promote behavioral, academic, and relational outcomes associated with positive school climate. Bonell et al.'s (2018) randomized trial involving 40 schools over a 3-year period found that restorative justice programming had a significant negative effect on bullying. Restorative justice is also associated with reductions in schoolwide rates of student dropout and absenteeism (González, 2012; Jain et al., 2014; Stinchcomb et al., 2006). Other studies have shown improvements in self-reported perceptions of school culture from students, teachers, and parents in the years following implementation of restorative justice programming (Armour, 2013; Gregory et al., 2016; Jain et al., 2014). Such findings indicate that the benefits of restorative justice may extend beyond victims and offenders and into their communities. Findings of such studies have important implications, not only for the future of restorative justice within primary and secondary educational settings, but for a variety of other community contexts.

### **Challenges with Restorative Justice Research**

Restorative justice research has proven to be far from a simple or straightforward endeavor. As restorative justice has grown in popularity, increased attention has been devoted to

understanding its effectiveness. Yet, as noted by Presser and Van Voorhis (2002), “the task of evaluating restorative justice interventions seems on its face to be daunting because models are so varied and do not readily lend themselves to conventional methods of evaluation research and performance measurement” (p. 162). As such, although many researchers have explored outcomes of restorative justice, few studies have yielded meaningful or clear empirical evidence (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1999; Ernest, 2019; Hayes, 2007; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). Thus, while the current findings on restorative justice appear promising, they are far from conclusive. The following sections explore some of the major challenges and limitations to restorative justice research.

### **Conceptual Challenges**

Conceptual ambiguity has been a major obstacle to restorative justice research. Widespread consensus has yet to be reached as to the meaning of restorative justice (Braithwaite, 2002b; Daly & Immarigeon, 1998; Daly, 2016; Gavrielides, 2008; Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Latimer et al., 2005; Wood & Suzuki, 2016). Indeed, the literature is full of conflicting conceptions of the term and what activities it does and does not encompass (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1999; Bazemore & Elis, 2013; Bazemore et al., 2007; Daly, 2004; Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002; Wachtel, 2016). One aspect of contention is whether restorative justice is outcome or process based (Daly, 2016; Gavrielides, 2008). Even those who hold process-based conceptions have disagreed about the essential operations of these processes (Gavrielides, 2008; Wachtel & McCold, 2001). This has made it difficult to accurately assess the effectiveness and integrity of the disparate activities labeled as restorative justice (Bazemore, 1998; Bazemore & Elis, 2013; Bazemore et al., 2000; Braithwaite, 2002b; Daly, 2004, 2016; Ernest, 2019; Presser & Von Voorhis, 2002). As a result, many previous restorative justice

research efforts have failed to produce findings that are easy to interpret or capable of being generalized.

The potential impact of modifying variables is another challenge to restorative justice research. Across different studies, there has been significant variation as to how, when, where, and with whom restorative justice interventions are applied (Bazemore et al., 2007; Daly, 2004, 2016; Daly & Immarigeon, 1998; Gavrielides, 2008; Hayes, 2007; Hayes & Daly, 2003; O'Mahony & Doak, 2009; Rodriguez, 2007). For example, restorative justice programs may be targeted to different types of offenses and stages of the criminal justice process (precharge, postcharge, presentence, or postsentence; Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Daly, 2004, 2016; Daly and Immarigeon, 1998; Latimer et al., 2005; O'Mahony & Doak, 2009). Participant demographics may vary in terms of age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Ernest, 2019; Latimer et al., 2005). Different programs often have their own unique means of assessing participant eligibility, training facilitators, preparing participants, and facilitating these processes (Bazemore et al., 2007; Bazemore & Elis, 2013; Daly, 2004, 2016; Daly & Immarigeon, 1998; Gavrielides, 2008; Hayes, 2007; Hayes & Daly, 2003; O'Mahony & Doak, 2009; Rodriguez, 2007; Woods, 2009). Yet, few studies have employed variation analysis to identify how such moderating variables may impact program outcomes (Bazemore et al., 2007; Bazemore & Elis, 2013; Hayes, 2007; Hayes, & Daly, 2003; Woods, 2009). As a result, even when studies reveal positive outcomes for restorative justice, it is difficult to know to what these outcomes can be attributed. Further research is needed to better understand the most influential factors and conditions on outcomes of restorative justice processes.

## **Methodological Challenges**

Methodological issues have further impeded restorative justice research. Although randomized controlled trials are considered the best means of assessing an intervention's effectiveness (Hariton & Locascio, 2018; Sibbald & Roland, 1998), they are difficult to conduct with restorative justice programs and thus have been seldomly employed (Bradshaw et al., 2006; Ernest, 2019; Strang, 2002). The voluntary nature of restorative justice makes self-selection bias difficult, if not impossible, to avoid; participants who opt to participate in these processes may be more motivated to obtain positive outcomes associated with restorative justice (Ernest, 2019; Latimer et al., 2005; Piggot & Wood, 2018). Restorative justice outcomes are not easily operationalized, and inconsistencies in how they are defined and measured across studies have created further issues of reliability and validity (Ernest, 2019; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). In addition, the relatively small size of many restorative justice programs has limited the size of many samples available for study (Ernest, 2019; Latimer et al., 2005; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). Lastly, the methodologies used for restorative justice research generally reflect Western worldviews and, thus, may lack cultural appropriateness (Smith, 2012).

To gauge the effects of these interventions, several meta-analyses have been conducted to synthesize data from multiple studies (Nugent et al., 2004; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Strang et al., 2013). For this literature review, I primarily selected studies using meta-analysis and comparison groups.

## **Review of Student Conduct Literature**

Throughout the history of U.S. higher education, colleges and universities have assumed responsibilities related to student discipline. Since colonial times, higher education institutions (HEI) have employed disciplinary measures to uphold institutional values and standards, protect

the campus community, and positively shape student character (CAS, 2021; Smith, 1994). Such measures, which today are generally referred to as “student conduct,” have encompassed policies, procedures, and professional responsibilities related to defining and enforcing behavioral expectations for those enrolled (CAS, 2021; Dannells, 1997; Glick & Haug, 2020; Smith, 1994; Stoner & Lowery 2004). According to Smith (1994), the pervasiveness of such measures over the past 300 years demonstrates that the “monitoring and molding of student behavior are crucial components of American higher education” (p. 84) This section of the literature review will provide an overview of historical and contemporary approaches, challenges, and objectives of student conduct.

### **Historical Overview**

Although student discipline has been a consistent part of higher education, it has been far from static. Challenges and approaches related to college student discipline are reflective of the larger sociocultural context in which HEI are situated. As United States’ culture, politics, and society have changed over time, HEI have revised and reshaped their approaches to student misbehavior. To effectively navigate the current behavioral challenges on college campuses, it is helpful to understand the historical methods, scope, and objectives of student conduct practice.

#### ***Colonial Period: In Loco Parentis***

Early approaches to student behavior within U.S. higher education were highly moralistic and authoritarian, with institutions exerting control over nearly every aspect of students’ lives. The first colonial colleges were small religious institutions designed to educate future clergymen and promote the Christian faith (Dannells, 1997; Waryold & Lancaster; 2020). Operating upon the premise of *in loco parentis*, or “in the place of a parent,” these colleges assumed responsibility for the moral, social, and intellectual development of those enrolled (Bush, 1969;

Dannells, 1997; Glick & Haug, 2020; Smith, 1994). Assuming they lacked sufficient moral character and self-control, Dannells (1997) noted that “early colonial college trustees, presidents, and faculties set about shaping their students through long and detailed codes of conduct and rigid scheduling” (p. 15). Students were expected to unquestioningly submit to institutional authority or face harsh punishments such as expulsion, corporal punishment, fines, forced labor, and public humiliation (Dannells, 1997). Yet, like actual parents, campus leaders found young adults’ desire for freedom and independence is not easily constrained.

### ***Post-Revolutionary War: Campus Violence***

Over time, *in loco parentis* became increasingly at odds with the evolving sociopolitical context of the United States. By the 1770s, the same spirit that had fueled the American Revolution led students to resent the authoritarian oversight of their higher education institutions and to demand more democratic forms of governance (Dannells, 1997; Smith, 1994). Yet, although democratic values were shaping the newly-formed fabric of the United States, campuses maintained the disciplinary approaches that the colonists had carried over from England (Dannells, 1997; Smith, 1994). In the decades leading up to the Civil War, students’ frustrations frequently boiled over into disruptive, hostile insurrections (Bush, 1969; Smith, 1994). It was a period of unprecedented violence. On most college campuses, “buildings were burned, professors were assaulted and sometimes killed, and students staged open rebellions in response to bad food, unilateral expulsions, and what they considered to be a general abridgment of their rights” (Smith, 1994, p. 79). Facing increasing insubordination, faculty and staff began to begrudge the responsibilities and risks associated with maintaining strict authority over students (Dannells, 1997). Rather than adopting new disciplinary approaches, however, institutional leaders tended to impose stricter rules and harsher punishments, effectively attempting to resolve

the problem with what had created it in the first place. This pattern continued to play out until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Reconstruction Era: Public, Secular Education***

By the end of the Civil War, higher education was becoming increasingly secular. Federal funds were used to establish public colleges with curriculum rooted in science rather than theology (Glick & Haug, 2020). With religion no longer a defining feature of higher education, less emphasis was placed on students' moral development (Bush, 1969; Smith, 1994). The first disciplinary specialists were appointed during this period, reducing the workload and responsibility of faculty members, and "punishments became generally milder, and persuasion and counseling emerged as a more common respond to milder forms of student misconduct" (Dannells, 1997, p. 18). Due at least in part to these changes, misconduct and rebellion substantially decreased and relationships between students and campus administrators generally improved (Dannells, 1997; Smith, 1994). These developments marked the beginning of an important shift, in which students began to be regarded less as wards of their educational institutions and more as members of a learning community.

### ***Countercultural Revolution: Civil Rights and Anti-War Movement***

The tumultuous period from the late 1950s through the mid-1970s had dramatic impacts on American society and higher education. Society was being reshaped by a powerful combination of forces, "including the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, increasing tolerance in judicial decisions on moral issues such as pornography, the lowering of the age of majority, and the student rights movement" (Dannells, 1997, p. 22). Increasingly critical of authority, students were demanding more of their government and higher education institutions (Sorey & Gregory, 2010). As student activism and political engagement rose to

unprecedented levels, college campuses became hotbeds for demonstrations, protests, and civil disobedience.

Although the sociocultural context of the United States had changed significantly since the colonial period, the influence of *in loco parentis* was still felt on college campuses. Many HEI failed to recognize students as full-fledged adults, and “governed contact between the sexes, enacted restrictive curfews, and regulated drinking [...] Many campuses even had dress codes, policed the length of hair, and forbade facial hair” (Broadhurst, 2014, p. 7). Student activism was regarded with distrust and disapproval by both university and government authorities, who attempted to restrict students’ political expression and activities through punitive measures (Sorey & Gregory, 2010). These efforts only enflamed students and led to more widespread and disruptive forms of activism (Dannells, 1997; Sorey & Gregory, 2010).

Conflict related to student political activity eventually landed in federal court. After taking part in a sit-in demonstration at a segregated grill, several students at Alabama State College were summarily expelled (Dannells, 1997). The students sued, claiming their 14<sup>th</sup> amendment rights were violated, and in the landmark *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education*, the Court determined that public institutions could not take away a student’s right to education without due process (Baldizan, 1998; Dannells, 1997; Gehring, 2001). Soon after, colleges across the country were facing similar lawsuits (Smith, 1994). With legal precedent invalidating the premise it operated upon, colleges could not continue the authoritarian approaches they had used for so long. It was time for higher education to redefine and remodel student discipline.

### *Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Creeping Legalism*

After the Dixon ruling, higher education institutions scrambled to reduce their legal liability by establishing new disciplinary systems. While college administrators understood the need to provide students with due process, they were not clear on what this entailed (Gehring, 2001). As such, many looked to the courts for inspiration, developing disciplinary systems which mirrored those of the criminal justice system (Clark, 2014; Dannells, 1997; Gehring, 2001; Lowery & Dannells, 2004). At many campuses, disciplinary processes took on the form of complex adversarial hearings that included cross-examinations, appeals, and the involvement of private legal counsel (Dannells, 1997; Gehring, 2001; Pavela, 1979). While these new disciplinary systems were complex and time-intensive, they were successful in reducing institutions' legal liability.

The increased proceduralism and legalism of campus disciplinary systems quickly drew concern and criticism from some higher education professionals. Detractors of this new approach to student misconduct claimed that it “undermined the informal and uniquely educational element of college student discipline, it led to costly and time-consuming processes, and it placed the student and the institution in an unnecessarily adversarial relationship” (Dannells, 1997, p. 77). Some asserted that institutions had gone overboard in their efforts to comply with federal mandates, instituting policies and practices that exceeded actual legal requirements (Dannells, 1997; Gehring, 2001; Travelstead, 1987). To help clarify matters, federal judges published the influential *General Order on Judicial Standards of Procedure and Substance in Review of Student Discipline at Tax Supported Institutions of Higher Education* (1968), which explicitly distinguished the legal obligations of higher education conduct processes from those of the criminal courts (Dannells, 1997). With this understanding, institutions began seeking out new

disciplinary approaches that, while ensuring procedural fairness, would be better suited to the higher education context. Rather than mirroring the role of the parent or the court, the time had come for higher education to develop its own unique approach to student discipline.

### ***Turn of the Century: Professionalization of Student Conduct***

As disciplinary matters came to require more attention and consideration, student conduct emerged as a distinct profession within higher education at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Responsibilities related to student discipline had shifted significantly since the colonial period; what had once been considered a collective responsibility of college personnel had generally come to rest with a small number of campus specialists (CAS, 2021; Gehring, 2013). These specialists worked with one another, across institutions, to advance and eventually established two professional membership associations: the Commission for Student Conduct and Legal Issues in 1973, followed by the Association of Student Judicial Affairs in 1987, which was later renamed to the Association of Student Conduct Affairs (ASCA; CAS, 2021; Gehring, 2013). These associations developed standards of ethics and best practices and helped foster “a more scientific and educational approach to student behavior” (Lowery & Dannells, 2004, p. 17). Today, student conduct is an established field within higher education and student conduct professionals are recognized as leaders within their institutions on all matters related to student discipline.

### **Contemporary Student Conduct**

Student misconduct continues to be a source of challenge and concern within higher education. Although disciplinary approaches have come a long way over the past three hundred years, they continue to be dynamic in response to new problems, limitations, and considerations (Gehring, 2013; Howell, 2005; Stoner & Lowery, 2004). Contemporary student conduct

professionals must “balance seemingly competing objectives. They need to protect the campus community, implement fair and balanced adjudication processes, and prioritize the learning and development of adjudicated students” (Neumeister, 2017, p. 97). Professional standards and assessment can help student conduct programs navigate these different, and sometimes conflicting, considerations. The following sections will examine the literature related to current contemporary student conduct goals, practices, challenges, and research findings.

### ***Standards***

Contemporary approaches to student misconduct attempt to balance individual rights, institutional mission, and community well-being. The Council for the Advancement of Standards within Higher Education (CAS) sets forth guidelines for the administration of various types of student programming within colleges and universities. CAS (2021) has identified three overarching goals, or standards, for contemporary student conduct programs namely that they should be procedurally sound, learning-centered, and community-focused.

**Procedurally Sound.** Student conduct programs should operate in a fair and unbiased manner. Higher education behavioral expectations and disciplinary processes should be clearly outlined and communicated to all students (Pavela, 1979; Stoner & Lowery, 2004). The processes used to address allegations of misconduct must uphold students’ right to due process and comply with current government mandates and directives (ASCA, 2017; CAS, 2021). Additionally, student conduct programs, “have a moral and ethical duty to ensure their processes are inclusive, socially just, and multi-partial” (CAS, 2021, p. 3). Processes and outcomes employed by student conduct programs should attempt to preserve the dignity of all parties and avoid causing intentional harm (ASCA, 2017).

**Learning Centered.** Student conduct programs should operate in alignment with the educational mission of the colleges and universities in which they are situated. As such, fostering student learning and development should be a central goal of contemporary student conduct programs (ASCA, 2017; Bennett et al., 2014; CAS, 2021; Dannells, 1997). Within this goal is the assumption that such learning and development will “encourage students to change their behaviors in a way that is more consistent with the institution’s code of conduct” (Howell, 2005, p. 386). Thus, rather than behavioral compliance, contemporary student conduct professionals must seek to strengthen students’ internal commitment and capacity to be responsible and caring members of the community (ASCA, 2017; CAS, 2021; Fran’Cee & Cocks, 2020; Glick & Haug, 2020). As such, disciplinary processes and outcomes are intended to be “informative, educational, developmental, and thought provoking” so that students will “come to understand why institutional rules exist and what happens when these rules are not followed” (Glick & Haug, 2020, p. 10). Additionally, by addressing problematic behavior, student conduct professionals contribute to a safe and respectful context in which all students may learn (CAS, 2021).

**Community Focused.** Contemporary student conduct is concerned with how campus communities both shape and are shaped by student behavior. Student conduct programs should promote the safety and well-being of the campus community by treating offenders, victims, and community members “with care, concern, honor, and dignity” (Bennett et al., 2014, p. 1). Measures should be employed to both address and discourage behaviors that cause harm (ASCA, 2017; CAS, 2021; Hoekema, 1994). When behavioral violations do occur, student conduct programs must aim to address the harm that has been caused and prevent future harm from occurring (ASCA, 2017; CAS, 2021; Hoekema, 1994). This requires consideration of the

individual and environmental factors that contributed to the behavior and the use of measures which appropriately balance the needs of offenders, victims, and community members (Bennet et al., 2014; CAS, 2021). This emphasis on community is highly aligned with restorative justice theory and practice.

### ***Practices***

Most contemporary student conduct programs employ what is known as the *model conduct* approach. Aligned with models provided by Stoner and Lowery (2004), this approach emphasizes codified behavioral expectations and adjudication procedures to manage student behavior. Institutional codes of student conduct (see Dannells, 1997; Pavela, 1979; Stoner & Lowery, 2004) specify prohibited behavior, define the rights of those enrolled, and outline disciplinary procedures and potential outcomes (Kalagher & Curran, 2020). Reported violations of this code are settled through a hearing process administered by an impartial third party. Although some conduct programs offer alternative resolution processes (such as mediation and restorative justice), the quasi-judicial model hearing process is the default means of addressing alleged misconduct (Giacomini, 2009; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Schrage, 2009).

Model conduct hearings provide students with due process yet avoid the legal complexity of formal court proceedings. An impartial official (hearing officer) or board reviews information and evidence related to reported misconduct to make determinations of responsibility (Karp & Sacks, 2014). Such determinations are based on preponderance, a standard of evidence in which “the proof need only show that the facts are more likely to be so than not so” (Long, 1985, p. 74). Students are provided due process “in the form of being present at a hearing, having the opportunity to be heard, and having the opportunity to present evidence” (Baldizan, 1998, p. 30). Those found responsible for behavioral violations are typically assigned disciplinary outcomes or

sanctions (CAS, 2021; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Stoner & Lowery, 2004). Although sanctions may be educational in nature, many of those employed across student conduct programs are oriented toward punishing, deterring, restricting, or excluding responsible parties (Karp & Sacks, 2014). While common, the effectiveness of the model conduct approach is questionable. The next section provides an overview of research findings related to participant outcomes of model conduct hearings and restorative justice processes within student conduct programs.

### ***Research***

Research on the outcomes and effectiveness of conduct processes is rather limited. Relatively few researchers have attempted to assess participant outcomes of student conduct programs (Dahl et al., 2014; Howell, 2005; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Nelson, 2017; Neumeister, 2017; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). The majority of these were conducted on model conduct hearing processes and focused exclusively on respondent outcomes (Dahl et al., 2014; Nelson, 2017). Howell's (2005) post-hearing interviews with respondents revealed mixed findings: while some students claimed they had not learned anything from the hearing process, others believed it had increased their empathy, consideration of consequences, and understanding of the conduct process. Multiple quantitative studies found positive relationships between respondents' perceptions of the fairness of the model hearing process and their perceptions of its educational value (King, 2012; Mullane, 1999; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). Similarly, Janosik and Stimpson (2017) found that students' level of self-reported learning was strongly correlated with their perceptions of the fairness and efficacy of the hearing process.

Other researchers have examined outcomes associated with sanctions. Kompalla et al. (2001) found that respondents sanctioned to community service or writing a reflection paper had a lower rate of recidivism than those given more passive sanctions (e.g., educational classes,

probationary standing, warning, suspension). Another study found that allowing students to choose their own sanctions (from a prescribed list) led to increases in the number of respondents who reported feeling listened to and respected throughout the conduct process (Ashley & Miller; 2022).

A few researchers examined outcomes of restorative justice processes employed within student conduct programs. Karp and Sacks (2014) compared developmental outcomes of respondents who went through student conduct model hearings or restorative justice conference processes. Over 600 respondents from 18 different higher education institutions completed questionnaires intended to assess “just community/self-authorship, active accountability, interpersonal competence, social ties to institution, procedural fairness, and closure” (Karp & Sacks, 2014, p. 154). Data analysis using inferential statistics revealed that the type of conduct process employed was the greatest predictor of respondent learning, and respondents who engaged in restorative justice reported greater learning across each of the six student development measures (Karp & Sacks, 2014).

Authors of another study administered posttests to respondents who chose to participate in a restorative justice conference offered by within their university’s student conduct program. Dahl et al. (2014) analyzed self-reported data of 191 respondents which revealed that the vast majority were satisfied with the process (92%), had benefited from meeting the victim (81%), believed the process strengthened their sense of community (80%), and thought it was somewhat to highly unlikely that they would recidivate (91%). The authors also found that scores for these outcomes tended to be higher for respondents whose motivations for participating in RJC included a desire to repair harm and help others, compared to those who were primarily driven by self-interest or external pressures (Dahl et al., 2014). Both of these studies illustrate promising

potential for the integration of restorative justice within student conduct, though more research is clearly needed.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this review was to provide a scholarly foundation for this study's exploration of participant outcomes from restorative justice programming within a higher education student conduct setting. The literature on restorative justice included theoretical information as well as descriptions of practical applications and quantitative research findings related to these processes. As the literature discussed, the philosophy and practice of restorative justice was developed from disparate sources working in parallel and now has a somewhat amorphous definition centered around a few key shared ideas, which were conceptualized in opposition to retributive justice. Restorative justice has seen the most application in criminal and educational systems, and although existing research has reported generally positive results, the lack of universally standardized practices and difficulty in delineating the bounds of the field make clear, sweeping conclusions impractical at this time.

The literature on student conduct administration provided an overview of historical and contemporary approaches to student discipline within higher education, including how restorative justice is aligned with present-day standards and objectives of student conduct programs. Also revealed was the present lack of research on participant outcomes in both traditional and restorative justice processes within student conduct programs in higher education settings. Of the few studies that have been conducted on such programs, none have used both pre and post assessments. Therefore, this study may provide important contributions.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Restorative Justice Program at Colorado State University. The following research question was investigated utilizing quantitative descriptive analyses: What is the frequency and variation of scores on the Colorado State University Restorative Justice Questionnaire for participants in the study?

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This quantitative descriptive study used a survey research design. Archival data were used. The research was nonexperimental because the program's operations did not allow for the use of comparison or control groups and the sample size was too small to conduct inferential statistical analyses. Given the nonexperimental nature of survey research, the focus was not on identifying cause-and-effect relationships or predicting outcomes, but rather on investigating the "attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics" of a particular population (Creswell, 2012, p. 376). This research design was appropriate to answer the research question. It is frequently used by social scientists to understand trends and evaluate educational programs (Creswell, 2012).

### **Participants and Site**

This section provides an overview of the research participants, the research site, and the nature of the program being studied. Additionally, rationale is provided for why the research site was chosen as well as an explanation of how participants were selected/obtained for the study.

The program that was the subject of this study is situated within a large, public, land grant university in the western United States. Colorado State University's Student Resolution Center (formerly known as Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services) is responsible for

enforcing the institution's student conduct code and resolving allegations of student misconduct (Shaff et al., 2007). In doing so, staff strive to "support students as they overcome mistakes; engage in character development with an emphasis on ethical decision-making and integrity; resolve conflict as the basic level possible through education, facilitation, and support; and to foster a safe and welcoming environment" (Shaff et al., 2007, p. 10). In 2003, the Student Resolution Center implemented a restorative justice program to serve as an alternative means of addressing student misconduct (Shaff et al., 2007). Students are typically referred to the program by student conduct hearing officers after having violated the University's student code of conduct (Shaff et al., 2007). Typical referrals involved "alcohol violations, academic dishonesty, minor theft, and bias incidents" (Shaff et al., 2007, p. 12). Students may be considered appropriate for the program if they admit responsibility, demonstrate remorse for their behavior, and indicate a desire to meet with the impacted parties (Shaff et al., 2007).

This site and program were selected for research because Colorado State University's Student Resolution Center was one of the first student conduct programs to implement restorative justice programming as a means of addressing student misconduct (Shaff et al., 2007). Given the novelty of this approach, little to no evaluation of such programming had been undertaken. The original purpose of the research was to assess the restorative justice program's alignment with the mission of the Student Resolution Center (Shaff et al., 2007). The purpose of this research was to analyze participants' experiences of restorative justice conferencing within this higher education disciplinary context.

The type of restorative justice practice used by Colorado State University's restorative justice program is restorative justice conferencing (RJC; Shaff et al., 2007). This practice adheres to the following operationalized definition of RJC, adapted from Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al.

(2015) and Sherman, Strang, Mayo-Wilson, et al. (2015), being a process that: (a) is led by a trained facilitator; (b) involves the participation of offender(s) who take responsibility/do not deny responsibility for the offense they have been accused of; (c) involves the participation of those directly and/or indirectly impacted (victims, surrogate victims, friends, family members, community members) by the offense; (d) is voluntary for all participants; and (e) centers on a discussion of the offense, the harms that it caused, and what can be done to address these harms (Shaff et al., 2007). RJC's have three primary stages: preconference, conference, and postconference. Each of these stages are discussed below.

### **Preconference**

Upon receiving a referral from a hearing officer, facilitators conduct preconference meetings with any person who could potentially be involved in the RJC, including the offender(s), the victim(s), community members, and supporters (typically friends or family of the victims and offenders; Shaff et al., 2007). During the preconference, facilitators describe the principles of restorative justice and explain what the RJC process looks like and entails (Shaff et al., 2007). They also listen to each individual's experience of the violation and ask questions to deepen understanding of the harms caused by the violation (Shaff et al., 2007). Facilitators make sure that all parties understand that participation in RJC is completely voluntary (Shaff et al., 2007). If the offender(s) are willing to participate and the facilitators feel the case is appropriate for RJC, a conference is organized.

### **Conference**

During the conference, participants typically sit in a circle formation or around a table. Conferences begin with introductions, ground rules, and reminders of the nature and purpose of restorative justice (Shaff et al. 2007). The next phase involves each individual sharing their

experiences, perspectives, feelings, and questions regarding the incident that is the focus of the dialogue (Shaff et al., 2007). The facilitator guides the participants in a structured dialogue through the use of questions and reflective statements. Eventually, the facilitator moves the discussion to the agreement phase where participants discuss and come to consensus on the actions that the offender will take for the purpose of repairing harm, improving themselves so that the offending behavior will not be repeated, and/or positively contributing to the community (Shaff et al., 2007). The terms of the finalized agreement are written down and the conference ends with participants sharing a snack and chatting informally (Shaff et al., 2007)

### **Postconference**

Following the conference, the offender is tasked with completing the terms of the agreement established in the conference. Student Resolution Center staff conduct regular check-ins with offenders to monitor their progress. Upon completion of the agreement, staff notify all conference participants and inform the referring hearing officer (Shaff et al., 2007). At this point, the case is considered complete.

The participants for this study consisted of three groups of individuals: (a) students who were reported for violating the code of conduct and subsequently referred to the restorative justice program by student conduct staff (offenders); (b) the people who were directly harmed by the offender's behavior (victims); and (c) members of the CSU and Fort Collins community indirectly affected by the behavioral violation, such as law enforcement officers, business owners, and friends or family members of the victims or offenders (community members).

### **Sampling**

Convenience sampling, a type of nonprobability sampling, was used to recruit participants. This sampling method was appropriate, as the researchers were not attempting to

generalize findings to the larger population but rather seeking to answer questions about participants' experiences (Creswell, 2015). The only demographic information collected from participants was their gender and the racial/ethnic heritage with which they identify.

Offenders were referred by student conduct to meet with the restorative justice program facilitators. If there were known victims involved in the offense, the program facilitators notified these people first by telephone and then in person to explain the program and determine if they were willing to voluntarily participate in the program. As part of their participation in the restorative justice program, both victims and offenders were asked if they are willing to participate in the survey. Their willingness in no way affected their ability to participate in the restorative justice program. Those who agreed were asked to complete a consent form. Participants who volunteered to take the survey were informed that they could stop participating at any time. Participants who agreed to participate and signed the consent form were only excluded involuntarily if the program was unable to contact them.

### **Data Collection**

The research used archival data, which “may be thought of as any sort of information, previously collected by others, amenable to systematic study” (Jones, 2010, p. 1008). These data were collected as part of a previous research study on restorative justice at Colorado State University (Shaff et al., 2007). Nonprobability sampling was used to recruit participants, who consisted of victims, offenders, and community members who engaged in the CSU restorative justice program. Victims and offenders were administered surveys twice, at the beginning and end of their participation in the program, while community members were only surveyed at the end of their participation in the program.

## Measures

The research used original surveys (Appendix A) developed by principal investigator Ann Hudgens and co-principal investigator Tom Cavanagh (Shaff et al., 2007). The surveys used in this study were approved by the Institutional Review Board of Colorado State University (CSU) and administered between 2004 and 2009. The surveys drew from the work of Sharpe (1998). Their grounding in these theoretical concepts lends the survey construct validity (Gray, 2014). The instrument used in this study was a modified version of a questionnaire developed by Sharpe (1998). Defined outcomes of conferences for victims, offenders, and community members. Basing the surveys on Sharpe's work contributes to the construct validity of the survey.

Surveys contained primarily quantitative questions with a variety of scales of measurement, including nominal scales, ordinal scales, and interval scales. Additionally, there were a few open-ended qualitative questions. Questionnaires differed slightly for victims, offenders, and community members. Additionally, there was some variation between the questions on the pre- and postsurveys for victims and offenders (community members only completed a postsurvey). Therefore, the study employed a total of five different surveys. Many of the questions on these surveys were similar in content. Questionnaires encompassed four primary sections: (a) questions designed to assess respondents' experiences related to the offense and the restorative justice conference; (b) questions designed to elicit respondents' attitudes and beliefs about the conference and those involved in the conference; (c) questions meant to reveal respondents' goals and concerns related to the justice process. Additionally, questionnaires asked participants to share their birthdate, gender, and the last four digits of their social security number. The program staff labeled each survey with its respective case number. Tables 6, 7, and

8 illustrate the independent and dependent variables which were identified from a review of the victim, offender, and community member surveys.

**Table 1*****Victim Variables***

	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Row 1	Gender	Victim's satisfaction with case management
Row 2	Race	Victim's perception of RJ as voluntary
Row 3	Whether victim is prior victim of crime	Victim's perceived personal benefit of participating
Row 4	Whether victim has resources for help	Victim's perceived tone of conference
Row 5	Whether victim had prior relationship with offenders	Whether victim was surprised by conference
Row 6	Number of offenders	Victim's perceived fairness of agreement
Row 7	Victim's reason for participating in RJ	Whether victim believes their story was heard
Row 8	The degree of importance victims place on various factors associated with fairness	Whether victim believes their story was considered in case outcome
Row 9	Whether, since the offense, the victim has taken precautions against future crime	Would victim recommend RJ to others
Row 10	Victim's satisfaction with case management (preconference)	Whether victim believes their case was handled fairly
Row 11	Victim's perception of RJ as voluntary (preconference)	Whether victim would participate in RJ again
Row 12	The degree to which the victim believes they will personally benefit from meeting offender in conference	Victim's satisfaction with conference outcome
Row 13	The victim's top three concerns related to fairness (Punishing the offender; Paying back the victim; Getting help for the offender; Actively participating in the process; Having the offender personally make things right; Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim; Allowing the offender to apologize to their family; Having the offender's story heard; Having the victim's story heard; Having the supporters/community members' stories heard; Other: (specify) Preconference	The victim's top three concerns related to fairness (Punishing the offender; Paying back the victim; Getting help for the offender; Actively participating in the process; Having the offender personally make things right; Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim; Allowing the offender to apologize to their family; Having the offender's story heard; Having the victim's story heard; Having the supporters/community members' stories heard; Other: (specify)

(Table continues)

Row 14	Whether victim believes offenders will reoffend	Victim's perception that conferencing reduced their anger about the situation.
Row 15	Whether victim believes offenders will reoffend against them	Victim's perception that conferencing allowed them to participate more fully in the justice system.
Row 16	The victim's stated reason for choosing to participate (To get paid back for losses; To help the offender(s); To help offender take direct responsibility for making things right: To let the offender(s) know my story; To receive an apology; To satisfy their parents; It was the best option of available choices; Other: (please specify) (preconference)	The victim's stated reason for choosing to participate (To get paid back for losses; To help the offender(s); To help offender take direct responsibility for making things right: To let the offender(s) know my story; To receive an apology; To satisfy their parents; It was the best option of available choices; Other: (please specify)
Row 17		Victim's perception that conferencing provided them some degree of closure.
Row 18		Victim's perception that conferencing made the justice process more responsive to their needs.
Row 19		Whether victims believe their attitudes about crime have change as a result of conferencing
Row 20		Whether victims believe their attitudes about the student conduct office have changed as a result of conferencing
Row 21		Victim's perception that facilitators sufficiently prepare them to meet with offender(s)
Row 22		Whether victim believes offender(s) were sorry
Row 23		Whether agreement was reached during conference
Row 24		The level of importance the victim ascribes to receiving answers to their questions
Row 25		The level of importance the victim ascribes to telling offenders how they were affected by offense
Row 26		The level of importance the victim ascribes to getting paid back for losses
Row 27		The level of importance the victim ascribes to seeing that the offenders get counseling or other type of help
Row 28		The level of importance the victim ascribes to having offenders punished
Row 29		The level of importance the victim ascribes to having opportunity to negotiate repayment

(Table continues)

Row 30	The level of importance the victim ascribes to having some input in the outcome
Row 31	The level of importance the victim ascribes to feeling they were an important part of process
Row 32	The degree to which victim agrees that conferencing allowed them to express feelings about being victimized
Row 33	The degree to which victim agrees that conferencing reduced their anger about the situation
Row 34	The degree to which victim agrees that conferencing allowed them to participate more fully in the system
Row 35	The degree to which victim agrees that conferencing allowed them to meet other parties
Row 36	The degree to which victim agrees that conferencing brought them closure
Row 36	The degree to which victim agrees that offenders were not sincere in their participation
Row 38	The degree to which victim agrees that they have a better understanding of why offense was committed against them
Row 39	The degree to which victim agrees that the offenders only participated to avoid punishment
Row 40	The degree to which victim agrees that conferencing makes the process more responsive to their needs
Row 41	Victim's perception that conferencing allowed them to express feelings about being victimized.
Row 42	Whether victim received an apology from offender(s)
Row 43	Whether victim believes offender(s) was held responsible
Row 44	Victim's perception that conferencing allowed them to connect with other involved parties.

**Table 2*****Offender Variables***

	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Row 1	Gender	Did the conference result in an agreement?
Row 2	Race	Offender's perception of their responsibility for offense (post-conference)
Row 3	Prior criminal history	Offender's perceived likelihood that they will recommit same offense (preconference)
Row 4	Year in school	Offender's perceived likelihood that they will recommit any offense (preconference)
Row 5	Whether they have resources for help	The degree to which the offender is satisfied with case management (post-conference)
Row 6	Whether there were multiple victims	Offender's perception of RJ as voluntary (preconference)
Row 7	Offender's perception of their responsibility for offense	The degree to which the offender believes they <i>have</i> personally benefited from participating in conferencing
Row 8	Offender's perceived likelihood that they will recommit same offense	Degree to which the offender believes they will remain a student at the university.
Row 9	Offender's perceived likelihood that they will recommit any offense	The offender's perception of the tone of conference
Row 10	Offender's satisfaction with case management	Whether the offender was surprised by conference
Row 11	Offender's perception of RJ as voluntary	Whether the offender believes the agreement created during the conference was fair
Row 12	The degree to which the offender believes they will personally benefit from participating in conferencing	Whether the offender believes the conference changed their attitude about crime
Row 13	Whether the offender had a relationship with the victim prior to the offense	The offender's attitude about the conference
Row 14	The level of importance the offender ascribes to being able to tell victim(s) what happened	Whether the offender believe their story was heard

(Table continues)

Row 15	The level of importance the offender ascribes to being able to pay back the victim(s) by paying them money	Whether the offender believe their story was considered in outcome of the conference
Row 16	The level of importance the offender ascribes to settling the case without a formal hearing	Whether the offender would recommend conferencing to others
Row 17	The level of importance the offender ascribes to settling the case without charges	Whether the offender thinks RJ would be the best process for similar cases
Row 18	The level of importance the offender ascribes to being able to apologize to their friends and family	Whether the offender believe their case was handled fairly
Row 19	The level of importance the offender ascribes to getting the case over with	Whether the offender choose to do this process again
Row 20	The level of importance the offender ascribes to paying back the victim(s) by doing some work.	The degree to which the offender is satisfied with the conference outcome
Row 21	The level of importance the offender ascribes to work out an agreement with the victim(s)	The degree to which the offender believes too much pressure was put on them to do all the talking in the conference.
Row 22	The level of importance the offender ascribes to apologizing to the victim(s) for what they did	The degree to which the offender believes they had no choice but to participate in the conference with their victim(s).
Row 23	The offenders stated reason for choosing to participate (To pay back the victim(s) for their losses; To help the victim(s); To take direct responsibility for making things right: To let the victim(s) know why I did it; To offer an apology; To satisfy their parents; It was the best option of available choices; Other: (please specify)	The offenders stated reason for choosing to participate (To pay back the victim(s) for their losses; To help the victim(s); To take direct responsibility for making things right: To let the victim(s) know why I did it; To offer an apology; To satisfy their parents; It was the best option of available choices; Other: (please specify)
Row 24	Whether the offender has previously committed similar type of offense	The degree to which the offender believes there was no help given to them after the conference.
Row 25	Whether offender has previously committed any type of offense	The degree to which the offender believes that without conferencing they probably would have gotten harsher treatment

(Table continues)

Row 26	The offender's top three concerns related to fairness (Punishing the offender; Paying back the victim; Getting help for the offender; Actively participating in the process; Having the offender personally make things right; Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim; Allowing the offender to apologize to their family; Having the offender's story heard; Having the victim's story heard; Having the supporters/community members' stories heard; Other: (specify)	The offender's top three concerns related to fairness (Punishing the offender; Paying back the victim; Getting help for the offender; Actively participating in the process; Having the offender personally make things right; Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim; Allowing the offender to apologize to their family; Having the offender's story heard; Having the victim's story heard; Having the supporters/community members' stories heard; Other: (specify)
Row 27		The offender's attitude towards the victim
Row 28		The degree to which the offender agrees the victim(s) was not sincere in his/her participation.
Row 29		The degree to which the offender agrees that they have a better understanding of how the offense affected the victim(s).
Row 30		The degree to which the offender agrees the victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages.
Row 31		The degree to which the offender agrees that the victim(s) never gave them a chance.
Row 32		The degree to which the offender believes the conference was a joke
Row 33		Whether the offender feels remorseful for the offense?
Row 34		The level of importance the offender ascribes to being able to tell victim(s) what happened (post-conference)
Row 35		The level of importance the offender ascribes to being able to pay back the victim(s) by paying them money (post-conference)
Row 36		The level of importance the offender ascribes to settling the case without a formal hearing (post-conference)
Row 37		The level of importance the offender ascribes to settling the case without charges (post-conference)
Row 38		The level of importance the offender ascribes to being able to apologize to their friends and family (post-conference)

(Table continues)

Row 39	The level of importance the offender ascribes to getting the case over with (post-conference)
Row 40	The level of importance the offender ascribes to paying back the victim(s) by doing some work. (post-conference)
Row 41	The level of importance the offender ascribes to work out an agreement with the victim(s) (post-conference)
Row 42	The level of importance the offender ascribes to apologizing to the victim(s) for what they did (post-conference)
Row 43	Whether the offender believe the conference changed their attitude about the student conduct office
Row 44	Whether the offender was surprised by anything that occurred in the conference session
Row 45	Whether the offender apologized to the victim(s)

**Table 3**

***Community Member Variables***

	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Row 1	Gender	To what degree does the community member believe the conference was beneficial to them in dealing with the incident?
Row 2	Race	The degree to which the community member is satisfied with how the case was handled
Row 3		Whether the community member believes the offender was held accountable
Row 4		Whether the community member surprised by anything that happened in the conference
Row 5		The level of importance the community member ascribes to being able to explain how they felt.
Row 6		The level of importance the community member ascribes to having the opportunity to work out an agreement that was acceptable to everyone.
Row 7		The level of importance the community member ascribes to having the participants realize how much you care about them.
Row 8		Whether an agreement was reached during the conference
Row 9		Whether the community member believes the agreement seemed fair

(Table continues)

Row 10	How likely the community member thinks it is that the offender will commit another offense like this one?
Row 11	How likely the community member thinks it is that the offender will commit another offense of any kind
Row 12	How the community member would describe their experience during conferencing (Very Positive; Positive; Mixed; Negative; Very Negative; Other: please specify)
Row 13	Whether the community member would participate in conferencing again, if they had the opportunity.
Row 14	Whether the community member would recommend conferencing to others who face similar situations
Row 15	Whether the community member believes that their side of the story was considered in this case
Row 16	Whether the community member believes that their opinions were considered in this case
Row 17	Whether the community member believes this case was handled fairly
Row 18	The community member's top three concerns related to fairness (Punishing the offender; Paying back the victim; Getting help for the offender; Actively participating in the process; Having the offender personally make things right; Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim; Allowing the offender to apologize to their family; Having the offender's story heard; Having the victim's story heard; Having the supporters/community members' stories heard; Other: (specify))
Row 19	The degree to which the community member agrees that too much pressure was put on any one individual to do all the talking in the conference.
Row 20	The degree to which the community member agrees that participants were treated with respect during the conference.
Row 21	The degree to which the community member agrees that some participants were not sincere in their participation.
Row 22	The degree to which the community member agrees that they have a better understanding of how the offender's behavior affected all participants.
Row 23	The degree to which the community member agrees that the victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages.
Row 24	The degree to which the community member agrees that conferences make the justice process more responsive to the offender's needs as a human being.

(Table continues)

Row 25	The degree to which the community member agrees that without conferencing the offender would have received harsher treatment.
Row 26	The degree to which the community member was satisfied about the outcome of the conference
Row 27	Whether the community member believes the conference changed their attitude about crime
Row 28	Whether the community member believes the conference changed their attitude about the student conduct office

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The request to conduct this study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Colorado State University in 2003 (see Appendix B) and approved on 1/20/2024. Survey data were collected from program participants who consented to respond. After the presurvey was conducted, participants were asked to sign a written consent form (see Appendix C) to use the survey data for research purposes. To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, unique ID numbers were assigned to each individual participating in the survey. A list of the name of the individual and the unique ID number assigned to that individual for purposes of the survey will be maintained by program staff, with access to that information restricted to two people. The response database contains the unique ID number and no link to individual names. Additionally, each offender was assigned a unique case number. Program coordinators wrote the case number on the respective offender surveys, as well as those of the victims and community members associated with that offender's case. Data were collected between 2003 to 2008. Paper copies of the surveys were administered to participants immediately following the pre-conference and conference. Descriptive data analysis will be conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## **Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology used for this study. The non-experimental and quantitative nature of the survey research design was discussed. A description of the program and intervention was also provided. Additionally, information about participants' roles (victim, offender, and community member) and demographics was given. The description of the study's instrumentation illustrated the study's use of five distinct surveys and the independent and dependent variables examined for each participant's role. The process for collecting and analyzing data described how and when surveys were administered and the use of SPSS software to conduct descriptive analysis in order to determine the frequency and variation of participant responses. The next section illustrates these findings.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the results of the data analysis to illustrate the frequency and variation of the scores for victims, offenders, and community members on the Colorado State University Restorative Justice Questionnaire and to examine how such scores differ from preconference to postconference.

### **Participants**

Participants in the study fell into one of three categories: (a) offenders, (b) victims, or (c) community members. Given the voluntary nature of the restorative justice conferencing program, participants could choose to withdraw from the program at any time. As such, not every victim or offender who completed a consent form or the preconference survey went on to participate in a conference or complete a postconference survey. Additionally, for various reasons, program administrators were not always able to obtain completed preconference surveys from victims or offenders prior to them engaging in a conference. The presurvey was completed by 21 victims and 83 offenders; as mentioned in chapter 3, presurveys were not administered to community members. The postconference survey was completed by 34 victims, 45 offenders, and 46 community members. Table 4 illustrates the number of each group of participants who completed the consent form, presurvey, and postsurvey. No records were found to indicate how many individuals declined to participate in the study.

**Table 4***Number of Participant Surveys*

Role	Presurvey	Postsurvey
Victim	21	34
Offender	83	45
Community Member	N/A	46

The term *case* was used to refer to a specific offense and the parties involved or impacted by an offense. Each case was assigned a case number. Some cases involved multiple offenders and/or victims. Some cases did not have victims because the victims could not be identified, did not respond to outreach attempts, or did not wish to be involved in the process.

For the purpose of this study, only data from complete cases were analyzed. Complete cases are defined as conferences that included at least one victim and one offender, in which both victims and offenders completed pre- and postconference surveys. This decision was made because participation of both victim and offender best reflects the previously articulated operational definition of restorative justice conferencing used by this study. For purposes of this study, 21 complete cases were investigated, in which pre- and postdata were collected from 15 victim participants, 21 offender participants, and 12 community member participants (some victims and community members were associated with multiple cases). These numbers are illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5***Number of Participants by Role in Complete Cases*

Victim	Offender	Community Member/Supporter
15	21	12

**Participant Demographics**

While over half (53%) of victims identified as male, 90% of offenders and 67% of community members identified as male (see Table 6). The majority (73% or more) of all participants self-identified as White (see Table 7). To compare demographic information of offender participants with the general CSU student population, gender and racial demographics of the general student population from the Fall 2007 to Summer 2009 semesters were obtained by running reports within Colorado State University's online Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness enrollment database and are displayed in Tables 8 and 9. The participant group, as will be illustrated below, is not representative of the overall student population at CSU, in terms of gender or race/ethnicity.

**Table 6***Participant Gender*

Participant Type	Male	Female	Missing
Victim	8 (53%)	7 (47%)	0 (0%)
Offender	19 (90%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
Community member/supporter	8 (67%)	3 (25%)	1 (8%)

**Table 7***Participant Race/Ethnicity*

Participant Type	White	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Asian	Other	Missing
Victim	11 (73%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)
Offender	20 (95%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Community member	10 (83%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)

**Table 8***Gender of CSU's Student Population from Fall 2007-Summer 2009*

Male	Female	Missing
51,558 (48%)	56,657 (52%)	0 (0%)

*Note.* These data were obtained by running reports within Colorado State University's online Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness enrollment database.

**Table 9***Race/Ethnicity of CSU's Student Population from Fall 2007-Summer 2009*

White	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Asian	Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	Other/Multi-Racial	Missing
83,837 (80%)	7,010 (7%)	524 (1%)	2,205 (2%)	208 (>1%)	2,269 (2%)	6,556 (6%)

*Note.* These data were obtained by running reports within Colorado State University's online Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness enrollment database.

## Victim Descriptives

This section examines the descriptives of the pre- and postsurvey for participants who were in the role of victims. There was a total of fifteen victim participants in this sample. The presurvey results will be illustrated first, followed by the results of the postconference survey. The postconference survey contained five questions that were the same or similar to those on the preconference survey. The results of these five questions will be reported.

### Victim Preconference Survey

Prior to the conference, victims were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with how their case was being handled. The majority of respondents seemed satisfied with the way their case was being handled, with eight (53.3%) indicating they were very satisfied and four (26.7%) indicating they were satisfied. While no respondents indicated dissatisfaction, three (20%) indicated feeling uncertain about their levels of satisfaction with how their case was being handled (two selected “unsure” while one selected “don’t know”). Table 10 illustrates these responses.

**Table 10**

*Victim Presurvey: Satisfaction with How Case is Being Handled*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
8 (53.3%)	4 (26.7%)	2 (13.3%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)

As explained in the literature review, engaging in restorative justice should be voluntary for all participants. Therefore, victims should not be forced or coerced into participating in restorative justice conferencing. As illustrated in Table 11, 13 (86.6%) victim respondents indicated that it was their choice to participate in the conferencing. While no respondents

indicated that it was not their choice to participate, two (13.3%) indicated that they experienced some pressure to participate. The survey did not provide an opportunity for victims to provide detail as to what this pressure was.

**Table 11**

*Victim Presurvey: Is Participating in Conference Victim's Own Choice?*

Yes	Yes, But Under Pressure	No
13 (86.7%)	2 (13.3%)	0

The presurvey provided victims with a list of possible reasons why they chose to participate in restorative justice conferencing and instructed them to select all reasons that applied to them. The results, shown in Table 12, illustrated that the three most common reasons, selected by over 50% of respondents, were: “to help the offender(s),” “to help the offender(s) take direct responsibility for making things right,” and “to let the offender(s) know my story.” Two respondents selected “other” and added comments. One victim indicated that being there to support the other victim of the offense was an additional reason why they chose to participate, while the other victim wrote that they wanted the offenders to learn that their actions have consequences.

**Table 12***Victim Preconference: Victim's Reasons for Participating in Conference*

Reasons	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	%
To get paid back for financial losses	0	0
To help the offender(s)	11	73.3
To help the offender(s) take direct responsibility for making things right	10	66.7
To let the offender(s) know my story	9	60
To receive an apology	3	20
To satisfy my parents	0	0
It was the best option of all available choices	1	6.7
Other	2	13.3

The presurvey presented victims with two questions related to offender recidivism. The first asked victims how likely they thought it was that the offender would recommit a similar type of offense. The results, illustrated in Table 13, showed that 64% of those who answered this question were uncertain, with eight (53.3%) respondents selecting “unsure” and one (6.7%) selecting “don’t know.” Only one respondent selected “likely,” and none selected “very likely.” The second recidivism-related question asked victims whether they were afraid the offender would commit another offense against them. Their responses, depicted in Table 14, showed that 14 (93.3%) respondents selected “no,” indicating they were not afraid of this occurring.

**Table 13***Victim Presurvey: Victim’s Perception of Likelihood Offender(s) Will Commit a Similar Offense*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don’t Know	Missing
0 (0%)	1 (6.7%)	8 (53.3%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)

**Table 14***Victim Presurvey: Is Victim Afraid Offender Will Commit Another Offense Against Them?*

Yes	No
1 (6.7%)	14 (93.3%)

The presurvey asked victims to predict how beneficial it would be for them to meet with the offender(s) in a restorative justice conference process. The results, depicted in Table 15, showed that the majority of respondents (80%) seemed to think they would derive some benefit from the experience. One respondent predicted such a meeting would be “somewhat beneficial,” eight indicated it would be “beneficial,” and three predicted it would be “very beneficial.” Although three respondents (20%) indicated uncertainty about how beneficial the process would be to them, no respondent predicted that a meeting would be “not at all beneficial.”

**Table 15***Victim Presurvey: How Beneficial Victim Predicts Meeting with Offender in Conference Will Be to Them*

Not at all beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Unsure	Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Don't Know
0 (0%)	1 (6.7%)	2 (13.3%)	8 (53.3%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)

Victims were asked to select their three most important concerns related to fairness, and to rank these concerns in order of importance to them (1 = most important). The results, illustrated in Table 16, showed the total number of respondents who selected each concern, as well as the number of respondents who ranked the concern as #1, #2, or #3. The concerns that were selected, listed in order of most to least total selections, were: actively participating in the process (11); getting help for the offender (8); having the offender’s story heard (7); having the victim’s story heard (6); allowing the offender to apologize to the victim (5); having the offender personally make things right (5); having the supporters’/community member’s stories heard (1).

**Table 16**

*Victim Presurvey: Victim’s Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)*

	#1	#2	#3	Total # Selected
Punishing the offender	0	0	0	0
Paying back the victim	0	0	0	0
Getting help for the offender	4	2	2	8
Actively participating in the process	2	2	7	11
Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim	1	1	2	5
Having the offender personally make things right	3	1	1	5
Allowing the offender to apologize to their family	0	0	0	0
Having the offender’s story heard	3	3	0	7
Having the victim’s story heard	2	2	2	6
Having the supporters/community member’s stories heard	0	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0

## Victim Postconference Survey

As in the preconference survey, the postconference survey asked victims to indicate their level of satisfaction with how their case was handled. The results, illustrated in table 17, show the majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with how their case was handled, with thirteen respondents (86.7%) selecting “very satisfied” and one (6.7%) selecting “satisfied.” Only one respondent (6.7%) indicated they were dissatisfied with their case management. These results seem slightly more positive than those on the preconference survey, where only eight respondents indicated they were “very satisfied” with their case management.

**Table 17**

*Victim Postsurvey: Satisfaction with How Case Was Handled*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
13 (86.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0	1 (6.7%)	0	0

In addition to assessing their overall degree of satisfaction with how their case was handled, victims were asked whether they believed their case was handled fairly. Notably, as Table 18 illustrates, 100% of respondents indicated their case was handled fairly.

**Table 18**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did Victims Believe their Case was Handled Fairly?*

Yes	No
15 (100%)	0

During the conference process, participants had the opportunity to talk about their experiences related to the offense. In relation to this, the postconference survey asked victims

whether they believed their story had been heard. Notably, all 15 respondents (100%) indicated that they felt their story was heard. These results are shown in Table 19.

**Table 19**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did Victims Believe their Story Was Heard?*

Yes	No
15 (100%)	0

After the conference, victims were asked about their perception of offenders' remorse. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they believed the offender, or offenders, were remorseful. Eight of the respondents participated in a conference where one offender was present. The results, illustrated in Table 20, showed that all eight (100%) respondents indicated that they believed the offender was sorry. Seven victims participated in a conference with multiple offenders. Table 21 shows that three of these respondents (42.9%) believed all the offenders were sorry while four (57.1%) believed that some of the offenders were sorry.

**Table 20**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offender in their conference was sorry?*

Yes	No
8 (100%)	0

**Table 21**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offenders were sorry?*

All Seemed Sorry	One or More Seemed Sorry	None Seemed Sorry
3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	0

Another set of questions, related to victim’s perception of offenders’ remorse, asked victims whether the offender, or offenders, had apologized. Table 22 illustrates that, of the eight respondents who participated in a conference where one offender was present, 100% indicated that the offender apologized to them. Seven victims participated in a conference with multiple offenders. The results shown in Table 23 illustrate that four of these respondents (42.9%) believed all the offenders were sorry while four (57.1%) believed that some of the offenders were sorry.

**Table 22**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did the Offender Apologize to the Victim?*

Yes	No
8 (100%)	0

**Table 23**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did the Offenders Apologize to the Victim?*

All Apologized	One or More Apologized	None Apologized
4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	0

In addition to inquiring about the offenders’ remorse, victims were asked if they believed the offenders were held responsible for their actions. Eight of the respondents participated in a conference where one offender was present. Table 24 shows that all eight (100%) respondents indicated that they believed the offender was held responsible. Of the seven victims who participated in a conference with multiple offenders, four (57.1%) believed that all offenders were held responsible and three (42.9%) believed that one or more of the offenders were held responsible. These findings are illustrated, below, in Table 25.

**Table 24***Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offender was held responsible?*

Yes	No
8 (100%)	0

**Table 25***Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe that the offenders were held responsible?*

All Were Held Responsible	One or More Were Held Responsible	None
4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	0

As in the preconference survey, the postconference survey inquired as to whether victim participants felt that engaging in the restorative justice conference process was voluntary. Victims were given the response options of “yes,” “yes, but under pressure,” and “no.” As shown in Table 26, all 15 (100%) respondents selected “yes,” indicating that participating in the conference process was their own choice. Interestingly, on the preconference survey, only thirteen (86.7%) selected “yes,” with two respondents (13.3%) selecting “yes, but under pressure.”

**Table 26***Victim Postsurvey: Did the victim believe participating in conference was their own choice?*

Yes	Yes, But Under Pressure	No
15 (100%)	0	0

Victims who indicated that it was their choice to participate in the conference were subsequently asked to select (from a list of options) all their reasons for participating. The

results, shown in Table 27, illustrated that the three most common reasons, selected by over 40% of respondents, were: “to help the offender(s)” (80%), “to let the offender(s) know how I felt about the offense” (46.7%), and “to receive an apology” (40%). One respondent selected “other” and explained, in the comments, that they wanted to participate to support the other victim of the offense.

**Table 27**

*Victim Postsurvey: Victim's Reasons for Participating in Conference*

Reasons	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	%
To get paid back for financial losses	0	0
To help the offender(s)	12	80
To receive answers to questions I had	5	33.3
To let the offender(s) know how I felt about the offense	7	46.7
To receive an apology	6	40
To have some say in the outcome	4	26.7
Other	1	6.7

The postconference survey asked victims one question specifically related to the effectiveness of the facilitator. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt their facilitator had sufficiently prepared them to meet with the offender(s). Only one respondent selected “no.” As shown in Table 28, the 14 other respondents (93.3%) all selected “yes,” indicating that they felt they had been sufficiently prepared by the facilitator.

**Table 28***Victim Postsurvey: Did the Facilitator Sufficiently Prepare Victim to Meet with the Offender?*

Yes	No
14 (93.3%)	1

Victims were asked, on the postconference survey, how they would describe the tone of the conference. They were given the opportunity to select one or more of the following response options: “friendly,” “hostile,” “victim-focused,” “offender-focused,” or “other.” The results, illustrated in Table 29, show 14 (93.3%) of respondents indicated they thought the tone of the conference was friendly, while one (6.7%) found it hostile. Two respondents (13.3%) designated the tone of the conference as “offender-focused.” None of the other response options were selected.

**Table 29***Victim Postsurvey: Victim's Perceptions of the Tone of the Conference*

Conference Tone	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	%
Friendly	14	93.3
Hostile	1	6.7
Victim-focused	0	0
Offender-focused	2	13.3
Other	0	0

In addition to being asked about their perception of the tone of the conference, victims were asked whether anything that occurred during the conference had surprised them. Those who indicated they had experienced surprise were asked what they had been surprised by and given

the opportunity to select one or more of the following options: “It went better than I expected,” “It went worse than I expected,” “The offender(s) seemed sincere,” “the offender(s) did not seem sincere,” or “other.” The results, depicted in Table 30, show that 12 (80%) respondents indicated they were not surprised by anything that occurred in the conference, while three (20%) indicated they did experience some degree of surprise. Two of these three respondents indicated they were surprised that the conference went better than they had expected, while one indicated it had gone worse than they expected. These results are illustrated in Table 31.

**Table 30**

*Victim Postsurvey: Was Victim Surprised by Anything that Occurred During Conference?*

Yes	No
3 (20%)	12 (80%)

**Table 31**

*Victim Postsurvey: What, if Anything, Surprised Victims about the Conference*

Reasons for Surprise	Participants	
	N	%
It went better than I expected	3	100
It went worse than expected	1	33.3
The offender(s) seemed sincere	0	0
The offender(s) did not seem sincere	0	0
Other	0	0

In RJC, participants will often attempt to create an agreement of things the offender will do to address and/or repair the harm they have caused (Allena, 2004). To this end, the postconference survey asked victims whether an agreement had been reached during the

conference process. If an agreement had been reached, victims were asked whether it was fair. All 15 (100%) respondents indicated that an agreement had been reached during their conference (see Table 32), and that they perceived the agreement to be fair (see Table 33).

**Table 32**

*Victim Postsurvey: Was an Agreement Reached During the Conference?*

Yes	No
15 (100%)	0

**Table 33**

*Victim Postsurvey: Did Victims Perceive the Agreement to be Fair?*

Yes	No
15 (100%)	0

One of the intended outcomes of restorative justice is to reduce victim’s fear and concerns about revictimization (Angel et al., 2014; Randall & Haskell, 2013; Strang et al., 2006; Sherman et al., 1998, 2015). The postconference survey asked victims whether they were afraid of being revictimized by the offender. As shown in Table 34, all 15 (100%) of respondents indicated they were not afraid that they offender would commit another offense against them. This is not a notable change, however, as 14 (93.3%) of victims indicated, on the preconference survey, that they were not afraid of revictimization from the offender.

**Table 34**

*Victim Postsurvey: Do Victims Fear the Offender Committing Another Offense Against Them?*

Yes	No
0	15 (100%)

Victims who had participated in restorative justice conferencing, were asked if they would recommend conferencing to other victims. As shown in Table 35, 13 respondents (86.7%) indicated they would recommend it, while 2 (13.3%) indicated they would not recommend it.

**Table 35**

*Victim Postsurvey: Would Victims Recommend Conferencing to Other Victims?*

Yes	No
13 (86.7%)	2 (13.3%)

The researchers sought to better understand what was important to victims during the conference process. The postconference survey presented victims with nine items they predicted victims might find important in relation to the conference. These items are listed as follows: “To receive answers to questions you wanted to ask the offender(s);” “To tell the offender(s) how the offense affected you;” “To get paid back for your losses by the offender(s);” “To see that the offender(s) got some counseling or other type of help;” “To have the offender(s) punished;” “To have the offender(s) say he or she is sorry;” “To have the opportunity to negotiate a repayment agreement with the offender(s) that was acceptable to all;” “To feel that you had some input into the outcome;” and, “To feel that you were an important part of the process.” Respondents were asked to assign each of these items with a score of “very important,” “important,” “unsure,” “unimportant,” “very unimportant,” or “don’t know.” Respondents’ ratings are illustrated in table 36, below. The items are listed as follows, in order of those that received the highest to lowest number of combined “very important” and “important” selections: telling the offenders how the offense affected them,  $N=14$  (93.3%); having the offender apologize,  $N=13$  (86.7%); feeling that they were an important part of the process,  $N=12$  (80%); feeling that they had some input into the outcome,  $N=11$  (73.3%); receiving answers to questions they had,  $N=10$  (73.3%); seeing that the

offender(s) got some type of help,  $N=9$  (60%); having the opportunity to negotiate a mutually acceptable repayment agreement,  $N=6$  (40%); to get paid back for losses,  $N=2$  (13.3%); to have the offender punished,  $N=2$  (13.3%).

**Table 36***Victim Postsurvey: Victims' Perception of the Importance of the Following*

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
To receive answers to questions you wanted to ask the offender(s).	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)	0	1 (6.7%)
To tell the offender(s) how the offense affected you.	9 (60%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	0
To get paid back for your losses by the offender(s).	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (20%)	5 (33.3%)	4 (26.7%)	0
To see that the offender(s) got some counseling or other type of help.	4 (26.7%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)	0
To have the offender(s) punished.	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	7 (46.7%)	5 (33.3%)	0
To have the offender(s) say he or she is sorry.	7 (46.7%)	6 (40%)	1 (6.7%)	0	1 (6.7%)	0
To have the opportunity to negotiate a repayment agreement with the offender(s) that was acceptable to all.	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.7%)	0	4 (26.7%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)
To feel that you had some input into the outcome.	6 (40%)	5 (33.3%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0
To feel that you were an important part of the process.	5 (33.3%)	7 (46.7%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0	1 (6.7%)

The postconference survey presented victims with a series of statements and instructed them to indicate their level of agreement with the following options: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “unsure,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “don’t know.” For the statement, “conferencing allowed me to express my feelings about being victimized,” five (33.3%) of victims strongly agreed, eight (53.3%) agreed, one (6.7%) was unsure, and two (13.3%) indicated they were not sure or did not know. Five (33.3%) of respondents strongly agreed, and six (40%) agreed with the statement “conferencing reduced my anger about the situation,” while two (13.3%) indicated they were unsure or did not know. In response to the statement, “conferencing allowed me to participate more fully in the system,” seven (46.7%) respondents strongly agreed, six (40%) agreed, and two (13.3%) indicated they were unsure or didn’t know. Seven (46.7%) of respondents strongly agreed and six (40%) agreed with the statement, “conferencing allowed me to meet the other parties personally,” while two (13.3%) indicated they were unsure or did not know. In response to the statement, “conferencing allowed me to leave the incident behind or at least think about it less often,” five (33.3%) respondents strongly agreed, eight (53.3%) agreed, one (6.7%) disagreed, and one (6.7%) indicated they were unsure. Six (40%) participants strongly disagreed and four (26.7%) disagreed with the statement, “the offender(s) was not sincere in their participation,” while two (13.3%) participants agreed or strongly agreed, and one (6.7%) indicated they were unsure. In response to the statement, “I have a better understanding of why the offense was committed against me,” four (26.7%) respondents strongly agreed and six (40%) agreed, while two (13.3%) disagreed and two (13.3%) indicated they were unsure. Four (26.7%) of respondents strongly disagreed and six (40%) disagreed with the statement, “the offender(s) participated only because he or she was trying to avoid punishment,” while two (13.3%) strongly agreed and three (20%) indicated they were unsure. In response to the

statement, “conferences make the process more responsive to my needs as a human being,” four (26.7%) respondents strongly agreed, six (40%) agreed, and five (33.3%) indicated they were unsure or didn’t know. The aforementioned results are illustrated in Table 37.

**Table 37**

*Victim Postsurvey: Victims’ Level of Agreement with Following Statements*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Missing
Conferencing allowed me to express my feelings about being victimized.	5 (33.3%)	8 (53.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)	0
Conferencing reduced my anger about the situation.	5 (33.3%)	6 (40%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	1
Conferencing allowed me to participate more fully in the system.	7 (46.7%)	6 (40%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)	0
Conferencing allowed me to meet the other parties personally.	7 (46.7%)	6 (40%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)	0
Conferencing allowed me to leave the incident behind or at least think about it less often.	5 (33.3%)	8 (53.3%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	0
The offender(s) was not sincere in their participation.	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)	0	0
I have a better understanding of why the offense was committed against me.	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	0	0	1

(Table continues)

The offender(s) participated only because he or she was trying to avoid punishment.	2 (13.3%)	0	3 (20%)	6 (40%)	4 (26.7%)	0	0
Conferences make the process more responsive to my needs as a human being.	4 (26.7%)	6 (40%)	4 (26.7%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)	0

Similar to the preconference survey, the postconference survey asked victims to select their three most important concerns related to fairness, and to rank these concerns in order of importance to them (1 = most important). The results, illustrated in Table 38, show the total number of respondents who selected each concern, as well as the number of respondents who ranked the concern as #1, #2, or #3. The concerns that were selected, listed in order of most to least total selections were: allowing the offender to apologize to the victim ( $N=8$ ); having the offender's story heard ( $N=8$ ); actively participating in the process ( $N=7$ ); having the victim's story heard ( $N=6$ ); getting help for the offender ( $N=5$ ); having the offender personally make things right ( $N=5$ ); allowing the offender to apologize to their family ( $N=2$ ); having the supporters'/community member's stories heard ( $N=1$ ). These responses are somewhat different than victims' original responses on the presurvey (see Table 16).

**Table 38**

*Victim Postsurvey: Victim’s Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)*

	#1	#2	#3	Total # Selected
Punishing the offender	0	0	0	0
Paying back the victim	0	0	0	0
Getting help for the offender	4	0	1	5
Actively participating in the process	2	3	2	7
Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim	1	3	4	8
Having the offender personally make things right	3	2	0	5
Allowing the offender to apologize to their family	0	0	2	2
Having the offender’s story heard	1	5	2	8
Having the victim’s story heard	3	1	2	6
Having the supporters/community member’s stories heard	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0

The postconference survey asked victims to indicate how much they benefited from meeting the offenders in a conference setting, and they were given the following response options: “not at all beneficial,” “somewhat beneficial,” “unsure,” “beneficial,” “very beneficial,” and “don’t know.” As illustrated in Table 39, the majority of victims indicated they experienced some degree of benefit, with eight (53.3%) selecting “very beneficial,” and six (40%) selecting “beneficial.” The remaining respondent (6.7%) selected “unsure.” This is a notable difference from the responses on their preconference survey (see Table 15), where only three (20%) predicted that meeting with the offender would be very beneficial.

**Table 39***Victim Postsurvey: How Beneficial Victims Found Meeting with Offender in Conference*

Not at all beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Unsure	Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Don't Know
0 (0%)	0	1 (6.7%)	6 (40%)	8 (53.3%)	0

Victim satisfaction is considered an important measure of effectiveness for restorative justice (Shapland et al., 2007; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Strang et al., 2006, 2013; Umbreit, 1989; Umbreit & Fercello, 1997; Umbreit et al., 1995; Umbreit et al., 2005). As such, the postconference survey asked victims to share how satisfied they were with the outcome of the conference session and provided the following response options: “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsure,” “dissatisfied,” “very dissatisfied,” and “don’t know.” The vast majority of respondents seemed to have some level of satisfaction with the outcome of the conference, with 10 (66.7%) of respondents indicating they were very satisfied and four (26.7%) indicating they were satisfied. Only one (6.7%) respondent selected “unsure” and none indicated that they were dissatisfied. These results are illustrated, below, in Table 40.

**Table 40***Victim Postsurvey: Satisfaction with Outcome of Restorative Justice Conference*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
10 (66.7%)	4 (26.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	0

Related to satisfaction, the postconference survey asked victims whether they would choose to participate in a restorative justice conference if they had to do it all over again. They

were given the response options of “yes” or “no.” Table 41 shows that all 15 (100%) of respondents selected “yes,” indicating they would choose to participate in process.

**Table 41**

*Victim Postsurvey: Would Victims Choose to Participate in Conference if They Had to Do it Over Again?*

Yes	No
15 (100%)	0

### **Offender Descriptives**

This section examines the descriptives of the pre- and postsurvey for participants who were in the role of offenders. There was a total of 21 offender participants in this sample. The preconference survey contained nine questions that were the same or similar to the postconference survey. The responses to these nine questions will be compared. The presurvey results will be illustrated first, followed by the results of the postconference survey.

#### **Offender Preconference Survey**

The preconference survey asked offenders to share their level of satisfaction with how their case is being handled. Offenders were given the response options of “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsure,” “dissatisfied,” “very dissatisfied,” and “don’t know.” As illustrated in Table 42, the majority of offenders (90.5%) expressed satisfaction in terms of how their case was being handled, with 10 (47.7%) indicating they were very satisfied and nine (42.9%) indicating they were satisfied. One (4.8%) respondent, each, indicated they were unsure or dissatisfied.

**Table 42***Offender Presurvey: Satisfaction with How Case is Being Handled*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
10 (47.7%)	9 (42.9%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0	0

Restorative justice emphasizes active accountability (Zehr, 2005). Therefore, restorative justice conferencing is intended for offenders who take responsibility for committing an offense (Sherman et al. 2015). The preconference survey asked offenders if they believe they were responsible for committing the offense that led to them being referred to the restorative justice program. As depicted in Table 43, the vast majority of offenders felt they were responsible for the offense. Nineteen (90.5%) respondents selected “yes” in response to the question: “do you believe you are responsible for the offense you committed.” Only one (4.8%) indicated they were not responsible, while one response was missing.

**Table 43***Offender Presurvey: Do Offenders Take Responsibility for Committing Offense?*

Yes	No	Missing
19 (90.5%)	1(4.8%)	1 (4.8%)

In addition to asking offenders if they took responsibility for the offense, the postconference survey asked them if they felt sorry for committing the offense. Respondents were given two response options: “yes,” or “no.” As shown in Table 44, 19 (90.5%) selected “yes,” indicating they felt remorse, while one respondent selected “no,” and one response was missing.

**Table 44***Offender Presurvey: Do Offenders Feel Sorry for Committing the Offense?*

Yes	No	Missing
19 (90.5%)	1(4.8%)	1 (4.8%)

Restorative justice should be voluntary for all participants, including offenders (Shaff et al., 2007; Sherman et al. 2015). To assess offenders’ perception of the voluntariness of the restorative justice program, the preconference survey asked offenders if their participation in the program was their own choice. Respondents were given the response options of “yes,” “yes, but under pressure,” or “no.” As illustrated in Table 45, all 20 offenders who responded to this question (one response was missing) indicated that participating was their own choice.

**Table 45***Offender Presurvey: Is Participating in Conference Offender's Own Choice?*

Yes	Yes, But Under Pressure	No	Missing
20 (95.2%)	0	0	1 (4.8%)

The presurvey provided offenders with a list of possible reasons why they were choosing to participate in restorative justice conferencing and instructed them to select all reasons that were applicable. The results, shown in Table 46, illustrate the following reasons selected by respondents (in order of most to least selected): “to take direct responsibility for making things right” ( $N=17$ ), “to offer an apology” ( $N=16$ ), “to let the victim(s) know my story” ( $N=9$ ), “to help the victim” ( $N=7$ ), to pay back victim(s) for financial losses” ( $N=3$ ), and “it was the best option of all available choices” ( $N=3$ ).

**Table 46***Offender Preconference: Reasons for Participating in Conference*

Reasons	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	%
To pay back victim(s) for financial losses	3	14.3
To help the victim	7	33.3
To take direct responsibility for making things right	17	81
To let the victim(s) know my story	9	42.9
To offer an apology	16	76.2
To satisfy my parents	0	0
It was the best option of all available choices	3	14.3
Other	0	0

The presurvey asked offenders to predict how beneficial it would be for them to meet with the victim(s) in a restorative justice conference process. The results, depicted in Table 47, show that the vast majority of respondents (85.7%) seemed to think they would derive some benefit from the experience. One respondent (4.8%) predicted such a meeting would be “somewhat beneficial,” three (14.3%) indicated it would be “beneficial,” and fourteen (66.7%) predicted it would be “very beneficial.” Although two respondents (9.5%), indicated uncertainty about how beneficial the process would be to them, no respondent predicted that a meeting would be “not at all beneficial.” Additionally, one respondent (4.8%) did not complete this question.

**Table 47**

*Offender Presurvey: How Beneficial Offenders Predict Meeting with Victims in Conference Will Be to Them*

Not at all beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Unsure	Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Don't Know	Missing
0	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (14.3%)	14 (66.7%)	0	1 (4.8%)

In seeking to better understand offenders' motivations and interests, the preconference survey presented offenders with nine items they thought offenders might find important in relation to the conference. These items are listed as follows: "To be able to tell victim(s) what happened," "To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money," "To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work," "To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone," "To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did," "To settle without a formal hearing," "To settle without charges being filed," "To be able to apologize to my family and/or friends for what I did," and "To get it over with." Respondents were asked to assign each of these items with a score of "very important," "important," "unsure," "unimportant," "very unimportant," or "don't know." Respondents' ratings are illustrated in Table 33, below. These items are listed, as follows, in order of those that received the highest to lowest number of combined "very important" and "important" selections: "To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did" ( $N=20$ ); "To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone" ( $N=19$ ); "To get it over with" ( $N=19$ ); "To be able to tell the victim(s) what happened" ( $N=17$ ); "To settle without charges being filed" ( $N=17$ ); "To be able to apologize to my family and/or friends for what I did" ( $N=17$ ); "To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work" ( $N=14$ ); "To settle without a formal

hearing” (N=12); “To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money” (N=3). These results are illustrated in Table 48.

**Table 48**

*Offender Presurvey: Perception of the Importance of the Following*

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know	Missing
To be able to tell the victim(s) what happened	5 (23.8%)	12 (57.1%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0	1 (4.8%)
To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money.	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (14.3%)	10 (47.6%)	3 (14.3%)	0
To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work.	2 (9.5%)	12 (57.1%)	6 (28.6%)	1 (4.8%)	0	0	0
To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone.	12 (57.1%)	7 (33.3%)	0	1 (4.8%)	0	0	1 (4.8%)
To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did.	13 (61.9%)	7 (33.3%)	0	0	0	0	1 (4.8%)
To settle without a formal hearing.	6 (28.6%)	6 (28.6%)	4 (19%)	2 (9.5%)	0	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)
To settle without charges being filed.	10 (47.6%)	7 (33.3%)	2 (9.5%)	0	0	2 (9.5%)	0
To be able to apologize to my family and/or friends for what I did.	9 (42.9%)	8 (38.1%)	2 (9.5%)	0	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0
To get it over with.	8 (38.1%)	11 (52.4%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0	0	0

The presurvey asked offenders two questions related to recidivism. The first asked how likely they thought it was that they would recommit a similar type of offense, and the second how likely they thought it was that they would commit another offense of any kind. The results, shown in Table 49, illustrate that 15 (71.4%) offenders thought it was very unlikely and three

(14.3%) thought it was unlikely they would commit a similar offense in the future. One (4.8%) indicated they were unsure. When they were asked about the likelihood of committing any type of offense in the future, Table 50 shows that 10 (47.6%) offenders thought it was very unlikely and eight (38.1%) thought it was unlikely. While two (9.5%) indicated they were unsure, none indicated that they thought it was likely or very likely they would commit any offense in the future.

**Table 49**

*Offender Presurvey: Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit a Similar Offense Like this One*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know	Missing
0	0	1 (4.8%)	3 (14.3%)	15 (71.4%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)

**Table 50**

*Offender Presurvey: Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit Another Offense of Any Kind*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know	Missing
0	0	0	8	10	2	1

The presurvey asked offenders to select their three most important concerns related to fairness, and to rank these concerns in order of importance to them (1 = most important). The results, illustrated in Table 51, show the total number of offenders who selected each concern, as well as the number of respondents who ranked the concern as #1, #2, or #3. The concerns that were selected, listed in order of most to least total selections, were: “Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim” (N=15); “Having the offender personally make things right” (N=11); “Having the victim’s story heard” (N=11); “Actively participating in the process” (N=8);

“Paying back the victim” (N=4); “Having the offender’s story heard” (N=3); “Punishing the offender” (N=1); and “Allowing the offender to apologize to their family” (N=1).

**Table 51**

*Offender Presurvey: Offenders’ Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)*

	#1	#2	#3	Total # Selected
Punishing the offender	1	0	0	1
Paying back the victim	2	2	0	4
Getting help for the offender	0	0	0	0
Actively participating in the process	0	4	4	8
Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim	5	6	4	15
Having the offender personally make things right	5	1	5	11
Allowing the offender to apologize to their family	1	0	0	1
Having the offender’s story heard	0	2	1	3
Having the victim’s story heard	4	3	4	11
Having the supporters/community member’s stories heard	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

**Offender Postconference Survey**

As in the preconference survey, the postconference survey asked offenders to share their level of satisfaction with how their case was handled. Offenders were given the response options of “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsure,” “dissatisfied,” very dissatisfied,” and “don’t know.” 100% of offenders indicated satisfaction with how their case was handled. The results in Table 52 show that 15 (71.4%) respondents were very satisfied and six (28.6%) were satisfied. This

overall satisfaction is higher than on the presurvey, where 90.5% of offenders indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied.

**Table 52**

*Offender Postsurvey: Satisfaction with how Case was Handled*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
15 (71.4%)	6 (28.5%)	0	0	0	0

As in the preconference survey, the postconference survey asked offenders if they believed they were responsible for committing the offense that was the focus of the restorative justice conference process. The responses, shown in Table 53, illustrated that all 21 (100%) offenders indicated they were responsible for committing the offense, which is a slight increase from the preconference survey (see Table 41) where only 90.5% of offenders indicated they were responsible for committing the offense.

**Table 53**

*Offender Postsurvey: Do Offenders Take Responsibility for Committing Offense?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

Like the preconference survey, the postconference survey asked offenders two questions related to recidivism. The first asked how likely they thought it was that they would recommit a similar type of offense and the second how likely they thought it was that they would commit another offense of any kind. The results, shown in table 54, illustrate that 20 (95.2%) offenders thought it was “very unlikely” they would commit a similar offense in the future, whereas on the

presurvey, only 10 respondents selected this option. The remaining respondent (4.8%) thought it was “unlikely” they would commit a similar offense in the future.

When asked about their likelihood of committing any type of offense in the future, Table 55 shows that 11 (52.4%) offenders thought it was very unlikely and seven (33.3%) thought it was unlikely. Two (9.5%) respondents indicated they were unsure. One (4.8%) respondent selected “likely” which is an increase from the preconference survey (see Table 47) where no respondents selected this option.

**Table 54**

*Offender Postsurvey: Offenders’ Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit a Similar Offense*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don’t Know
0	0	0	1 (4.8%)	20 (95.2%)	0

**Table 55**

*Offender Postsurvey: Offenders’ Perception of Likelihood They Will Commit Another Offense of Any Kind*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don’t Know
0	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	7 (33.3%)	11 (52.4%)	0

In addition to asking offenders if they took responsibility for the offense, the postconference survey asked them if they felt sorry for committing the offense. Respondents were given two response options: “yes,” or “no.” As shown in table 56, all 21 (100%) offenders selected “yes,” indicating they felt remorse. This is a slight increase from their responses on the preconference survey (see table 42), where 90.5% of respondents selected “yes” (one selected “no” and another response was missing).

**Table 56***Offender Postsurvey: Do Offenders Feel Sorry for Committing the Offense?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

The researchers were also curious about how likely offenders thought it would be for them to continue attending the university and graduate. Table 57 shows that 19 (90.5%) respondents indicated they were “very likely” and one (4.8%) indicated they were “likely” to continue attending the university and finish school. Only one (4.8%) respondent indicated that they thought that this was unlikely.

**Table 57***Offender Postsurvey: How Likely Offenders Believe It Will be for Them to Continue at CSU and Graduate*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know
19 (90.5%)	1 (4.8%)	0	1 (4.8%)	0	0

Related to remorse, the postconference survey asked offenders if they apologized to the victims for what they did. Once again, they were given the response options of “yes” or “no.” Table 58 shows that all 21 (100%) respondents selected “yes,” indicating that they did offer an apology to the victim(s). Interestingly, the victim respondents indicated that not all offenders apologized (see Table 20). One explanation for this discrepancy is that some offenders did not offer an apology but felt uncomfortable answering honestly. Another is that some offenders’ apologies were not recognized as apologies by their victims.

**Table 58***Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Apologize to Victims?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

The postconference survey also asked offenders whether participating in the conference was voluntary. The vast majority (95.2%) indicated that participating in their conference was their own choice. While no respondents indicated that they were forced to participate, one (4.8%) indicated that they felt pressured to participate. These results are slightly different than those on the preconference survey (see Table 45) where 20 (95.2%) said participating in the conference was their own choice, while one (4.8%) response was missing. These results are shown in Table 59.

**Table 59***Offender Postsurvey: Is Participating in Conference Offender's Own Choice?*

Yes	Yes, But Under Pressure	No
20 (100%)	1	0

Like the presurvey, the postconference survey provided offenders with a list of possible reasons why they were choosing to participate in restorative justice conferencing and instructed them to select all reasons that were applicable. The results, shown in Table 60, illustrate the following reasons selected by respondents (in order of most to least selected): “to take direct responsibility for making things right” ( $N=20$ ), “to offer an apology” ( $N=18$ ), “to let the victim(s) know why I did it” ( $N=9$ ), “to help the victim” ( $N=13$ ), to pay back victim(s) for their losses” ( $N=9$ ), and “it was the best option of all available choices” ( $N=4$ ), “to satisfy my parents”

(N=1). These results are somewhat different than those on the presurvey, indicating offenders' motivations for participating in the conference changed, somewhat, over time.

**Table 60**

*Offender Preconference: Offenders' Reasons for Participating in Conference*

Reasons	Participants	
	N	%
To pay back victim(s) for financial losses	9	42.9
To help the victim	13	61.9
To take direct responsibility for making things right	20	95.2
To let the victim(s) know why I did it	14	66.7
To offer an apology	18	85.7
To satisfy my parents	1	4.8
It was the best option of all available choices	4	19
Other	0	0

The postconference survey asked offenders one question specifically related to the effectiveness of the facilitator. Offenders were asked whether they felt their facilitator had sufficiently prepared them to meet with the victim(s). As shown in Table 61, all 21 (100%) respondents indicated they were sufficiently prepared by the facilitator.

**Table 61**

*Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Feel Facilitator Sufficiently Prepare Them to Meet the Victim?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

The postconference survey asked offenders to indicate how much they benefited from meeting the victim(s) during the conference. They were given the following response options: “not at all beneficial,” “somewhat beneficial,” “unsure,” “beneficial,” “very beneficial,” and “don’t know.” Table 62 shows that the vast majority (95.2%) of offenders indicated they experienced some degree of benefit, which is a slight increase from offenders’ predictions on the preconference survey (see Table 44). Sixteen (76.2%) selecting “very beneficial,” three (14.3%) selecting “beneficial,” and one (4.8%) selecting “somewhat beneficial.” While one (4.8%) respondent selected “unsure,” none indicated that the meeting was “not at all beneficial.”

**Table 62**

*Offender Postsurvey: How Beneficial Offenders Found Meeting Victim(s)*

Not at all beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Unsure	Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Don't Know
0 (0%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	3 (14.3%)	16 (76.2%)	0

The postconference survey also asked offenders to share their attitude towards the victim. Respondents were provided with the following response options: “very positive,” “positive,” “mixed,” “negative,” “very negative,” or “other.” Table 63 illustrates that 17 (81%) respondents selected “very positive” and four (19%) selected “positive.” None of the other response options were selected. Because a similar question was not asked on the offender preconference survey, we are unable to know whether offenders’ attitudes towards victims changed over time.

**Table 63***Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Attitude Towards Victims*

Very Positive	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Very Negative	Other
17 (81%)	4 (19%)	0	0	0	0

In addition to asking offenders about their attitude towards the victim, the postconference survey asked offenders about their attitude about their restorative justice conference. The results, shown in table 64, reveal that 15 (71.4%) offenders indicated they had a very positive attitude toward the conference and six (28.6%) indicating they had a positive attitude.

**Table 64***Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Attitude About the Restorative Justice Conference*

Very Positive	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Very Negative	Other
15 (71.4%)	6 (28.6%)	0	0	0	0

The postconference survey asked offenders what they perceived to be the tone of the conference. They were given the opportunity to select one or more of the following response options: “friendly,” “hostile,” “victim-focused,” “offender-focused,” or “other.” The results, depicted in Table 65, show that 20 (95.2%) respondents indicated the tone of the conference was friendly. Four respondents (19%) designated the tone of the conference as victim-focused and two (9.5%) designated it as offender focused.

**Table 65***Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Perceptions of the Tone of the Conference*

Conference Tone	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	%
Friendly	20	95.2
Hostile	0	0
Victim-focused	4	19
Offender-focused	2	9.5
Other	0	0

Offenders were asked, on the postconference survey, whether they were surprised by anything that occurred during the conference. Those who indicated they had been surprised were asked to indicate what had surprised them and given the opportunity to select one or more of the following options: “It went better than I expected,” “It went worse than I expected,” “The victim(s) seemed to care about me,” “the victim(s) was angry,” or “other.” The results, depicted in Table 66, show that 17 (81%) respondents were not surprised by anything that occurred in the conference, while four (19%) did experience surprise. Three of these four respondents indicated they were surprised that the victims seemed to care about them and two were surprised that the conference went better than they had expected. One respondent selected “other.” These results are illustrated in Table 67.

**Table 66***Offender Postsurvey: Was Offender Surprised by Anything that Occurred During Conference?*

Yes	No
4 (19%)	17 (81%)

**Table 67***Offender Postsurvey: What, if Anything, Surprised Offenders about the Conference*

Reasons for Surprise	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	%
It went better than I expected	2	50
It went worse than expected	0	0
The victim(s) seemed to care about me	3	75
The victim(s) seemed angry	0	0
Other	1	25

Offenders were asked whether an agreement had been reached during the conference. Respondents who indicated an agreement had been reached were then asked whether they perceived said agreement to be fair. Table 68 shows that all 21 (100%) respondents indicated that an agreement had been reached during their conference. This aligns with victims' accounts as 100% of victim respondents also said an agreement had been reached during their conference (see table 29). Additionally, all 21 (100%) respondents indicated that they perceived the agreement to be fair (see table 69).

**Table 68***Offender Postsurvey: Was an agreement reached during the conference?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

**Table 69**

*Offender Postsurvey: Did offenders perceive the agreement to be fair?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

Related to fairness, the postconference survey asked offenders to select their three most important concerns related to fairness, and to rank these concerns in order of importance on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being the most important). The results, depicted in Table 70, show the total number of offenders who selected each concern, as well as the number of respondents who ranked the concern as #1, #2, or #3. The concerns that were selected, listed in order of most to least total selections, were: “Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim” ( $N=13$ ); “Having the offender personally make things right” ( $N=10$ ); “Having the victim’s story heard” ( $N=10$ ); “Actively participating in the process” ( $N=8$ ); “Paying back the victim” ( $N=7$ ); “Having the offender’s story heard” ( $N=6$ ); “Punishing the offender” ( $N=1$ ); and “Actively participating in the process” ( $N=8$ ). These responses are somewhat different than those on the offender preconference survey (see Table 51).

**Table 70**

*Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)*

	#1	#2	#3	Total # Selected
Punishing the offender	0	0	1	1
Paying back the victim	3	1	3	7
Getting help for the offender	0	0	0	0
Actively participating in the process	1	0	0	1
Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim	7	3	3	13
Having the offender personally make things right	4	4	2	10
Allowing the offender to apologize to their family	0	0	0	0
Having the offender's story heard	0	2	4	6
Having the victim's story heard	1	6	3	10
Having the supporters/community member's stories heard	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0

Like the preconference survey, the offender postconference survey presented offenders with nine items they thought offenders might find important in relation to the conference and asked them to assign each of these items a score of “very important,” “important,” “unsure,” “unimportant,” “very unimportant,” or “don’t know.” The results are listed in Table 71. The items are listed, as follows, in order of those that received the highest to lowest number of combined “very important” and “important” selections: “To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did” ( $N=21$ ); “To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone” ( $N=21$ ); “To be able to tell the victim(s) what happened” ( $N=21$ ); “To get it over with” ( $N=19$ ); “To settle without charges being filed” ( $N=15$ ); “To settle

without a court appearance” (N=14); “To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work” (N=10); To be able to apologize to my family and/or friends for what I did” (N=7); “To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money” (N=2). The offenders’ responses on the postconference survey differed in some regards to those on the preconference survey (see Table 48). Compared to the preconference survey, there was a 140% increase in the number of respondents indicated that telling the victim what happened was very important; a 58.3% increase in the number of offenders who indicated that having the opportunity to work out mutually acceptable agreement with the victims was very important; a 53.8% increase in the number of respondents who indicated that apologizing to the victim was very important.

**Table 71**

*Offender Postsurvey: Offenders’ Perception of the Importance of the Following*

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
To be able to tell the victim(s) what happened	12 (57.1%)	9 (42.9%)	0	0	0	0
To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money.	2 (9.5%)	0	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	10 (47.6%)	3 (14.3%)
To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work.	3 (14.3%)	7 (33.3%)	7 (33.3%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)
To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone.	19 (90.5%)	2 (9.5%)	0	0	0	0
To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did.	20 (95.2%)	1 (4.8%)	0	0	0	0
To settle without a court appearance.	10 (47.6%)	4 (19.0%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)
To settle without charges being filed	9 (42.9%)	6 (28.6%)	2 (9.5%)	0	1 (4.8%)	3 (14.3%)

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
To be able to apologize to my family and/or friends for what I did.	4 (19.0%)	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	5 (23.8%)	5 (23.8%)	1 (4.8%)
To get it over with.	10 (38.1%)	9 (52.4%)	0	2 (9.5%)	0	0

The researchers sought to understand whether offenders felt their story was heard during the conference and if they believed their story had been considered in the outcome of the case. Offenders' responses, illustrated in Table 72, show that all 21 (100%) offenders believed their story had been heard. As shown in table 73, all 21 (100%) offenders also believed that their story had been considered in the outcome of the case.

**Table 72**

*Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Believe Their Story was Heard?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

**Table 73**

*Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders Believe Their Story was Considered in the Outcome of the Case?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

The postconference survey presented offenders with a series of statements and instructed them to indicate their level of agreement with the following response options: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “unsure,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “don’t know.” For the statement, “too much pressure was put on me to do all the talking in the conference, 10 (47.6%) respondents

disagreed and nine (42.9%) strongly disagreed with the statement, while two (9.5%) indicated they were unsure. In response to the statement, “I felt I had no choice but to participate in the conference with my victim(s),” 13 respondents (61.9%) strongly disagreed and eight (38.1%) disagreed. For the statement, “the victim(s) was not sincere in his/her participation,” 13 (61.9%) strongly disagreed, seven (33.3%) disagreed, and one (4.8%) strongly agreed. In response to the statement, “the conference was a joke,” 15 (71.4%) respondents strongly disagreed, five (23.8%) disagreed, and one (4.8%) agreed. Fourteen (66.7%) respondents strongly agreed and seven (33.3%) agreed with the statement, “I have a better understanding of how the offense affected the victim(s).” In response to the statement, “the victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages,” 16 (76.2%) respondents strongly disagreed, four (19%) disagreed, and one (4.8%) indicated they did not know. Seventeen (81%) respondents strongly disagreed and four (19%) disagreed with the statement, “I felt the facilitator was against me.” For the statement, “there was no help given to me after the conference,” seven (33.3%) strongly disagreed and seven (33.3%) disagreed, while four (19%) indicated they did not know and three (14.3%) indicated they were unsure. In response to the statement, “Conferences make the process more responsive to my needs as a human being,” 11 (52.4%) agreed, seven (33.3%) strongly agreed, and three (14.3%) indicated they were unsure. Seventeen (81%) respondents strongly disagreed and four (19%) disagreed with the statement, “I felt the victim(s) never gave me a chance.” In response to the statement, “without conferencing I probably would have got harsher treatment, nine (42.9%) agreed, four (19%) strongly agreed, three (14.3%) indicated they did not know, three (14.3%) indicated they were unsure, and one (4.8%) respondent, each, disagreed or strongly disagreed. These results are illustrated in Table 74.

**Table 74***Offender Postsurvey: Offenders' Level of Agreement with Following Statements*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Too much pressure was put on me to do all the talking in the conference.	0	0	2 (9.5%)	10 (47.6%)	9 (42.9%)	0
I felt I had no choice but to participate in the conference with my victim(s).	0	0	0	8 (38.1%)	13 (61.9%)	0
The victim(s) was not sincere in his/her participation.	1 (4.8%)	0	0	7 (33.3%)	13 (61.9%)	0
The conference was a joke.	0	1 (4.8%)	0	5 (23.8%)	15 (71.4%)	0
I have a better understanding of how the offense affected the victim(s).	14 (66.7%)	7 (33.3%)	0	0	0	0
The victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages.	0	0	0	4 (19%)	16 (76.2%)	1 (4.8%)
There was no help given to me after the conference.	0	0	3 (14.3%)	7 (33.3%)	7 (33.3%)	4 (19%)
I felt the facilitator was against me.	0	0	0	4 (19%)	17 (81%)	0
Conferences make the process more responsive to my needs as a human being.	7 (33.3%)	11 (52.4%)	3 (14.3%)	0	0	0
I felt the victim(s) never gave me a chance.	0	0	0	4 (19%)	17 (81%)	0
Without conferencing I probably would have gotten harsher treatment.	4 (19%)	9 (42.9%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (4.8%)	1 (4.8%)	3 (14.3%)

To assess whether restorative justice impacted offenders' attitudes, the postconference survey asked offenders if, as a result of their participation in conferencing, any of their attitudes about crime had changed. Twelve (57%) of offenders selected "yes," indicating their attitudes had changed, while nine (42.9%) indicated their attitudes had not changed. These results are depicted in Table 75.

**Table 75**

*Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders' Attitudes About Crime Change, as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?*

Yes	No
12 (57%)	9 (42.9%)

A related question on the postconference survey asked offenders if any of their attitudes about the office of Conflict Resolution had changed because of their participation in conferencing. As shown in table 76, 16 (76.2%) respondents indicated their attitudes towards the office had not changed, while five (23.8%) indicated they had.

**Table 76**

*Offender Postsurvey: Did Offenders' Attitudes about the Office of Conflict Resolution at CSU Change as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?*

Yes	No
5 (23.8%)	16 (76.2%)

The postconference survey asked offenders whether they believe restorative justice conferencing would be the best way to handle cases involving others who commit similar offenses. Respondents were given response options of “yes” or “no.” Notably, as shown in Table 77, all 21 (100%) respondents selected “yes,” indicating they thought it would be the best way to handle similar types of cases.

**Table 77**

*Offender Postsurvey: Do Offenders Think Conferencing Would Be the Best Way to Handle Similar Types of Offenses Involving Others?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

Offender satisfaction is one of the outcomes that has been assessed by prior studies on restorative justice (Abrams et al., 2003, 2006; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Tyler et al., 2007). The postconference survey asked offenders how satisfied they were with the outcome of the restorative justice conference and provided them with the following response options: “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsure,” “dissatisfied,” “very dissatisfied,” and “don’t know.” Table 78 shows that all respondents indicated satisfaction with the outcome, with 12 (57.1%) respondents selecting “very satisfied,” and nine (42.9%) selecting “satisfied.”

**Table 78**

*Offender Postsurvey: Satisfaction with Outcome of Restorative Justice Conference*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
12 (57.1%)	9 (42.9%)	0	0	0	0

A related question on the postconference survey asked offenders whether they would choose to participate in a restorative justice conference if they had to do it all over again. They were given the response options of “yes” or “no.” Like the victim respondents (see Table 42), all offender respondents selected “yes,” indicating they would choose to participate in the process if they had to do it over again. These responses are shown in Table 79.

**Table 79**

*Offender Postsurvey: Would Offenders Choose to Participate in Conference if They Had to Do it Over Again?*

Yes	No
21 (100%)	0

**Community Member Descriptives**

This section examines the descriptives of the survey results for participants who were in the role of community members. Individuals in the role may be members of law enforcement, campus employees, other students, or friends or family of the victim or offender. This group of participants only completed a postconference survey. There was a total of 12 community member participants in this sample.

The community member survey asked respondents to share their level of satisfaction with how the case was handled. Community members were given the response options of “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsure,” “dissatisfied,” very dissatisfied,” and “don’t know.” As illustrated in Table 80, all 12 respondents (100%) expressed satisfaction in terms of how the case was handled, with 11 (91.7%) indicating they were very satisfied and one (8.3%) indicating they were satisfied.

**Table 80**

*Community Member Survey: Level of Satisfaction with How Case Was Handled*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
11 (91.7%)	1 (8.3%)	0	0	0	0

Like the victims’ postconference survey, this survey asked community members whether they believed the offender was held accountable for the offense. Table 81 shows that all twelve (100%) respondents indicated that they believed the offender was held accountable.

**Table 81**

*Community Member Survey: Did Participants Believe the Offender was Held Accountable?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

Community members and supporters were asked two questions related to offender recidivism. The first asked them to indicate how likely they thought it was that the offender will commit another similar offense and the second asked them how likely they thought it was that the offender would commit another offense of any kind. In regard to both the offender committing a similar offense in the future and the offender committing another offense of any kind, seven (58.3%) respondents thought it was highly unlikely, four (33.3%) thought it was unlikely, and one (8.3%) respondent was unsure of the likelihood. These results are shown, respectively, in Tables 82 and 83.

**Table 82**

*Community Member Survey: Perception of Likelihood the Offender Will Commit Another Offense Like this One*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don’t Know
0	0	1 (8.3%)	4 (33.3%)	7 (58.3%)	0

**Table 83**

*Community Member Survey: Perception of Likelihood the Offender Will Commit Another Offense of Any Kind*

Very Likely	Likely	Unsure	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know
0	0	1 (8.3%)	4 (33.3%)	8 (58.3%)	0

Community members and supporters were asked whether they were surprised by anything that occurred in the conference. Those who indicated they experienced surprise were asked what had surprised them and given the opportunity to select one or more of the following options: “It went better than I expected,” “It went worse than I expected,” “the victim(s) was angry,” “the offender(s) seemed sincere,” “the offender(s) did not seem sincere,” “I learned things I did not know,” or “other.” The results, depicted in Table 84 show that eight (66.7%) respondents indicated they were not surprised by anything that occurred in the conference, while four (33.3%) indicated they did experience surprise. Of those who were surprised, three indicated it was because the conference went better than they had expected, three indicated it was because the offender(s) seemed sincere, and three indicated that it was because the victim(s) was angry. Additionally, one respondent indicated they were surprised to learn things they had not known. These results are illustrated in Table 85.

**Table 84**

*Community Member Survey: Were Participants Surprised by Anything that Occurred During Conference?*

Yes	No
4 (33.3%)	8 (66.7%)

**Table 85***Community Member Survey: What, if Anything, Was Surprising about the Conference?*

Reasons for Surprise	Participants	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
It went better than I expected	3	25
It went worse than I expected	0	0
The victim(s) was angry	3	25
The offender(s) seemed sincere	3	25
The offender(s) did not seem sincere	0	0
I learned things I did not know	1	8.3
Other	0	0

Community members and supporters were asked how beneficial the conference was to them in dealing with the offense. The results, depicted in Table 86, show that the vast majority of respondents (91.7%) seemed to derive some benefit from the experience. Seven respondents (58.3%) found the conference to be very beneficial, three (25%) found it beneficial, and one (8.3%) found it somewhat beneficial. One (8.3%) respondent indicated they were unsure how beneficial the conference was to them.

**Table 86**

*Community Member Survey: How Beneficial Was the Conference, to Them, in Dealing with the Offense?*

Not at all beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Unsure	Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Don't Know
0	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	3 (25%)	7 (58.3%)	0

Community members and supporters were presented with three items and asked to indicate how important each was to them on a scale of “very important,” “important,” “unsure,” “unimportant,” “very unimportant,” or “don’t know.” Six (50%) respondents found the opportunity to explain how they felt to be important, while five (41.7%) found it very important, and one (8.3%) found it unimportant. Six (50%) respondents found the opportunity to have participants realize how much they cared about them to be very important, four (33.3%) found it important, one (8.3%) found it unimportant, while one (8.3%) indicated they did not know its importance. Six (50%) of respondents found the opportunity to work out an agreement that was acceptable to everyone to be important, while five (41.7%) found it very important, and one (8.3%) respondent was unsure of its level of importance. These findings are illustrated, below, in Table 87.

**Table 87**

*Community Member Survey: Perception of the Importance of the Following*

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
To be able to explain how you felt	5 (41.7%)	6 (50%)	0	1 (8.3%)	0	0
To have the participants realize how	6 (50%)	4 (33.3%)	0	1 (8.3%)	0	1 (8.3%)

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
much you care about them						
To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone	5 (57.1%)	6 (50%)	1 (8.3%)	0	0	0

After the conference, community members and supporters were asked if they believed their side of the story had been considered in the case. They were given response options of “yes,” or “no.” As Table 88 shows, all 12 (100%) of respondents selected “yes,” indicating they believed their story had been considered.

**Table 88**

*Community Member Survey: Did Participants Believe Their Story was Considered in the Case?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

A similar question on the Community Member Survey, asked whether participants believed their opinions were considered in the case. Like the previous question, all 12 (100%) of respondents indicated that they believed their opinions had been considered. These results are illustrated in Table 89.

**Table 89**

*Community Member Survey: Were their Opinions Considered in the Case?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

The Community Member Survey asked participants to describe their experience with conferencing by choosing one of the following options: “very positive,” “positive,” “mixed,” “negative,” “very negative,” or “other.” The results, shown in Table 90, reveal that eight (66.7%) of offenders indicated they had a very positive experience with conferencing and four (33.3%) indicating they had a positive experience with conferencing.

**Table 90**

*Community Member Survey: Experience with Conferencing*

Very Positive	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Very Negative	Other
8 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	0	0	0	0

Community members and supporters were asked whether an agreement had been reached during the conference. Respondents who indicated an agreement had been reached were then asked whether they perceived the agreement to be fair. Tables 91 and 92 show that all 12 (100%) respondents indicated that an agreement had been reached during their conference and that they perceived this agreement to be fair.

**Table 91**

*Community Member Survey: Was an Agreement Reached During the Conference?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

**Table 92**

*Community Member Survey: Did They Perceive the Agreement to be Fair?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

Community members and supporters were also asked if they believed the case was handled fairly, and given response options of “yes” or “no.” Their responses, illustrated in Table 93, show that all 12 (100%) of community members selected “yes,” indicating they believed their case was handled fairly.

**Table 93**

*Community Member Survey: Did Participants Believe the Case was Handled Fairly?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

Another survey question, related to fairness, asked community members and supporters to select their three most important concerns related to fairness, and to rank these concerns in order of importance on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being the most important). The responses, illustrated in table 94, show the total number of community members who selected each concern, as well as the number of who ranked the concern as #1, #2, or #3. The concerns that were selected, listed in order of most to least total selections, were: “Having the offender personally make things right” (N=8); “Having the victim’s story heard” (N=7); “Actively participating in the process” (N=5); “Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim” (N=4); “Having the offender’s story heard” (N=4); “Getting help for the offender” (N=3); “Having the supporters/community member’s stories heard” (N=1); and “Other” (N=1).

**Table 94**

*Community Member Survey: Top Three Concerns Related to Fairness (Ranked in Order of Importance)*

	#1	#2	#3	Total # Selected
Punishing the offender	0	0	0	0

	#1	#2	#3	Total # Selected
Paying back the victim	0	0	0	0
Getting help for the offender	3	0	0	3
Actively participating in the process	2	1	2	5
Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim	0	4	0	4
Having the offender personally make things right	4	2	2	8
Allowing the offender to apologize to their family	0	0	0	0
Having the offender's story heard	0	1	3	4
Having the victim's story heard	1	2	4	7
Having the supporters/community member's stories heard	0	1	0	1
Other	1	0	0	1

Community members and supporters were presented with seven statements and asked to share their level of agreement with each using the following response options: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “unsure,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “don’t know.” For the statement, “too much pressure was put on any one individual to do all the talking in the conference,” eight (66.7%) of community members and supporters disagreed, three (25%) strongly disagreed, and one (8.3%) did not respond. Nine (75%) of respondents strongly agreed and three (25%) agreed with the statement, “participants were treated with respect during the conference.” In response to the statement, “some participants were not sincere in their participation,” six (50%) disagreed, five (41.7%) strongly disagreed, and one (8.3%) indicated they were unsure. Six (50%) respondents agreed and five (41.7%) strongly agreed with the statement, “I have a better understanding of how the offender’s behavior affected all participants.,” while one (8.3%) respondent did not answer. In response to the statement, “the victim(s) participated only because

he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages,” eight (66.7%) respondents strongly disagreed, three (25%) disagreed, and one (8.7%) response was missing. Six (50%) participants agreed and five (41.7%) agreed with the statement, “conferences make the justice process more responsive to the offender’s needs as a human being,” while one (8.3%) participant indicated they were unsure. In response to the statement, “without conferencing the offender would have received harsher treatment,” seven (58.3%) respondents indicated they were unsure, two (16.7%) indicated they did not know, and one respondent (8.3%), each, indicated they agreed, disagreed, or didn’t respond. The results are illustrated in Table 95.

**Table 95***Community Member Survey: Level of Agreement with Following Statements*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Missing
Too much pressure was put on any one individual to do all the talking in the conference.	0	0	0	8 (66.7%)	3 (25%)	0	1 (8.3%)
Participants were treated with respect during the conference.	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	0	0	0	0	0
Some participants were not sincere in their participation.	0	0	1 (8.3%)	6 (50%)	5 (41.7%)	0	0
I have a better understanding of how the offender's behavior affected all participants.	5 (41.7%)	6 (50%)	0	0	0	0	1 (8.3%)
The victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages.	0	0	0	3 (25%)	8 (66.7%)	0	1 (8.3%)
Conferences make the justice process more responsive to the offender's needs as a human being.	5 (41.7%)	6 (50%)	0	1 (8.3%)	0	0	0
Without conferencing the offender would have received harsher treatment.	0	1 (8.3%)	7 (58.3%)	1 (8.3%)	0	2 (16.7%)	1 (8.3%)

The Community Member Survey had two questions intended to assess attitudinal change. The first asked community members and supporters to indicate whether participating in restorative justice led to any change in their attitudes toward crime. The results, illustrated in table 96, show nine (75%) offenders selected “no,” indicating their attitudes had not changed, while two (16.7%) indicated their attitudes had changed (one respondent did not answer). A related question asked community members and supporters if, as a result of participating in conferencing, any of their attitudes about the Office of Conflict Resolution had changed. As shown in Table 97, six (50%) respondents indicated their attitudes towards the office had changed, while five (23.8%) indicated they had not (one respondent did not answer the question).

**Table 96**

*Community Member Survey: Did Attitudes About Crime Change, as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?*

Yes	No	Missing
2 (16.7%)	9 (75%)	1 (8.3%)

**Table 97**

*Community Member Survey: Did Attitudes about the Office of Conflict Resolution at CSU Change as a Result of Participation in Conferencing?*

Yes	No	Missing
6 (50%)	5 (41.7%)	1 (8.3%)

The Community Member Survey asked respondents to share their level of satisfaction when they left the restorative justice conference. They were provided with the following response options: “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsure,” “dissatisfied,” “very dissatisfied,” and “don’t know.” All indicated some level of satisfaction with the outcome of the conference, with

9 (75%) respondents selecting “very satisfied” and three (25%) selecting “satisfied”. These results are illustrated, below, in table 98.

**Table 98**

*Community Member Survey: Satisfaction with Outcome of Restorative Justice Conference*

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsure	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
9 (75%)	3 (25%)	0	0	0	0

Related to satisfaction, the Community Member Survey asked respondents whether they would choose to participate in a restorative justice conference if they had to do it all over again. Table 99 shows that all 12 (100%) community members and respondents selected “yes,” indicating they would choose to participate in the process again.

**Table 99**

*Community Member Survey: Would Respondents Choose to Participate in Conference if They Had to Do it Over Again?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

Finally, the Community Member Survey asked participants whether they would recommend restorative justice conferencing to others in similar situations. Respondents were given response options of “yes” or “no.” Table 100 illustrates that all 12 (100%) respondents selected “yes,” indicating they would recommend the process to others.

**Table 100**

*Community Member Survey: Would Participants Recommend Restorative Justice Conferencing to Others Facing Similar Situations?*

Yes	No
12 (100%)	0

**Summary**

The intention of this quantitative nonexperimental research was to examine the frequency and variation of the scores for victims, offenders, and community members on the Colorado State University Restorative Justice Questionnaire and how such scores differed from preconference to postconference. This chapter examined the results of descriptive statistical analyses conducted on the responses of participants associated with cases where the following conditions were met: (a) A restorative justice conference took place; (b) the restorative justice conference included at least one victim and one offender; (c) the participating victims and offenders completed both pre- and postconference surveys.

As discussed in chapter 3, the pre- and postconference surveys encompassed three primary sections: (a) questions to assess respondents' experiences related to the offense and the restorative justice conference; (b) questions designed to elicit respondents' attitudes and beliefs about the conference and those involved in the conference; (c) questions meant to reveal respondents' goals and concerns related to the justice process. Descriptive analysis revealed that all groups of participants frequently reported beneficial experiences associated with the restorative justice conference. There was not notable variation in the levels of satisfaction with the conference process and outcome reported by victims, offenders, and community members or supporters. Most victims and offenders predicted that they would benefit from the conference

process and the majority of victims, offenders, and community members reported that participating in the conference was, in fact, beneficial. Additionally, many indicated that they would recommend restorative justice conferencing to others and would choose to participate in conferencing if they had it to do all over again. The majority of participants, within all groups, also reported positive attitudes and beliefs about the conference process and those involved in it. For example, most indicated they believed the process was fair and that others were sincere in their participation. The most common goals and concerns among participants had to do with being heard and hearing others' stories, helping the victim or offender, working out agreements that were acceptable to everyone, and giving or receiving apologies. While there was variation between the concerns and goals of the different groups of participants, as well as the pre- and postsurveys, no clear themes of variation were identified.

The following, and final, chapter will provide a comprehensive summary of the study, an exploration of connections to elements identified in the literature, as well as recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings related to participant experiences of restorative justice in a higher education student disciplinary context. Specifically, this chapter provides a summary of the study and discusses how it connects with existing literature within the field of restorative justice. Finally, implications of the research findings and recommendations for future research are explored.

### **Summary**

This study had two primary purposes. The first was to provide an increased understanding of the attitudes, perspectives, and experiences of student offenders, victims, and community members/supporters who engaged in a restorative justice conference within a higher education institution's disciplinary process. The second objective was to examine these responses in relation to restorative justice theory and existing research.

Restorative justice is a relational approach to conceptualizing and addressing crime and other types of wrongdoing. Within this paradigm, offenses are violations of people and relationships rather than violations of laws or rules (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Zehr, 2005). Restorative justice processes seek to engage those impacted by an offense (victims, community members, and offenders) in dialogue and collaborative problem solving to repair the harms that have resulted from the wrongdoing (Zehr, 2005). These processes have been applied within the context of the criminal justice system, organizations, educational settings such as primary schools, and higher education institutions (González, 2012; Hopkins, 2002; Karp 2013; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Morrison, 2013; Paul, 2017). Research into the

effectiveness of restorative justice processes has been more robust in some of these contexts than others.

At present, few researchers have examined participant experiences of restorative justice programs situated in higher education. A review of the research revealed only two studies that looked at participant experiences of restorative justice within this context (one was conducted by Karp and Sacks [2014] the other by Dahl et al. [2014]). Moreover, no known study on higher education restorative justice programming has examined outcomes for victims and community members, as well as offenders, nor compared pre- and postdata from participants. If restorative justice is to be used by higher education institutions to address student misconduct, understanding the experiences of participants in these programs is important. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how these participants experience restorative justice conference processes within a higher education setting.

### **Connections to the Literature**

This section examines the findings of this study in relation to areas of focus identified in the literature review to see how this research fits within and builds upon the current state of the restorative justice field. Specifically, the focus is on exploring connections between the findings of this study regarding victim, offender, and community member outcomes and the following three areas: the restorative justice theoretical paradigm, empirical findings of restorative justice research, and student conduct standards.

### **Victim Outcomes**

Victims have a central role within restorative justice. Restorative justice theory assumes that those best positioned to address offenses and engage in reparative efforts are those who have been affected by them (Koss et al., 2014; Schmid, 2003; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Zehr, 2005).

As such, victims often are provided with the opportunity to shape both the justice processes and outcomes (Karp, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). Restorative justice allows victims to discuss how the offense impacted them and voice their needs and concerns (Karp, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). Restorative justice proponents assume providing opportunities for such engagement will contribute to positive outcomes for victims (Umbreit, 1989; Van Camp & Wemmers, 2013; Van Wormer, 2009). The following sections look at victim outcomes commonly examined within restorative justice research.

As in previous studies, the findings of this study indicated high levels of satisfaction among victims who participated in restorative justice. Victim satisfaction has been a frequently explored outcome in restorative justice research. The majority of victims who participate in restorative justice have reported high levels of satisfaction with the processes and higher levels of satisfaction than victims who did not participate in restorative justice (Latimer et al., 2005; Poulson, 2003; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Shapland et al., 2007; Strang, 2002; Strang et al., 2006, 2013; Umbreit, 1989; Umbreit & Fercello, 1997; Umbreit et al., 1995; Umbreit et al., 2005). The findings of this study align with the existing empirical evidence, in this regard. On both the pre- and postconference survey, the majority of victims indicated satisfaction with their case management. On the postconference survey, most victims indicated satisfaction with the conference outcome and believed both the conference process and the conference agreement to be fair. Related to victim satisfaction, previous researchers have found that the majority of victims who participated in restorative justice would recommend the process to others and would choose to participate in the process again. Similarly, in this study, most victims indicated that they would recommend conferencing to other victims, and all shared that they would choose to participate in a conference if they had to do it over again.

Researchers have indicated that restorative justice processes may contribute to victims' well-being and emotional restoration. As previously stated, reparation of harm is a central focus of the restorative justice paradigm. In schools, this reparation is particularly directed to harm caused to relationships (Cavanagh, 2008). Restorative justice processes aim to help victims heal by addressing their physical, emotional, and material needs (Karp, 2013; Zehr, 2005). As such, emotional well-being and restoration are commonly assessed outcomes for victims who participate in restorative justice. Previous researchers have found that victims who participate in restorative justice reported less anger and fear of revictimization from their offender than those who did not (Poulson, 2003; Sherman et al., 1998, 2005; Strang, 2002; Strang et al., 2003; Umbreit et al., 1995, 1996). Additionally, victims who participated in restorative justice had fewer symptoms of posttraumatic stress than victims who went through traditional court processes (Angel et al., 2014).

This study assessed a number of items related to victim well-being and restoration. In the postconference survey, the majority of victims indicated that conferencing helped provide them with some closure, in that they were able to leave the incident behind or at least think of it less often. Most also reported that conferencing helped reduce their anger about the offense. On the postconference survey, no victim indicated they were afraid of being revictimized by the offender. However, this is not a significant change from their responses on the preconference survey, on which only one participant indicated they were afraid of this. Receiving apologies from offenders may be helpful for victims' healing (Strang, 2002). Notably, 100% of victim participants in this study indicated that they received an apology from at least one offender in their conference process and that they believed at least one of the apologies they received was sincere. Many victims in this study also expressed that conferencing provided them with an

opportunity to express their feelings about being victimized and that the conference process was responsive to their needs.

Victims often want to have involvement and input in justice processes. Previous studies have shown that victims want the opportunity to participate and have a voice in justice processes (Gavrielides, 2015; Umbreit, 2002; Wemmers, 2002; Wemmers & Cyr, 2004). This study assessed victims' motivations for engaging in restorative justice conferencing, with both the pre- and postconference survey asking victims to share their reasons for choosing to participate in the process. Sixty percent of victims indicated on the preconference survey that one of their reasons for participating was to share their story with the offender. On the postconference survey, 46.7% indicated that a reason they chose to participate was to let the offender know how they felt about the offense, 26.7% said it was to have some say in the outcome, and 33.3% said it was to receive answers to questions they had.

This study also asked victims what was important to them about the justice process and what they were concerned about in terms of fairness. In the preconference survey "actively participating in the process" was the most commonly selected concern that victims had related to fairness, being selected by over 70% of victims (it was selected by 46.7% on the postsurvey). On both the pre- and postsurvey, 40% indicated that having their story heard was one of their top three concerns relating to fairness. Notably, on the postconference survey, 100% of victims indicated they believed their story had been heard. Additionally, on the postconference survey, over 70% of victims indicated that both having some input in the process and feeling that they were an important part of the process were either important or very important to them.

This study also looked at victims' perceptions, desires, and motivations related to offenders. Prior to the conference, most victims in this study believed they would personally

benefit from meeting with the offenders, and their responses on the postconference survey indicated that the majority did find the meeting beneficial. Previous researchers have suggested that many victims do not desire vengeance or harsh punishment of those who have offended against them (Gavrielides, 2017; Sherman & Strang, 2003; Umbreit, 1988; 1989; Wemmers and Cyr, 2004). Instead, victims often want their offenders to be held accountable for their actions and get support in their rehabilitation, as well as engage in activities that will repair the harm they have caused (Wemmers & Cyr, 2004; Umbreit, 1988, 1989). The results of this study align with these findings. In both the pre- and postconference surveys, 80% or more of victims indicated that helping the offender was one of the reasons they chose to participate in the conference process. In the postconference survey, 60% of victims indicated that seeing the offender get counseling or some type of help was either important or very important to them. Notably, none of the respondents on the pre- or postconference survey indicated that punishing the offender was one of their top three concerns related to fairness. Additionally, on the postconference survey, the majority indicated that having the offender(s) punished was either unimportant or very unimportant to them. Instead, the responses illustrated that many of the victims in this study seemed interested in hearing the offenders' stories and giving them a chance to make things right. Importantly, all victims indicated on the postconference survey that at least one of the offenders in their case had been held accountable.

### **Offender Outcomes**

Restorative justice theory asserts that offenders should be accountable for repairing or otherwise addressing the harm that resulted from their offense. Restorative justice processes are intended to help offenders learn about the consequences of their actions and actively work toward making things right (Zehr, 2005, p. 197). By doing this, offenders are believed to be able

to have a voice in justice processes and outcomes, gain increased understanding and empathy, rebuild relationships, and become positive members of their communities (Allena, 2004; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Zehr, 2002, 2005). These goals are well-aligned with contemporary student conduct's standards of being procedurally sound, learning centered, and community focused (CAS, 2023).

As stated in Chapter 2, arguably the most commonly examined offender outcomes in restorative justice research are recidivism, compliance, and subjective experience. As this study did not monitor offenders' compliance with fulfilling the terms of their agreement or track their future recidivism, it cannot contribute to the existing literature related to these outcomes. Instead, this study primarily focused on outcomes related to offenders' subjective experiences, namely their satisfaction, attitudes, perspectives, and understanding.

Satisfaction with the restorative justice conference process was an outcome examined in this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, multiple researchers have found that most offenders reported satisfaction with the restorative justice process in which they participated (Abrams et al., 2006; Dahl et al., 2014; Evje & Cushman, 2000; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Shapland et al., 2007; Umbreit et al., 2002). Similarly, in this study, offenders' responses indicated they were satisfied with the restorative justice conferencing process. On the preconference survey, over 90% of respondents reported they were satisfied with how their case was being handled. In the postconference survey this percentage was even higher, with 100% indicating they were satisfied with how their case was handled and that their attitude about the conference was either "positive" or "very positive." Nearly all respondents indicated that the tone of the conference was "friendly." Additionally, 100% of offenders indicated they would participate in the process again, if they had to do it over, and they believed conferencing would

be the best way to handle similar types of offenses involving others. Part of this satisfaction may be due to the fact that students had an active input in the creation of a restorative justice agreement, as Ashley and Miller (2022) found that students who were able to choose their own sanctions reported feeling listened to and respected in their conduct process.

Offenders' perceptions of fairness is another outcome this study examined. Previous researchers have found that offenders generally perceive restorative justice to be fair and have higher perceptions of fairness of the process than those who did not participate in restorative justice (Latimer et al., 2005; Latimer & Kleinknecht, 2000; McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Strang et al., 1999). Fairness is also a central goal of contemporary student conduct programs. The Council for the Advancement of Standards within Higher Education (CAS) has asserted that student conduct programs should be procedurally sound: operating in a fair and unbiased manner, preserving the dignity of all participants, and not causing intentional harm (ASCA, 2017; CAS, 2023). Student offenders who perceive their conduct process to be fair are more likely to believe it has educational value and report higher learning outcomes (King, 2012; Mullane, 1999; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015). Offenders in this study seemed to generally perceive the restorative justice process as fair. On both the pre- and postconference surveys, the majority indicated that participating in the conference was their own choice and not a choice they made under pressure. All respondents indicated that they were sufficiently prepared by the facilitator to meet with the victim. 100% of respondents indicated that they believed their story had been heard and was considered in the outcome of the case. Additionally, all offenders reported that they thought the agreement reached during the conference was fair.

Through the use of pre- and postconference surveys, this study aimed to examine offenders' attitudes about the offense and any shifts in understanding or perspective.

Experiencing attitudinal shifts may support offenders in becoming constructive members of their communities (Allena, 2004; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Zehr, 2002, 2005). Restorative justice is intended to help offenders better understand the impacts of their actions and develop increased empathy and prosocial motivations (Karp, 2004a, 2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp, & Frank, 2016a; Oles, 2004). This aligns well with CAS's 2023 assertions that student conduct programs should be learning centered. According to previous research, offenders report that restorative justice increased their sense of accountability, empathy, self-awareness, and remorse (Abrams et al., 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010; Shapland et al., 2007). Additionally, offenders who participate in restorative justice have more positive attitudes toward victims than those who did not (Calhoun & Pelech, 2010; McCold & Wachtel, 1998). Most offenders who participate in restorative justice also believe they are unlikely to reoffend (Abrams et al., 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010; Shapland et al., 2007).

In this study, there was not a notable shift from the preconference to postconference in offenders' reported sense of remorse or accountability for committing the offense. Nearly all respondents reported, on both the pre- and postconference surveys, that they were responsible for committing the offense and felt remorseful for doing so. This is likely because student conduct staff only referred students to the restorative justice program if they demonstrated high rates of accountability and remorse. Similarly, there was not much difference between the pre- and postconference responses of offenders in regard to the likelihood they would recidivate; the majority believed it was unlikely they would reoffend. However, 100% of offenders indicated that the conference increased their understanding of how the offense impacted victims. Over half of offenders also reported that their attitudes about crime changed as a result of participating in

the conference. Additionally, after the conference, all offenders indicated having a positive or very positive attitude toward the victims.

This study also examined offenders' motivations for participating and their concerns related to fairness. While prior research has examined offenders' perceptions of fairness, a review of the literature did not yield information about what offenders consider to be important, in terms of fairness. This study asked offenders to indicate, on both the preconference and postconference surveys, their top three concerns related to fairness. Based on their responses, having the opportunity to make things right and having the opportunity to apologize to the victim were their most common concerns associated with fairness. Dahl et al. (2014) examined college student offenders' motivations for participating in restorative justice. They found that students who were motivated to make amends had the best outcomes in terms of satisfaction and perceived learning from the process. Making amends was a primary motivator for offenders in this study, with having the opportunity to offer an apology to the victims and taking direct responsibility for making things right being the two most common reasons offenders selected to indicate why they chose to participate in conferencing.

### **Community Member Outcomes**

In addition to victims and offenders, community members are considered key stakeholders in restorative justice (Braithwaite, 2002a; Marshall, 1999; McCold, 2004; Pranis, 2013; Riestenberg, 2013; Rosenblatt, 2015; Rossner & Bruce, 2016; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). Proponents of restorative justice believe it can strengthen relationships among members of the community and contribute to community well-being. (Beck, 2012; Pranis, 2013; Schmid, 2003; Zehr, 2005). Community is a central focus of contemporary conduct programs, which aim to

treat all members of the campus community with dignity and work to balance the needs of offenders, victims, and community members (Bennet et al., 2014; CAS, 2023).

As discussed in Chapter 2, community outcomes fall into two categories: those at the larger-scale community level and those of community members who participate directly in a restorative justice process (as victim or offender supporters or community representatives). While the nature of this study did not provide an opportunity to examine community-level outcomes, it did examine outcomes of those who participated in the conference as community members. Previous research on this subject has been sparse and the few studies found through the literature review were limited to the experiences of parents/guardians of offenders who were participating in conferencing with their children. The outcomes examined in these studies were related to community members' satisfaction, attitudes, and perspectives regarding their experience with restorative justice. Within both studies examined in Chapter 2, community members' self-reports indicated that the vast majority had positive experiences with restorative justice conferencing (McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Palk et al., 1998). Most expressed satisfaction with restorative justice and indicated they found the process and/or agreement to be fair (McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Palk et al., 1998). The majority of respondents indicated that the process helped bring them closure and that they would recommend the process to others (Palk et al., 1998). Most parents indicated that they felt their opinions had been adequately considered in the process (McCold & Wachtel, 1998). Additionally, they believed the offenders were unlikely to recidivate and felt that the conference positively affected their perceptions of their children (McCold & Wachtel, 1998).

This study examined similar outcomes. Unfortunately, information was not gathered as to participants' specific roles or relationships, so it is unknown if they were parents, friends, or

relatives of the victims or offenders, or if they were representatives of the larger campus or city community. However, the findings indicated that those who participated in the conference process as community members found the experience beneficial. All respondents reported having a positive or very positive experience with conferencing. They indicated satisfaction with the justice process and outcome and believed that both were fair. Most community members indicated the conference was helpful to them in dealing with the offense, and all reported that their experiences and opinions had been considered. They also seemed to generally have positive impressions of the offender, indicating they did not think it was likely that the offender would recidivate.

### **Implications for Practice**

Although research on campus restorative justice programs is limited, the findings of this study suggest that it is possible for restorative justice programs situated within a higher education student disciplinary context to:

1. Operate in alignment with restorative justice theory.
2. Help foster positive and beneficial experiences for victims, offenders, and community members.
3. Adhere to established standards for contemporary student conduct programs.

This implies that restorative justice processes may be a valuable addition to college and university student conduct programs. While some campuses have incorporated restorative justice processes, they have not yet become an integral part of higher education student conduct programs (Allena, 2004; Giacomini, 2009; Karp & Sacks, 2014; Meagher, 2009; Schrage, 2009; Zacker, 2020). Yet, proponents see restorative justice as being aligned with higher education's mission of fostering student development and an increasing number of colleges and universities

are integrating restorative justice into their student disciplinary processes (Karp, 2004a, 2004b, 2013; Karp & Conrad, 2005; Karp & Frank, 2016a; Karp & Sacks, 2014). In light of this, the following section examines implications for practice that can contribute to the integrity and effectiveness of restorative justice processes within a higher education student disciplinary context.

### **Appropriate Referrals and Screening Procedures**

Although restorative justice may be an effective means of addressing student misconduct, it is not appropriate for every situation. A core tenet of restorative justice is to do no harm, and this is partly achieved through assessing the suitability of the offender (Bolitho, 2015; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). Not every offender will be appropriate for restorative justice (Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). Adequate screening criteria can help protect victims from experiencing emotional harm that may arise if the offender is insincere, intimidating, or dishonest (Presser & Lowenkamp, 1999; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). As such, it is important that campus conduct programs have established criteria for determining whether a case is appropriate for restorative justice. At CSU, the offender must admit to having committed the offense, express remorse for their actions, and be interested in meeting with impacted parties (Shaff et al. 2007). This screening process may have contributed to the high level of satisfaction among victims in this study. All but one of the offenders in this study indicated on the presurvey that they were responsible for committing the offense, and the majority of community members and victims perceived offenders to be sincere. As previously noted, receiving an apology from their offender is important for many victims (Strang, 2002). It is reasonable to assume that offenders are more likely to apologize to victims if they take responsibility and have remorse for the offense. In this

study, all offenders indicated they apologized to the victim and all victims reported receiving an apology from at least one of their offenders.

### **Inclusion of Victims and Community Members**

Campuses looking to integrate restorative justice into their student disciplinary programs have a variety of processes to from which to choose. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is great conceptual ambiguity and debate regarding what restorative justice means and the specific elements and activities it does, or does not, encompass (Bazemore et al., 2007; Bazemore & Elis, 2013; Bazemore & Umbreit, 1999; Daly, 2004; Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002; Wachtel, 2016). As such, “restorative justice” can and is used to refer to a wide range of processes (Bazemore et al., 2007; Daly, 2004, 2016; Daly & Immarigeon, 1998; Gavrielides, 2008; Hayes, 2007; Hayes & Daly, 2003; O’Mahony & Doak, 2009; Rodriguez, 2007). Such processes may or may not include victim and/or community member participation.

There are both theoretical and empirical reasons that suggest campus conduct programs may benefit from restorative justice processes that include victims and community members. Restorative justice theory asserts that justice processes should actively involve those who have been impacted by the offense (Koss et al., 2014; Paul, 2017; Schmid, 2003; Umbreit & Armour, 2011; Zehr, 2005, 2015). Those impacted include both those directly impacted (victims) and those indirectly impacted (community; Bazemore, 1998; Wachtel, 2016; Zehr, 2002, 2005). As such, some argue that true restorative justice processes need to involve victims and community members (Galaway & Hudson, 1996; Marshall, 1999; McCold, 2001; United Nations, 2006; Van Ness & Nolan, 1998; Wachtel & McCold; 2001).

Indeed, the three most widely used and accepted models of restorative justice (victim offender mediation, conferences, and circles) all include victim and/or community member

participation (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Karp, 2004a; Karp & Frank, 2016b; Umbreit et al., 2005; United Nations, 2006; Van Ness & Strong, 2014). At present, restorative justice conferencing (the intervention used in this study) has been subject to more empirical research than any other type of restorative justice process (Sherman, Strang, Barnes, et al., 2015; Strang et al., 2006). Victim-offender mediation has also been subject to a great deal of empirical research (Bradshaw et al., 2006; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Mullane, et al.; Nugent et al., 2004). Thus, much of the positive findings on restorative justice come from studies of processes that included victims and/or community members.

Research shows that victims, community members, and offenders benefit from engaging with one another in restorative justice processes. As noted earlier, multiple studies indicated that meeting with their offender in a restorative justice process was helpful to victims' healing and emotional well-being (Angel et al., 2014; Poulson, 2003; Sherman et al., 1998; Strang et al., 2003; Umbreit et al., 1995, 1996). The majority of victims in this study indicated that they benefited from meeting with their offender. Similarly, studies have found that meeting with their victims in restorative justice processes is positively associated with offender compliance and decreased recidivism (Cormier, 2002; Latimer et al., 2005; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Umbreit, 1998; Umbreit et al., 2001). Offenders have also indicated that speaking with impacted parties provided them with a sense of relief and closure (Abrams et al., 2003, 2006; Calhoun & Pelech, 2010). In this study, the majority of offenders reported that meeting with victims was very beneficial and that, after the conference process, they had a very positive attitude towards victims. Community members have also reported satisfaction regarding restorative justice processes involving victims and offenders (McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Palk et al., 1998). In this

study, all community members reported having a positive attitude about the conference and being satisfied with the conference outcome.

The use of restorative justice programs also aligns with contemporary student conduct standards. CAS (2023) has asserted that student conduct programs should be community focused. In addressing incidents of misconduct, student conduct programs must “address any impacts and harms of the behavior on those involved, including the campus and local community” (CAS, 2023, p. 6). Including community members in the resolution process provides opportunities to address the direct and indirect harms experienced by victims and members of the community. Student conduct programs also need to be inclusive and representative of the campus community (CAS, 2023). One way this can be fostered is through the inclusion of diverse representatives of the campus community in student conduct programs’ restorative justice processes.

### **Investment of Resources**

Institutionalizing a restorative justice program is hard work. Such programs must often educate and partner with community stakeholders, gain support from leadership, recruit and train staff and/or volunteers, market, and maintain some degree of funding (Dhami & Joy, 2007; LaCroix, 2018). As such, campuses interested in integrating restorative justice into student disciplinary processes should be aware of the time, energy, and financial resources required to run a restorative justice process.

Restorative justice can be very time intensive. Given the involvement of multiple parties, the mere coordination and scheduling of restorative justice processes can be extremely time consuming (Dhami & Joy, 2007). Additionally, these processes require significant preparation. As previously stated, it is important that programs adequately assess and screen participants for

suitability (Presser & Lowenkamp, 1999; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002). Programs must also ensure that participants are adequately prepared to engage in the process, which may involve multiple meetings with primary parties prior to the actual restorative justice process (Bolitho, 2015; Miller & Hefner, 2015). Additionally, debriefing and follow-up with participants may be necessary to help parties process what happened during the intervention and ensure that offenders follow through with any agreements reached during the process (Bolitho, 2015).

Given the responsibilities associated with operating a restorative justice program, it is important for campus restorative justice programs to invest in dedicated staff and/or volunteers. Those who facilitate restorative justice processes have significant impact on participant experiences and the overall success of restorative justice processes (Bolitho, 2015; Bolitho & Bruce, 2017; Dhami & Joy, 2007; Holden, 2021; Paul, 2015; Paul & Swan, 2018). The knowledge, skills, experiences, values, and beliefs of facilitators influence justice processes and outcomes (Bolitho, 2015; Bolitho & Bruce, 2017; Dhami & Joy, 2007; Holden, 2021; Paul, 2015; Paul & Swan, 2018). As such, adequate recruitment, screening, training, and mentoring of facilitators is extremely important (Bolitho & Bruce, 2017). At Colorado State University, for instance, the restorative justice program used volunteer facilitators and employed a full-time staff restorative justice coordinator whose responsibilities included organizing conferences, recruiting and training volunteer facilitators, and helping facilitate conferences (Shaff et al. 2007). In this study, the majority of victims, offenders, and community members indicated that the facilitator had adequately prepared them to engage in the conference process and that the facilitator managed the process in a fair and unbiased manner.

Restorative justice programs cannot operate in a vacuum, but depend on support, partnership, and buy-in among the community. Such support is crucial for a program to obtain

the resources, case referrals, and volunteers needed to sustain its activities (Dhami & Joy, 2007; Huston, 2015; LaCroix, 2018). “Given that RJ represents a shift from the status quo, the onus is usually upon the organizers of the RJ program to develop partnerships” (Dhami & Joy, 2007, p. 15). Stakeholders and other community members may lack knowledge or be skeptical about restorative justice (Dhami & Joy, 2007). As such, program organizers must work to educate them about the values, principles, practices, and outcomes associated with restorative justice (Dhami & Joy, 2007, Huston, 2015; LaCroix, 2018). This can be accomplished through trainings, informational sessions, one-on-one consultations, story-telling, marketing, and promotional activities (Dhami & Joy, 2007, Huston, 2015; LaCroix, 2018; Shaff et al., 2007). At Colorado State University, the restorative justice program has developed multiple partnerships with campus and community stakeholders, including law enforcement, residence life staff, fraternity and sorority life, counseling services, and hearing officers (Shaff et al. 2007). Those interested in implementing and maintaining campus restorative justice programs must be willing and able to devote the time and energy necessary to build strong partnerships.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study focused on exploring the experiences of victims, student offenders, and community members who engaged in restorative justice conferences as part of one university’s student conduct program. As previously articulated, there is a need for more research on campus restorative justice programs. While numerous studies have examined participant outcomes of restorative justice within a criminal justice context, few have done so for participants of restorative justice programs in higher education settings. Therefore, there are many opportunities for further research in this area. Additionally, there are some areas that could benefit from increased attention from restorative justice research, regardless of whether these processes take

place in or outside of a campus context. Such areas include community member experiences, diversity of participants, and operationalization of interventions.

One area for further research is the experiences of community members who participate in restorative justice processes. Community is considered a central stakeholder within restorative justice (Rosenblatt, 2015; Rossner & Bruce, 2016; Zehr, 2015). Community members are individuals who have been indirectly impacted by an offense, who may have close relationships to the victim or offender or be representatives of the larger community interests (McCold, 2004; Rossner & Bruce, 2016). As noted earlier, there is a dearth of empirical evidence related to the experiences of community members who participate in restorative justice (Rosenblatt, 2015). In light of this, it would be valuable for future researchers to examine restorative justice interventions that include community member participation and to collect data on the experiences of these participants. This study administered postintervention surveys to community members; it could be valuable for future studies to also administer preintervention surveys to assess what, if any, changes occur in community members' attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs.

Another direction for future research is related to diversity among participants. As noted in Chapter 4, the majority of participants in this study were White, and 90% of offenders were male. Many of the studies included in the literature review did not provide demographic information about participants, such as race or gender. Among those that did, many had offenders that were mostly White and male. It would be valuable to understand if and how participant characteristics might impact the effectiveness of restorative justice interventions, yet few researchers have attempted to examine this (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013). As such, future

researchers should strive to ensure restorative justice interventions are provided to diverse populations and to specify the demographic information of participants.

Another recommendation is for future restorative justice research to clearly define and operationalize the restorative justice interventions being studied. As noted in the literature, there is a great deal of conceptual ambiguity surrounding restorative justice. The term *restorative justice* is used to refer to a wide range of activities. Unless studies make the effort to clearly define what a restorative justice intervention entails, it is not clear what type of process is being evaluated. This creates challenges related to both reliability and validity. Yet, few studies contain clearly operationalized definitions of restorative justice. Clearly labeling the type of restorative justice process being studied and operationalizing its components will contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness of different types of restorative justice interventions and produce results that are easier to interpret and capable of being generalized.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this quantitative descriptive study was to explore the experiences of victims, offenders, and community members who participated in a restorative justice conferencing program situated within a higher education student disciplinary context. Restorative justice interventions in colleges and universities have not been the subject of extensive research. As more higher education institutions operate, or consider implementing, such programming, it is important to understand the participant outcomes associated with restorative justice in such settings. The goals of contemporary student conduct programs are well-aligned with the objectives and tenets of restorative justice, and the participants in this study indicated they had mostly positive experiences with the restorative justice conferencing process.

These findings have promising implications for the use of restorative justice in higher education and will hopefully serve to inspire further research in this area.

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APPENDIX A – PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

**Pre-Conference Victim Interview Questionnaire**  
**Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services**  
**Colorado State University**  
**Restorative Justice Program**

*Recently you met with a facilitator in order to hear more about restorative justice and the possibility of participating in a Restorative Justice Group Conference. As part of an evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program, the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services would appreciate your feedback on this survey.*

*For the sake of definition, the term “offender” is used to reference the person who caused harm and the term “victim” refers to the person who was harmed. In addition, the term “offense” is used to describe the incident regardless of this being a criminal matter or not.*

*It is really important that you be as honest in your answers as possible. Please be assured that your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will in no way jeopardize the outcome of a conference, should it occur.*

*Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time.*

*Thank you for your time.*

Today’s Date:

1. How satisfied are you with the way your case is being handled so far?

- Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Don’t know \_\_\_\_\_

2. Was there more than one person who caused you harm?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 2a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

2a. Since there were multiple offenders, did you:

- Know all of the offenders \_\_\_\_\_
- Know one or more of the offenders \_\_\_\_\_
- Know none of the offenders \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you know the offender before the offense occurred?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 3a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

3a. Since you knew the offender(s), how did you know the offender(s)?

- Friend \_\_\_\_\_
- Acquaintance \_\_\_\_\_
- Neighbor \_\_\_\_\_

Business/Employment \_\_\_\_\_  
Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel that being part of the conference was your own choice?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 4a  
Yes, but under pressure \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

- 4a. If yes, why did you agree to participate in the conference? (Check all that apply)  
To get paid back for my financial losses \_\_\_\_\_  
To help the offender(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
To help the offender take direct responsibility for making things right \_\_\_\_\_  
To let the offender(s) know my story \_\_\_\_\_  
To receive an apology \_\_\_\_\_  
To satisfy my parents \_\_\_\_\_  
It was the best of all available choices \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Of the following possible effects of the offense on your life, which one was the most important to you? (Check all that apply)  
A greater sense of fear \_\_\_\_\_  
The loss of property \_\_\_\_\_  
The damage to property \_\_\_\_\_  
A feeling of a lack of power \_\_\_\_\_  
The hassle of dealing with the police and CSU officials \_\_\_\_\_  
Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

6. How likely do you think it is that the offender(s) will commit another offense like the one in this case?  
Very likely \_\_\_\_\_  
Likely \_\_\_\_\_  
Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are you afraid the offender(s) will commit another offense against you?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

8. To what degree do you think that you might benefit from a meeting with the offender(s) in a conference setting?  
Not at all beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
Somewhat beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
Very beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

9. Of the following statements, please pick your 3 most important concerns related to fairness in resolving this case. Also please rank the 3 items you selected 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Punishing the offender  
\_\_\_\_\_ Paying back the victim  
\_\_\_\_\_ Getting help for the offender  
\_\_\_\_\_ Actively participating in the process

- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender personally make things right
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to his or her family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the victim's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the supporters/community members' stories heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. There are a number of activities some people do to reduce their perceived risk to crime. For each of the following, please indicate if you have done it.

Engraved ID numbers on your possessions.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Installed extra locks on windows or doors.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Purchased a watchdog.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Kept a weapon in your home/room for protection.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Added outside lighting.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Learned more about self-defense.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Started carrying something to defend yourself.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Tried to avoid unsafe areas during the day.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_

Not at all \_\_\_\_

Tried to avoid unsafe areas during the night.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_

After This Incident \_\_\_\_\_  
Not at all \_\_\_\_\_

Limited or changed your daily activities because of crime.

Prior to This Incident \_\_\_\_\_  
After This Incident \_\_\_\_\_  
Not at all \_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you been a victim of an offense before this incident?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 11a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_

11a. If yes, how many times have you been victimized with what kind of offense?  
Offense against property: \_\_\_\_\_  
Offense against person: \_\_\_\_\_

12. If you had a problem and needed help or support, could you rely on the people who live close to you for help?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_  
Not sure \_\_\_\_\_

13. With what ethnic heritage do you identify?  
Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_\_  
African American \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian \_\_\_\_\_  
Native American \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

14. Is there anything else you would like to say regarding your case?

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Confirmation of interviewee's information

15. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
16. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
17. Last four digits of your social security number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Post-Conference Victim Interview Questionnaire**

Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services  
Colorado State University  
Restorative Justice Program

*Recently you participated in a Restorative Justice Group Conference. As part of an evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program, the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services would appreciate your feedback on this survey.*

*For the sake of definition, the term “offender” is used to reference the person who caused harm and the term “victim” refers to the person who was harmed. In addition, the term “offense” is used to describe the incident regardless of this being a criminal matter or not.*

*It is really important that you be as honest in your answers as possible. Please be assured that your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will in no way jeopardize the outcome of the conference.*

*Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time.*

*Thank you for your time.*

Date of Conference:

Today’s Date:

- 1. How satisfied are you with the way your case was handled?  
Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Don’t know \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2. Do you believe that your story was heard?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. Do you believe that your story was considered in the outcome of this case?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4. Was there more than one person who caused you harm?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 4a, 4b, and 4c.  
No \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is no, go to 4d, 4e, and 4f.
  
- 4a. If multiple offenders, do you believe that (check one):  
All were held responsible \_\_\_\_\_  
One or more were held responsible \_\_\_\_\_  
None were held responsible \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4b. If multiple offenders, do you believe that (check one):  
All seemed sorry \_\_\_\_\_  
One or more seemed sorry \_\_\_\_\_  
None seemed sorry \_\_\_\_\_

- 4c. If there were multiple offenders, did:
- All apologize \_\_\_\_\_
- One or more apologize \_\_\_\_\_
- None apologize \_\_\_\_\_
- 4d. If one offender, do you believe he or she were held responsible?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_
- 4e. If one offender, do you believe he or she was sorry?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_
- 4f. If one offender, did he or she apologize?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you feel that participating in this conference was your own choice?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 5a.
- Yes, but under pressure \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a. If yes, why did you choose to participate in the conference?
- To get paid back for losses \_\_\_\_\_
- To receive answers to questions I had \_\_\_\_\_
- To help the offender(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- To receive an apology \_\_\_\_\_
- To let the offender(s) know how I felt about the offense \_\_\_\_\_
- To have some say in the outcome \_\_\_\_\_
- Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you feel the facilitator sufficiently prepared you for the meeting with your offender?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is no, go to 6a.
- 6a. If no, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- 
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7. Would you say the tone of the conference was generally... (Check all that apply)
- Friendly \_\_\_\_\_
- Hostile \_\_\_\_\_
- Victim focused \_\_\_\_\_
- Offender focused \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Were you surprised by anything that occurred in the conference session?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 8a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

- 8a. If yes, by what?
- It went better than I expected \_\_\_\_\_
  - It went worse than I expected \_\_\_\_\_
  - The offender(s) seemed sincere \_\_\_\_\_
  - The offender(s) did not seem sincere \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

9. To what degree do you think that you have benefited from meeting the offender(s) in the conference setting?

- Not at all beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Somewhat beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Very beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

9a. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Was an agreement reached during the conference?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 10a.
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

- 10a. If yes, did the agreement seem fair to you?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you afraid the offender will commit another offense against you?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

12. Would you recommend conferencing to other victims?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you believe your case was handled fairly?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

13a. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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14. For the following, please indicate how important each item was to you during the conference:

To receive answers to questions you wanted to ask the offender(s).

- Very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Important \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_

Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To tell the offender(s) how the offense affected you.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To get paid back for your losses by the offender(s).

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To see that the offender(s) got some counseling or other type of help.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the offender(s) punished.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the offender(s) say he or she is sorry.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the opportunity to negotiate a repayment agreement with the offender(s) that was acceptable to all.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To feel that you had some input into the outcome.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To feel that you were an important part of the process.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

15. If you had to do it all over again, would you choose to participate in a conference?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

15a. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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16. When you left the conference session, how satisfied were you about the outcome?

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

17. How could the conference have been improved? Please specify:

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18. The following represent statements that are sometimes made by victims who participate in conferences. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

Conferencing allowed me to express my feelings about being victimized.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferencing reduced my anger about the situation.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferencing allowed me to participate more fully in the system.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferencing allowed me to meet the other parties personally.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferencing allowed me to leave the incident behind or at least think about it less often.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

The offender(s) was not sincere in their participation.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

I have a better understanding of why the offense was committed against me.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

The offender(s) participated only because he or she was trying to avoid punishment.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferences make the process more responsive to my needs as a human being.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_

- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

19. Of the following statements, please pick your 3 most important concerns related to fairness in the system. Also, please rank the 3 items you selected with #1 being the most important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Punishing the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paying back the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting help for the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Actively participating in the process
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender personally make things right
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to his or her family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the victim's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the supporters/community members' stories heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

20. As a result of your participation in conferencing, have any of your attitudes about crime changed?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 20a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

20a. If yes, what attitudes have changed and why?

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21. As a result of your participation in conferencing, have any of your attitudes about the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU changed?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 21a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

21a. If yes, what attitudes have changed and why?

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22. Is there anything else you would like to say about the conferencing session or about how your case was handled?

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Confirmation of Interviewee's information

- 23. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. Gender: male \_\_\_\_\_ female \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. Last 4 digits of your social security number: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Pre-Conference Offender Interview Questionnaire**

Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services

Colorado State University

Restorative Justice Program

*Recently you met with a facilitator in order to hear more about restorative justice and the possibility of participating in a Restorative Justice Group Conference. As part of an evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program, the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services would appreciate your feedback on this survey.*

*For the sake of definition, the term “offender” is used to reference the person who caused harm and the term “victim” refers to the person who was harmed. In addition, the term “offense” is used to describe the incident regardless of this being a criminal matter or not.*

*It is really important that you be as honest in your answers as possible. Please be assured that your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will in no way jeopardize the outcome of a conference, should it occur.*

*Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time.*

*Thank you for your time.*

Today’s Date:

1. How satisfied are you with the way your case is being handled so far?

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Don’t know \_\_\_\_\_

2. Was there more than one person who you caused harm to?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 2a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is no, go to 3.

2a. Since there were multiple victims, did you:

Know all of the victims \_\_\_\_\_  
Know one or more of the victims \_\_\_\_\_  
Knew none of the victims \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you know the victim(s) before the offense occurred?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 3a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_

3a. Since you knew the victim(s), how did you know the victim(s)?

Friend \_\_\_\_\_  
Acquaintance \_\_\_\_\_  
Neighbor \_\_\_\_\_  
Business/Employment \_\_\_\_\_  
Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you believe you are responsible for the offense you committed?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you feel that being part of the conference was your own choice?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 5a.  
 Yes, but under pressure \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 5a.  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a. If yes, why did you agree to participate in the conference? (Check all that apply)  
 To pay back the victim(s) for their financial losses \_\_\_\_\_  
 To help the victim(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 To take direct responsibility for making things right \_\_\_\_\_  
 To let the victim(s) know why you did it \_\_\_\_\_  
 To offer an apology \_\_\_\_\_  
 To satisfy your parents \_\_\_\_\_  
 It was the best of all available choices \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. To what degree do you think that you might benefit from a meeting with the victim(s) in a conference setting?  
 Not at all beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Somewhat beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you committed this type of offense before?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 7a.  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
- 7a. If yes, how many times? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Have you committed any other types of offense before?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 8a.  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
- 8a. If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_
9. For each of the following statements, please indicate how important each item is to you.
- To be able to tell victim(s) what happened.  
 Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
 Important \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To settle without a formal hearing.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To settle without charges being filed.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To be able to apologize to my family and/or friends for what I did.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To get it over with.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to both of you.

- Very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Important \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did.

- Very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Important \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

10. How likely do you think it is that you will commit another offense like this one?

- Very likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

11. How likely do you think it is that you will commit another offense of any kind?

- Very likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

12. Of the following statements, please pick your 3 most important concerns related to fairness in resolving this case. Also please rank the 3 items you selected 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Punishing the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paying back the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting help for the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Actively participating in the process
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender personally make things right
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to his or her family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the victim's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the supporters/community members' stories heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you had a problem and needed help or support, could you rely on the people who live close to you for help?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_  
Not sure \_\_\_\_\_

14. With what ethnic heritage do you identify?

Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_\_  
African American \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian \_\_\_\_\_  
Native American \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

15. Is there anything else you would like to say regarding your case?

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Confirmation of interviewee's information

16. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
17. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
18. Last 4 digits of social security number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Post-Conference Offender Interview Questionnaire**  
**Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services**  
**Colorado State University**  
**Restorative Justice Program**

*Recently you participated in a Restorative Justice Group Conference. As part of an evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program, the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services would appreciate your feedback on this survey.*

*For the sake of definition, the term “offender” is used to reference the person who caused harm and the term “victim” refers to the person who was harmed. In addition, the term “offense” is used to describe the incident regardless of this being a criminal matter or not.*

*It is really important that you be as honest in your answers as possible. Please be assured that your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will in no way jeopardize the outcome of the conference.*

*Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time.*

*Thank you for your time.*

Date of Conference:

Today’s Date:

1. How satisfied are you with the way your case was handled?

- Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Don’t know \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you believe you are responsible for the offense you committed?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you feel that participating in this conference was your own choice?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 3a.
- Yes, but under pressure \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 3a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

3a. If yes, why did you choose to participate in the conference?

Please indicate all that apply

- To pay back the victim(s) for their losses \_\_\_\_\_
- To help the victim(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- To take direct responsibility for making things right \_\_\_\_\_
- To let the victim(s) know why I did it \_\_\_\_\_
- To offer an apology \_\_\_\_\_
- To satisfy my parents \_\_\_\_\_
- It was the best option of available choices \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel the facilitator sufficiently prepared you for the meeting with your victim?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is no, go to 4a.
- 4a. If no, please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Would you say the tone of the conference was generally... (Check all that apply)  
 Friendly \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hostile \_\_\_\_\_  
 Victim focused \_\_\_\_\_  
 Offender focused \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you apologize to the victim(s) for what you did?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you feel sorry for what you did?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is no, go to 7a.
- 7a. If no, what do you feel? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you think you have benefited from meeting the victim(s)?  
 Not at all beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Somewhat beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very beneficial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know \_\_\_\_\_
- 8a. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Were you surprised by anything that occurred in the conference session?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 9a.  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
- 9a. If yes, by what?  
 It went better than I expected \_\_\_\_\_  
 It went worse than I expected \_\_\_\_\_  
 The victim(s) seemed to care about me \_\_\_\_\_  
 The victim(s) was angry \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_
10. For the following, please indicate how important each item was to you during the conference:  
 To be able to tell victim(s) what happened.  
 Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
 Important \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unsure \_\_\_\_\_

Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To pay back the victim(s) by paying them money.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To pay back the victim(s) by doing some work.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the opportunity to work out an agreement with the victim(s) that was acceptable to everyone.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To be able to apologize to the victim(s) for what I did.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To settle without a court appearance.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To settle without charges being filed.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To be able to apologize to my family and friends for what I did.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To get it over with.

Very important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

11. Was an agreement reached during the conference?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 11a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_

11a. If yes, did the agreement seem fair to you?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which of the following best describes your attitude now, toward the victim(s)?  
Very Positive \_\_\_\_\_  
Positive \_\_\_\_\_  
Mixed \_\_\_\_\_  
Negative \_\_\_\_\_  
Very Negative \_\_\_\_\_  
Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

13. Has your attitude changed since the conference?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 13a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_

13a. If yes, in what way? \_\_\_\_\_

14. How likely do you think it is that you will commit another offense like this one?  
Very likely \_\_\_\_\_  
Likely \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
Very Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

15. How likely do you think it is that you will commit another offense of any kind?  
Very likely \_\_\_\_\_  
Likely \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
Very Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

16. How likely do you think it is that you will continue attending CSU and finish school?

- Very likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Very Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

17. Which of the following best describes your attitude about the conferencing session?

- Very Positive \_\_\_\_\_
- Positive \_\_\_\_\_
- Mixed \_\_\_\_\_
- Negative \_\_\_\_\_
- Very Negative \_\_\_\_\_
- Indifferent \_\_\_\_\_

18. If you had it to do over again, would you choose to participate in a conference?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 18a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

18a. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you believe conferencing would be the best way to handle cases involving other people who get into similar types of trouble?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 19a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

19a. Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you believe that your story was heard?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you believe that your story was considered in the outcome of the case?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

22. Of the following statements, please pick your 3 most important concerns related to fairness in the system. Also, please rank the 3 items you selected with #1 being the most important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Punishing the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paying back the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting help for the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Actively participating in the process
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender personally make things right
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to their family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the victim's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the supporters/community members' stories heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

23. The following represent statements that are sometime made by people in trouble who participate in conferences. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Too much pressure was put on me to do all the talking in the conference.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

I felt I had no choice but to participate in the conference with my victim(s).

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

The victim(s) was not sincere in his/her participation.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

The conference was a joke.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

I have a better understanding of how the offense affected the victim(s).

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

The victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferences make the justice process more responsive to my needs as a human being.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

There was no help given to me after the conference.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

I felt the facilitator was against me.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

I felt the victim(s) never gave me a chance.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Without conferencing I probably would have gotten harsher treatment.

Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Agree \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

24. When you left the conference session, how satisfied were you about the outcome?

Very Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Very Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

25. How could the conference have been improved? Please specify:

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26. As a result of your participation in conferencing, have any of your attitudes about crime changed?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 26a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_

26a. If yes, what attitudes have changed and why?

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27. As a result of your participation in conferencing, have any of your attitudes about the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU changed?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 27a.  
No \_\_\_\_\_

27a. If yes, what attitudes have changed and why?

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28. Is there anything you would like to say about your case?

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Confirmation of Interviewee's information

29. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

30. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

31. Last 4 digits of your social security number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Post-Conference Supporter/Community Member Interview Questionnaire**  
**Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services**  
**Colorado State University**  
**Restorative Justice Program**

*Recently you participated in a Restorative Justice Group Conference. As part of an evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program, the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services would appreciate your feedback on this survey.*

*For the sake of definition, the term “offender” is used to reference the person who caused harm and the term “victim” refers to the person who was harmed. In addition, the term “offense” is used to describe the incident regardless of this being a criminal matter or not.*

*It is really important that you be as honest in your answers as possible. Please be assured that your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will in no way jeopardize the outcome of the conference.*

*Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time.*

*Thank you for your time.*

Date of Conference:

Today’s Date:

1. How satisfied are you with the way this case was handled?

- Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- Don’t know \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you believe the offender was held accountable for the offense committed?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is no, go to 2a.

2a. If no, how could he/she be held accountable?

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3. To what degree do you think that a conference setting was beneficial to you in dealing with the incident?

- Not at all beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Somewhat beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Very beneficial \_\_\_\_\_
- Don’t know \_\_\_\_\_

4. Were you surprised by anything that occurred in the conference session?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 4a.
- No \_\_\_\_\_

- 4a. If yes, by what?
- It went better than I expected \_\_\_\_\_
  - It went worse than I expected \_\_\_\_\_
  - The victim(s) was angry \_\_\_\_\_
  - The offender(s) seemed sincere \_\_\_\_\_
  - The offender(s) did not seem sincere \_\_\_\_\_
  - I learned things I did not know \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

5. For the following, please indicate how important each item was to you during the conference:

To be able to explain how you felt.

- Very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Important \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the opportunity to work out an agreement that was acceptable to everyone.

- Very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Important \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

To have the participants realize how much you care about them.

- Very important \_\_\_\_\_
- Important \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unimportant \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

6. Was an agreement reached during the conference?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 6a
- No \_\_\_\_\_

6a. If yes, did the agreement seem fair to you?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No \_\_\_\_\_

7. How likely do you think it is that the offender will commit another offense like this one?

- Very likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Likely \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

8. How likely do you think it is that the offender will commit another offense of any kind?  
 Very likely \_\_\_\_\_  
 Likely \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_  
 Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which of the following best describes your experience with conferencing?  
 Very Positive \_\_\_\_\_  
 Positive \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mixed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Negative \_\_\_\_\_  
 Very Negative \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other; please specify \_\_\_\_\_

10. If you had to do it over again, would you choose to participate in a conference?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_

11. Would you recommend conferencing to others who face similar situations?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you believe that your side of the story was considered in this case?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you believe that your opinions were considered in this case?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you believe this case was handled fairly?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_

15. Of the following statements, please pick your 3 most important concerns related to fairness in the system. Also please rank the 3 items you selected with #1 being the most important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Punishing the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paying back the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Getting help for the offender
- \_\_\_\_\_ Actively participating in the process
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender personally make things right
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to the victim
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allowing the offender to apologize to their family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the offender's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the victim's story heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having the supporters/community members' stories heard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. The following represent statements that are sometime made by supporters who participate in conferences. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

Too much pressure was put on any one individual to do all the talking in the conference.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Participants were treated with respect during the conference.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Some participants were not sincere in their participation.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

I have a better understanding of how the offender's behavior affected all participants.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

The victim(s) participated only because he/she wanted the money back or to be paid for damages.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Conferences make the justice process more responsive to the offender's needs as a human being.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Without conferencing the offender would have received harsher treatment.

- Strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Agree \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsure \_\_\_\_\_
- Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

17. When you left the conference session, how satisfied were you about the outcome?

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Unsure \_\_\_\_\_  
Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

18. How could the conference have been improved? Please specify:

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19. As a result of your participation in conferencing, have any of your attitudes about crime changed?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 19a  
No \_\_\_\_\_

19a. If yes, what attitudes have changed and why?

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20. As a result of your participation in conferencing, have any of your attitudes about the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU changed?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If the answer is yes, go to 20a  
No \_\_\_\_\_

20a. If yes, what attitudes have changed and why?

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21. With what ethnic heritage do you identify?

Hispanic/Latino \_\_\_\_\_  
African American \_\_\_\_\_  
Asian \_\_\_\_\_  
Native American \_\_\_\_\_  
White \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

22. Is there anything you would like to say about your case?

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Confirmation of Interviewee's information

23. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
24. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
25. Last 4 digits of your social security number \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B – INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

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**Colorado State University Human Research Committee  
Application to Use Human Subjects (H-100, Rev 7/2002)**

Complete Part A and Part B. On separate pages, list all questions from Part C and respond to each as applicable. Part C should be replicated on your computer. For full review protocols, return the **ORIGINAL** (with original signatures) and **12 copies** (each with all attachments except proposal/dissertation/thesis) to Regulatory Compliance, 410 University Services Center. Assistance is available on our web page at <http://www.research.colostate.edu/rcoweb>

**PART A. COVER SHEET**

New

Protocol  Resubmission

1. Project Title (identical to proposal or thesis/dissertation):

**Evaluation of Restorative Justice Program:**

**Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct**

2. Principal Investigator (PI): **Anne Hudgens, Ph.D.** 3.  
Telephone: **491-5312**

4. Department: **Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services**

5. E-mail: **ahudgens@lamar.colostate.edu**

6. Co-Principal Investigator: **Tom Cavanagh** 7.  
Telephone: **491-3168**

8. Department: **Research and Development Center for the Advancement of  
Student Learning**

9. E-mail: **tom.cavanagh@cahs.colostate.edu**

10. If Co-PI is a student, is this project for a:  Thesis  
 Dissertation  Neither  
(Attach thesis/dissertation prospectus, abstract, or methodology chapter.)

11. Date recruitment anticipated to begin: **October 1, 2003**  
(This must be a future date, please allow time for a complete review.)

12. Will this project be supported by external funds?  Yes (answer 13-15)  No  
(go to signatures)

13. Funding Agency (attach full proposal including budget):

14. Grant/contract number or PASS number:

15. Proposal deadline:

As the PI submitting this proposed research and signing below, I agree to conduct the research involving human subjects as presented in the protocol or modifications to it and as approved by the Department and the Human Research Committee; to obtain and document informed consent and provide a copy of the consent form to each subject unless this is waived by the HRC; to present any proposed modifications in the research to the HRC for review and approval prior to implementation; to retain records for the mandated lengths of time; and to report to the HRC any problems or injuries to subjects.

PI Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My signature below confirms that I have read this protocol and approve of this research.

Department Chair/Head or Acting (circle which) Signature

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART B. ATTACHMENTS**

Indicate those which apply to and are included for this protocol.

\_\_\_\_\_ Advertisements or posters

\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone scripts or other recruitment scripts

X  Consent form(s), including parental permission and child assent for minors  
(model form available)

\_\_\_\_\_ Cover letter(s), on departmental letterhead, include main elements of informed consent,  
with faculty signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter(s) from counselors/specialists itemizing credentials, on letterhead

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter(s) of agreements from organizations, on letterhead, with original signatures

X  Instruments/tests/photos to be used; note if purchased or provide documentation allowing use

\_\_\_\_\_ Debriefing materials

\_\_\_\_\_ Principal Investigator's current résumé, **if** one is not currently on file with the Regulatory Compliance Office

X  Proposal copy or methodology section (only one copy)

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ Thesis/dissertation prospectus, abstract, or methodology chapter (only one copy)

**I think this qualifies for the following type of review:**

**Exempt** Category number \_\_\_\_\_  
Submit the original application.  
original application &  
copies

**Expedite** Category number \_\_\_\_\_  
Submit the original application &  
& one entire copy.

**Full**  
Submit the  
12 entire

---

**Office Use Only:**

Tracking number: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Review:

Full

Exempt

Expedite

Category # \_\_\_\_\_

FDA:  Yes

No

Elapsed time:

Other:

Revised 7/02; supercedes all other versions

## Part C. PROTOCOL INFORMATION

List **every question** by number, brief heading, and your response. Using a different font for your response aids the reviewer. Mark “N/A” if question does not apply to your protocol, but do not use N/A for benefit or risk questions. (Note: Focus your responses to approximately 3 pages. **DO NOT** replicate the proposal here.)

### Objectives

1. Objectives of proposed research and background. (Will be used in assessing the risk/benefit ratio for participants. The hypotheses to be tested may be listed.)

**The objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness and extent of the Restorative Justice Program in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU based on these six key questions: (1) does the program address harms, needs, and causes, (2) is it adequately victim-oriented, (3) are offenders encouraged to take responsibility, (4) are all the relevant stakeholders involved, (5) is there an opportunity for dialogue and participatory decision-making, and (6) is the program respectful to all parties?**

### Human Participants description

2. Source of participant population:

**The participant population for this study will consist of: (1) students referred to the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU who are determined by staff in that office to be appropriate for the Restorative Justice Program (offender), (2) the people who are harmed by the offender (victim), and (3) members of the CSU and Fort Collins community affected by the crime or wrongdoing.**

3. Number of participants (for example, number of surveys to be distributed):

**We estimate completing four surveys for each case referred to the Restorative Justice program. This is a new program so an overall estimate is difficult. We would estimate that about 3 cases per month will be referred to the program.**

4. Characteristics of participants (such as age, gender, student, disease conditions, behavioral abnormalities; affiliations or memberships). Why are these appropriate for this study? If excluding a category, such as minors, explain why.

**The participants in this study will primarily involve traditional undergraduate students. Older people will primarily be involved as victims and affected community members. This participant population is appropriate for the study because they are directly involved in the Restorative Justice Program. Nobody outside of the program will participate in the evaluation.**

5. Recruitment procedures:

**Participants will be asked when Restorative Justice Program facilitators first meet with them in person if they are willing to participate in the survey, and if they are they will be asked to complete the consent form.**

6. Recruiting materials (attach advertisements, posters, letters, scripts):

**None.**

7. Criteria for excluding participants involuntarily (such as “failed to keep food diary as required”):

**Participants who agree to participate and sign the consent form will only be excluded involuntarily if we are unable to contact them.**

8. Rationale for using “at-risk” populations (e.g., minors, pregnant women, prisoners):

**We will not include “at-risk” populations as participants.**

9. Original letters of HRC agreement/approval from organization where participants sought (not concept support letters).

**The participants are being sought from the same organization as the Principal Investigator is the administrator.**

10. Other matters pertinent to the human participants

N/A

### **Procedures to be followed with participants (Methodology)**

11. Specify location of study:

**Colorado State University, office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services.**

12. List variables to be studied (what are you measuring or examining):

**Gender, age, ethnicity.**

13. Describe method of data collection (attach copies of surveys, instruments, etc. If using a copyrighted instrument, document authorization of use.)

**Surveys (copies attached).**

14. Describe activities involving participants, including frequency and duration of each activity (this could be an experimental stimulus, a survey, what questions would be asked in an interview, for example) Diagramming helps.

**Participants will be surveyed by telephone at the beginning (pre) and end (post) of their participation in the Restorative Justice Program.**

15. Describe equipment used with subjects, if any:

**None.**

16. Specify what factors will lead to stopping procedures causing physical or emotional stress.

**Participants will volunteer to participate in the survey and may stop their participation at any time.**

17. Describe biological samples to be taken, method, and qualifications of individuals taking samples:

**None.**

18. Provide de-briefing method and materials for participants (required for concealed or deceptive research, desirable for other research):

**None.**

19. Other aspects of the procedures

N/A

### **Risks to participants**

20. Describe potential risks and assess the likelihood, severity, duration, and effects of each. (Use "no known risks" if none are anticipated.) **N/A is not an acceptable response for this question.** Common risks include:

- a. physical injury
- b. psychological trauma or stress
- c. social/economic harm
- d. legal risk
- e. loss of confidentiality

**Break in confidentiality could reveal responses; emotional distress.**

21. Describe methods for minimizing risks. For example, document how potential psychological distress will be addressed, by whom, and with what credentials (provide letter of agreement to serve as a counselor).

**The Investigators for this study will monitor the research to insure the confidentiality of the participants is maintained. Participants will be identified only by the last 4 digits of their social security number.**

22. Describe other methods, if any, that were considered alternatively and why they will not be used:

**None.**

23. Other matters relative to risk to participants:

**None.**

### **Benefits to participants**

24. Describe the direct benefits to these participants because of their participation. **N/A is not an acceptable response for this question.**

**There are no known direct benefits to the participants.**

25. Describe the benefits accruing to the class of participants these individuals represent: **Participants in the study (offenders, victims, and affected community members) will benefit from our evaluation of the effectiveness of the Restorative Justice Program.**

26. Describe the benefits accruing to society-at-large or other:

**The Restorative Justice Program at CSU is unique in higher education. The results of this study will be shared with other universities through journals.**

27. Other aspects of benefits to participants:

**None.**

### **Consent procedures**

28. Describe how potential participants will be informed about the project activities:

**Staff in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU will inform the participants about the Restorative Justice Program. Program facilitators will inform the participants in person about the program in detail and ask whether or not they want to participate.**

29. Attach the consent form (*use reading level and terminology understandable to participants*) or cover letter, script, or other substitution for a consent form. Check 45 CFR 46.117(c) for criteria for waiver of documentation of consent, and 45 CFR 46.116(d) for waiver of consent entirely. If you employ these, provide complete justification of how this project meets the criteria.

30. Other aspects of the consent process:

**None.**

### **Confidentiality**

31. Describe the method(s) used to protect the identity of individual participants. If a linked list is used, when will it be destroyed? Provide a sample of the code.

**Individual participants will be identified only by the last 4 digits of their social security number.**

32. Describe plans for maintaining data after study is complete. Faculty should keep a copy for 3 years following the conclusion of the project, so the data are auditable. Who retains copies, stored where/how, how is confidentiality maintained, for how long.

**The data collected in this study will be maintained by the Principal Investigator in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU in a locked storage facility. The data will contain no personal identifiers.**

33. Describe how federal requirement will be met for consent forms to be retained for 3 years following the conclusion of the project. Typically this entails the faculty member storing the documents in locked storage.

**The consent forms completed in this study will be maintained by the Principal Investigator in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU in a locked storage facility for 3 years following the completion of the study.**

34. If audio- or video-taping, specify tape storage, use, and when and how disposition of the tapes will take place.

**N/A**

35. Other aspects of confidentiality:

**None.**

APPENDIX C – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_,

Recently you participated in a Pre-Conference or Conference as part of the Restorative Justice Program at Colorado State University. We would appreciate your feedback on the process. We believe the Restorative Justice Program can make a difference in the lives of those who participate, and we want to hear from you. We will be using the information you submit to evaluate the Restorative Justice Program, and we appreciate your help.

Members of the program are conducting a research study of the data obtained through the survey we are asking you to complete. We are seeking your consent to use the survey data for research purposes. The results of the research study will be reported to the staff in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services and may be part of a journal article we hope to publish. In any case, the reports of our analysis of the data will not refer to you individually. If an individual answer to an open-ended question is referred to in our report, a pseudonym (false name) will be used so your anonymity will be protected.

Attached is a consent form for you to review. Participation in the study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, please sign the consent form and also complete the attached survey.

If you are completing these documents following a Pre-Conference or a Conference, you can return them to the Restorative Justice Facilitator when you are finished.

If you have received these materials in the mail, then both the form and the survey can then be placed in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped enveloped and dropped in the mail.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Shay Bright, Assistant Director of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services, at (970) 491-7165 or [shay.bright@colostate.edu](mailto:shay.bright@colostate.edu).

Sincerely,



Anne Hudgens  
Executive Director, Campus Life  
Director, Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** Evaluation of Restorative Justice Program: Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services

**NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Anne Hudgens

**NAME OF CO-INVESTIGATOR:** Tom Cavanagh

**CONTACT NAME AND PHONE NUMBER FOR QUESTIONS/PROBLEMS:** Tom Cavanagh, 011-647- 856-2889, ext. 6376

**SPONSOR OF PROJECT:** None.

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:** This research project is being conducted by the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at CSU to evaluate the effectiveness of the Restorative Justice Program. The results of the research study will be reported to the staff in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services and may be part of a journal article we hope to publish.

**PROCEDURES/METHODS TO BE USED:**

The primary source of data for this research will be the answers to survey questions about the Restorative Justice Program you participated in, if you consent to us using the data for research purposes. Throughout your involvement in the Restorative Justice Program, you will be asked to fill out two surveys—one following the Pre-Conference and one following the Conference. Each survey is written and will take approximately 7 minutes to complete. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**RISKS INHERENT IN THE PROCEDURES:**

The only known risk involved with this study is a breach of confidentiality, that is, someone will learn that you participated in this study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks. The researcher will use the process outlined in the “Confidentiality” section of this document to minimize the chance of a breach of confidentiality happening.

**BENEFITS:**

There are no known immediate benefits to you for participating in this study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

A unique ID number will be assigned to each individual participating in the survey. A list of the name of the individual and the unique ID number assigned to that individual for purposes of the survey will be maintained by the PI and Co-PI with access to that information restricted to those two people. The database will only contain the unique ID number and no link to the individual’s name. A breach of confidence could occur if someone found out your individual answers.

**LIABILITY:**

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

