

Lynn University

**SPIRAL**

---

Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and  
Projects

Theses and Dissertations Collections

---

2001

## The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program: Does it Really Work?

Andrew M. Rosenberg  
*Lynn University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://spiral.lynn.edu/etds>



Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Juvenile Law Commons](#), and the [Law Enforcement and Corrections Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Rosenberg, Andrew M., "The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program: Does it Really Work?" (2001). *Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and Projects*. 189.  
<https://spiral.lynn.edu/etds/189>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations Collections at SPIRAL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios and Projects by an authorized administrator of SPIRAL. For more information, please contact [liadarola@lynn.edu](mailto:liadarola@lynn.edu).

“The Boynton Beach  
Juvenile First  
Offender Program;  
Does It Really  
Work?”

Andrew M. Rosenberg  
Lynn University  
Graduate Project

# Table of Contents

Chapter I- Introduction.....	Pg. 1-3
Chapter II- Background on Conversion Programs.....	Pg. 3-10
Chapter III- Nationwide First Offender Programs.....	Pg.10-19
Chapter IV-The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program.....	Pg.19-29
Chapter V-Research Plan.....	Pg. 29-35
Chapter VI-Findings.....	Pg. 35-41
Chapter VII-Juvenile Questions.....	Pg. 42- 54
Chapter VIII-Parental Questions.....	Pg. 54-67
Chapter IX-Comparison Analysis.....	Pg. 68-71
Chapter X- Conclusion.....	Pg. 72-73
Chapter XI- Recommendations.....	Pg. 73-76
Chapter XII- Case Studies.....	Pg. 77-82
References.....	Pg. 83-85
Appendix	

# **Introduction**

## **I. Introduction**

As Florida enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the public realizes that the children of today are the leaders of tomorrow. When a person thinks about children in general, he is faced with the fact that “children” incorporates all juveniles; the good and the not so good. The “good” child refers to the ones that have not come into contact with law enforcement, and the not so good child is the “at risk” child who has had personal contact with law enforcement or has gotten caught for a wrongful deed. Since a child is known for his/her actions, those that have committed crimes suffer from societies disapproval. Society’s’ response hopes to change the path of crime and destruction that these children have begun to pave for themselves. In order to fight juvenile crime, police departments throughout Palm Beach County have established First Offender Programs aimed at changing the criminal tendencies and negative behaviors of youths before they become habitual offenders. The First Offender Programs work with “at risk” juveniles and give them information that may help them make the right choice in a negative situation.

The authority to divert criminal charges emanates through the Florida Civil Citation provision. “Florida’s civil citation process was established to provide an efficient and innovative alternative to custody... for children who

commit non serious delinquent acts and to ensure swift and appropriate consequences.” (Koch Crime Institute 1999) In Florida, a law enforcement officer has the authority to issue a civil citation to any juvenile who admits to committing a misdemeanor crime. The officer is allowed to assess up to 50 hours of community service and may also require the juvenile to participate in other intervention programs.

The goal of this study is to determine whether or not the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program has had a positive impact on participants. The assumption has been made by administrators of the Boynton Beach Police Department that this program has saved money and has had a positive impact on the lives of families participating in the program. The First Offender Program has operated under the theory that arrest or first contact with the police is a family crisis and that skilled intervention can have a positive impact. This study will validate many of the underlying notions that the First Offender Program has proved beneficial to the City of Boynton Beach.

There has never been a formal study to assess the effectiveness of this program. With the results of this study a final analysis will be compiled that will enable administrators of the Boynton Beach Police Department to decide whether or not money spent on the First Offender Program was productive.

The Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program operated between the years of 1991 to 1999. The author of this research is a currently employed police officer, who has previously administered this program for the City of Boynton Beach. He is a sixteen-year veteran of the Boynton Beach Police Department and has a bachelor's degree in Criminology, which was earned at Florida State University in 1981. The author has many hours of intensive training in dealing with juveniles and currently is employed at South County Mental Health as a therapeutic counselor. The Palm Beach County School Board has also employed him as a Mentor for at risk juveniles. He has been employed as a consultant for Restorative Justice at Florida Atlantic University and worked with at-risk youth involved with Restorative Justice at the Boynton Beach Mall.

## **I. Background On Diversion Programs**

The Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender program immediately diverts the first time non-violent offender out of the criminal justice system. " A general definition of a diversion program is a disposition of a criminal defendant either before or after adjudication of guilt in which the court directs the defendant to participate in a work or

educational program.” (Koch Crime Institute 1999) The Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program diverts the juvenile before adjudication and he/she does not go through the criminal recording procedure.

“One source estimated that status offenders (juveniles convicted only of running away from home, truancy, sexual promiscuity, or incorrigibility, rather than criminal law violations) represented nearly 40 percent of the cases referred to juvenile court.” (Widom, 1986) The Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 was designed to divert these status offenders out of the criminal justice system through various diversion and deinstitutionalization programs. Since these early days of diversion, most “status” offenses are not even dealt with by police departments. Diversion of youth has come to mean the diversion of non-violent misdemeanors and some non-violent felonies. Examples of diverted crimes are retail theft, car theft, and burglary.

There are three types of diversion. The first is **legal diversion**. Legal diversion works within the criminal justice system and attempts to minimize the effect of an arrest upon a juvenile by keeping the juvenile out of the criminal justice system and out of the courtroom. An example of this type of a program is the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program. The



second example of diversion is **paralegal diversion**. This diversion is performed through non-governmental agencies attached to other agencies, such as youth services bureaus. The third example of diversion is **non-legal diversion**, which takes place entirely outside of the criminal justice system with voluntary participation. An example of this type of diversion is the Palm Beach County Sheriffs' Eagle Academy.

Theoretically, diversion allows the criminal justice system to be more efficient by decreasing the number of criminal cases reaching the courts. "This should permit the remaining cases to receive prompt and effective treatment, enabling courts to concentrate their resources on the more serious or difficult cases. Indeed diversion programs have been found to reduce court caseloads and to decrease expenses". (Widom 1986)

The underlying theory for immediate diversion is to avoid the stigma of being labeled a criminal. "Labeling theorists suggest that some of the alleged characteristics of delinquents may be exaggerated, if not actually generated, by the process of trial and punishment and the consequential social stigma and the loss of reputation to which those who happen to be caught are inevitably exposed. That is to say, labeling theory states that the delinquency labels with which society identifies certain members are the very root causes of criminality, and that the delinquents therefore, are mere victims of

conventional stigmatizing.” (Funk 1996) Labeling theory also suggests that when an individual becomes identified as a criminal he is henceforth regarded in negative terms, thus stigmatizing this individual. For example, parents will go to great lengths to avoid having their children labeled as “slow learners”. Parents do not want the negative stigma placed upon their child. Once a child identifies him/herself with this label, then the child begins acting out the role of a “slow learner” with detrimental results.

One of the basic principles of the labeling theory is that of the “role”. Role theory suggests that people are “actors on the stage of life” and that people will carry out the behavior that is appropriate with the role that they are playing at particular points in their lives. Role theory suggests that “when in social situations, one determines the role one is expected to play and then engages in behaviors appropriate to that role.” (Whitaker, 1982) If labeled a “juvenile delinquent”, a child may engage in behaviors consistent with that role.

According to other theorists regarding juvenile labeling, specifically Edwin Shur, delinquency is common and that all youth engage in delinquency at one time or another, yet only a small percentage of youth get caught and labeled as delinquents. Shur assumes that that most juveniles engaging in delinquent behavior do not develop criminal careers. His

proposition suggests that most delinquent activities are simply isolated phenomena that are best handled by not calling undue attention to the youth.

Another theory associated with juvenile delinquency is the “social learning theory”. According to this theory juveniles learn that if they cannot attain desired goals via legal means, they will seek to achieve these goal by illegal activities.

Pre-trial and diversion programs seem to allow the juvenile offender a chance to avoid the stigma associated with the formal juvenile court system, which can result in his being labeled a “juvenile delinquent”. To what extent are individuals with juvenile records more likely to commit future crimes than those without such a record? “ A review of scholarly analysis examining the relationship between early contacts with the legal system and subsequent acts of delinquency or adult criminality reveals that early court appearances are reasonably prognostic of subsequent delinquent behavior.”(Funk 1996)

The consequences of possessing a criminal record are well known. The convicted criminal will always be branded as untrustworthy by members of society. Employment prospects are always limited and a person with a criminal record always has to explain the circumstances for which he/she has been arrested. The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program offers the

first time non-violent criminal offender a second chance. Upon the offender's successful completion of the program, all charges are expunged and the juvenile may resume his life anew without the stigma of a conviction.

The juvenile justice system began with the idea that government should provide for the welfare of children and that children should be separated from the adult justice system by specialized juvenile proceedings. The underlying theory of juvenile justice is to provide treatment for the causes of juvenile delinquency and not to punish juveniles in the same way as adults. Juvenile justice is civil in nature. In this civil system of juvenile justice, constitutional protections usually afforded to the adult criminal are not available to the juvenile offender. However, legal issues related to "Due Process" and "Equal Protection" can be addressed at the intake phase of the Juvenile First Offender Program. The intake officer administering the program has great discretionary power. The administering officer can question what rights, if any, does a juvenile have in demanding participation in the program. If the officer decides that the juvenile does not qualify for participation in the program, does the juvenile have the right to demand participation in the program? The administering officer can disqualify a candidate for several reasons. Some of the reasons for disqualification are as follows. 1) A general negative attitude toward the program, school, or

parents, 2) Lying about a past arrest, 3) Non participation of parents, and 4) Not residing within the jurisdictional intake area. Since the premise of juvenile diversion is civil in nature, participation in the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program is viewed as a privilege. If for any reason the juvenile is disqualified he/she does not have the right to demand participation. If the juvenile is disqualified his arrest paperwork is sent through the regular prosecuting channels and is handled by the state attorney's office and can result in a permanent criminal record.

Pre-trial diversion programs have several common elements.

They include restitution, community service, parental involvement, continuing education, continuous monitoring, supervision, and counseling. Service programs should feature constructive assignments to help the minor learn responsibility for his or her actions. The assignments may include, but are not limited to, requiring the juvenile to participate in education or counseling programs. Most programs are designed to be completed within one year and most programs last no longer than six months.

Most diversionary programs operate within a six-month time period. Is a six-month period sufficient for the administration of this program? Did juveniles complete the program and then commit further delinquent acts? At the inception of the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program no time

limit was set for the program. Supervision was maintained on all juveniles that were entered in the program. In 1994 the program was limited to one year. In 1995 the program was shortened to six months. The reason for this shortening was to give the administrator of the program a smaller group of juveniles to supervise. Prior to this time hundreds of juveniles needed to be supervised. It was felt by the administration of the police department that 100 juveniles are too many for quality supervision. A goal of this study is to find out whether or not the juveniles stayed out of trouble after completing this program.

## **II. Nationwide First Offender Programs**

The researcher found several nationally recognized First Offender Programs outlining specific program components. The programs described here are similar to the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program. The following information is intended to show the similarities of other nationwide first offender programs and that the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program is not unique. This researcher only found guideline components for these programs and did not find analysis showing the effectiveness of any of these programs. All program lengths fell between three and six months. For example, the Dallas Police Department Juvenile

First Offender Program consists of a five-week intensive skills program aimed at the children and their parents. The first five weeks are spent on educating the juvenile in the decision making process. At the same time parents are educated on parenting skills. The five-week program consists of the following components;

**FIVE WEEK PROGRAM**

**YOUTH SKILL/PARENT SKILL**

**Week#1 Being prepared/Greeting the challenge of raising youth in the 90s**

**Week#2 Attending/Observing contracting**

**Week#3 Week #Listening/Decision -Making Praise**

**Week#4 Drug Abuse Education/Discipline**

**Week#5 Goal- setting/Communication**

After successfully completing the first five weeks the Juvenile First Offender is monitored for an additional period of three months. If he/she does not re-offend during this period, his/her record will be erased. If the juvenile does re-offend during this period, then he/she will be sent to court to face the original charge.

In Houston, Texas (Harris County), first offender programs have been initiated as part of the probation department. There is no police department involvement in this program and the program is completely voluntary. If the juvenile does not complete program guidelines, then his/her criminal case is prosecuted in court. If the juvenile decides to enter the first offender program,

he/she, along with parents, meet with a probation officer where information regarding home, school, family, friends, problems, and accomplishments are discussed. The juvenile is then placed in one of the following deferred prosecution programs

- 1.) **Parent Teen Survival, a five-week family group.** A counseling program that meets once a week. Parents and juveniles are separated into groups and then unite to discuss the issues, which arose in the smaller groups.
- 2.) **STAR Program.** A six-week counseling program designed to target the juvenile but will help the family if needed.
- 3.) **Youth Education Shoplifting Program.** A two-week program specifically designed to deal with the crime of shoplifting. It includes video instruction and counseling of the juvenile.
- 4.) **Dispute Resolution Center.** This program is used for the crimes of assault and criminal mischief. The victim, the offender, and the parents are all brought together in order to develop a solution to the problem created by the actions of the juvenile. In the end, the parties usually agree on a monetary solution.
- 5.) **Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.** This program provides six weeks of drug counseling for the juvenile.
- 6.) **Community Service.** When community service is assigned by deferred prosecution, it is generally based on the cost of the crime, in terms of the amount of goods stolen or the cost of the damages incurred. A formula has been established that sets forth one hour of community service for every five dollars worth of property stolen or damaged.

After the first component of the program is completed, the juvenile enters the monitoring phase for a total of three months. If the juvenile does not re-offend, then all the original legal paperwork is destroyed and the juvenile does not receive a criminal record. If the juvenile does re-offend, then the original case is filed and the juvenile if found guilty, acquires a criminal



record.

In San Antonio, Texas, the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department established a diversion unit, again with no police department involvement. This diversion program addresses the length of supervision in a very interesting manner. Length of supervision will depend on the client's risk level. An assessment form is used to determine risk level. The form involves a series of questions focussing on prior referrals, family composition and relations, the juvenile's attitude, substance/alcohol abuse, gang affiliation, and school performance. If the juvenile is considered low risk, supervision will range from six to eight weeks. If the juvenile is high risk, supervision could last as long as six months

There are several Bexar county diversion components. They are all focused on the first six weeks of the program. The different programs are as follows:

- 1. Shoplifting Offenders Program.** This program includes the practical lessons on the economic impact that shoplifting has on business and the community.
- 2. Family Enhancement Classes.** This program is designed to teach parents and juveniles to communicate with each other in order to obtain a level of understanding of each other's needs.
- 3. Juvenile Offenders Vocational/ Education Network.** This program is based on the realization that juveniles are often part of a greater dysfunction within their own homes, rather than just deviant behavior.
- 4. Young Offenders Peer Group.** This program is based on a curriculum focussing upon self-esteem, social skills, drug/alcohol, communication and

decision making. The objective of this program is to educate youth on how their future is affected by what they do today.

**5. Inside Look Program.** This program provides a unique perspective on life in the criminal justice system by allowing the juveniles to tour the state jail and witness the hardships and realities of life and work inside a penal institution.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation First Offender Program, located in Shawnee, Oklahoma, includes all the general program components but also has inserted an additional and interesting program feature. The Patawatomi Nation uses **adult mentors** to help curb the juvenile urge for further deviant criminal behavior. Mentors are matched to the Juvenile First Offenders and spend at least two hours a week with the offender. The program lasts between three and six months. "All we are asking is that the mentors spend quality time with the juveniles. As long as it is legal and enjoyable for both, the activities the mentors and the first offenders engage in are completely up to them." (Dodson 1998) The mentors must undergo a thorough background check and must participate in a four-hour training program.

Mentoring is an interesting and encouraging effort. This researcher has worked as a paid mentor for the Palm Beach County School Board. Many at risk juveniles lack a positive role model in their lives and a positive mentor can have a profound effect on the future of a child. A main problem that this researcher has observed with mentoring is the ability to find qualified people willing to donate their time. There is so many children needing a

positive role model in their lives that the possibility of finding sufficient qualified mentors is extremely difficult. One possible way to provide mentors is to hire part time mentors with public funds. To institute a program of this magnitude will be very expensive and will encompass many at- risk children, mentors, and administrators. This researcher does believe that positive mentoring will have a beneficial effect on the offender but to undertake this mentoring project would be too great a task for one program.

### **Study Results From Nationwide First Offender Programs**

This researcher found several studies outlining results from nationwide diversion programs.

According to a research publication titled; An Outcome Study of the Diversion Plus Program for Juvenile Offenders, a Lexington Kentucky diversion program was researched and evaluated. Four questions were asked.

- 1.) What percentage of juveniles who entered the program graduated successfully?
- 2.) Who was arrested after a period of one year and why?
- 3.) Did graduates escalate to delinquent offending?
- 4.) Did graduates escalate into more serious delinquency?

Ninety four participants were studied between the years of 1991 and 1992. "Half of the 94 subjects were female. Approximately two-thirds were white, and the remainder were Afro-American. At the time of referral,

participants ranged from 11-17 years of age, with the average age 14.55 years; approximately 52 percent fell into the 11-14 age group, and the rest fell into the 15-17 group. Nearly 21 percent resided with both natural parents. Forty percent were divorced and single. Thirty nine percent were divorced and remarried.” (Kramer 1997)

Of the 94 juveniles who entered the program 86.2 percent graduated and 13 percent failed. “Two thirds, or 67 percent, of the 94 juveniles were rearrested at some point during the follow-up period.” (Kramer 1997) A significant number of males were rearrested as opposed to females. For the graduates that recidivated there was a pattern of escalation to minor delinquency but not to felonious or more serious crime.

The Memphis Metro Youth Diversion Project (MMYDP) is a paralegal diversion program administered by the Community Day Care Social Services Association in Memphis, Tennessee. A six and twelve month time frame was studied in this research. Researchers wanted to find out whether juveniles committed further crimes after the initial six-month period.

Researchers found that 22.1 percent of juvenile’s recidivated within the first 6 months of the program. Within a year of the program completion 31.6 percent of the juveniles recidivated.

In a research paper titled Diversion Follow Up: Recidivism and

Participant Impressions conducted by the University of Saskatchewan, recidivism rates were given for a community-based youth diversion program operating in a Western Canadian city with a population of 160,000 residents. Forty-three youths and parents were interviewed 18 months following the completion of a six-month program. Recidivism rates, as well as program satisfaction, were measured in this study.

The average age of the youth participating in the program was 13.5 years. At the time of the follow-up interview the average age of the participants was 15 years. "One hundred ninety six diverted youths and 117 court-processed youths constituted the experimental and control groups. Nineteen percent of the youths were non-white and 81 percent were white. The offenses for which the youth were diverted included breaking and entering (79%), theft under \$200.00 (33%), theft over \$200.00 (26%), and willful damage (26%). Police data showed that the recidivism rate for diverted youths was 26% while that for court processed youths was 49.6%." (Fischer 1986) Sixty percent of the parents said that the diversion program had a positive effect upon their child with comments such as "terrific, fair and just". Forty percent of the parents approved of the program and offered suggestions for change. Parents also made other comments such as diversion, "wasn't tough enough," "the punishment was too lenient," and,

“need more counseling available.”

The University of Kentucky conducted a study of recidivism involving the teen court program titled Sentence Completion and Recidivism Among Juveniles Referred to Teen Courts. Researchers studied recidivism rates within the first twelve months of the program. Also studied was the result of sentences handed down by peers.

Two hundred and thirty four cases were studied in this research. The sentence most often imposed by peers was community service with 51.3 percent of the juveniles receiving community service as a sentence. The average community hours given were 25. Nearly half of the juveniles, or 46.6 percent, were sentenced to write letters of apology to victims. 35.9 percent were ordered to serve as teen court jurors; and 25.6 percent were ordered to complete counseling workshops. Other sanctions included essay preparation (13.2 percent), curfew (8.5 percent). Seventy one percent of the juveniles completed their peer-imposed sanctions. “ Seventy two or (31.8 percent) recidivated at least once during the year after sentencing. Of the recidivists, 41 or (56.9 percent) had a second court appearance during follow up, and 20 (48.8 percent) of those with a second offense appeared in court for a third offense.” (Minor 1999) The majority of cases, which were not serious, included possession of marijuana, receipt of stolen property, and theft.

“Recent statistics from the Youth Accountability Board reflect a 97% success rate, county wide, for juveniles completing the program. During a twenty-month period following the successful completion of the program, only 4% of the juveniles were referred back to the juvenile justice system as repeat offenders. These statistics are similar to the results of those communities using the teen court approach, thus reflecting the effectiveness of these pre trial diversionary programs in reducing juvenile recidivism.” (Panzer, 1997). This researcher will conduct a systematic survey and phone interviews of past Juvenile First Offender Participants to see if the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender program had similar results.

### **III. The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program**

At the inception of the Juvenile First Offender Program in 1989, the main program goal as set forth by the Children’s Service Council was “to decrease the number of first time offenders who commit a subsequent offense and enter the juvenile justice system.” (Children’s Service Council, 1989) The program was originally grant-funded through the Children’s Service Council. That funding ended in 1996 at which time the funding was assumed by the City of Boynton Beach. Since 1996, the Boynton Beach Police Department

Juvenile First Offender Program has added program components, which were assumed to be beneficial to the clients. Until the present there has never been any hard research which could either confirm or deny that any of these program components were beneficial.

The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program is a criminal diversion program focusing upon the first time, non-violent criminal offender. Experimental in nature, it was the first Juvenile First Offender Program of this type located in Palm Beach County. Cooperating agencies were the Palm Beach County States Attorney's Office, the Children's Service Council of Palm Beach County, the Children's Home Society, the Youth Services Bureau of Palm Beach County, and the Palm Beach County School Board. At this point in time the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program, has been discontinued, lacking both funding and manpower. However city administration places a high value on this program and plans to restore the program in the near future.

At the inception of the Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program all juvenile arrest paperwork is reviewed by the First Offender Administrator. The administrator screens and selects all first offenders and contacts their parent or guardian. A meeting is planned with all



parents and juveniles. This meeting, called an intake interview, serves two purposes: 1) It explores the extent to which the juvenile and parents will participate in the program and 2) It allows the first offender administrator a chance to weed out the undesirable candidates, those with bad attitudes and/or lack of commitment. The first offender administrator has been given the authority and the discretion based on his intuition and instincts to defer any candidate. Once the juvenile has been accepted in the program several pieces of information must be given to the parents and the juvenile. They must sign a waiver of a speedy trial stating that the juvenile waives the right to have the case tried within 90 days of arrest. All family problems are discussed to include abuse situations and special circumstances. If all parties agree to participate in the program, a contract is drawn and signed by the parents and juvenile participant.

The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender administrator withholds all criminal filing paperwork as an incentive for program completion. In order to complete the First Offender Program, clients must perform all sanctions in a satisfactory manner. The program's original length, beginning in 1990, was one year. The program was shortened to six months in 1994. Most sanctions are given to the client at the intake interview. This is the point where the juvenile is accepted into the program. In order to participate in the first

offender program, he/she must possess a positive attitude and an understanding of the criminal recording process. The sanctions described in the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program include:

- 1.) Participation in Youth Court**
- 2.) Mandatory School Attendance With at Least a "C" Average**
- 3.) Community Service Hours**
- 4.) Letters of Apology**
- 5.) Monetary Restitution if Applicable**
- 6.) Jail Tour**
- 7.) Ropes Class**
- 8.) Family Counseling**
- 9.) Individual Counseling, if applicable**

Upon his/her successful completion of all mandated program sanctions the juvenile's criminal filing paperwork is destroyed eliminating any possibility of a damaging criminal record. Do these sanctions help keep the juvenile first offender client out of further trouble? For example, does the thought of getting caught and acquiring a criminal record enter into the decision-making process of these same juveniles if ever confronted with the opportunity to commit a crime? Which sanction has had the most profound impact on the first offender client? These are some of the variables that will be measured in this study.

Several agencies and individuals cooperated with the Boynton Beach Police Department. The Palm Beach County State Attorney liaison was Ms. Jeannie Howard, an experienced veteran prosecutor in charge of the juvenile

section of the Palm Beach County States Attorney's Office. Ms. Howard stated, "The purpose of the Palm Beach County state attorney's office support of this program is the fact that diversion of criminal charges by local municipalities will lessen the amount of cases reaching our office." (Personal communication, 1993). Ms. Howard also said, "You can devise and operate a first offender program in any way that you see fit. Our goal in assisting in this program is to reduce the caseload which is currently getting to our office." (Personal communication, 1993)

The Palm Beach County School Board also supported the efforts of the First Offender Program. The administrating officer was allowed full access to all attendance and grade records. The administrating officer was allowed to enter schools that clients were attending. The officer was allowed to remove juveniles from class and conduct an administrative counseling session. In this counseling session the first offender administration officer would document school attendance and course grades. Personal and family problems could also be addressed in these counseling sessions. In many instances, these school visits were the most efficient way in which to see clients. They were valuable in the documentation of the clients participating in the program.

The Palm Beach County School Board operates the "Youth Court" Program, a diversion program aimed at school age offenders. Peer judging

and consequent shaming is crucial to this program. The Juvenile First Offender would appear at a scheduled date and time for a hearing. Positive youth from the community volunteer as lawyers as both defense attorneys and prosecutors. The juvenile lawyers review the case and when both parties are prepared, the trial begins. The case is decided by at least six juvenile peers. They can be either volunteers from the community or juveniles performing community service. A full time judge, volunteering his time, presides over the trial and offers guidance to the juvenile lawyers. Parents are encouraged to accompany the Juvenile First Offender to the Youth Court, they experienced what a defendant in real court feels like without having to get a criminal record. In most instances the juveniles practicing as lawyers were allowed to ask questions and raise their voices, actions that would not be allowed in a real courtroom.

The Palm Beach County School Board offered the utilization of the Youth Court program for all Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender clients, all of who participated. The Youth Court program also gave further sanctions, which were handed down by the juvenile jury. Most jurors participating in the program were past defendants, who were performing jury duties as part of their own sentence. In most instances these juries handed down harsh sentences (more than the minimum) including letters of apology,

restitution, jury duties, and community service hours.

The Children's Home Society originally supported the efforts of the First Offender Program by providing a group therapist for family counseling at no charge. The family counselor would run an eight week therapeutic program in which 8 to 12 families would participate. All Juvenile First Offender clients had to be accompanied by at least one guardian. The group was set up in a circle with approximately 20 participants. A circle forum facilitates open communication with no barriers. Each week a different predetermined topic was selected for discussion. They included peer pressure, decision making, communication, drugs and alcohol abuse, family pressures, law, and other various topics. Each week a juvenile participant was assigned a presentation on the topic assigned for that week's discussion. The group sessions frequently included role playing and guest speakers. Originally the Children's Home Society donated the counselor free of charge. One year after the counseling program began the Society cancelled the donation. The program worked so well for the clients that the Boynton Beach Police Department decided to hire the counselor as a contracted employee at the rate of \$35.00 an hour. The Children's Home Society also offered additional free individualized and family counseling to all clients participating in this program after the family group-counseling program was completed.

The Youth Services Bureau of Palm Beach County also assisted by providing free counseling to all clients participating in the First Offender Program. The Youth Services Bureau provided counseling for long term therapy while the Children's Home Society focused on the short term.

The Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County provided full funding of the Boynton Beach Police Department First Offender Program. The Council provided a grant that paid the full salary for the officer assigned to administer the program. Because the program was grant-funded, detailed records were collected regarding the progress of the clients participating in the program. The Children's Service Council liaison administrator kept detailed records on program statistics as well as progress of individual clients. The program coordinator was visited on a quarterly basis at which time statistics were obtained by The Children's Services Council. The research data obtained and collected by the Children's Service Council will be used in the preparation of this paper.

Sandy Pines Hospital offered to assist the First Offender Program by offering a self-esteem-building course at a reduced cost. The "Ropes" course focused on challenging the juveniles to take risks that they previously would not have taken. The juvenile participants were challenged to walk across a beam thirty feet above ground and jump from one pole to another

three stories above ground. The participants went to the ropes course during the sixth week of therapeutic counseling with all the other clients participating in the counseling group. Parents did not accompany the juveniles on this trip so as not to inhibit the juvenile in seeking out new challenges. A well-trained behavior analyst taught the ropes course who was skilled in helping juveniles focus on reaching positive goals. All clients were mandated to participate and were expected to climb and accept challenges, which they previously might have refused. Clients were taught trust in one another, which helped build individual and collective trust. It would be a goal of this research to see if the ropes course improved the self-esteem of the juvenile participants and contributed to the successful completion of the program.

This researcher chaperoned all the "Ropes" trips and directly participated in the challenges and therapeutic team-building activities. It was interesting to watch the Juvenile First Offenders work together as a group and inspiring to observe the positive interaction among the participants. Only six weeks prior, the juveniles, unfamiliar with each other, experienced strained relationships. This activity also helped this researcher in building a positive rapport with the offenders. There were several situations in which this researcher had to take a risk and trust the offenders.

There were several components specific to this program. One such exercise was called the "Spider Web". This activity involved getting your body through holes in the spider web constructed of string. The person attempting to go through the hole could not touch the string. Since some of the holes were four feet above the ground, the whole group needed to assist the climber. In one instance this researcher had to go through this hole and had to risk that the group of juvenile offenders would lift him and help him through the hole. With the help of the juveniles, the experience proved successful and helped the juveniles trust and build rapport with the researcher. Because many of the Juvenile First Offender participants do not get to experience positive activities either at home or in school, they enjoyed this activity and flourished due to its positive nature. A goal of this research is to find out what effect this program component had on the lives of the participants and what they remember as being important from this trip.

The Martin County Sheriffs' Office allowed the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender program the opportunity to bring all participants on a tour of the Juvenile Boot Camp. The Boot Camp Tour was scheduled during the second week of the eight week counseling program. It lasted approximately two hours and was originally designed to give the juveniles a first-hand boot camp experience. The tour was a hands on



experience. The first offender clients were disciplined from the moment they exited the transport van. They were made to do pushups and other disciplinary activities. This was a very traumatic experience for the juvenile offenders and conversation between members on the ride home was subdued. The facilitator of the program used this particular sanction for further discipline. If the administrator found that the juvenile was not complying with the program or was incorrigible at home, the threat of returning to the "Boot Camp" was usually enough to straighten him/her out. In 1998 the Martin County Boot Camp Tour became less intense due to internal problems. Program changes lessened the impact of the Tour and led to its cancellation.

The Palm Beach County Sheriffs' Office provided support to the First Offender Program by offering jail tours to replace the Boot Camp Tour free of charge. The tours, a scared-straight program, exposed the juvenile to the consequences of continued criminal behavior. It is a goal of this research to find out what effect the jail tour had on the participating clients of the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program.

#### **IV. Research Plan**

The Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program

has operated for the past 10 years with no evaluation procedure. The administration of the Boynton Beach Police Department has assumed that the First Offender Program has had long lasting and beneficial effects on the clients participating in the program. Many variables have never been measured in regard to the first offender program. For example how did the following program components effect the participants of the program?

1. Community service project
2. Effects of family counseling
3. Effects of building self-esteem through the “Ropes” course
4. Effects of the “Boot Camp or Jail Tour”
5. Effects of Increased Supervision

Data will be collected from over 25 clients who have participated in the Boynton Beach Police Department First Offender program throughout the past five years. The data will be collected through phone interviews with past clients. A data collection instrument will be designed in the form of a questionnaire. Questions will be used to construct graphs and bar charts. All first offender clients and their parents will be polled and asked all questions pertaining to the first offender program. Data such as race and age already has been collected by the Boynton Beach Police Department.

Systematic sampling will be used to select the clients who will be surveyed through this study. Twenty five clients will be selected from

200 clients by selecting every eighth registered client. Systematic sampling is the most widely used version of probability sampling. "In this approach every Kth element in the population is sampled, beginning a random start with an element from 1 to K." (Emory, 1991)

The goal is to examine whether the following program components have a positive effect on the successful completion of the Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program.

A.) **Community service**: Community service provides an opportunity for the juvenile offender to "pay back" the community through personal time and efforts. How is community service used in the Boynton Beach First Offender Program and does it really provide the juvenile offender with an inside view on the impact that their offense had on the community?

Most clients involved in The Boynton Beach First Offender Program participated in a mandatory community service project. This project was administered by Florida Atlantic University and was based upon the Balanced Approach in dealing with juvenile offenders. The Balanced Approach seeks to restore the victim and the community by utilizing positive and useful community service. This particular community service project involved the restoration and renovation of an abandoned city cemetery located in downtown Boynton Beach. The Juvenile First Offenders met on

weekends to clean trash and landscape. Florida Atlantic University provided funding for the landscaping and the City of Boynton co-operated by providing a sprinkler system and grass seed. This researcher was heavily involved with this project and provided transportation to and from the cemetery. This project was performed during the hot summer months and the juveniles experienced considerable discomfort. The second phase of this program involved the history of the cemetery. Founders of the community attended the weekly sessions detailing the history of the cemetery and provided history on the people that were buried there. The final phase of this project involved a play in which First Offender clients assumed the roles of some of the buried people in the cemetery and performed skits on the lives of people buried in the cemetery.

Other community service projects involved washing police cars and cleaning the police station. The participants were also exposed to positive peers as a form of community service. Juvenile First Offenders were allowed to work with Boynton Beach Police Explorers, performing functions such as fingerprinting of children and wearing of the McGruff outfit (Police Mascot). This researcher had to closely supervise all the community service projects. A goal of this study is to find out whether the positive community service projects helped the juvenile participants. Another goal is to find out

what effect the close supervision had on the participants of the program.

**B.) Parental Involvement;** Parental involvement was mandatory when participating in this program. Parents were required to attend group counseling sessions facilitated by a certified MSW counselor (masters degree in social work). In a few cases juveniles requested participation in the program even though their parents were not participating. These juveniles wanted to avoid a criminal record and received special attention.

Approximately one percent of clients fell into this category. Through sampling of every eighth participant in this program this researcher does not foresee speaking to any of these clients. "In many instances it is parental behavior that contributes to juvenile criminal offenses. This behavior needs to be identified and corrected if a program is to be effective." (Panzer, 1997). The questionnaire designed to measure these variables contains a parental section and a juvenile section. Success is defined as the completion of the first offender program without getting arrested again.

**C.) Increased supervision;** " Studies have shown one of the causes of juvenile delinquency is the lack of proper (and at many times) adult supervision". (Panzer, 1997). The first offender administrator checks on all the clients at least once a month. Does the increased supervision by a

police officer increase the successful completion of this program?

Statistics such as re-arrest rates, age, race, and type of crime can be compared. By conducting this study, this researcher will be able to pinpoint workable solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of program components.

In many instances environmental influences can be linked to the decision that causes a juvenile to commit a criminal act. The first offender program focused on this fact and gives all non-violent juveniles the opportunity to participate in this program. A few examples of outside influences, which can cloud a juvenile's decision-making process, are:

- Peer pressure**
- Family problems**
- Poverty**
- Boredom**

The majority of clients participating in the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender program were arrested and charged with retail theft. The primary causes resulting in criminal behavior were peer pressure and family problems. Many times the juveniles were taken into custody with more than enough funds to purchase the stolen merchandise. This fact is based on observations of the author of this research. This research will identify the leading causes of the bad decisions and will show the decisions in a percentage format.

With the results of this study, I will attempt to find whether the

Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program compares favorably to the written research that this researcher has found. This study will benefit the administration of the Boynton Beach Police Department as well as the City of Boynton Beach. The Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program operated for approximately 11 years and diverted approximately 500 juveniles out of the criminal justice system. A formal study has never been performed to validate the effectiveness of this program. It is possible that the expense outweighed the positive results. It is also possible that juveniles who entered this diversionary program might have stayed out of trouble regardless of their participation. I will use a formal questionnaire and will interview 25 participants, both parents and juveniles, via phone. I will conduct at least two case studies in which I will follow and track the success or failure of participants. The major goal will be to find out whether the Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program had a positive effect on the actual participants and the community of Boynton Beach.

## **V. Findings**

The underlying purpose of the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program was to keep the first time criminal offender out of the

criminal justice system in order to avoid the stigma of being labeled a criminal. It was hoped that through program components such as the family group counseling, the ropes self-esteem-building course, and the jail tour, juvenile first offenders would be educated and would never commit another criminal act. The writer of this study measured facts on 200 hundred clients between the years of 1996-1998. Below are preliminary findings prior to the survey questionnaire.

### **200 TOTAL FIRST OFFENDER CLIENTS**

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b><i>Black</i></b>	(45) 22.5%	(19) 9.5%	(64) 32%
<b><i>White</i></b>	(66) 33%	(70) 35%	(136) 68%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	(111) 55.5%	(89) 44.5%	(200) 100%

Two hundred juveniles entered the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program from April of 1996 to December of 1998. Of the 200 clients entered 66 or 33% were white male juveniles. There were 45 or 22% black male juveniles. There were 70 or 35 % white females. There were 19 or 9.5% black females. Of the 200 First offender clients there were 111 males or



55% and 89 females or 45%. There were 136 or 68% white clients and 64 or 32% black clients.

### **TOTALS BY CHARGES**

<i>Charges</i>	<i>Number of Clients</i>	<i>Percentage of Clients</i>
<i>Retail Theft</i>	176	88%
<i>Narcotics</i>	9	4.5%
<i>Burglary</i>	7	3.5%
<i>Obstruction</i>	5	2.5%
<i>Simple Battery</i>	4	2%
<i>Trespass</i>	4	2%
<i>Criminal Mischief</i>	3	1.5%
<i>Grand Theft</i>	1	.5%
<i>Aggravated Battery</i>	1	.5%
<i>Totals</i>	200	100%

It was interesting to find that the majority of diverted charges were for the crime of retail theft. One hundred seventy six or 88% of all clients entered into the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program was for the crime of retail theft. The majority of these thefts occurred at the Boynton Beach Mall. Other charges include 1.) Narcotics, **4.5%** 2.) Burglary, **3.5%**, 3.) Resisting arrest, **2.5%** 4.) Simple battery, **2%** 5.) Trespass **2%** 6.) Criminal mischief, **1.5%** 7.) Grand theft, **.5%** 8.) Aggravated battery, **.5%**.

**This set of statistics leads this researcher to believe that most first offenses committed by juveniles are non-violent misdemeanors involving**

a bad decision to steal.

### AGE AT THE TIME OF ARREST

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of Clients</i>	<i>Percentage of Clients</i>
<i>17</i>	60	30%
<i>16</i>	29	14.5%
<i>15</i>	35	17.5%
<i>14</i>	32	16%
<i>13</i>	25	12.5%
<i>12</i>	13	6.5%
<i>11</i>	6	3%
<i>Total</i>	200	100%

Most of the juveniles entered into the Boynton Beach First Offender program were 17 years of age. Thirty percent of all participants were 17 years old at the time of their first criminal offense, or a total of 60 first offender clients. Ages 13 through 16 are evenly distributed as far as the age of first arrest. At age 16 there were 29 juveniles entered into the program or 14.5%. Thirty five juveniles were entered into the program who were 15 years old or 17.5%. Thirty juveniles were entered that were 14 years old at the time of arrest, or 16%. Twenty-five juveniles were entered into the program that were 13 years old, or 12.5%. Thirteen juveniles were entered into the program that were 12 years old for a total of 6.5%. Six Juveniles were entered into the program that were 11 years old, or 3%. **The average age of**

**the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender was 15.02 years of age.**

It seems that juveniles at age 17 are more likely to make a bad decision regarding committing a crime than at an earlier age. It was also found that a juvenile first offender client at the age of 17 is more likely to fail the program. This is probably due to increased freedom and lack of parental supervision as well as strong peer pressure to fit in.

### **PARTICIPANT FAILURES**

**12 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS FAILED THE PROGRAM DURING THE STUDY PERIOD, WHICH RESULTED IN FILING OF THE ORIGINAL CHARGES**

**5.5% RATE OF FAILURE**

### **FAILURES BY RACE, GENDER AND AGE;**

#### **RACE & GENDER**

<i>Failure</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>
<i>Males</i>	8	1
<i>Females</i>	1	2
<i>Totals</i>	9	3

#### **AGE**

<i>Failure</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>12</i>	8	1	1	1

**RE-ARRESTED**

<i>Failure</i>	<i>Re-arrested</i>	<i>Refused to participate</i>
12	5	7

Preliminary findings prior to the telephone random survey showed several interesting statistics. There were more males entered into the program than females for the years between 1996 and 1998. A total of 111, or 55%, males were entered into the program as opposed to 89, or 45%, females.

There were more white than black clients entered in the program . There were 136, or 68%, white clients entered into the program as opposed to 64, or 32 %, black clients. It should be noted that the Boynton Beach Police Department only accepts first offender clients who committed misdemeanors and non-violent felonies. As the administrator of this program during this period, this researcher has observed that many black clients were not eligible for participation in the program due to past arrests, violent crimes, and general lack of interest and obviously were not eligible for participation.

At the inception of this study, 25 participants and their parents were chosen at random to be surveyed. The researcher then contacted every eighth client for a telephone interview. All clients agreed to be interviewed.

Every client was excited to hear from this researcher and was eager to share the successes in their lives. While this researcher was fulfilling the duties of a road patrol police officer, he encountered several clients on the streets of Boynton Beach. Most of these clients were shopping in the Boynton Beach Mall or other retail areas. When this researcher encountered these clients and their parents, he asked questions and received answers to be used in this study. These chance encounters led to a total of 30 clients surveyed.

The first part of the survey instrument is six questions directed at the juvenile who participated in the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program. All six questions pertain directly to the required activities while participating in this program.

# **Juvenile Questions**

## **VI. JUVENILE QUESTIONS**

### **QUESTION #1**

**Did the first offender program have an impact on your life?**

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>None</i>
<b>97%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3%</b>

The first question is an attitudinal survey question asking the Juvenile First Offender if he/she believes that the program had an effect upon their life. Ninety-six percent of juveniles questioned advised that the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program had a positive effect on their lives. Zero percent of participants reported that the program had a negative effect upon their life. One juvenile, or 3%, reported that the program had no effect upon their life. While conducting the survey, this researcher had a chance to speak with the clients and to record their comments.

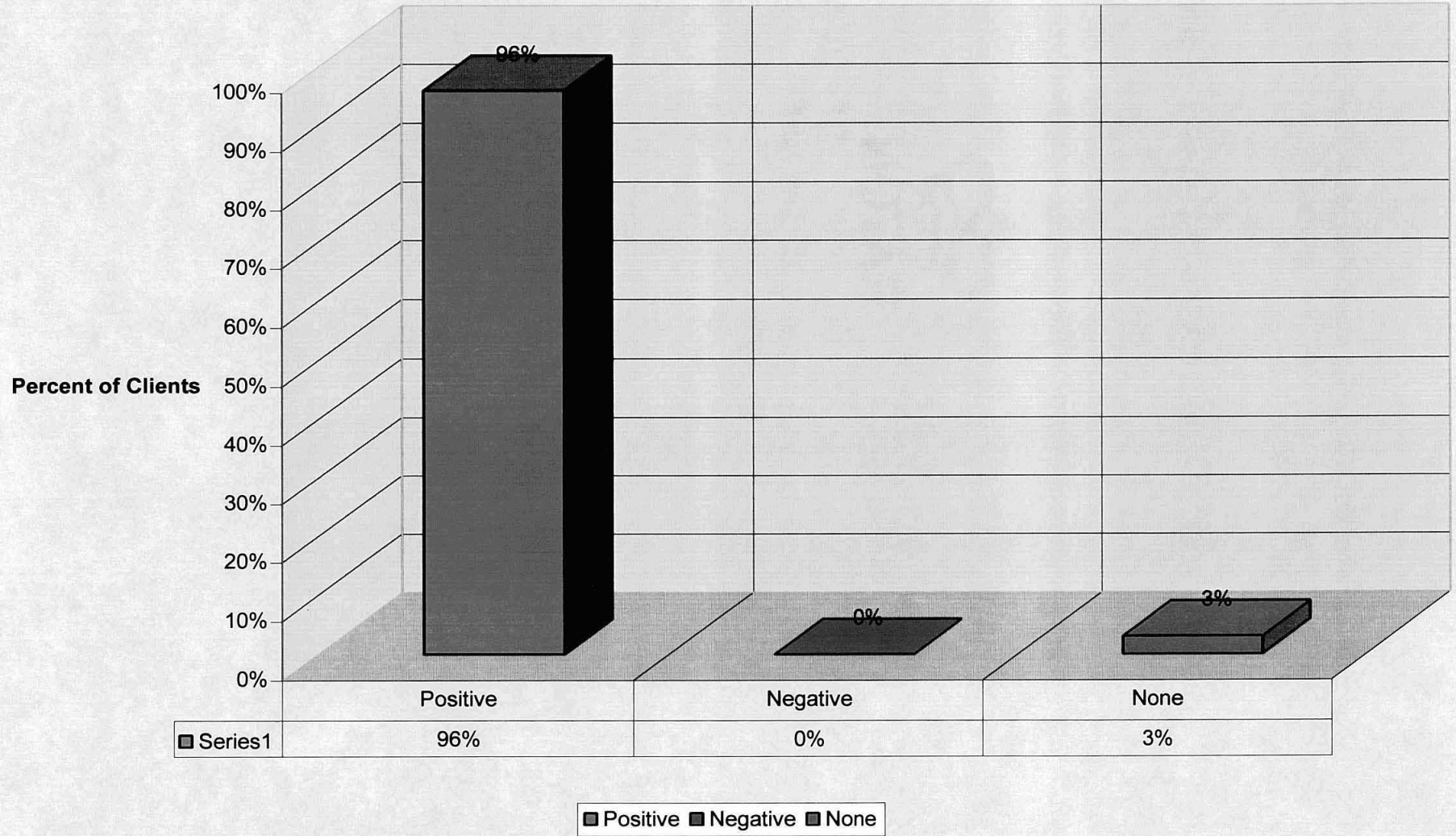
They are as follows:

**“That program was the best thing that ever happened to me. It straightened me right out.”**

**“ I needed a good kick in the but, thank you for everything.”**

**“Without that program I don’t think I would be making it to medical school.”**

# Impact On Your Life





## Question #2

**Did you get arrested again and if so how many times?**

<i>Once</i>	<i>Twice</i>	<i>Three</i>	<i>More</i>	<i>None</i>
26%	0	0	0	74%

The theory underlying the Boynton Beach Police Department Juvenile First Offender Program is to educate the juvenile so that the juvenile will never again offend. Question #2 explores whether or not the juvenile has stayed out of trouble. Twenty two or 73%, of juveniles surveyed never re-offended. Eight juveniles, or **26%, reoffended after completing the program.**

Several juveniles reported that they were arrested after the program completion. This percentage of 26% re-arrest rate differs from the average of a 5.5% re-arrest rate while participating in the program. This fact proves that **the juveniles stay out of trouble while participating in the program. After the program completion the juvenile first offender is prone to acting out criminal behavior.** This fact pertains to program length that will be discussed in the conclusion portion of this paper.

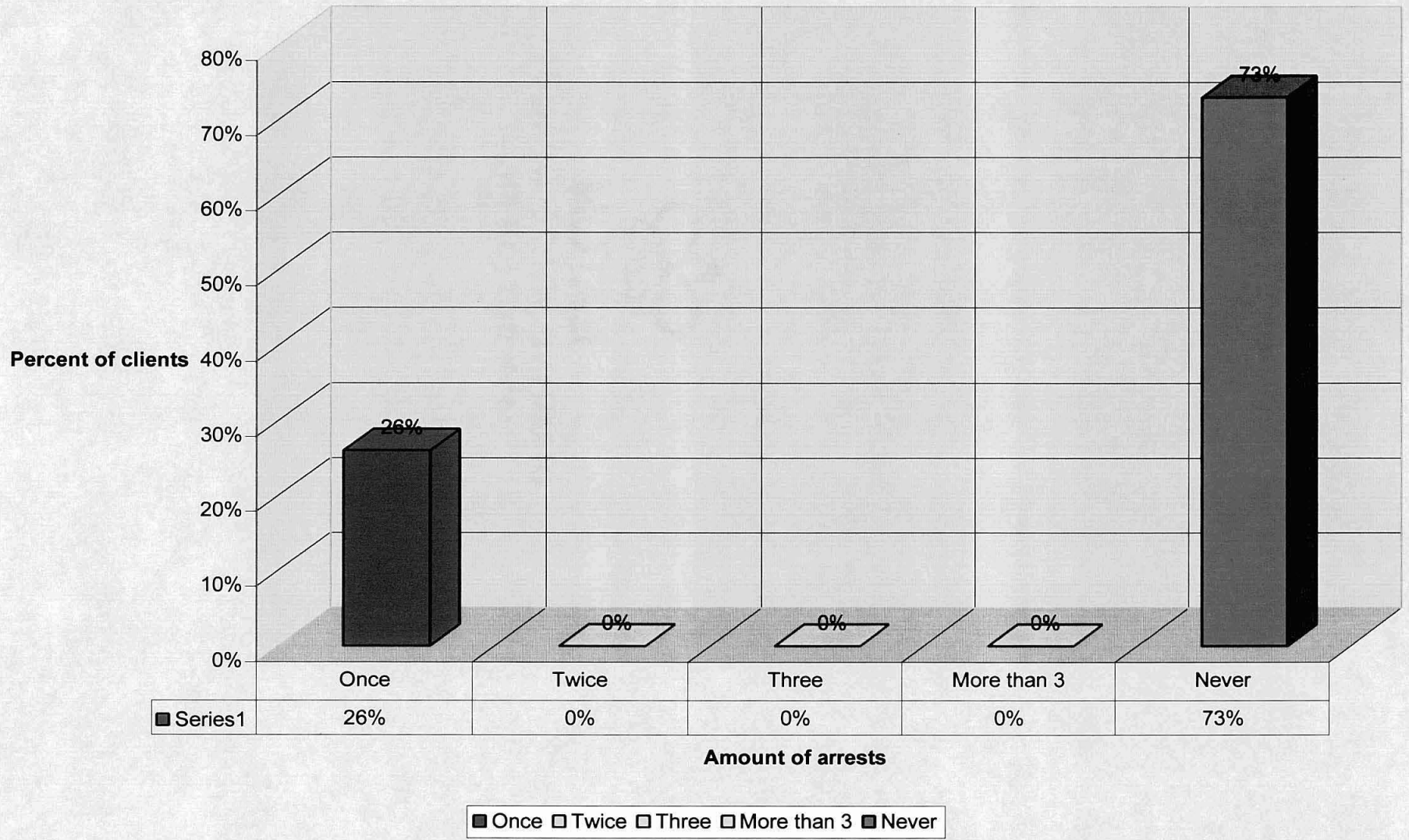
Quotes;

**“ I don’t know why I got arrested again! I just forgot all the stuff I learned. I don’t think anything could have helped me, I was too wrapped up in drugs.”**

**“I had lots of problems that no-one really knew about. It took a long time but I finally straightened out.”**

**“Hell no I never got arrested again! I never want to go through that again!”**

### Did You Get Re-Arrested?



### Question #3

**Did the idea of having a criminal record stop you from doing another crime?**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Slightly</i>
<b>96%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3%</b>

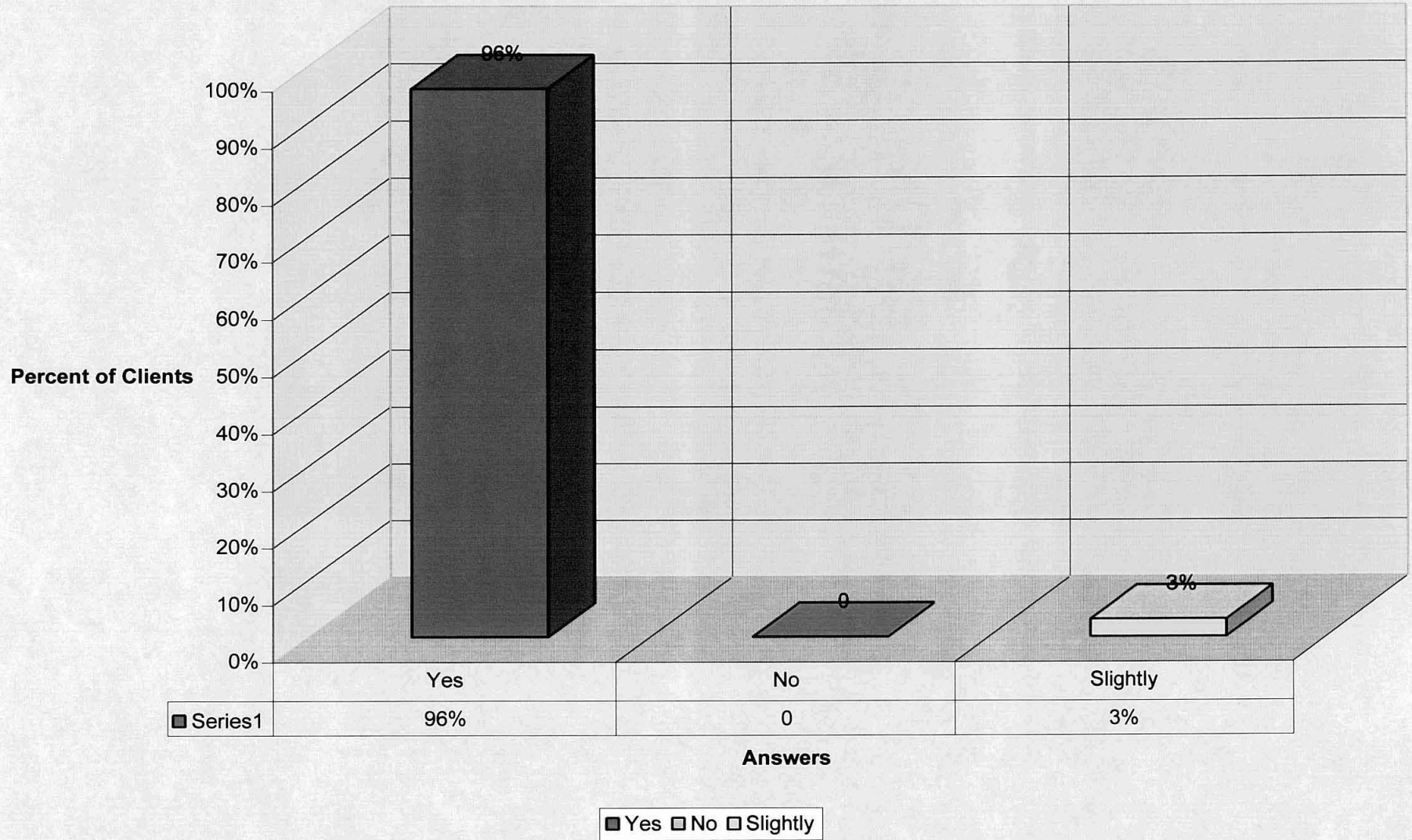
Education is a major component of the Boynton Beach Police department Juvenile First Offender Program. Positive decision-making and avoiding a criminal record is a very large component of the education process. Question #3 is designed to find out whether the fear of possessing a criminal record entered into the decision-making process and deterred the juvenile from re-offending. Twenty-nine clients, or 96%, of juveniles surveyed advised that they did in fact think about having a criminal record before they made a bad decision to re-offend and that this fact stopped them from doing further crime. Since a major segment of the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program is devoted to educating the juvenile on the consequences of possessing a criminal record, This experience has seemed to have a permanent effect on the juvenile participants.

One client, or 3%, of all juveniles surveyed advised that the thought of possessing a criminal record did not deter them from committing further crime. (+ Or – 1%)

**Quotes:**

**“Definitely, the program drilled that into me. I wanted to go into the service and I knew that I couldn’t do that with a criminal record”**

### Criminal Record Detering Deviant Behavior



### Question #4

**Which Part of the program had the most positive impact on you?**

<i>Counseling</i>	<i>Ropes</i>	<i>Youth court</i>	<i>Jail Tour</i>	<i>Supervision</i>
53%	0	10%	26%	10%

The Boynton Beach police department juvenile First Offender program consisted of five major program components. Question #4 asked the juvenile participant, which of these components had the most positive impact on him or her. All program components serve their own special purpose. The separate program components serve to increase communication, build self-esteem, and educate the first offender. The majority of juvenile participants, or 53%, surveyed reported that the family group counseling had the most positive impact upon them. Since the family group counseling focuses on communication, this researcher concludes that parents and children needed help in communicating with each other. The second highest rating went to the jail tour, with 26% of juvenile participants reporting that this experience had the most positive effect on them. The tour was meant to bring reality to the juvenile and scare him or her from ending up in jail. From the high percentage rate of the answer, it can be concluded that this program component had a major effect upon the juvenile participants. Ten percent of the juveniles surveyed reported that the increased supervision while participating in the program had the most positive impact upon them. Most of

these juveniles lack parental supervision or refuse to let their parents supervise them. They have no choice while participating in this program but to allow the police department to monitor them at school and home. From this rating it can be assumed that control of the juvenile needs to be established and that the juveniles are aware that they need to be controlled. The youth court program also received a 10% rating. This program is based on shaming and educating the Juvenile First Offender. The juvenile is embarrassed when he or she has to appear before peers and judged for a criminal offense. The juvenile also gets to see firsthand what a court experience is like. This education is valuable for the juvenile in that he/she is allowed to experience court action without receiving a criminal record. The ropes course received a zero rating. The ropes course gives the juvenile an opportunity to achieve goals and take risks within a safe and controlled environment. (+ Or – 1%)

Quotes;

**“I hated that jail tour. I never want to go back. That’s all I needed to think about.”**

**“The counseling helped me and my parents communicate better.”**

**“ All I remember is having to wax that big police van with you watching. That was terrible. Now I am a massage therapist and doing great!”**

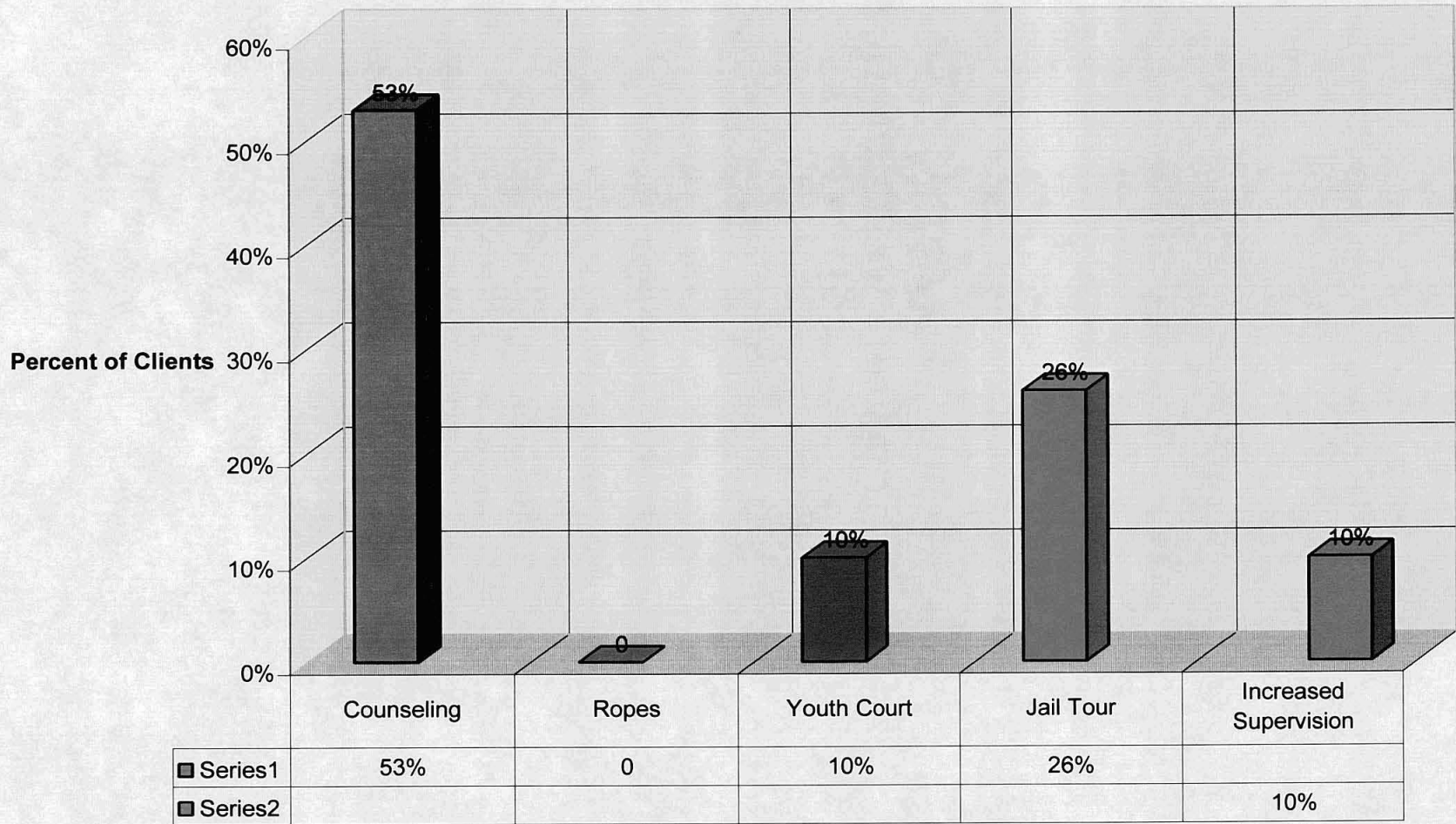


**“I hated having to clean that cemetery on Saturdays. I had to pick up garbage, When I should have been hanging with my friends.”**

**“Youth Court was really embarrassing. I knew some of the other kids there and they couldn’t believe I was there as a defendant.”**

**“It was embarrassing having to go to the office for a visit at school. Like I was a criminal or something.”**

### Most Effect



■ Series1 ■ Series2

### Question #5

#### **How did the community service project effect you?**

<i>Very Positive</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>No Effect</i>	<i>Got Worse</i>
<b>63%</b>	10%	23%	3%

The fifth question asked of the juvenile participant, what effect if any, the community service project had on him/her. There is no central clearinghouse for the performance of community service hours. This is a countywide problem. Juveniles and their parents are advised to go to any non-profit agency or religious organization in order to work off the community hours. Jobs can include picking up trash along the beach to additional jury duties at youth court. During the period of this study most juveniles participated in a co-operative community service project in which an abandoned cemetery was renovated. Not all juveniles participated in this project which can account for the differences in responses. Nineteen participants, or 63%, of all juveniles surveyed reported that the community service component had a positive effect on him/her. Twenty-three percent of juveniles surveyed advised that the service project had no impact on them. Three percent of juveniles surveyed advised that things actually got worse. This researcher observed that the harder and more unpleasant the task, the

higher the impact upon the juvenile. Juveniles who served extra jury duties or had easy jobs for community service were more likely to report that the community service had no effect upon them. (+Or- 1%)

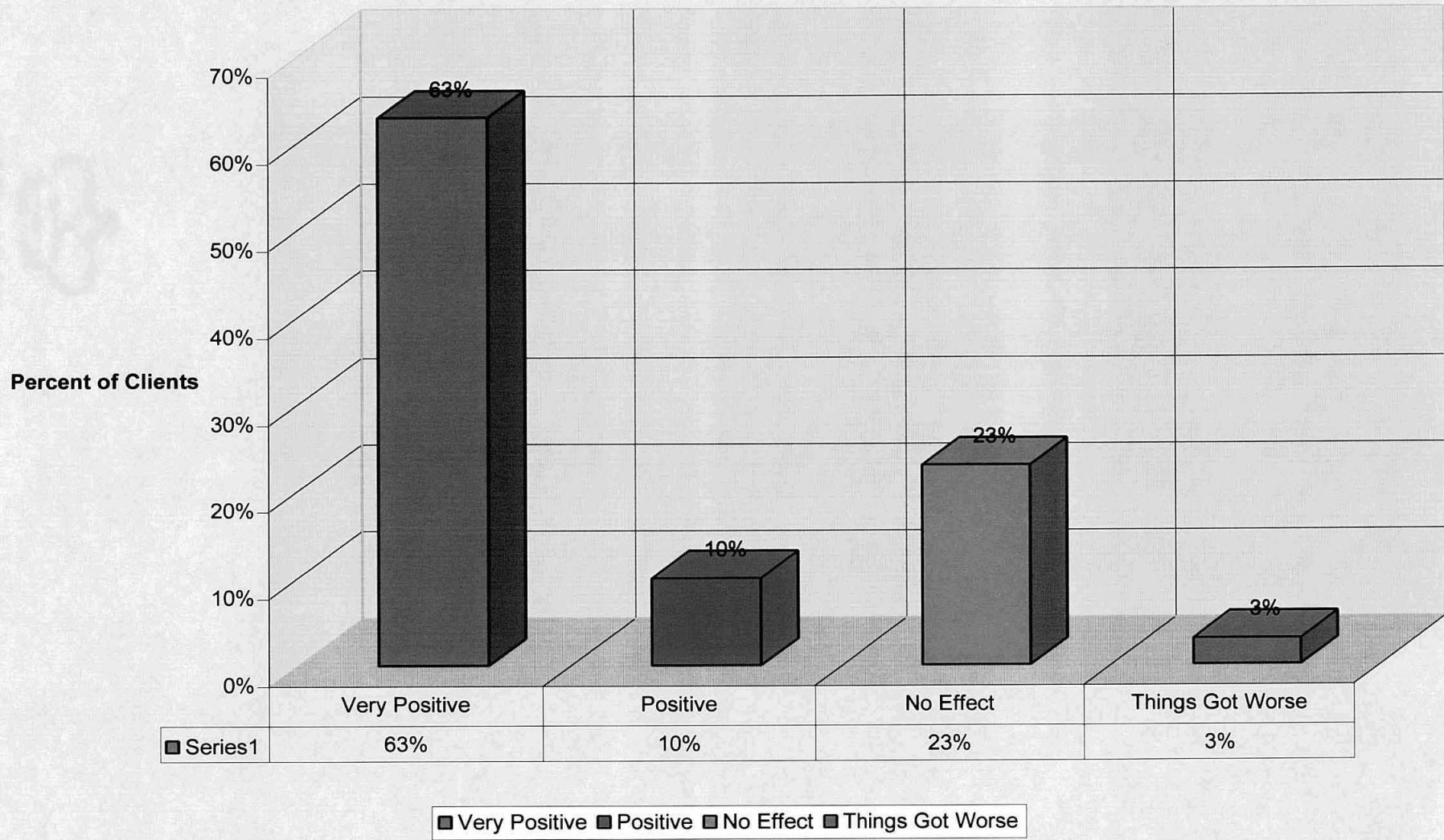
Quotes;

**“I hated cleaning that cemetery. It was hot and dirty.”**

**“I felt good about building a park for the kids. It was a lot of work but it was fun too.”**

**“I went to the soup kitchen. I liked helping the people that didn’t have anything.”**

### Did Community Service Effect You?



### Question #6

**Why did you commit the crime that led to your first arrest?**

<i>Peer Pressure</i>	<i>Money</i>	<i>Dare</i>	<i>Excitement</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
<b>43%</b>	10%	3%	26%	16%

Question #6 is an attitudinal question to find out what the juvenile participant perceived as the reason for their first arrest. Forty three percent advised that their friends influenced their decision to commit their first criminal offense. Peer pressure was the major response as to the cause of the first arrest. The second highest response was that the criminal act was committed by the juvenile for excitement reasons. This means that the juveniles were getting bored with their lives and craved excitement. Twenty-six percent of the juveniles reported that they committed their first criminal offense out of boredom. Sixteen percent of juveniles advised that they simply did not know why they committed their first criminal offense. Why this response? Does a juvenile really not know why the offense was committed? Did the juvenile not know how to answer the question? Or did he simply forget. Three percent of the juveniles surveyed reported that they committed their first criminal offense in response to a dare. (+ Or – 1%)

Quotes;

**“I really don’t know why I did it. I was bored and thought it would be fun.”**

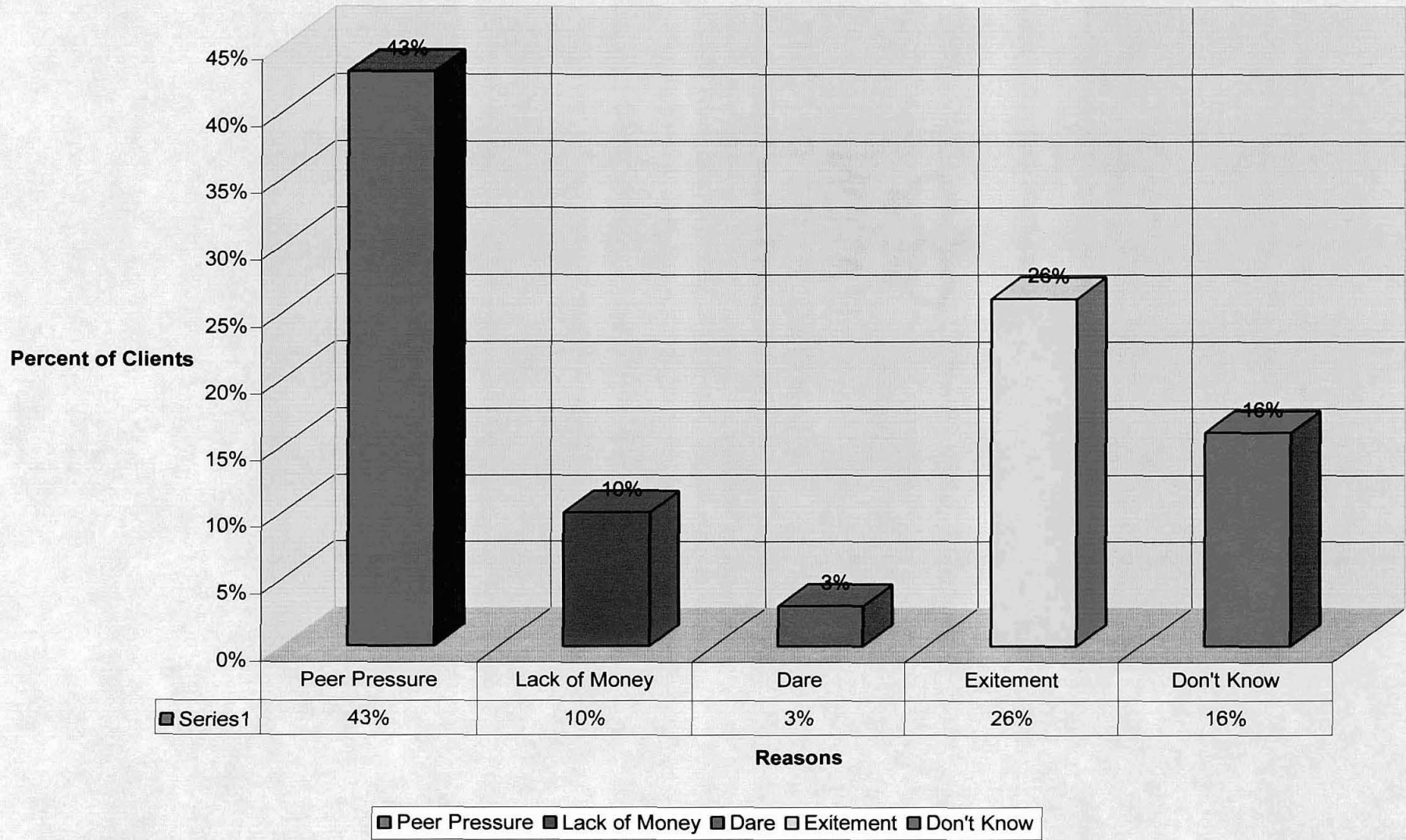
**“I had the money for the earrings. My friends said that it was easy to do at that store”**

**“All my friends were doing it so I thought that I would try it. I didn’t think that we would get caught.”**

**“I wanted it, but didn’t have the money.”**

**“My friends said that if I didn’t steal it they would beat me up”**

### Reason For Committing First Offense





# **Parental Questions**

## VII. PARENTAL QUESTIONS

Questions #7-15 are directed at the parents of the Juvenile First Offender. These questions were asked in an attempt to find out parental opinions of the program and to investigate the possibility of their role in the decision-making process of the juvenile first offender.

### Question #7

**How would you describe your marital status at the time of your son/daughters first arrest?**

<i>Divorced (Single)</i>	<i>Divorced (Remarried)</i>	<i>Married To Original Partner</i>
30%	26%	43%

Question #7 asked the parents about their marital status at the time of their child's first arrest. Over half or 56% of all parents reported that they were divorced. Thirty percent of parents reported that they were divorced and single at the time of arrest. Twenty six percent of parents were divorced and remarried. Less than half, or 43%, of all parents reported that they were married to their original partner at the time of arrest. Of this 43% of parents still married to their original partner, several reported that they were experiencing marital difficulties at the time of their son/ daughter arrest. This researcher believes that this statistic reveals that divorce and marital difficulties have a strong impact on decision making of juveniles. (+ Or –

1%)

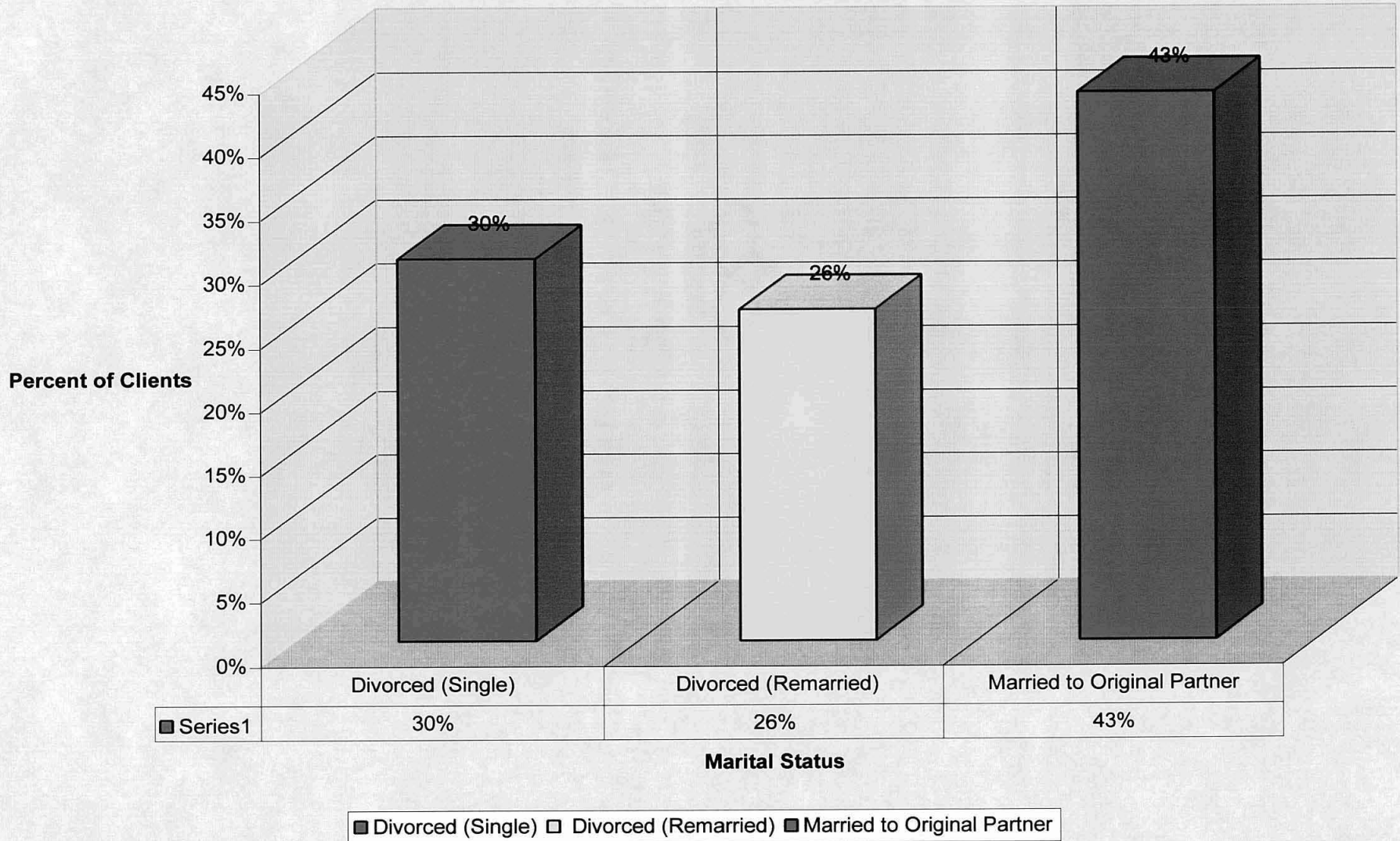
Quotes;

**“We’ve been married for 17 years. I don’t know why she did that. We’ve shown her lots of love”**

**“We were married but separated at the time she did this. I couldn’t keep a good eye on her.”**

**“I’m divorced and I know that he is mad that his dad is not around”**

### Marital Status At The Time Of Son/Daughter Arrest



**Question #8****Has either parent been arrested?**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
27%	73%

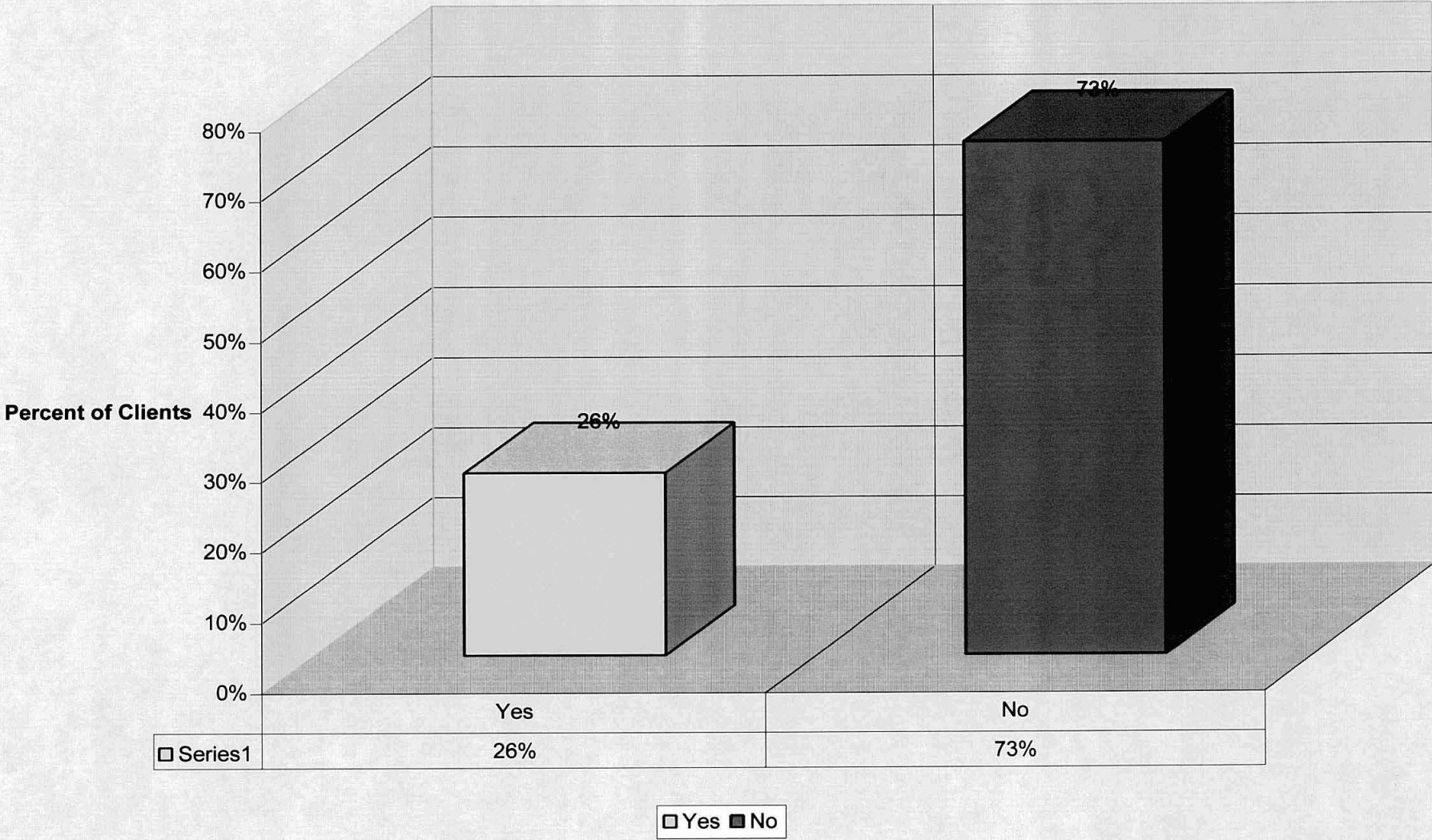
Question #8 is asked to see if there is a relationship between a parent being arrested and the child being arrested. One quarter, or 26%, of all parents surveyed reported that they had been arrested. This directly correlates with the re-arrest statistic reported in question #2, in which 26% of the juvenile participants were re-arrested after the program was over. 73% of parents reported that they had never been arrested. This statistic tends to point out that there is an effect on the child when a parent has been previously arrested.

Quotes:

**“ Yes, Both me and my husband have been arrested. You don’t think that matters do you?”**

**“Yes, it was for alcohol and drugs. All the charges were suspended though”**

# Has Either Parent Been Arrested?



### Question # 9

**What kind of sanctions did you give as parents?**

<i>More Sanctions</i>	<i>The Program Was Enough</i>
<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>

Question # 9 asked the parents whether they gave additional punishment other than the juvenile first offender program sanctions. There are many sanctions given by the first offender program, but only 53% of parents surveyed reported that they set further sanctions. Forty seven percent, or 14, parents thought the program was punishment enough. Further sanctions included grounding (staying home) and the revoking of phone privileges. Many parents would not let the juvenile leave the home except for attending school.

Quotes;

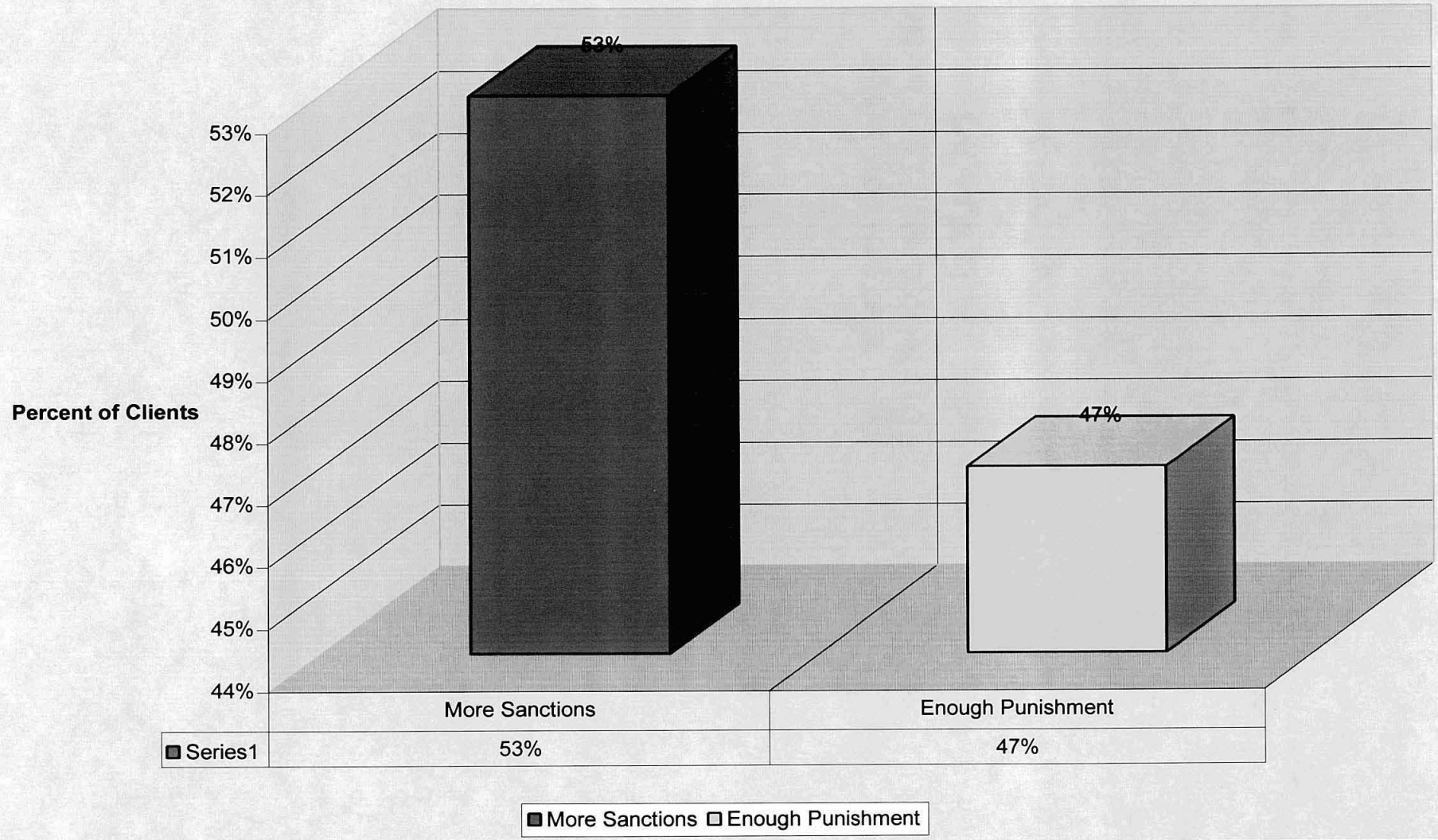
**“ I grounded and restricted him”**

**“ I took away the phone and made her change friends”**

**“ I gave a curfew and took away all privileges. I also made him read”**

**“ The program was enough. He got ‘scared straight’.”**

### Did Parents Give Additional Sanctions?





### Question # 10

**Did you have any other problems with your child after the program was over?**

<i>No Problems</i>	<i>Slight Problems</i>	<i>More Problems</i>
<b>56%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>

Question #10 asked the parent whether they experienced further problems with their child after the program was over. There is no formal after care component attached to this program and clients were not contacted after the program completion. This question attempted to find out whether the program had a lasting effect on the juvenile. Fifty six percent of the parents surveyed reported that they did not experience any more problems with their child after the program was over. Twenty three percent of the parents surveyed reported that they experienced slight problems, and 21% reported that they experienced more serious problems. This correlates with the re-arrest rate statistic of 26% asked in question #2, in which eight juveniles got arrested after completing the program .The parents that reported more serious problems with their children were the same families in which juveniles were re-arrested after program completion.

Quotes:

**“ We found evidence of sexual abuse with my daughter. (Child on child rape). She ended up having to go though extensive counseling. She is much better now.”**

**“My daughter ended up getting pregnant and having a baby. This was the best thing that ever happened to her. She is a wonderful mother and couldn’t be happier.”**

**“Slightly more problems. I couldn’t stop him from hanging out with his old crowd.”**

**“ We had more problems. Nothing could have helped him at that point. He ended up getting arrested again after the program was over. He outgrew all that; he is much better now.”**

### Question # 11

**What effect did the first offender program have on the life of your child?**

<i>No effect</i>	<i>Slight Effect</i>	<i>Major Effect</i>
3%	30%	66%

Question # 11 is an opinion-related question and asks whether the parent believes that the First Offender Program had an impact on their child. **Ninety six percent of the parents reported that the first offender program impacted their child.** Sixty six percent reported that the program had a major effect, and thirty percent of parents reported a slight impact. Three percent of parents reported that the program had no effect. This statistic proves that the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program impacted the lives of these juveniles and was beneficial to the community, an outcome, which will be further, explored in the conclusion of this paper.

(+ Or – 1%)

Quotes:

**“ That program was the best thing that ever happened to my son. He now understands the consequences of his actions.”**

**“ Slight, the program did a lot but she continued to act up. I really couldn’t get a handle on her.”**

**“We really enjoyed the program. My other son participated in the counseling and it brought our family much closer.”**

**“The program had a major effect. Thank you.”**

**Question # 12**

**What aspect of the first offender program worked best for you child?**

<i>Family Counseling</i>	<i>Community service</i>	<i>Increased supervision</i>	<i>Youth Court</i>	<i>Ropes</i>	<i>Jail Tour</i>	<i>All</i>
23%	23%	16%	26%	3%	3%	3%

Question # 12 was designed to find out from the parents which component of the first offender program worked best for their child. This is an opinion-gauged question directed at the outcome behavior of the juvenile. Twenty-three percent, or seven parents stated that family group counseling had the most effect. Twenty three percent or seven parents also advised that community service had the most effect upon their child. Sixteen-percent, or five parents reported that increased supervision worked best for their child. Twenty-six percent, or eight, parents reported that youth court had the most effect on their child. Three-percent, or one parent, reported that the ropes course had the most effect upon their child. Three-percent, or one parent, reported that the jail tour had the most effect on their child. Three percent or one parent reported that all the program components had a great effect upon their child. (+ Or-1%)

Quotes;

**“ My son really enjoyed the police aspect of the program. I think that being around a police officer really helped him.”**

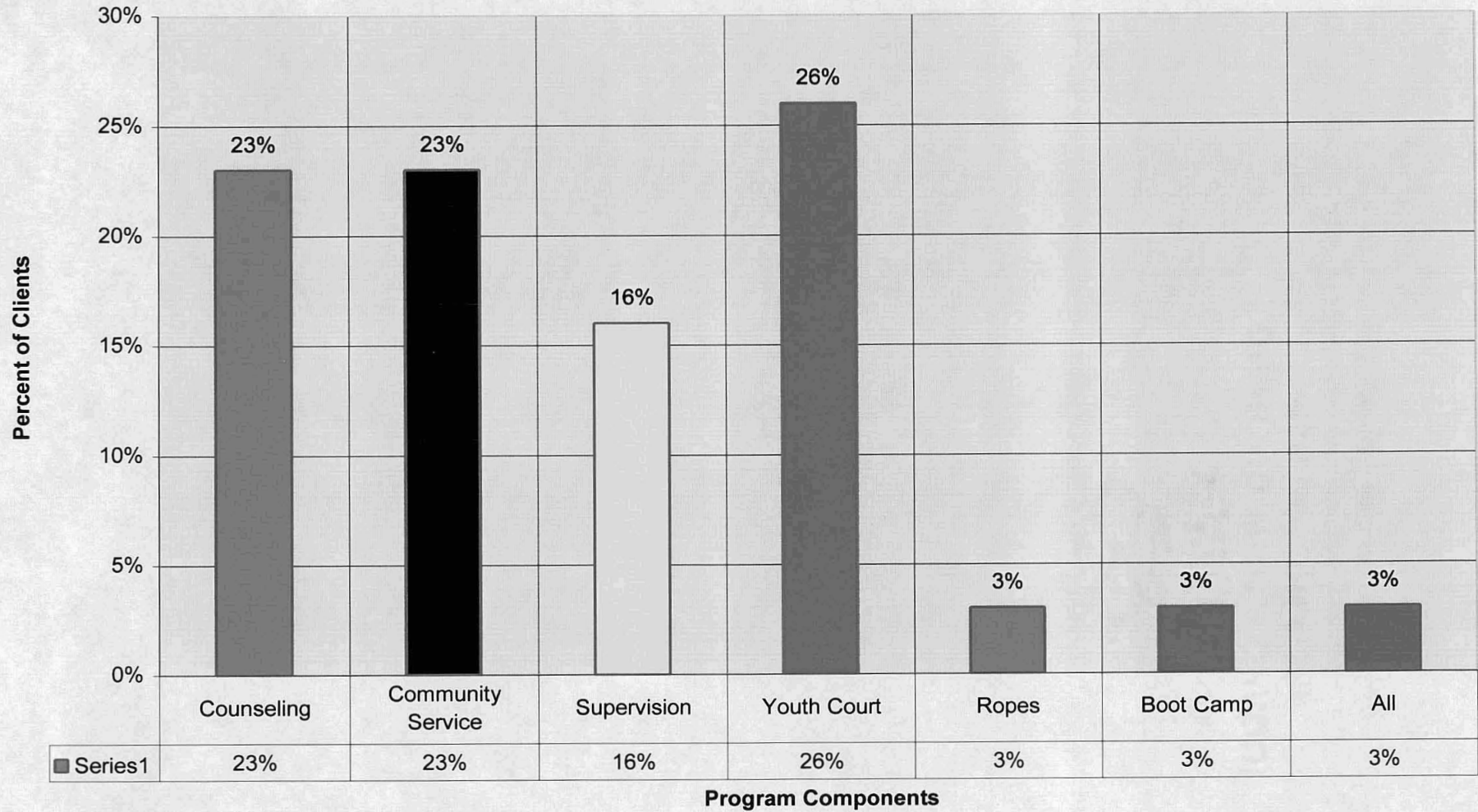
**“ That jail tour scared the hell out of her.”**

**“My daughter still talks about that ropes course. It really made her feel good about herself.”**

**“ The counseling was the best! It helped all of us communicate better.**

**“ Youth court really embarrassed her. It showed her what it feels like to be in real court.”**

### What Worked Best?



■ Counseling ■ Community Service □ Supervision ■ Youth Court ■ Ropes ■ Boot Camp ■ All

### Question # 13

**What could have been done differently, or what could have been added to the program to make it better?**

<i>More supervision</i>	<i>More sanctions</i>	<i>More Counseling</i>	<i>Nothing</i>
<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>30%</b>

Question #13 asked the parent if there could be improvements made in the first offender program. Forty-seven percent, or seventeen parents, reported that they would have liked more counseling. During counseling communication between the parent and the juvenile was established. It is no surprise that the parents wanted more communication between them and their children. Thirteen-percent, or four parents, wanted more supervision and ten percent, or three parents, requested more sanctions. Thirty-percent, or six parents, were happy with the program and reported that nothing could be added to make the program better. (+ Or -1%)

Quotes:

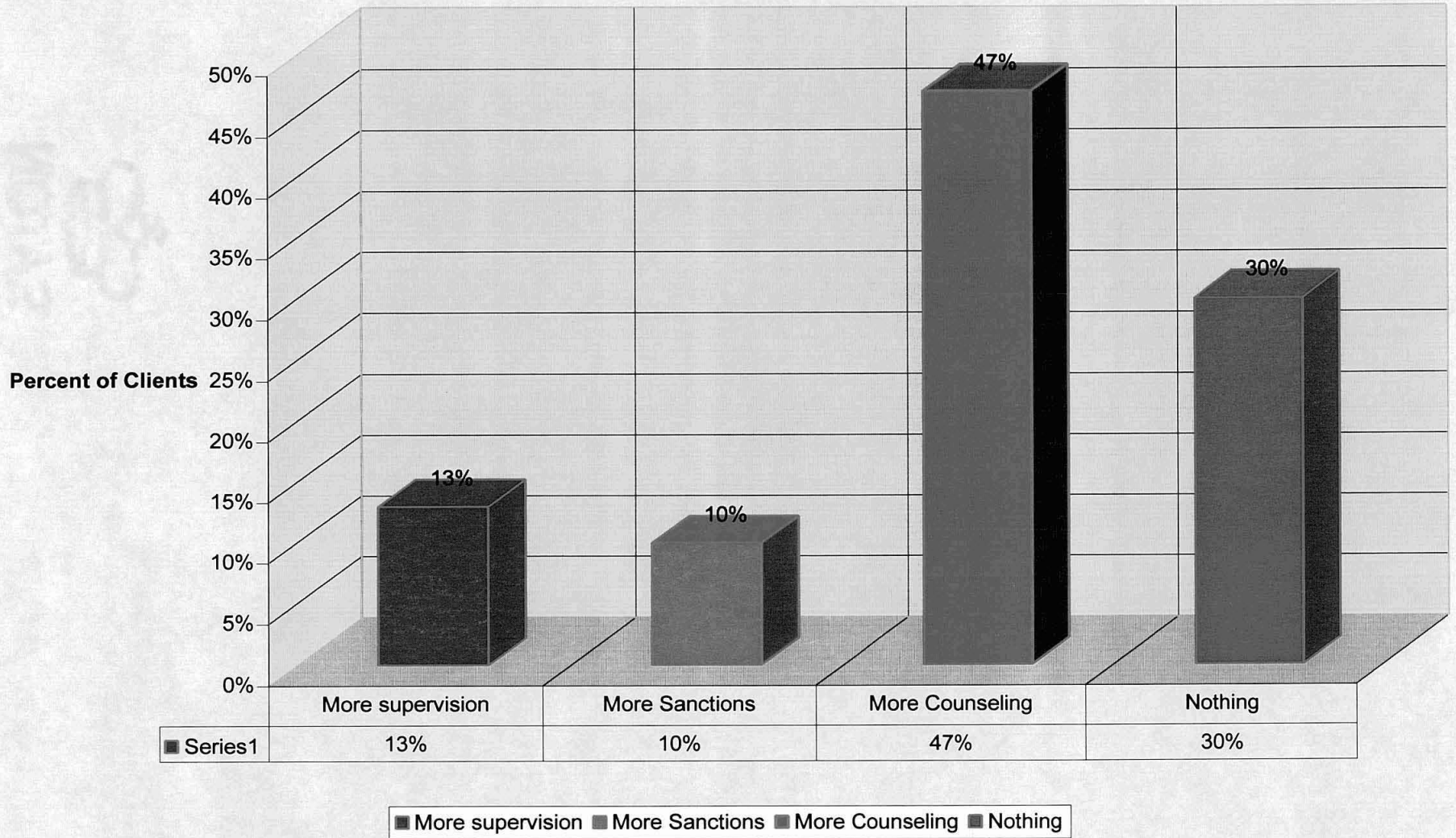
**“The program was fine the way it is. I can’t think of anything that should be added.”**

**“The counseling was great. I would have liked more counseling.”**

**“The supervision by the administrating officer was what kept him in line. I would have liked to see more of that and for a longer time.**



### What Could Make The Program Better?



### Question # 14

**Did your son/daughter change friends after the arrest?**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>No</i>
76%	0	24%

Question # 14 was asked to the parents to find out whether their child changed friends after they got arrested. Seventy-six percent, or twenty three parents, reported that their child changed friends after they were arrested. Zero percent reported that they slightly changed friends. Twenty four percent, or seven parents, advised that their child did not change friends after the first arrest.

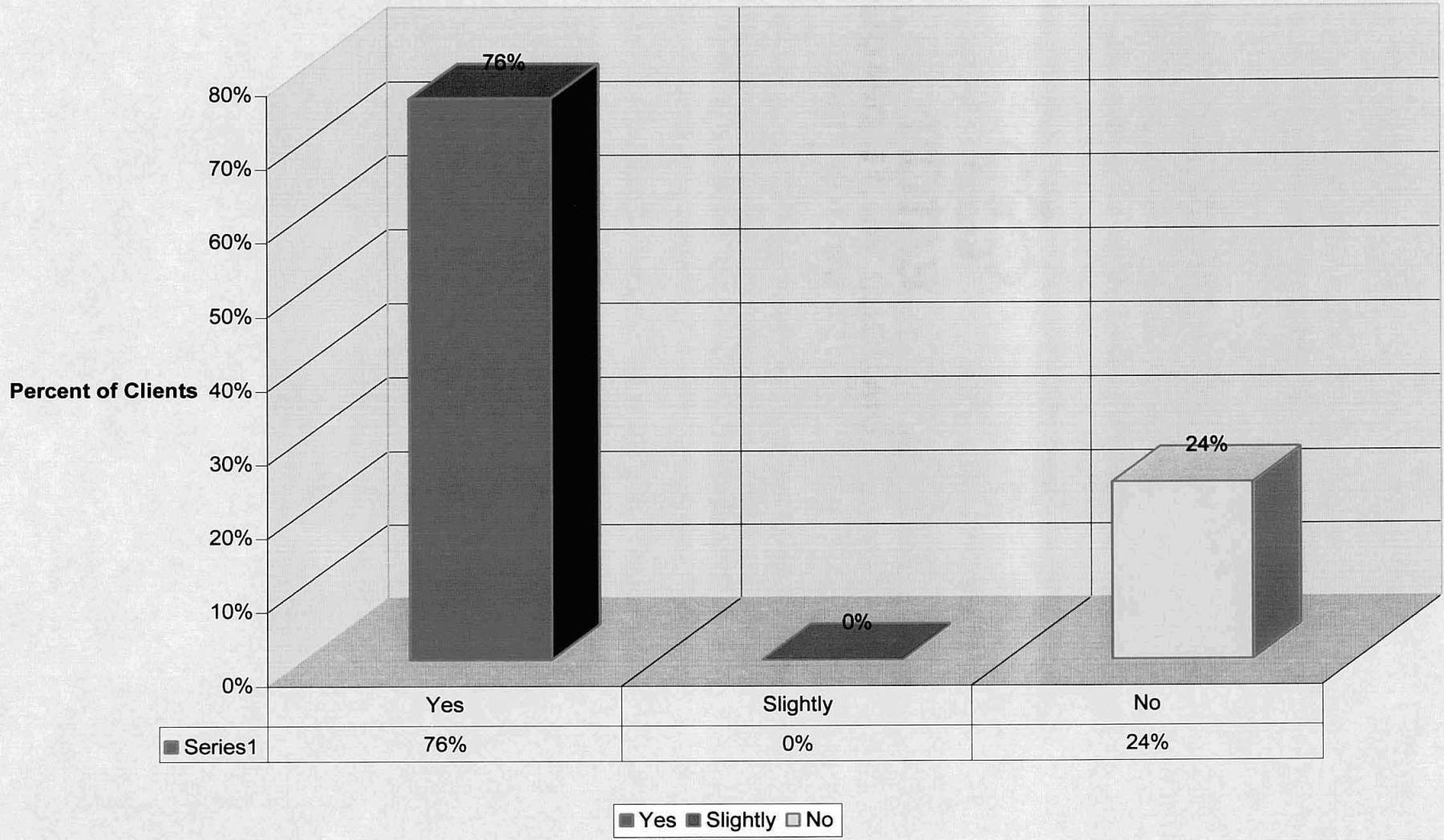
Quotes:

**“Yes, I took her out of school and home-schooled her. She also started going to church.”**

**“ I put him on total restrictions and he wasn’t allowed to see any of his old friends”**

**“ His friends weren’t the bad ones. My son was the bad influence, so I didn’t care if he hung out with his old friends.”**

### Did Your Child Change Friends?



### Question # 15

**What do you think the major reason was for your son/daughter getting arrested?**

<i>Peer Pressure</i>	<i>Family Problems</i>	<i>Lack of Money</i>	<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Other Influences</i>
<b>80%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3%</b>

Question # 15 was designed to gauge the opinion of parents as to the cause of their child's first arrest. Eighty-percent, or twenty four parents, reported that peer pressure was the major factor influencing the juvenile at the time of arrest. Three-percent, or one parent, reported that family problems were a major influence. Three-percent or one parent reported that the lack of money was a major contributing influence. Ten-percent or three parents, reported that drugs had a major influence on their child. Three-percent or one parent reported that other influences had a major effect on their child. (+ Or -1%)

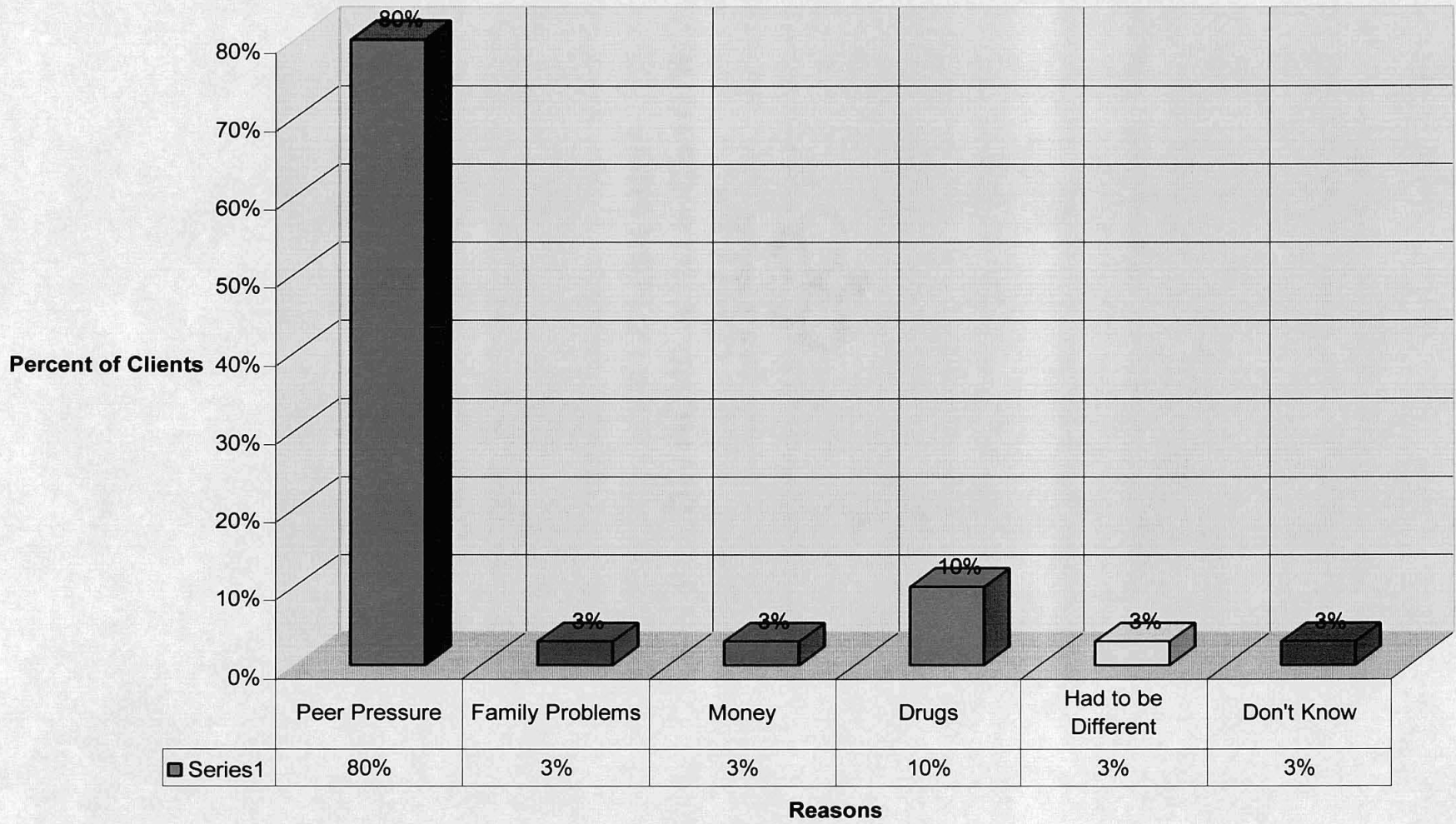
Quotes:

**“ My daughter just had to be different. It was as if she was looking for attention.”**

**“Peer pressure was definitely the main influence. I hated the kids that my son was hanging around with.”**

**“He is much better now. But he still hangs out with those dregs.”**

### Why Do You Think Your Child First Got Arrested?



■ Peer Pressure ■ Family Problems ■ Money ■ Drugs □ Had to be Different ■ Don't Know

**“He is still in high school and plans to be a technical specialist working with his hands.”**

# **Comparison Analysis**

### VIII. Comparison Between Parent And Child Regarding Effectiveness Of Program Components

	<i>Parent</i>	<i>Juvenile</i>
<i>Counseling</i>	53%	23%
<i>Community Service</i>	0%	23%
<i>Increased Supervision</i>	10%	16%
<i>Youth Court</i>	10%	3%
<i>Ropes</i>	0%	3%
<i>Boot Camp</i>	26%	3%
<i>All Sanctions Worked</i>	0%	3%

Offenders and parents were asked the same questions with some interesting results. Question #4 asked the Juvenile First Offender to report which part of the program had the most positive effect on him or her. Fifty-three percent of the juveniles reported that the counseling had the most positive impact upon them, followed by the jail tour at 26%. On the other hand, twenty-three percent of the parents reported that the counseling had the most positive effect on their child, and the jail tour rated only three percent. These differing statistics reveal at least some lack of communication between the parents and juvenile and demonstrate the counseling component of the program is more important to the juvenile than the parents realize. The jail tour is a very important aspect of the program as reported by the juveniles. Since the parent does not go on the jail tour with the juvenile, the



discrepancy of opinions can be understood. Parents seemed to think that the youth court had more effect on the juvenile with ten percent of the juveniles reporting that the youth court had a major effect on them and 26% of parents stating that youth court had a major effect. These statistics are not very far apart, but this researcher believes that the parent was more affected by the youth court program than was the juvenile. This can be attributed to the parental observation of many positive youths participating in a program in which that their child was the defendant.

### **Comparison between Parent And Juvenile Regarding Effect Of Program On The Life Of The Juvenile**

	<i>Parent</i>	<i>Juvenile</i>
<i>Positive</i>	66%	96%
<i>Slight</i>	30%	0%
<i>Negative</i>	0%	0%
<i>None</i>	3%	3%

Question # 1 and question # 11 asked the juvenile and the parent if the Juvenile First Offender Program had an effect on his or her life. 96% of the juveniles reported that the program had a positive effect on their lives. In question # 11, 66% of parents advised that the program had a major effect on their child and 30% of parents reported that the program had a slight effect;

a total of 96% of clients stated that the program affected them.

These two statistics correlate exactly, with 96% of parents and the juveniles reporting that the program had an effect on the juvenile.

### **Comparison Between Parents And Juveniles Regarding Reason For Arrest**

	<i>Parent</i>	<i>Juvenile</i>
<i>Peer Pressure</i>	80%	43%
<i>Lack Of Money</i>	0%	10%
<i>Dare</i>	0%	3%
<i>Excitement</i>	0%	26%
<i>Don't Know</i>	3%	16%
<i>Family Problems</i>	3%	0%
<i>Drugs</i>	10%	0%
<i>Had To Be Different</i>	3%	0%

Question #6 and question #15 asks the parent and the juvenile what they thought was the major reason for the arrest. Forty-three percent of the juveniles reported that peer pressure was the major cause for their first arrest. Eighty-percent of parents reported that they believed peer pressure was the major cause for the first offense. It seems that the parents want to blame the children's friends more than the children do. Twenty-six percent of the juveniles reported that they were bored and committed the crime because they wanted some excitement. This reason was not reported by any parents. Question #14 asks parents if the juvenile changed friends after the

arrest. Seventy-six percent reported that their son/daughter changed friends after the arrest. This correlates with the question #15 in which 80% of the parents reported that peer pressure was the cause of the arrest. The data clearly shows that parents made their children change friends after the arrest

## **IX. Conclusion**

The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender program began with the goal of diverting first offenders from the criminal justice system and making sure that they stay out of future trouble. According to the research conducted in this study, this program had a very positive effect on the parents and the juveniles. All the main components of the first offender program were shown to have a positive effect on the family, with the exception of the Ropes Course, which showed juveniles reported as having no effect . Prior to this study, this researcher believed the program was having a positive effect on the lives of the first offender juveniles. Now through the results of this study, these positive aspects of the program have been measured and can be discussed and supported.

Nearly all the juveniles and most of the parents reported that the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program had a positive effect on the lives of the juveniles. Most of the quotes and comments were very positive. Parents and juveniles were eager to share their experience with this researcher.

This researcher believes that all components are vital to The Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program and nothing should be deleted or omitted. The two most important components, as measured in the

study, are the family group counseling and the youth court. The least important component is the ropes course. The re-arrest rate while the juveniles were participating in this program was 3%. When the juveniles were surveyed after the program completion, it was found that at least one fourth, or 26%, of the juveniles were re-arrested. The first arrest of a juvenile was found to be a symptomatic problem occurring within the life of the juvenile. Whether it was peer pressure, family problems, or lack of excitement, the juvenile was in a state of crisis and in need of some type of assistance. Counseling and education in most cases will help an individual, so it was no surprise that most participants enjoyed the program and benefited from their participation

## **X. Recommendations;**

### **Program length**

Through the questionnaire used in this study this researcher found that an extraordinary number of juveniles, 26%, were getting arrested after completing the program. It was found through research that some juveniles who commit their first offense would never get into trouble again. On the other hand, other juveniles present a greater risk to themselves and to the community. A risk assessment instrument should be designed to assess the

juvenile and his or her specific situation. The use of a risk assessment form can help tailor program length to an individual's needs. Some Juvenile First Offenders may have to be supervised until they are 18 and others only need to be supervised until they have completed the program sanctions. Questions for the risk assessment instrument should be designed by a therapeutic counselor (MSW or above) and should focus on family problems, substance abuse, peer affiliation, school performance, and the juvenile's overall attitude. It should be noted that not all juveniles can be saved, but with increased supervision the possibility of further arrests should decrease.

### **Increased Supervision**

While participating in the Boynton Beach Juvenile first Offender Program the juvenile is heavily monitored for the first three months of the program. This is the time when participants are attending youth court, family counseling, and performing community service hours. If they fail to participate in the program, they are dropped. After successfully completing the first three months, the Juvenile First Offender enters a monitoring phase. This is where surprise school visits and home visits are conducted on the juvenile on a monthly basis.

For higher risk juveniles, increased supervision will increase their

chances of staying out of trouble. More school visits and home visits should be conducted, as well as phone calls to the home. An additional jail tour should be scheduled for the higher risk juveniles and further counseling should be facilitated for the families. The administrator can outsource much of these services with local non-profit groups. The high-risk juveniles should be re-evaluated with the risk assessment instrument on a yearly basis.

### **Change friends**

Nearly all juveniles and most parents reported that peer pressure led to the first arrest. A sanction should be designed to deal with this factor. The juvenile should be required to find new friends after the arrest and drop those that encouraged the crime. This should be monitored by parents and reported to the administrating officer. This arrangement should be discussed and approved by the parents at the intake interview. If the juvenile refuses to change friends or does not agree to the monitoring then he/she should be dropped from the program. This will be a hard sanction to enforce. Friends are a very large component in a teenager's life and resistance to this sanction should be expected. Parents will need to use discretion and patience when dealing with this particular sanction.

## **Community Service Organizer**

Community service hours are given to every juvenile first offender participating in the program. This sanction is universal in most diversion programs as a way for the offender to give back to the community they have harmed. At the present time juveniles are referred out to non-profit and religious organizations to perform their own community service. A central clearinghouse should be developed to handle and organize community service projects. The program coordinator can develop and implement projects that are based upon the “**balanced approach**”, which involves giving back to victims and the community and at the same time educating the defendant. The person co-ordinating the project can be a screened volunteer or a paid employee. Funds can be solicited from government or non-profit sources via a grant application.



# Case Studies

**XI. Case Study #1**  
**John Doe**  
**16 years old**  
**(Personal Interview 9-15-00)**

At the time of this interview John was 16 years of age. The interview took place on 9-15-00, at 11:00 PM, at Fairlanes Bowling alley in Boynton Beach Florida (Palm Beach County). This researcher was working as a uniformed police officer and was working for the bowling alley. John was loitering in the parking lot and submitted to this interview freely and voluntarily.

John was arrested for the first time on 5-12-96 for the crime of shoplifting. Thirteen years of age at the time of the arrest, he was living at his home in Boynton Beach, Fl. His parents were never divorced and were having a hard time managing him. John's school grades were falling and he was starting to skip classes. He spent five months in the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender program and was re-arrested for burglary on 10-26-97, at which time the original charge of shoplifting was filed.

John successfully completed all program components in the Boynton Beach Juvenile First Offender Program. He attended the family group counseling with his father. He exhibited no signs of abnormal behaviors and did well in counseling. He participated in youth court and received 25 hours of community service and five jury duties. John successfully participated in

the jail tour and again exhibited no outward signs of behavior problems. He attended the ropes course and worked well with the rest of the group. After the first three months, John was placed in the monitoring phase of the program. However, he continued to fail in school and was finally re-arrested.

John's second arrest was for burglary. After this arrest, John stated that it became easier to commit criminal acts. He was arrested for domestic violence in which he assaulted his father. He began to smoke marijuana and dropped out of school. "I was hanging around the wrong kids. They were bad influences. I didn't care about anything anymore." He was arrested again for domestic battery for attacking his brother. John advised that he started doing auto burglaries and car thefts. He was finally arrested for possession of marijuana and was sent to a Level six juvenile corrections facility. A level six juvenile corrections facility is a maximum level state of incarceration in which the offender is incarcerated twenty four hours a day.

This researcher asked John why he started doing crime and what caused the anger that he was feeling. He stated, "I am mad at my dad. I never felt loved at home. My father was there but he never cared. He never spent time with me when I was growing up. I felt abused as a kid because he would hit me a lot. I just figured that I got away with so much and that I would never get caught." This researcher asked John if the juvenile first

offender program had an effect on him. He replied, "Actually it did. I hated picking up trash in that cemetery and youth court was a little scary. Getting up in front of all those other kids and all." John reported that although the first offender program had an effect on him, nothing would have kept him from doing more crime. John has been out of incarceration for three months and advised that he is enrolled in public high school, where he is trying to earn his diploma. He maintained that he was not associating with bad kids, but in the next sentence he said that the previous week he had to get out of a stolen vehicle and walked home because he did not want to get into trouble again.

**Case Study #2**  
**Jane Doe**  
**20 years old**  
**(Personal Interview 6-30-00)**

Jane Doe is currently 19 years of age and gave this interview freely and voluntarily for this study. This interview was conducted on 6-30-00 on the phone. Jane was originally arrested for the misdemeanor crime of shoplifting on 2-4-95. She was 14 years old at the time of her first criminal offense.

Jane was visibly upset at her intake interview on 2-21-00. Her father and mother has never been divorced but were having marital difficulties at the time. She was arrested with a friend of hers who also participated in this program. Jane's father was a law enforcement officer and a local attorney employed her mother. This researcher decided to try an innovative approach to rehabilitation and required Jane to join the Boynton Beach Police Explorers. The Police Explorers are a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America and involve positive youth doing service for the community while learning about law enforcement. Jane had only to attend the family group counseling as a further sanction. Jane's parents wanted her to change friends so they agreed to the program change and guidelines.

Jane was required to participate with the Boynton Beach Explorer Post for one year, after which she was allowed to retire. Jane did well in the

Explorer Post and enjoyed being around new and positive teens. The assistant advisor, a positive female role model, became her new mentor. This individual was positive with Jane and offered her reinforcing praise. Jane started travelling with the Explorer Post and began excelling at every aspect of the police explorers. She not only stayed with the explorer post; she became a Captain and eventually a Major (the highest rank ever held by a Boynton Beach Police Explorer). Jane was selected as channel twelve teen of the month in 1998 and was featured on the nightly news. She was selected as Florida explorer of the year for 1998 and was chosen from a field of 2,000 other statewide explorers. Jane was able to earn several grant college scholarships from channel twelve, Target, and several other foundations. She is presently attending Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia, studying business administration.

This researcher asked Jane why she committed her first criminal offense and what was the cause of the action. Jane stated, "My friend was doing it and I really didn't think about it. It was such a stupid mistake. I was not hanging out with the right kind of kids. My family was going through a lot. Now that my parents are divorced things are better." This researcher asked Jane if the Juvenile First Offender program had a positive effect on her life. She stated, "Oh, my God, I would not be where I am at without you and

your wife. Thank God I got a second chance!"

## References

1. Brown, W.K. (1989) **The Effect of Early Adjudication on Adult Outcome.** International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, (pp.177-183) London, England: The Association.
2. Dodson, Michael, I. (1997-1998) **Mentors Help Save Kids From A Kid From A Second Mistake,** Citizens Powatomi Nation, (pp.1-2). Retrieved August 29, 2000 from Google database on the World Wide Web: <http://www.google.com>
3. Doe, Jane. (Personal Communication,2000)
4. Doe, John. (Personal Communication, 2000)
5. Fischer, D.G. (1986) **Diversion Follow-up: Recidivism and Participant Impressions.** Canadian Journal of Special Education, (pp. 127-133). Vancouver, Canada: University of Saskatchewan.
6. Funk Marcus T. (1996). **A Mere Youthful Indiscretion? Re-examining the Policy of Expunging Juvenile Delinquency, Records,** University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform, (pp. 1-34). Retrieved August 29, 2000, from NCJRS Virtual Library on the World Wide Web: <http://www.NCJRS.org/database.htm>
7. Hatcher, Susan (1998) **First Offender Programs: Working To Remove the Criminal Tendency from Juveniles.** Juvenile Law Section of the State Bar of Texas, (pp. 1-6). Retrieved August 29 2000 from Google database on the World Wide Web: <http://www.google.com>
8. Howard, Jeannie. (Personal Communication, 1993)



9. Koch Crime Institute, I. (1999). **Juvenile Offender Statutory Review.** Arkansas: Retrieved 6-27-00 from Google Database on the World Wide Web: <http://www.google.com>
10. Kramer, J.J. (1997) **An Outcome Study of the Diversion Plus Program for Juvenile Offenders.** Federal Probation, (pp. 51-56) Washington D.C.: U.S. G.P.O. Distributors.
11. McNeece, Aaron (1996) **Teen Courts in Marion and Hernando Counties Evaluation of 1996 Continuation Grant Activities.** State of Florida, Department of Community Affairs, (pp. 1-7). Retrieved on 6-27-00 at the Florida State University database on the World Wide Web: <http://www.criminology.FSU.edu/cj.html>
12. Minor, Kevin (1999) **Sentence Completion and Recidivism among Juveniles Referred to Teen Courts.** Crime and Delinquency, (pp.467-480). New York, N.Y.: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
13. Panzer, C. (1997). **Reducing Juvenile Recidivism through Pretrial Diversion Programs.** Journal of Juvenile Law, Vol. 18, 186-207. La Verne, Calif.
14. Severy, L.J., Whitaker J.M. (1982) **Juvenile Diversion-An experimental analysis.** Evaluation Review, (pp.753-774). Newbury Park, Ca.: Sage Publications.
15. Severy, L.J., Whitker J. M. (1984) **Service Accountability and Recidivism for Diverted Youth: Criminal Justice and Behavior**, (pp. 47-74). Beverly Hills, Ca.: Sage Publications.
16. Shur, E.M. (1971) **Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications.** New York: Harper and Row

17. Widom, Cathy (1986) **Juvenile Delinquency: Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology: Perspectives and Standards for Interdisciplinary Practice**, (pp.263-283) Philadelphia, Pa.: Davis Co.
18. Whitaker, (1982) **Diversion and Compusary Treatment: Schaffer Library of Drug Policy**, Retrieved 1-7-2000, from google database on the world wide web: <http://www.google.com>

# Appendix

## Juvenile First Offender Questionnaire

**Questions 1-10 will be directed toward the juvenile that directly participated in the program.**

- 1.) Did the first offender program have an impact on your life?
  - A.) Positive (29) 96%
  - B.) Negative (0)
  - B.) None (1) 3%
  
- 2.) Did you get arrested again and if so how many times? NONE
  - A.) Once (8) 26%
  - B.) Twice (0)
  - C.) Three times (0)
  - D.) More than three times (0)
  - E.) None (22) 73%
  
- 3.) Did the idea of having a criminal record stop you from doing another crime?
  - A.) Yes (29) 96%
  - B.) No (0)
  - C.) Slightly (1) 3%
  
- 4.) Which part of the program had the most positive impact on you?
  - A.) Counseling (16) 53%
  - B.) Ropes Course (0)
  - C.) Youth Court (3) 10%
  - D.) Boot Camp Tour/Jail Tour (8) 26%
  - E.) Increased Supervision (3) 10%

Why:

- 5.) What did you do for community service? How did the community service project effect you?
- A.) very positive (19) 63%
  - B.) positive (3) 10%
  - C.) no effect (7) 23%
  - D.) things got worse (1) 3%

Comments:

- 6.) Why did you commit the crime that led to your first arrest?
- A.) Peer Pressure (13) 43%
  - B.) Lack of Money (3) 10%
  - C.) Dare (1) 3%
  - D.) Excitement (8) 26%
  - E.) Don't Know (5) 16%

**Questions 7-15 will be directed toward the parents that directly participated in the program.**

7.) How would you describe your marital status at the time of your son/daughters first arrest?

- A.) Divorced (Single) (9) 30%
- B.) Divorced (remarried) (8) 26%
- C.) Married to original partner (13) 43%
- D.) Married (0)

8.) Has either parent ever been arrested?

- A.) Yes (8) 26%
- B.) No (22) 73%

9.) What kind of sanctions did you give as parents?

- A.) More Sanctions. Get Example (16) 53% \_\_\_\_\_
- B.) The program was enough punishment (14) 47%

10.) Did you have any other problems with your child after the program was over?

- A.) No Problems (17) 56%
- B.) Slight problems (7) 23%
- C.) More problems (6) 21%

11.) What effect did the first offender program have on the life of you child?

- A.) No Effect (1) 3%
- B.) Slight Effect (9) 30%
- C.) Major Effect (20) 66%

12.) What aspect of the first offender program worked best for your child?

- A.) Family Group Counseling (7) 23%
- C.) Community Service (7) 23%
- D.) Increased Supervision (5) 16%
- E.) Youth Court (8) 26%
- F.) Ropes (1) 3%
- G.) Boot Camp (1) 3%
- H.) All (1) 3%

13.) What would you like to have seen differently or what could have been added to the program to make it better?

- A.) More Supervision (4) 13%
- B.) More sanctions (3) 10%
- C.) More Counseling Offered (14) 47%
- D.) Nothing (9) 30%

14.) Did you son/ daughter change friends after the arrest?

- A.) Yes (23) 76%
- B.) Slightly (0)
- C.) No (7) 24%

15.) What do you think the major reason was for you son/daughter getting arrested?

- A.) Peer Pressure (23) 80%
  - B.) Family Problems (1) 3%
  - C.) Lack of Money (1) 3%
  - D.) Drugs (3) 10%
  - E.) Other Influences; Describe \_\_ (1) had to be different 3% (1) don't know 3%
- \_\_\_\_\_

# BOYNTON BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT JUVENILE FIRST OFFENDER PROGRAM

File Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## RISK ASSESSMENT

Factor	Scoring Measures
Attitude during Interview	0 - Good
TYC Commitment or out of home placement for 30 days or more	0 - None
Age (at time of assessment)	11 - 1
Drug/chemical abuse	0 - No know use; occasional abuse
Alcohol abuse	0 - No know use; occasional abuse
Parental control/influence	0 - Generally effective
School discipline/employment problems	0 - Attending school, training and/or working
Learning/academic performance problems	0 - No significant problems or not applicable
Runaway/behavior	0 - None
Negative peer influence	0 - None
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>	

Initial Assessment of Risk (using the total score above, check appropriate risk level):

- Low Risk (0-5)  
 Medium Risk (6-14)  
 High Risk (15+)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Select ALL applicable measures from column B; add together and choose level of need.

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Scoring Measures</u>	<u>Need Level</u>
Appearance of Youth	2 – Signs of alcohol use 2 – Signs of drug use 1 – Anger 1 – Non compliant 1 – Agitated 1 – Depressed 3 – Disoriented (time, place, person)	Low Need (0-2)
Violent Behavior	1 – Verbal threats to others 2 – Assaultive history 3 – Injured person, pet, animal 1 – Destruction of property 3 – Frequent violent episodes	Low Need (0-2)
Behavior History	3 – Arson, fire starting 3 – Suicide attempts 2 – Sexually acting out (offense, aggression, promiscuity) 1 – Property destruction 2 – Frequent fighting 1 – frequent lying 1 – frequent cheating 1 – frequent stealing	Low Need (0-2)
Peer Relationships	1 – Described as a loner 2 – Has no friends 2 – Friends-negative peer group 1 – Has no best friend	Low Need (0-2)
Disposition/Self-Image	1 – Mood swings-mild 3 – Mood swings-severe 1 – Self image-low 3 – Self image-very negative/inappropriate	Low Need (0-1)
Identity Problems	3 – Confusion related to sexual identity 1 – Does not “fit in” 1 – No direction/goals in life 1 – Fatalistic	Low Need (0-1)
Substance Abuse	2 – Alcohol-weekly or more often 3 – Cocaine-weekly or more often 2 – Marijuana-weekly or more often 3 – Inhalants-weekly or more often 3 – Other illegal drug-weekly or more often	Low Need (0)
History of Abuse	3 – Physical 4 – Sexual 3 – Emotional 3 – Self (mutilation, scarring)	Low Need (0)
Developmental History	1 – Hyperactivity 1 – Hypoactivity 1 – Encopresis 1 – Enuresis 1 – Developmental lags	Low Need (0-2)

While scoring in two or more areas of high need would appear to warrant consideration of psychological testing, screening or referral to other services. Medium need scores may or may not be considered using a judgement call by the evaluator.

We do not recommend psychological testing, screening or referral to another agency based on the results of this assessment.

Relevant testing or screening instruments previously administered for this juvenile have been secured.

We recommend psychological testing, screening or referral to another agency with specific problems as follows:

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**EDUCATIONAL STATUS NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Select ALL applicable measures from column B; add together and choose level of need.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Scoring Measures</b>	<b>Need Level</b>
Education Status	1 – Attending alternative school program 2 – Dropped out	Low Need (0)
Attendance History	1 – Some problem 3 – Chronic truancy	Low Need (0)
School Behavior	1 – Little participation (activities) 1 – Minor infractions 3 – Major/chronic (suspended, expelled)	Low Need (0-2)
Academic Difficulties	1 – Low achievement 2 – Below appropriate grade level 2 – Reading, writing, language deficiency 3 – Coded ED 2 – Coded LD 2 – Coded MR 2 – Health issues (visual, hearing, speech)	Low Need (0-2)

Students scoring in two or more areas of high need would appear to warrant consideration of psychological testing, screening or referral to other services. Medium need scores may or may not be considered using a judgement call by the evaluator.

Do not recommend psychological testing, screening or referral to another agency based on the results of this assessment.

Relevant testing or screening instruments previously administered for juvenile have been secured.

Recommend psychological testing, screening or referral to another agency with specific problems as follows:

---



---



---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## FAMILY STATUS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Select ALL applicable measures from column B; add together and choose level of need.

Factor	Scoring Measures	Need Level
Relationship	2 – Non-supportive 2 – Lack of stability 3 – Disorganized/chaotic	Low Need (0)
Parental Supervision	2 – Poor parenting skills 2 – Ineffective/inadequate discipline 1 – Inconsistent expectations 4 – Contribute/encourage delinquency 3 – No supervision/limits	Low Need (0-1)
Parent/Family Problems	2 – Emotional instability 3 – Psychiatric 3 – Criminality 2 – Substance Abuse 3 – Family violence 2 – Marital discord	Low Need (0-2)
Family History	1 – Single parent 1 – Remarried 0 – Never divorced	Low Need (0)
Prior arrest of parents	2 – Yes 0 – No	Low Need (0)

• If scores scoring in one or more areas of high need would appear to warrant consideration of psychological testing, screening or referral to other services. Medium need scores may or may not be considered using a judgement call by the evaluator.

• Do not recommend psychological testing, screening or referral to another agency based on the results of this assessment.

• If relevant testing or screening instruments previously administered for juvenile have been secured.

• If we recommend psychological testing, screening or referral to another agency with specific problems as follows:

---



---



---

Officer's Signature

Date