

# **EVALUATION OF THE SOUTH OXNARD CHALLENGE PROJECT 1997-2001**

**Susan Turner, Amber Schroeder, Terry Fain,  
Jodi Lane, and Joan Petersilia**

**RAND**

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**January 2002**

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**Ventura County Probation Agency**

**Calvin C. Remington**  
Chief Probation Officer

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ISBN: 0-8330-3136-8

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Published 2002 by RAND

1700 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

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## **PREFACE**

Despite the overall decline in adult crime rates in the 1990s, crime experts have cautioned that youth crime was increasing at an alarming rate. Researchers and practitioners alike have noted the importance of focusing our anti-crime efforts on this youth population and on developing new and innovative approaches to the problem. In 1996 the California Legislature indicated their intent to reduce the rate of juvenile violent crime in the state by passing Senate Bill 1760 establishing Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Challenge Grants. The first "Challenge Grants" provided approximately 50 million dollars for 14 counties to develop comprehensive, multi-agency plans designed to provide a "continuum" of responses to juvenile delinquency. The Legislature asked that counties develop collaboration, integrated approaches to addressing youth crime and incorporate an evaluation component into the project design.

Ventura County developed an innovative collaborative approach to reducing juvenile delinquency in South Oxnard based upon the principles of Clear's "Corrections of Place" theory. This restorative justice approach incorporates offenders, victims, and community residents in the administration of juvenile justice and in the healing of the community. The RAND Corporation and Dr. Joan Petersilia conducted the evaluation of the Ventura program using a randomized field experiment to document program outcomes for youth, their families, victims, and the local community. This publication is the final report of the program and evaluation. It describes the principles of Corrections of Place Theory made to accommodate the program; includes a description of changes in the local juvenile justice system; and describes program participants, as well as program implementation and youth outcomes during the program intervention period and beyond. This report is intended for distribution to those who are interested in the South Oxnard Challenge Project (SOCP).

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The South Oxnard Challenge Project (SOCP) was developed as a demonstration project to test through a randomized experiment the practical applicability of Clear's restorative justice theory and to examine the results of the newly-developed collaborative approach to juvenile justice in South Oxnard. The collaboration involved the County of Ventura, the City of Oxnard, and private non-profit agencies. The major participants in the collaboration were the Ventura County Probation Agency, Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (Drug and Alcohol Programs, Mental Health Services), City Corps (Oxnard), City of Oxnard Recreation Department, Oxnard Police Department, El Concilio De Condado De Ventura, Interface Children Family Services, and Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP). Participants from these agencies jointly determined treatment approaches and delivered services using a team approach. Direct provision of services constituted one of the primary differences between SOCP and regular juvenile probation where youth are referred out for services with periodic follow-up.

The primary mission of SOCP was:

To reduce juvenile crime in South Oxnard/Port Hueneme by bringing together the juvenile justice system, offenders and their families, human services, victims and the community, as partners in the strategies needed to make change.

The broad goals to implement this mission were:

- Enhanced formal and informal participation in the justice system by citizens and local communities
- Improved outcomes related to juvenile delinquency reduction, created in a climate of accountability to victims and the community
- Increased emphasis on families, not just individual children, as the focus of frontline practice, with the families as partners in public safety
- Development of a more responsive, more comprehensive, and less categorical system

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM**

The project targeted youth who lived in South Oxnard or Port Hueneme, were between 12 and 18 years old, had a citation or violation of probation, and scored at least 12 points on a local risk assessment instrument. South Oxnard/Port Hueneme teens were targeted because this geographical area has the highest crime rate in Ventura County and because this age group was most at risk for both offending and victimization. Youth with citations or violations of probation were believed to be most at risk among this group for committing crimes again in the near future.

The primary difference between SOCP and routine juvenile probation was the manner in which services were delivered. On regular probation caseloads, probation officers are located outside the community (in the city of Ventura) and manage cases, determine needs, and refer youth to outside agencies for services. In SOCP, staff worked in multi-agency teams and shared offices in two primary South Oxnard buildings--the South Oxnard (Community) Center and an office space located a few miles away. Team members met formally at least weekly to discuss cases, and SOCP staff typically collaborated daily to coordinate youth services. They also provided treatment groups, community service, and recreation opportunities on site.

## **HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

SOCP was evaluated using a randomized experiment. Half of eligible youth referred to SOCP were placed in the program; half were assigned to routine probation supervision. Information on youth background characteristics, services received, and outcomes during the intervention period and an 18-month follow-up were recorded for 539 SOCP and comparison study offenders.

The study had several major hypotheses. They were:

- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would show better school performance, as measured by attendance, grades, and disciplinary actions

- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would show better outcomes on risk behaviors, as measured by drug and alcohol use
- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would have better recidivism outcomes, as measured by new arrests and petitions filed and sustained
- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would have better probation outcomes, as measured by successful completions of probation, payment of restitution, and completion of community service hours

The majority of study youth were male (78 percent) and Latino (80 percent). A slight majority of these youth were between fifteen and sixteen years old (50 percent). Approximately 68 percent were on informal probation and 32 percent were on formal probation (602 wards) at the time of random assignment.

## **HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS**

Analyses revealed generally similar outcomes for both SOCP and comparison youth on a wide variety of measures, including alcohol and drug use, restitution payments, community service, and school performance. Fewer than 30 percent of either group used alcohol during the intervention period; about one-third used drugs. Drug testing results showed that marijuana was the most frequently used drug, and SOCP youth had a higher proportion of positive tests than comparison youth. Approximately 40 percent of both groups were ordered to pay restitution; of these, 18 percent of SOCP and 12 percent of comparison youth satisfied their requirement during the intervention period. More than half of all youth were assigned community service. The average community service performed by SOCP youth was 15 hours, significantly higher than for comparison youth, who performed an average of 8 hours during the intervention period.

Three major recidivism outcomes were examined--referrals/arrests, sustained petitions/convictions (adult), and juvenile and adult commitments to an institution. SOCP and comparison youth were similar during the intervention and follow-up periods

in terms of the percent of referrals/arrests, sustained petitions/convictions (adult), and juvenile and adult commitments. Approximately half of all study youth had no new arrests leading to a referral during the intervention period. Few study youth had a sustained petition; approximately a quarter of both groups spent time incarcerated during the intervention. However, for those youth with sustained petitions, SOCP youth were more likely to be sustained on technical violations than comparison youth. Fewer youth were arrested during the subsequent follow-up periods than during the intervention; however, the rates were similar for SOCP and comparison youth.

## **PROCESS EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS**

On average, probation officers and navigators in SOCP had more contacts with project youth than did other SOCP staff, which was expected. Most of the contact that youths received from staff was to monitor the youth's Challenge Plan progress, probation agreement progress, or facilitate services. On average, youth received about eight contacts per month from SOCP staff.

The average length of time for SOCP youth contacts (for all staff) was about 8 hours per month, including attempted and collateral contacts. Excluding attempted and collateral contacts, youths received about 6 hours and 45 minutes of contact from all SOCP staff in a given month. Family services were the most frequently received services for SOCP youth during their intervention. Family services included activities such as crisis intervention, family counseling, parent-child mediation, and parenting workshops. Approximately 78 percent of SOCP youth were exposed to these services, compared to only 6 percent of comparison youth. At the end of the intervention period, fewer SOCP cases were closed compared with routine probation cases. This may reflect a practice by SOCP staff of retaining youth after the intervention period in order to provide additional services to families.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Why were the outcomes so similar for SOCP and comparison youth? One possible answer lies in system-level changes some observers suggest occurred during the

Challenge I program. The introduction of SOCP might have changed "business as usual" for routine probation, enhancing services for these caseloads. With the introduction of SOCP, routine probation officers were able to reduce the size of their caseload by referring eligible youth to SOCP. As a result of the reduced caseloads, routine probation officers could provide more intensive supervision to a smaller number of youth. In addition, some routine probation units had also already implemented similar strategies to those used at SOCP to address youth and family needs. As a consequence of similar program components being delivered to some control and SOCP youth, similar outcomes may have resulted. Alternatively, the lack of differences in youth outcomes may reflect the reality that more intensive services than those provided by SOCP are required to change youth behaviors.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several lessons were learned from SOCP. Taking a broad, abstract theory about an ideal world into probation practice is a difficult endeavor. Working together in collaboration proved much more time consuming than the traditional, agency-specific approach to dealing with social problems. In addition, SOCP faced the challenge of implementing a restorative justice approach within a traditional bureaucratic governmental system. There is an inherent difficulty for probation officers, who are by law required to perform certain duties for the courts (e.g., monitoring offender probation terms, filing violations), attempting to implement a program that is not based primarily upon their responsibility to monitor the youth. Restorative justice also calls for direct consideration of community feelings in responding to offenses. SOCP has had great difficulty in generating interest from a broad base of South Oxnard residents. Reaching out to victims, a key component of restorative justice, was another challenge for SOCP.

What these experiences suggest is that planners think carefully about the type of restorative justice model they seek to implement. COP may not have been a good fit in Ventura County because the community had a number of restorative justice practices in place and were skeptical of a redefinition being made by SOCP. In addition, SOCP may have attempted to change too many things in the community with this type of model.

According to the program manager, SOCP might have fared better had it focused on a few components of restorative justice and tried to implement them well.

Recommendations for improvements in the area of collaboration include better staff training, more commitment from all involved departments, and clearer role definitions. In addition, selecting partners and staff who believe in both the collaborative process and the model being implemented should help forge better collaboration, as well as build a stronger program.

A number of staff felt that the additional services provided to youth and their families was one of the great successes of the program. Staff indicated that the "one stop shopping" provided youth and their families with services they needed. One recommendation from the SOCP experience is to incorporate centralized services into juvenile programming. The county's CPA 2000 Day Reporting Programs, will incorporate this approach.

Finally, future research should continue to track innovative changes in how youth are served in Ventura County. Understanding how programs are implemented and their impact on individual youth will help provide hard data on their appropriateness for reducing juvenile crime and protecting public safety.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We are grateful to the Ventura County Probation Agency for their continued cooperation and access to their records. We especially thank Chief Calvin Remington, Deputy Chief Karen Staples, Carmen Flores, Manager of SOCP, and the managers and supervisors of other juvenile probation units. We also thank the other SOCP participating agencies, including the Ventura County Department of Child and Family Services, Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (Drug and Alcohol Programs, Mental Health Services), City Corps (Oxnard), City of Oxnard Recreation Department, Oxnard Police Department, El Concilio De Condado De Ventura, Interface Children Family Services, and Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP) for their willingness to participate in data collection efforts. We would also like to thank the Oxnard Unified School District for allowing us to abstract information from school records. Finally we would like to thank our on-site staff, who diligently abstracted information from probation and other agency files and interviewed staff and youth regarding their experiences with SOCP. They include Monica Arevalo, Hilda Castillo, Alynnette Gladney, Rachel Guevara, Guadalupe Nuñez, Dondra Shepard, and Cyndi Stephenson.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### CONCERN ABOUT YOUTH VIOLENCE

In recent years policymakers and criminal justice officials have become increasingly concerned about rates of violent juvenile crime and particularly gun violence. Although juveniles constituted only 19 percent of those arrested for violent crimes in 1992, their number of arrests for violent crime increased 47 percent between 1988 and 1992 (Howell, Krisberg and Jones 1995). The violent crime arrest rate for juveniles peaked in 1994 and declined thereafter (between 12 and 15 percent), but the 1996 rate remained 40-60 percent higher than the 1980 rate (Puzzanchera 1998). And, experts have warned that demographic shifts will create even larger groups of teenagers (i.e., potential delinquents) in the near future (see Fox 1996). Because traditional programs have not eradicated juvenile violence, policymakers are searching for "better" ways to address the problem and are looking for programs that "work."

California was a strong leader in innovative approaches to juvenile rehabilitation in the 1960s and 1970s. But after frustrating results, they and leaders in the remainder of the country began focusing on harsher punishments during the 1980s and early 1990s. But increasing prison populations, in part due to the "Three Strikes" law, prompted state lawmakers again to become seriously interested in preventing violence through means other than long-term incarceration.

In an effort to decrease commitments to the California Youth Authority (CYA) and subsequently prison, Senator Lockyer introduced and the California Legislature passed SB 1760 in early 1996, which created the Juvenile Crime and Accountability Challenge Grant Program. This program was designed to provide 3-year grants to counties to establish multi-agency juvenile justice coordinating councils to develop and implement comprehensive, multi-agency approaches for combating juvenile crime.<sup>1</sup> The Legislature

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<sup>1</sup> A fourth year of funding was later added by the state.

asked that counties create strong collaborations among social service agencies to administer a broad range of responses to youth at risk of committing crime within one year and required counties to include a strong evaluation component as part of their grant applications. Required measurements of outcomes specified by the Legislature included: the rate of juvenile arrests per 100,000 population, the rate of successful completion of probation, and the rate of successful completion of restitution and court-ordered community service. The California Board of Corrections (BOC) was appointed to administer funds and provide technical assistance to the counties receiving Challenge grants.

By mid-1997, the California Board of Corrections had awarded over \$45.8 million in grants to fund initial Challenge programs in 14 counties<sup>2</sup>, including Ventura County. The funded counties are presented in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1**  
**Counties Receiving Challenge I Grant Funds**

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| Alameda        | San Francisco |
| Contra Costa   | San Joaquin   |
| Humboldt       | Santa Barbara |
| Orange         | Santa Clara   |
| Sacramento     | Stanislaus    |
| San Bernardino | Tehama        |
| San Diego      | Ventura       |

As a result of budget augmentations to the original Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Act in 1998, the California Board of Corrections awarded an additional \$56 million in demonstration grants during May 1999. The 17 counties that received Challenge II grants included six new counties (El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, and Solano) and 11 of the Challenge I counties (Contra Costa, Humboldt, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa

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<sup>2</sup> These initial programs became known as Challenge I grants, to distinguish them from subsequent Challenge grants.

Barbara, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, and Tehama). Ventura County did not apply for a Challenge II grant.

## **INITIATING CHANGE IN VENTURA COUNTY**

In the summer of 1996, Frank Woodson, then director of the Ventura County Correction Services Agency (Probation Agency), read a short article by Todd Clear about his theory "Corrections of Place," a restorative justice approach to addressing local crime problems (Clear 1996b). This model, presented later in Figure 2.1, incorporated offenders, victims, and community as the primary parties responsible for addressing crime and relegated the state to a supportive role in this effort. Woodson was intrigued by the restorative justice approach and had a strong personal commitment to including community in local efforts to address crime. When the Challenge Grant applications were issued in late 1996, Woodson saw an opportunity to try an innovative approach based upon Clear's model and presented the Corrections of Place idea to the local Multi-Agency Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (MAJJCC), the newly-formed group that was charged with assessing local needs, setting priorities, and submitting the Challenge Grant application. MAJJCC had 15 members including a county supervisor, the presiding judge of the juvenile court, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, the Sheriff, the Ventura Chief of Police, the Superintendent of Schools, the county Chief Administrative Officer, and directors of county and private social service agencies.

Because Woodson and the other members of MAJJCC also had a strong commitment to understanding the effects of such efforts through measurable outcomes, an evaluation team was asked to participate in the planning from the outset. The result of the planning efforts were the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Local Action Plan, the Challenge Grant application, and an agreement by Joan Petersilia and RAND Corporation to evaluate the program if funded. In early 1997, the California Legislature awarded the grant and appropriated \$4,527,100 beginning July 1, 1997 to implement the South Oxnard Challenge Project.

## **II. BACKGROUND: PROGRAM NEED AND PROGRAM DESIGN**

### **CORRECTIONS OF PLACE: A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MODEL**

#### **Restorative Justice**

In recent years, policymakers and the public have become disillusioned with correctional programs such as probation and parole and have called for more accountability by offenders and more services to victims and the community. Restorative Justice is one promising approach to addressing these concerns, which focuses on restoring the community through reparation and healing of all parties, including the offender. Rather than focusing on punishment, restorative justice focuses on "negotiation, mediation, victim empowerment, and reparation" (Bazemore and Umbreit 1994: 6). Important examples of restorative justice methods include Victim-Offender Mediation (e.g., VORP programs) and Neighborhood Accountability Boards.

#### **Corrections of Place**

Seeing the promise in the restorative justice approach, Clear developed a new theory called "Corrections of Place" (COP), which applies the principles of restorative justice and community policing to probation while considering the importance of addressing situational factors conducive to crime, such as unguarded crime targets (see Clear 1996a, 1996b).

The COP approach, which Clear calls a "community justice" model, is at its core a restorative justice model that emphasizes the importance of allowing the offender to "restore" the actual victim as well as the immediate community (1996a: 49). Rather than relying on the state (correctional system) to punish the offender as most approaches do, the COP model calls for the state to facilitate a *healing* transaction among the offender, victim, and community by providing resources and structure. In this way, the coercive role of the state is minimized and the offender, victim, and community all maintain power in the transaction (see also Clear and Karp 1998).

Clear argues that crime is not just an offense against the state. Rather, it is a "shattering" of community, because it represents the "symbolic claim" that the offender is not obligated to abide by the societal norm of fairness (1996a: 50). The victim suffers both obvious losses (e.g., physical harm or property loss) and abstract losses (e.g., emotional repercussions). The community is harmed also, because crime represents a "practical and symbolic denial of community" (Clear 1996a: 51). In essence, crime represents both a threat to community safety and a statement about the fragility of the community social and moral structure. Consequently, all parties--the offender, the victim, the community and the state have an interest in repairing the harm and restoring the community (see also Clear and Karp 1998). Figure 2.1 represents Clear and Karp's (1998) model, which was adapted for SOCP by including the family in the process.

**Managing Risk.** A major task in preventing crime and restoring community is risk management. Clear considers two types of factors in managing offender risk to the community. First, there are factors inherent in or related specifically to the offender (e.g., age, gender, personality, intelligence, socioeconomic status and living arrangements). Most of these factors are not amenable to change through intervention by communities or justice system officials. Second, there are situational factors related to the offender and the environment that converge when a crime actually occurs.<sup>3</sup> These factors include an offender who is motivated to commit a crime, who sees an available, unattended target and who has few people in his or her life to reinforce law-abiding behavior. According to COP, communities and/or justice officials can affect these factors through targeted interventions. The COP model argues that interventions should address *all* of these factors rather than focusing solely on the offender, as traditional approaches do. For example, providing "intimate handlers" such as family members or volunteers, "target hardening" practices such as street lights and door locks, and "guardians," such as neighborhood watch programs or walking companions, can all help prevent crime.

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<sup>3</sup> The situational factors were developed in part based upon Routine Activities Theory (Cohen and Felson 1979).

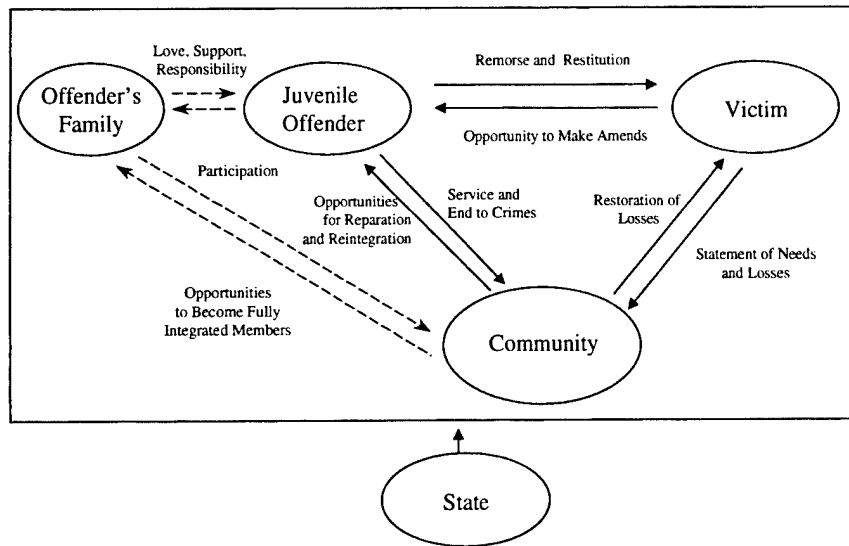


**Fig. 2.1 - Core Responsibilities of Parties to the Sanctioning Process (Revised)<sup>4</sup>**

## **IMPLEMENTING THE THEORY: THE SOUTH OXNARD CHALLENGE PROJECT**

### **Translating Clear's Concepts**

Traditional juvenile probation in Ventura County is divided into different levels of supervision--i.e., bankload cases, minimum, medium, maximum, and intensive. Youth eligible for the SOCP project were drawn predominately from medium supervision caseloads. Medium caseloads consist of approximately 80 clients who are seen approximately once a month in the office and once every three months in the field. During these contacts, probation officers monitor alcohol and drug use and other terms of probation. Youth are referred to outside social services as necessary (e.g., alcohol and other drug treatment, mental health services).

<sup>4</sup> The Ventura County service providers specified the model to apply to juvenile offenders and added the offender's family as an important part of the healing process. The dotted lines in the figure represent the additional responsibilities added to the model by Ventura County.

The South Oxnard Challenge Project was developed as a demonstration project to test through a randomized experiment the practical applicability of Clear's restorative justice theory and to examine the results of the newly-developed collaborative approach to juvenile justice in South Oxnard.

Because theories rarely enumerate specific recipes for implementation, one of the toughest challenges of the Ventura County collaborative was developing a method to translate COP theory to practice. Local policymakers and managers who would be supervising on-site staff at SOCP began meeting weekly as the "Implementation Committee" that would serve as the hub of planning activities. They invited Dr. Clear to visit during the first few months of the project to help them specify practical strategies to implementing the theory. The Implementation Committee solidified the mission for SOCP, created the transition plan for placing staff at the program site, and fine-tuned the program components. Once the SOCP program became operational, members of the Implementation Committee responsible for daily supervision of staff (i.e., minus policymakers) continued to meet as the Interagency Management Team (IMT).

The Implementation Committee wanted to ensure that their program was based on sound research. They examined the research on serious, violent, and chronic offenders (e.g., Krisberg et al. 1995; OJJDP 1995), and based upon this research, they hoped to create a program that delivered holistic, comprehensive, intensive, community-based services with a socially grounded approach (Ventura County MAJJCC and CSA 1997: 12).

### **Mission and Goals**

The Implementation Committee at SOCP developed the primary mission of the program in November 1997. This mission was:

To reduce juvenile crime in South Oxnard/Port Hueneme by bringing together the juvenile justice system, offenders and their families, human services, victims and the community, as partners in the strategies needed to make change.

The broad goals to implement this mission were:

- Enhanced formal and informal participation in the justice system by citizens and local communities
- Improved outcomes related to juvenile delinquency reduction, created in a climate of accountability to victims and the community
- Increased emphasis on families, not just individual children, as the focus of frontline practice, with the families as partners in public safety
- Development of a more responsive, more comprehensive, and less categorical system.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

#### Program Components

Table 3.1 illustrates the differences between SOCP and regular juvenile probation for youth who were on medium supervision caseloads. The primary difference between the two types of probation was the manner in which services are delivered. On regular probation caseloads, probation officers are located outside the community (in the city of Ventura) and manage cases, determine needs, and refer youth to outside agencies for services. In comparison, the South Oxnard Challenge Project occupied space in two primary South Oxnard buildings--the South Oxnard (Community) Center and an office facility located a few miles away. At SOCP the staff also worked in teams to provide services to the experimental youth and their families. The teams comprised probation officers, service coordinators (case managers who maintain a non-peace officer status), navigators (mentors), mental health providers, alcohol and drug specialists, and a restorative justice specialist. For case oversight, SOCP youth were typically assigned to a probation officer if they were on court ordered probation or a service coordinator if they were on informal handling. Although these staff members supervised compliance of the probation (or Challenge) contract, all members of the interagency team contributed to the youth and family programming. The team members met formally at least weekly to discuss cases, and typically collaborated daily to coordinate services. They also provided treatment groups, community service, and recreation opportunities on site. In general, SOCP staff saw youth and contacted families two to three times a week, although some youth were seen daily and some less frequently depending on their needs.

**Table 3.1**  
**Comparing SOCP and Routine Juvenile Probation**

| <i>SOCP</i>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>Routine Juvenile Probation<br/>(Medium Supervision Caseload)</i>                      |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Location of Service Center<br>(Probation Office) | South Oxnard                                                                                                                                                          | City of Ventura                                                                          |
| Case Management                                  | Interagency Team                                                                                                                                                      | Probation Officer                                                                        |
| Expected Contacts with<br>Youth                  | Initial home conference<br>Two family contacts and two total hours per month by<br>Service Coordinator/DPO<br>One hour face-to-face contact per week by Navigator     | Office visit once a month<br>Field visit every three months                              |
| Focus of Intervention                            | Family                                                                                                                                                                | Youth                                                                                    |
| Duration of Intervention                         | 7 months for informal probation cases<br>9 months for formal probation cases<br>Continued treatment if youth continues contacting<br>staff after case closed          | Intervention ends when probation case<br>is closed                                       |
| Social Services Availability                     | Mental health, alcohol and drug, anger management,<br>parenting skills, child protective services, mediation,<br>City Corps, Day Reporting services available on site | Referral to outside agencies                                                             |
| Victim Services                                  | Probation officers call victim or refer to on-site<br>restorative justice advocate                                                                                    | Probation officers send restitution letter<br>or refer to local non-profit for mediation |
| Community Services                               | Community Outreach Workers<br>Community Advisory Group<br>Community Development Events<br>Community service projects in target area                                   | None                                                                                     |

## **Program Implementation**

Youth on routine probation are on an active caseload until they are officially closed by the probation agency. In comparison, youth at SOCP had a designated intervention period determined by the type of probation they had been assigned. Youth on informal probation had a 7-month intervention period, while formal probation cases were assigned a 9-month intervention period. Another difference between SOCP and routine probation was that SOCP staff were encouraged to continue servicing youth who voluntarily stayed in contact after the completion of the intervention period.

SOCP staff members focused on both the youth assigned to their caseload and his/her family members. Upon receipt of a case, SOCP team members conducted an initial home conference to determine the needs of the individual youth and his/her family. After the initial conference, SOCP staff generally saw youth and contacted families two to three times a week, although some youth were seen daily and some were seen less frequently depending on their needs. In addition, youth had at least one hour of direct contact with their assigned navigator each week. Youth assigned to routine probation are seen in the office once a month and out in the field once every three months.

For victim services, an on-site restorative justice specialist was hired to hold victim-offender (and parent-child) mediations. In addition, probation officers often contacted victims personally to talk to them about their restitution needs, rather than simply mailing out letters asking them to indicate their financial losses resulting from the offense.

SOCP staff also provided services to the community by supporting and attending the Community Advisory Group (CAG) and going to other local meetings to report SOCP progress. The CAG consisted of approximately ten community members who advised SOCP staff on programmatic issues and who got monthly updates on the project from SOCP staff. An Executive Board composed of local elected officials and the officers from the CAG also provided program and fiscal oversight for the grant.<sup>5</sup> In addition,

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<sup>5</sup> The CAG and Executive Board later merged into a single group.

Community Outreach Workers, who were hired by the grant but who also were long-time members of the South Oxnard community, garnered resources for local community youth events, such as trips to Magic Mountain and museums, and for youth needs, such as clothing and eyeglasses. In addition, these workers organized community development events, including an Open House, a Wellness Fair, a Multi-Cultural Crafts Fair, and a Domestic Violence Workshop.

Table 3.2 presents the agencies involved in the SOCP project. The major participants in the collaboration included the Ventura County Probation Agency, Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (Drug and Alcohol Programs, Mental Health Services), City Corps (Oxnard), City of Oxnard Recreation Department, Oxnard Police Department, El Concilio De Condado De Ventura, Interface Children Family Services, and Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP). Participants from these agencies jointly determined treatment approaches and delivered services using a team approach. Direct provision of services constituted one of the primary differences between SOCP and regular juvenile probation where youth are "referred out" for services with periodic follow-up. Approximately 30 staff were involved in the project at any particular time.

**Table 3.2**  
**Participants in the South Oxnard Challenge Project**

| <i>Partner Agencies</i>                                                | <i>Staff Provided On-Site (Nov. 2000)</i>        |                                                                                                 | <i>Staff Roles</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ventura County Probation Agency                                        | 1 Departmental Manager                           | Manage project                                                                                  |                    |
|                                                                        | 1 Part-time Supervising Deputy Probation Officer | Assign cases to staff                                                                           |                    |
|                                                                        |                                                  | Supervise project staff                                                                         |                    |
|                                                                        | 1 Senior Deputy Probation Officer                | Supervise project staff                                                                         |                    |
|                                                                        | 4 Deputy Probation Officers                      | Manage formal and court –ordered informal Probation cases; focus on families                    |                    |
|                                                                        | 1 Probation aid                                  | Act as navigator or service coordinator or serve as aid to other staff (depends on skill level) |                    |
|                                                                        | 2 Office Assistants                              | Provide clerical support for project staff                                                      |                    |
| Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, Drug and Alcohol Programs | 2 Alcohol and Drug Treatment Specialists         | Provide individual and group alcohol and drug treatment                                         |                    |
| Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, Mental Health Services    | 1 Social Workers                                 | Provide a modified version of Multisystemic Therapy for up to 5 clients for 4-6 month periods   |                    |
|                                                                        | 2 Social Work Interns                            |                                                                                                 |                    |
| City Corps (Oxnard)                                                    | 1 City Corps Program Assistant                   | Provide community service opportunities (work crews)                                            |                    |
|                                                                        | 3 Work Crew Leaders                              |                                                                                                 |                    |
| City of Oxnard Recreation Department                                   | 1 Recreation Supervisor                          | Provide recreation services and supervise recreation staff, including navigators                |                    |
|                                                                        | 4 Navigators                                     | Facilitate youth use of services                                                                |                    |
|                                                                        | 1 part-time recreation staff                     | Lead outings, transport youth, help lead groups                                                 |                    |
| Oxnard Police Department                                               | 1 Senior Police Officer                          | Assist staff in searches, obtaining police reports and help at day reporting                    |                    |
| El Concilio De Condado De Ventura                                      | 1 Service Coordinator                            | Manage informal handling cases; focus on families                                               |                    |
|                                                                        | 1 Community Outreach Worker                      | Market the project and obtain resources for clients                                             |                    |
| Interface Children Family Services                                     | 1 Restorative Justice Advocate                   | Provide victim-offender and parent-child mediations                                             |                    |
| Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP)                                       | 1 Counselor                                      | Provide pre-12-step treatment groups for teens                                                  |                    |

A wide variety of community justice-related activities were performed in SOCP. Table 3.3 highlights these activities for the staff involved in the collaboration. What is striking about the activities is the large number not linked directly with correctional services or supervision. A large number of services focused on assisting families with basic needs relating to housing and employment and other services.

**Table 3.3**  
**Some Community Justice-Related Activities of SOCP Staff**

| <i>Staff</i>                            | <i>Activity</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Probation Officers                      | <p>Increase contact with families of Probation clients</p> <p>Work with families within their own environments</p> <p>Encourage parents to take responsibility for supervising and disciplining children</p> <p>Take clients on job searches</p> <p>Tutor clients one-on-one--doing homework, studying for tests</p> <p>Talk to clients about family and peer relationships</p> <p>Facilitate groups</p> <p>"Work out" with clients (e.g., running, playing softball and basketball)</p> <p>Go on recreation outings with youth (e.g., camping)</p> <p>Assist needy parents in obtaining food and furniture</p> <p>Talk to neighborhood councils about SOCP</p> |
| Child and Family Services Social Worker | <p>Run anger management classes</p> <p>Help families clean their houses</p> <p>Attend SOCP parenting classes with youth and families</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Alcohol and Drug Treatment Specialists  | <p>Transport youth to out of county activities</p> <p>Connect clients to housing and utility services</p> <p>Link families to public health services</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Mental Health Social Workers            | <p>Utilize parent strengths to increase supervision of children</p> <p>Teach parents to use praise and encouragement for good behavior</p> <p>Assist parents in identifying outside community supports and resources</p> <p>Decrease parent reliance on Probation for control of their children</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| City Corps                              | <p>Conduct community-requested service projects</p> <p>Increase youth competency through work and service</p> <p>Create an attractive, comfortable environment for youth</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

(continued on next page)

**Table 3.3 (cont'd)**  
**Some Community Justice-Related Activities of SOCP Staff**

| <i>Staff</i>                         | <i>Activity</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Navigators                           | Act as a role model for youth<br>Encourage, motivate, and guide youth<br>Introduce youth to new life opportunities<br>Teach youth skills to navigate life<br>Accompany youth on recreation outings (e.g., UCLA football game, camping)                                                                                                                                   |
| Police Officer                       | Work with youth on a casual basis (unrelated to offenses)<br>Go on recreation excursions with youth<br>Take visitors on tours of South Oxnard<br>Talk to community residents about SOCP                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Service Coordinators (Non-Probation) | Focus on meeting basic family needs by connecting them with services<br>Educate parents about community resources and their responsibilities to initiate the process by asking for help<br>Look for existing prosocial activities in community that are congruent with youth interests                                                                                   |
| Community Outreach Workers           | Recruit community residents for participation in SOCP<br>Obtain community support for and participation in client activities<br>Run daily employment preparation groups ("breakfast club")<br>Work on local School Attendance Review Boards<br>Interact with neighborhood councils and community ministerial groups<br>Organize special presentations for and about SOCP |
| Restorative Justice Advocate         | Connect with victims<br>Facilitate healing between offenders and victims, including conducting mediations<br>Conduct parent-child mediations                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

#### **IV. HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

##### **BACKGROUND OF THE APPROACH TO RESEARCH--RANDOM ASSIGNMENT**

In the summer of 1997, Ventura County contracted with RAND and Dr. Joan Petersilia of the University of California, Irvine to evaluate the South Oxnard Challenge Project. The evaluation team had been involved from the beginning, participating in the grant development and overall evaluation design. The evaluation used an experimental design with random assignment, which is one of the strongest scientific methods for determining program impact. The evaluation design called for 500 (250 experimental and 250 control) youth to be randomly assigned over an 18-month period, beginning January 1, 1998.

##### **STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

The study had several major hypotheses. They were:

- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would show better school performance, as measured by attendance, grades, and disciplinary actions
- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would show better outcomes on risk behaviors, as measured by drug and alcohol use
- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would have better recidivism outcomes, as measured by new arrests, petitions filed and sustained
- Compared to youth on routine probation supervision, SOCP youth would have better probation outcomes, as measured by successful completions of probation, payment of restitution, and completion of community service hours

## **METHODS**

### **Setting**

The Screening and Selection subcommittee of the Implementation Committee met during the summer and fall of 1997 to collect validated risk assessments and refine the selection criteria for the target group. This committee narrowed the selection criteria for the target group and adapted a validated risk assessment, revising the scoring categories to make them more applicable to the South Oxnard juvenile population (see Appendix).

Research indicates that programs are more likely to be successful if they target youth who are medium to high-risk for delinquency--e.g., use alcohol or drugs or have previous contact with the juvenile justice system (Wilson and Howell 1995). Based upon the characteristics of the local juvenile population, the Screening and Selection committee determined that youth who scored at least 12 points on the risk assessment would qualify as medium to high-risk for committing offenses within the following year. From September 15, 1997 to October 15, 1997, this subcommittee pre-tested the risk assessment to ensure that it would "capture" youth who, based upon probation agency experience, were actually medium to high-risk. The risk assessment was also used to estimate the number of monthly referrals to SOCP, to ensure a large enough study sample size. After the pretest, the point weights on some instrument categories were revised to ensure that this screening tool did not capture low-risk youth, and the instrument became the primary method of referral to SOCP.

### **Sample**

The Screening and Selection Committee targeted for the study youth who lived in South Oxnard or Port Hueneme, were between 12 and 18 years old, had a citation or violation of probation, and scored at least 12 points on the risk assessment. South Oxnard/Port Hueneme teens were targeted because this geographical area has the highest crime rate in the county and because this age group was most at risk for both offending and victimization. Youth with citations or violations of probation were believed to be most at risk among this group for committing crimes again in the near future.

## Design

SOCP and comparison group youth were studied using a longitudinal design, comprising several segments. The "intervention" period was the first 7 to 9 months after random assignment to either SOCP or routine probation. This was the period of time during which youth received the bulk of their SOCP programming. Three separate six-month follow-up periods were defined for each youth--at 6, 12, and 18 months after the intervention period. Measures of program contacts and implementation were measured during the implementation period; outcomes were measured during the intervention period and each of the three, six-month follow-up periods.

The random assignment for study cases took place between January 1998 and ended December 1999 for formal cases and February 2000 for informal cases.<sup>6</sup> A total of 539 youth were assigned to the studying during this time, including 264 SOCP youth and 275 comparison youth. Intervention period data were recorded for all 275 comparison and 264 SOCP youth. For the first six-month follow-up, we have data for all except one SOCP youth whose records were sealed. We were unable to gather the 12- and 18-month follow-up for some youth because their follow-up periods extended past the end date of the project. In other words, their dates for data collection were beyond June 2001. This impacted a small number of cases: 13 SOCP youth and 16 comparison youth did not complete the second follow-up, and 38 youth in each group did not complete the third follow-up. Figure 4.1 shows the number of cases for analyses of data for the background, intervention, and follow-up periods.

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<sup>6</sup> There was a one-month hiatus in random assignment during summer 1999 while decisions regarding a fourth year of funding were being made.

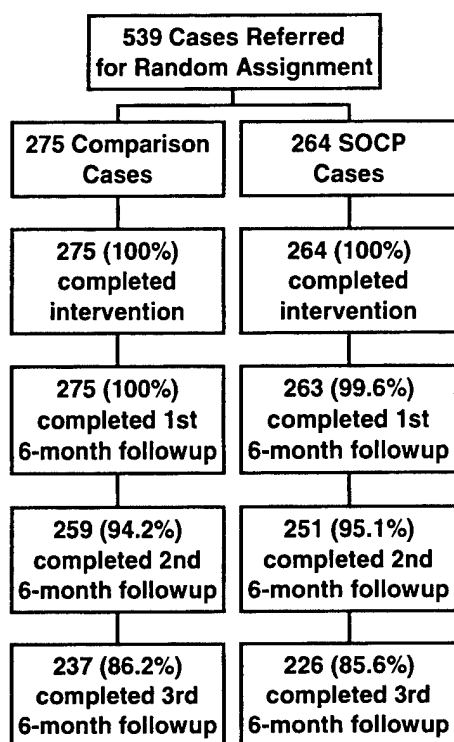


**Fig. 4.1 - Youth Who Completed Follow-Up Periods Before June 30, 2001**

### **Procedure**

Probation officers from various units were trained to complete the risk assessment instrument for youth who satisfied the basic target criteria. Table 4.1 describes the routine agency functions for the units responsible for screening eligible youth.

**Table 4.1**  
**Ventura County Probation Agency Unit Functions**

| <i>Referring Unit</i>                        | <i>Agency Function</i>                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oxnard Youth Services (YS)                   | Probation officers are responsible for early intervention and diversion cases                                    |
| Juvenile Intake Services (Intake)            | Staff are responsible for routing new citations, violations of probation, and warrants                           |
| Juvenile Supervision Services (JSS)          | Probation officers are responsible for routine processing of youth with new citations or violations of probation |
| Juvenile Placement and Aftercare Team (JPAT) | Probation officers provide aftercare to youth returning from placement                                           |
| Colston Youth Center (CYC)                   | County residential treatment program for wards of the court                                                      |

Youth were placed in the program using a multiple stage process. If a probation officer had an eligible youth, he or she called the on-site evaluation supervisor for random assignment of the youth to either the experimental group (SOCP) or the comparison group (routine juvenile probation). To ensure fairness to all eligible youth, random assignment was performed by RAND staff using an equal probability assignment. Youth had a 50 percent chance of being assigned to SOCP and a 50 percent chance of being assigned to routine probation. If a youth received an experimental assignment, he or she was then placed in SOCP by probation officers. Comparison youth were handled as they usually would be (see Figure 4.2).

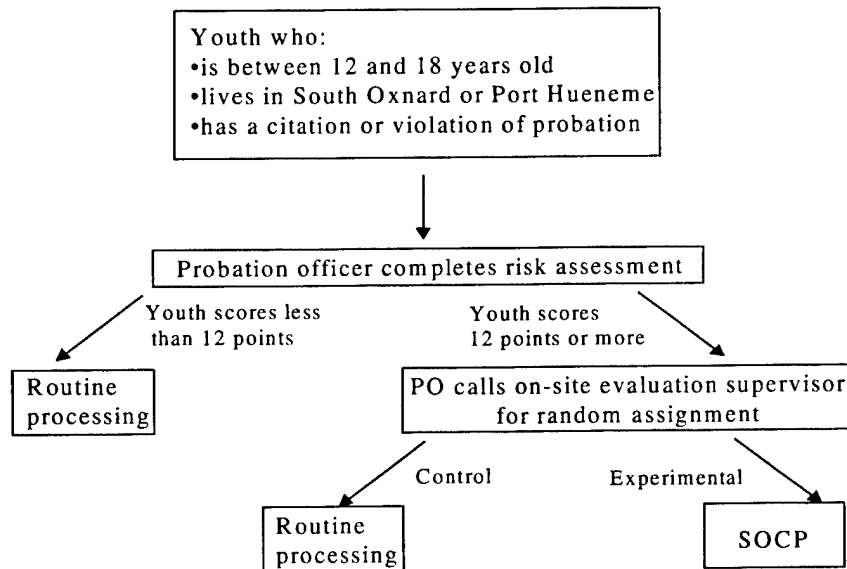


**Fig. 4.2 - Referral Process for SOCP**

## Measures

There were two sets of outcomes for this study. The legislature specified key youth outcomes common across all counties. The local Ventura County collaboration members specified youth, family, victim, and community outcomes that they believed were important to measuring their implementation of a restorative justice model based upon the principles of Corrections of Place.

In order to measure these outcomes, the evaluation team collected five primary types of information: initial and follow-up official record data for each youth; youth interviews; records of weekly contact; staff interviews; and descriptive observations of the program, staff activities, and community meetings. The following section describes each of these data methods in more detail.

**Official Record Data for Each Youth.** The primary data utilized in this report is official record data gathered for youth during the intervention and three six-month follow-up periods. The California Board of Corrections monitored the evaluation of all Challenge projects in the state and had created data specifications to ensure that common

data elements were collected for each county. These data included demographic characteristics, as well as school, drug, and criminal history for each youth in the study.

Because the South Oxnard Challenge Project was designed to work with families, the evaluation team was also collecting official record data for siblings who were on probation. The intake date and length of the intervention period for siblings were matched to reflect the dates for the randomly assigned youth.<sup>7</sup>

A majority of the common data elements were gathered from the probation files by members of the evaluation team. However, recidivism data was supplied directly to RAND as a quarterly computerized download from the Ventura County Probation Agency. In addition to information supplied by probation, members of the evaluation team also abstracted school information directly from the Oxnard High School District computerized record system.

**Youth Contact Data<sup>8</sup>.** "Contact sheets" that recorded both direct and indirect contacts between youth and staff were completed weekly by SOCP staff members. These data were used to determine the amount of time staff spent with youth during intervention period. The data also provided the type of services received by youth, their families, and victims (when appropriate).

**Youth Self-Report Data.** Youth self-report data were obtained from interviews conducted by the evaluation team approximately twelve months post random assignment. Youth were asked a series of questions relating to family, peers, drugs, delinquent behavior, fear of crime, social service awareness, victims, mental health, and their probation experience.

**Staff Interview Data.** At the end of a youth's intervention period, the on-site evaluation supervisor conducted an interview with the "primary" staff member (probation officer or service coordinator) assigned to the case. The purpose of the interview was to

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<sup>7</sup> Analyses in this report include only those youth randomly assigned to SOCP or comparison group; no data for siblings are included.

<sup>8</sup> To relieve workload pressures on probation officers with control cases, the evaluation team recorded contacts by these staff during the intervention and first follow-up period only.

assess the extent of program impact on the youth. More specifically, the staff were asked how well they felt that they addressed the following youth needs: individual needs, family needs, school needs, peer needs, victim needs, and community needs.

**Descriptive Observations.** In addition to the listed quantitative measures, the evaluation team also collected qualitative data to provide more detailed context for other data collected. This qualitative data included information about the process of designing the SOCP program (e.g., issues addressed in Implementation, Screening and Selection, Management meetings), the implementation process (gathered by ride-alongs with staff, staff interviews, participant observation), and family stories of success and failure.

Table 4.2 illustrates the key outcomes and sources of data for the state and local requirements.

**Table 4.2**  
**Key Outcomes and Data Sources for SOCP**

| <i>Outcome</i>                                     | <i>Data Source</i>                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mandated by Legislature</b>                     |                                                             |
| Rate of juvenile arrests per 100,000 population    | Oxnard Police Department<br>Ventura County Probation Agency |
| Rate of successful completion of probation         | Ventura County Probation Agency                             |
| Rate of successful completion of restitution       | Ventura County Probation Agency                             |
| Rate of successful completion of community service | Ventura County Probation Agency                             |
| <b>Ventura County Requested Outcomes</b>           |                                                             |
| <i>Youth Outcomes:</i>                             |                                                             |
| Number of arrests                                  | Oxnard Police Department<br>Ventura County Probation Agency |
| Number of community service hours completed        | Ventura County Probation Agency                             |
| Number of positive/negative urinalysis tests       | Ventura County Probation Agency                             |
| Attendance at available services                   | SOCP Attendance Lists/<br>Weekly case contact forms         |
| Number and type of contacts with staff             | Weekly case contact forms                                   |
| School attendance                                  | School files                                                |
| Number of school credits earned                    | School files                                                |
| Grade point average                                | School files                                                |
| Number of disciplinary actions                     | School files                                                |
| <i>Family Outcomes:</i>                            |                                                             |
| Number and type of contacts with staff             | Weekly case contact forms                                   |
| Evaluation of parent-child mediations              | Post-mediation survey                                       |
| <i>Victim Outcomes:</i>                            |                                                             |
| Number and type of contacts with staff             | Weekly case contact forms                                   |
| Evaluation of victim-offender mediations           | Post-mediation survey                                       |
| <i>Community Outcomes:</i>                         |                                                             |
| Number and type of contacts with staff             | Monthly community contact forms                             |

**Statistical Analyses.** One of the advantages of randomized designs is the simplicity of the statistical analyses that are used to test for differences between the experimental and control groups. For outcomes on continuous variables, such as rates or

averages, we used t-tests; for dichotomous and categorical outcomes, we used chi-square tests. For statistical significance, we used two-tailed tests,  $p < .05$ .

## **RESULTS**

This final report presents information on SOCP and control youth for whom the intervention and data collection were complete by June 30, 2001. We present outcomes required by the Board of Corrections for youth measures collected from official records only; staff, youth and family interview data findings will be presented in a separate report.

### **Descriptive Statistics for the Samples**

**Referral Sources and Risk Score.** As discussed earlier, SOCP referrals came from several sources. The majority of referrals were made by probation officers assigned to the Oxnard Youth Services Unit. The remainder of the study referrals came from Juvenile Supervision Services (27 percent), Juvenile Intake Services (17 percent), the Juvenile Placement and Aftercare Team (8 percent), and the Colston Youth Center (3 percent).

**Demographic Characteristics.** The strength of randomization is that it results in comparable experimental and comparison groups over the long run. Thus differences observed in the outcomes between two groups can be attributed to the intervention and not systematic differences in background characteristics between the two study groups. Overall, randomization produced comparable SOCP and control groups in terms of the majority of background characteristics. The two exceptions were:

- comparison youth were more likely to use alcohol
- comparison youth were slightly more likely to have a mother with a criminal record

These exceptions will be discussed in more detail below.

Table 4.3 presents the demographic characteristics of study participants. Considering that 85 percent of the youth on juvenile field supervision in Ventura County were male, it is not surprising that the majority of SOCP youth (80 percent) and comparison youth (76 percent) were also male. The majority of the youth on routine field

supervision were between the ages of 15 and 16 years old.<sup>9</sup> At the time of random assignment, the average age of study participants was 15 years old--somewhat younger than an average "routine" field supervision. The distribution of ethnic backgrounds among study participants also revealed a large percentage of Hispanic youth--mirroring existing caseloads in the county. Eighty-one percent of the SOCP youth and 78 percent of the comparison youth were Hispanic. Only a small percentage of the SOCP youth were non-Hispanic white (8 percent), black (6 percent), or of another ethnicity (4 percent).

At the time of random assignment, 69 percent of the SOCP youth and 68 percent of the comparison youth lived with one or both of their parents. For the SOCP youth, 25 percent were living with both parents and 31 percent were living in a single parent home--primarily with the mother. An additional 10 percent lived with one natural parent and a step-parent. Similar to SOCP youth, more than one third of comparison youth lived either with both parents or a parent and a step-parent. For those SOCP youth not living with one or both parents, 8 percent were in an out of home placement, 6 percent were living with relatives--primarily grandparents, and 23 percent fell into the "other" category. The "other" category includes those youth who are living in group homes, institutions, etc.

A parent was classified as having a criminal history if they had been or were currently on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole. At the time of random assignment, 11 percent of the SOCP youth had a father with a criminal record, 4 percent had a mother with a criminal record, and 2 percent of the SOCP youth had both parents involved with the criminal justice system. Comparison youth and SOCP youth were equally likely to have a father with a criminal history. However, comparison youth were more likely to have a mother with a criminal history than were SOCP youth.

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<sup>9</sup> According to the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Local Action Plan (1997), only 10 percent the probationers are under the age of 15.

**Table 4.3**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants at Random Assignment**

| <i>Variable</i>              | <i>SOCP Youth<br/>(N = 264)</i> |          | <i>Comparison Youth<br/>(N = 275)</i> |          |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
|                              | <i>%</i>                        | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i>                              | <i>N</i> |
| Gender                       |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| Male                         | 79.6                            | 210      | 76.4                                  | 210      |
| Female                       | 20.4                            | 54       | 23.6                                  | 65       |
| Age                          |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| 9--11                        | 0.4                             | 1        | 0.4                                   | 1        |
| 12--14                       | 24.6                            | 65       | 25.1                                  | 69       |
| 15--16                       | 50.8                            | 134      | 49.8                                  | 137      |
| 17--18                       | 24.2                            | 64       | 24.7                                  | 68       |
| Ethnicity                    |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| Black                        | 6.4                             | 17       | 8.0                                   | 22       |
| Hispanic                     | 81.4                            | 215      | 78.2                                  | 215      |
| White                        | 8.3                             | 22       | 10.6                                  | 29       |
| Other                        | 3.8                             | 10       | 3.3                                   | 9        |
| Primary Caretaker            |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| Natural Parent(s)            | 58.7                            | 155      | 60.4                                  | 166      |
| Parent & Step Parent         | 9.8                             | 26       | 7.6                                   | 21       |
| Step-parent(s) <sup>10</sup> | 0.8                             | 2        | 0.0                                   | 0        |
| Foster parent(s)             | 0.4                             | 1        | 0.4                                   | 1        |
| Relative(s)                  | 5.7*                            | 15       | 12.0                                  | 33       |
| Friend(s)                    | 1.9                             | 5        | 0.7                                   | 2        |
| Other <sup>11</sup>          | 22.7                            | 60       | 18.9                                  | 52       |
| Parent Criminal History      |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| Neither Parent               | 83.7                            | 221      | 77.8                                  | 214      |
| Father Only                  | 10.6                            | 28       | 10.6                                  | 29       |
| Mother Only                  | 3.8                             | 10       | 7.3                                   | 20       |
| Both Father and Mother       | 1.9                             | 5        | 4.4                                   | 12       |

\* SOCP and comparison youth significantly different,  $p < .05$

**Child Abuse.** Utilizing data from Child Protection Services (CPS), we determined that 53 SOCP youth (20 percent) and 52 comparison youth (19 percent) had at least one past record of documented or self-reported abuse or neglect.

<sup>10</sup> Includes adoptive parents.

<sup>11</sup> Includes group home, institution, etc.

**Alcohol and Drug Use.** Table 4.4 shows alcohol and drug use prior to random assignment for all study participants. The two groups showed a statistically significant difference in alcohol usage ( $p < .05$ ) prior to random assignment. Comparison youth (55 percent) were more likely to have used alcohol than were SOCP youth (40 percent). Thirteen percent of SOCP youth had no known interference with functioning (mild use), while 22 percent had created either legal or medical problems or the alcohol use has created problems at home, school or with peers. An additional 4 percent of the SOCP youth were chronic users at the time of random assignment.

At the point of random assignment, 46 percent of the SOCP youth and 54 percent of the comparison youth had some known drug use. Although comparison youth seem to show slightly higher rates of drug use, the difference is not statistically significant. Fifteen percent of SOCP youth had some known drug use, but no known interference with functioning (mild use) while 26 percent have created either legal or medical problems or the drug use has created problems at home, school or with peers. An additional 5 percent of the SOCP youth were chronic drug users at the time of random assignment.

**Table 4.4**  
**Prior and Current Alcohol and Drug Use at Random Assignment**

| <i>Variable</i>                 | <i>SOCP Youth</i><br>( <i>N</i> = 264) |     | <i>Comparison Youth</i><br>( <i>N</i> = 275) |     |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------|-----|
|                                 | %                                      | N   | %                                            | N   |
| <b>Frequency of Alcohol Use</b> |                                        |     |                                              |     |
| Have Not Used                   | 60.6*                                  | 160 | 45.1                                         | 124 |
| Mild Use                        | 13.3*                                  | 35  | 23.6                                         | 65  |
| Moderate Use                    | 22.4                                   | 59  | 26.2                                         | 72  |
| Chronic Use                     | 3.8                                    | 10  | 5.1                                          | 14  |
| <b>Frequency of Drug Use</b>    |                                        |     |                                              |     |
| Have Not Used                   | 53.8                                   | 142 | 45.8                                         | 126 |
| Mild Use                        | 15.2                                   | 40  | 18.6                                         | 51  |
| Moderate Use                    | 26.1                                   | 69  | 28.0                                         | 77  |
| Chronic Use                     | 4.9                                    | 13  | 7.6                                          | 21  |

\* SOCP and comparison youth significantly different,  $p < .05$

**Prior Educational Performance.** Data on educational performance were available only for a sub-sample of youth, since many school records are purged after one year, and because some youth attended several school districts, were on independent study, were schooled at home, etc. Records of suspensions and expulsions were available for almost all youth, and we could assess grade level functioning for almost 70 percent of study youth. We were able to ascertain whether youth had school attendance problems for only about half the sample.

Table 4.5 shows school-related characteristics of SOCP and comparison youth at time of random assignment. Among enrolled youth whose records we could access, 90 percent of both SOCP and comparison youth--97 of the 108 in each group whose attendance records were accessible--were attending school. However, among those whose grade levels could be ascertained (173 SOCP youth and 173 comparison youth), a majority of both groups--54 percent of SOCP youth and 57 percent of comparison youth--were not working at their expected grade level. Moreover, among those whose disciplinary records were available--147 SOCP youth and 144 comparison youth--over half of each group had been suspended or expelled at some time.

**Table 4.5**  
**Prior Educational Performance**

| <i>Variable</i>             | <i>SOCP Youth</i><br><i>(N = 264)</i> |          | <i>Comparison Youth</i><br><i>(N = 275)</i> |          |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------|----------|
|                             | <i>%</i>                              | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i>                                    | <i>N</i> |
| School Attendance           |                                       |          |                                             |          |
| Attending                   | 36.7                                  | 97       | 35.3                                        | 97       |
| Not attending               | 4.2                                   | 11       | 4.0                                         | 11       |
| Not enrolled/unknown        | 59.1                                  | 156      | 60.7                                        | 167      |
| School Performance          |                                       |          |                                             |          |
| At grade level              | 30.3                                  | 80       | 26.9                                        | 74       |
| Below grade level           | 35.2                                  | 93       | 36.0                                        | 99       |
| Not enrolled/unknown        | 34.5                                  | 91       | 37.1                                        | 102      |
| Past Suspensions/Expulsions |                                       |          |                                             |          |
| None                        | 23.1                                  | 61       | 25.8                                        | 71       |
| One or more                 | 32.6                                  | 86       | 26.6                                        | 73       |
| Not enrolled/unknown        | 44.3                                  | 117      | 47.6                                        | 131      |

**Prior Criminal Record.** Table 4.6 presents the prior criminal record for study participants. The majority (58 percent) of study participants were between the age of 12 and 14 when they received their first juvenile citation. At the time of random assignment, SOCP youth and comparison youth looked similar in terms of the number of previous referrals and sustained petitions. Approximately half of the study participants had a prior 601 referral to probation. However, only one SOCP youth and one comparison youth had a 601 sustained petition by the court. Almost half of the study participants had a 602 referral to probation prior to random assignment and approximately one-third had sustained petitions.

**Table 4.6**  
**Prior and Current Criminal Justice Status at Random Assignment**

| <i>Variable</i>                   | <i>SOCP Youth<br/>(N = 264)</i> |          | <i>Comparison Youth<br/>(N = 275)</i> |          |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
|                                   | <i>%</i>                        | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i>                              | <i>N</i> |
| Age at First Citation             |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| Less Than 12                      | 9.5                             | 25       | 9.1                                   | 25       |
| 12 - 14                           | 57.2                            | 151      | 59.3                                  | 163      |
| 15 - 16                           | 29.6                            | 78       | 26.2                                  | 72       |
| 17 - 18                           | 3.8                             | 10       | 5.4                                   | 15       |
| Prior 601/602 Referrals           |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| 601 Referral                      | 49.6                            | 131      | 54.6                                  | 150      |
| 602 Referral                      | 47.3                            | 255      | 48.8                                  | 263      |
| Prior 601/602 Sustained Petitions |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| 601 Sustained Petition            | 0.4                             | 1        | 0.4                                   | 1        |
| 602 Sustained Petition            | 34.8                            | 92       | 33.4                                  | 92       |
| Current Status                    |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| Formal Probation                  | 33.0                            | 87       | 30.2                                  | 83       |
| Informal Probation                | 67.0                            | 177      | 69.8                                  | 192      |
| Current Referral                  |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| New Citation                      | 72.7                            | 192      | 75.6                                  | 208      |
| Formal Violation of Probation     | 8.7                             | 23       | 7.3                                   | 20       |
| From JPAT or Colston              | 4.6                             | 12       | 4.7                                   | 13       |
| Gang/Tagging Crew Association     |                                 |          |                                       |          |
| None                              | 61.0                            | 161      | 61.4                                  | 169      |
| Gang Association                  | 26.9                            | 71       | 26.6                                  | 73       |
| Tagging Crew Association          | 6.4                             | 17       | 5.8                                   | 16       |

As Table 4.6 indicates, most study participants, including 73 percent of SOCP cases and 76 percent of comparison cases, were referred for random assignment as a result of a new citation.<sup>12</sup> Only 33 percent of the SOCP youth and 30 percent of the control group were on formal status at the time of random assignment. More commonly, study participants were on informal probation or informal handling (non-court ordered probation). Prior to random assignment, 50 percent of the SOCP youth and 55 percent of the control group had at some time been on informal probation or informal handling.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of the study participants, 61 percent of the SOCP youth and 61 percent of the controls, had no known gang affiliation at the time of random assignment. Approximately 27 percent of both groups had some known gang association and 6 percent had been associated with a tagging crew. In order to be classified as being affiliated with a gang or tagging crew, the youth must have claimed association or it was suspected that the youth was affiliated by law enforcement or the probation agency.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the most serious sustained petition prior to random assignment, for youth who had at least one sustained petition.<sup>14</sup> For SOCP youth, property offenses were the most common type of prior crime, with an equal distribution of felony and misdemeanor offenses. Violent misdemeanors were the second most common offense for SOCP youth. The reverse was true for the comparison youth: they had more violent misdemeanor offenses than property offenses.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> To be placed on formal probation, the youth must be a ward of the court.

<sup>13</sup> Generally, youth cases are classified as "informal" when they are still in the earlier stages of the delinquency continuum. In less serious situations, the court may provide youth an opportunity to complete probation "informally" before being placed on formal probation.

<sup>14</sup> The local police departments send all juvenile citations to the Probation Agency to determine further action, if any.

<sup>15</sup> Violent offenses are crimes such as homicide, robbery and assault. Property offenses include crimes such as burglary, vandalism, and theft.

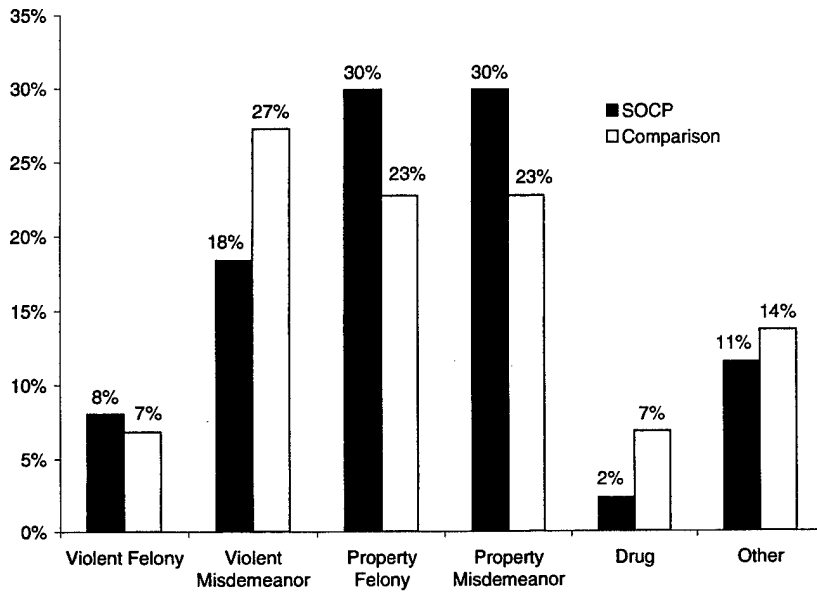


**Fig. 4.3 - Most Serious Sustained Petition Prior to Random Assignment, for Those with at Least One Sustained Petition**

## **V. HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS**

### **RESULTS DURING INTERVENTION PERIOD**

#### **Educational Performance**

School records were available for a sub-sample of youth (just under 30 percent of the full sample)<sup>16</sup> to examine changes in their school performance before and after the intervention period. Both groups began the intervention period with similar GPAs--1.1 and 1.2 for SOCP and comparison youth, respectively. In addition, both groups improved somewhat--about half a grade point--after the intervention, so that SOCP and comparison youth were similar in terms of intervention GPAs.

School records also provided information on the number of disciplinary incidents for approximately half of the study participants. Similar to the school GPA measures, both SOCP and comparison youth improved during the intervention; however the improvement was similar for both SOCP and comparison youth. The average number of disciplinary incidents was about one for both SOCP and comparison youth during the intervention period.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Alcohol and Drug Use**

Figure 5.1 illustrates the number of SOCP youth and comparison youth known to use alcohol prior to random assignment and during the intervention period. Thirty-nine percent of SOCP youth and 55 percent of control youth had some alcohol use prior to random assignment. Both groups showed reductions during the program: 26 percent of SOCP youth and 24 percent of comparison youth used alcohol during the intervention period. The differences between groups, although significant at random assignment, was

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<sup>16</sup> Some school records are purged after one year; we were unable to obtain GPAs for more than half of the sample. Attendance records were not in the system for most youth in the study.

<sup>17</sup> Data on actual days enrolled was not reliable enough to use for calculating the time period during which disciplines occurred.

not significant at the end of the intervention. Fifty-four percent of the SOCP youth and 38 percent of comparison youth had no known alcohol use either before or during the intervention period. Twenty percent of SOCP youth and 38 percent of comparison youth who used alcohol prior to random assignment did not use alcohol during the intervention. However, 7 percent of SOCP youth and comparison youth who had no known alcohol use prior to random assignment, did use alcohol during the intervention period. Nineteen percent of the SOCP youth and 17 percent of the comparison youth used alcohol both prior to random assignment and during the intervention period.

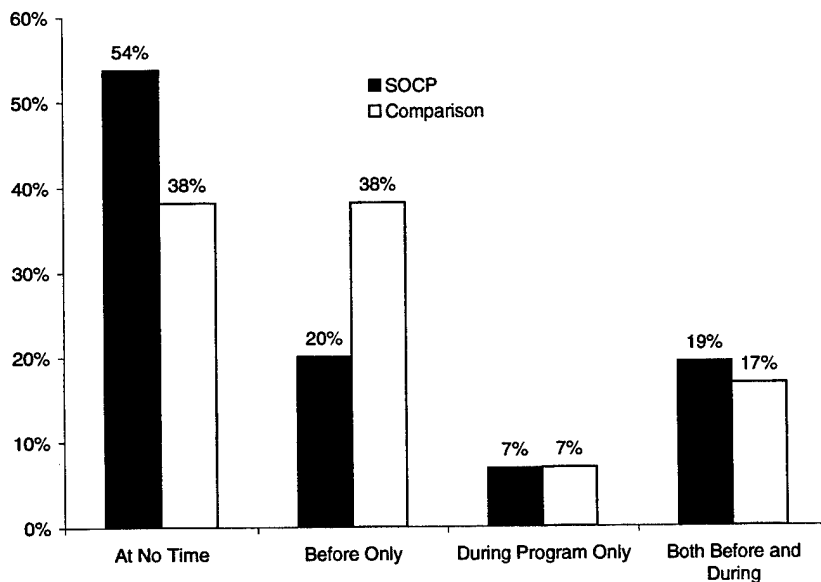


**Fig. 5.1 - Alcohol Usage Prior to Random Assignment and During Intervention Period**

Figure 5.2 illustrates the number of SOCP and comparison youth known to use drugs prior to random assignment and during the intervention period. At random assignment, about half of all youth had used drugs. During intervention, about a third used drugs. At random assignment and during the program, SOCP and comparison youth were similar in terms of drug use. Forty-seven percent of the SOCP youth and 39 percent of comparison youth had no drug use either before or during the intervention period. Eighteen percent of SOCP youth and 28 percent of comparison youth who used drugs

prior to random assignment did not use drugs during the intervention. However, 7 percent of the SOCP youth and the comparison youth who had no drug use prior to random assignment used drugs during the intervention period. Twenty-eight percent of the SOCP youth and 26 percent of the comparison youth used drugs both prior to random assignment and during the intervention period.

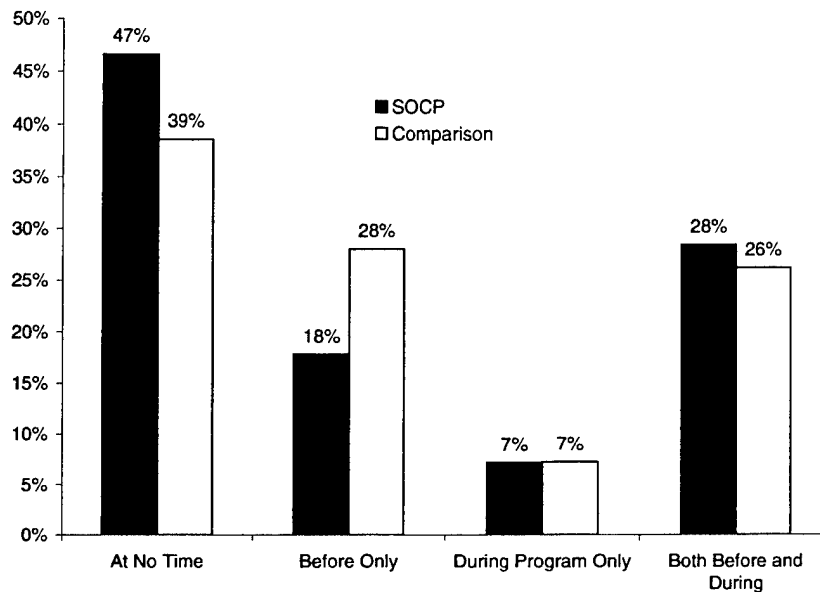


**Fig. 5.2 - Drug Usage Prior to Random Assignment and During Intervention Period**

Figure 5.3 indicates the number of times SOCP and comparison youth were drug tested during the intervention period. Probation officers cannot legally require clients on informal handling to submit to drug testing. Only youth with a 654.2 informal probation status or those on formal probation can be required to submit to a drug test. To make this analysis more meaningful, only youth who could be legally drug tested (i.e., those on 654.2 status or those on formal probation) were included in this analysis. Official record data indicated slightly more than half (60 percent) of eligible SOCP youth were drug tested during the intervention period. Forty-one percent were tested one or two times, 11 percent were tested three or four times, and 8 percent were given five or more tests. Overall, comparison youth were drug tested less often during the intervention period than

SOCP youth. Only 26 percent of the comparison youth received one or two drug tests. It is possible that youth in both groups were given more drug tests than those indicated here. It was common at both routine probation and at SOCP that probation officers were assisted by other staff members who would perform this function. Routine probation officers, for example, may have delegated a Corrections Services Officer (CSO) to perform a drug test. If the result of the drug test was negative, it may not have been documented in the probation file.

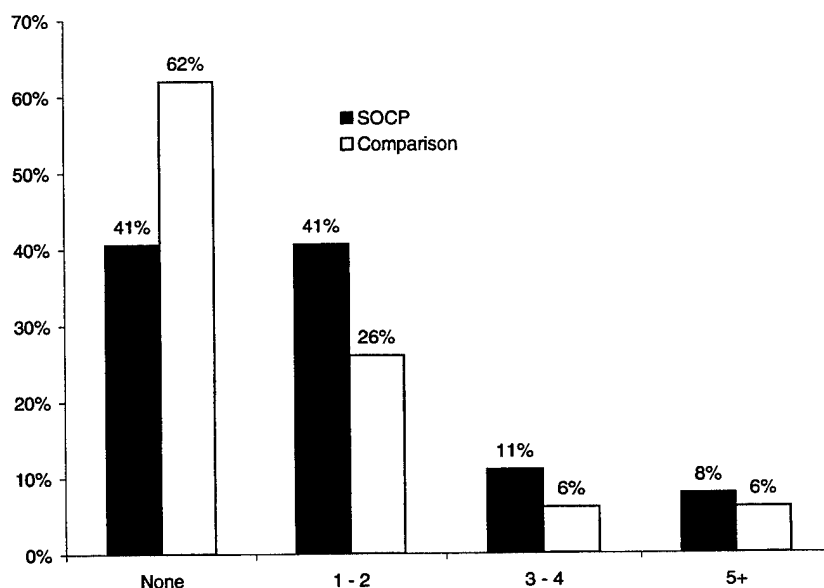


**Fig. 5.3 - Number of Drug Tests Administered During Intervention Period<sup>18</sup>**

Additional analysis revealed a moderate relationship between whether a youth was drug tested and his/her total risk score. Those who had a higher total risk score were more likely to be drug tested during the intervention ( $p < .05$ ).

Of the 133 youth drug tested during the intervention,<sup>19</sup> there were 70 youth who had at least one positive test. This included 44 SOCP youth and 26 comparison youth.

<sup>18</sup> Only youth on formal probation and 654.2 informal cases (76 SOCP youth and 57 comparison youth) are included in this chart.

As Figure 5.4 indicates, of those study participants who were tested during their intervention, 42 percent of the SOCP youth and 54 percent of the comparison youth had no positive results. Thirty-three percent of SOCP youth had one positive drug test, 12 percent had two positive tests, and 13 percent had three or more positive drug tests. SOCP youth had a higher proportion of positive tests (number of positive tests/total tests taken) than youth on routine probation ( $p < .05$ ). The vast majority of positive tests were for marijuana--for both SOCP and comparison youth. About one-tenth tested positive for cocaine; only a very few youth tested positive for any other drug.

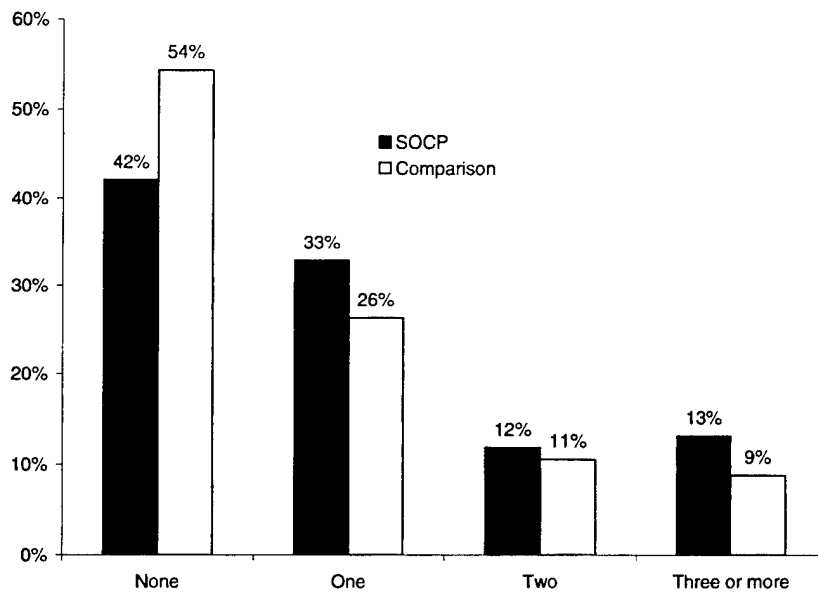


**Fig. 5.4 - Number of Positive Drug Tests, for Eligible Probation Cases<sup>20</sup> Tested During Intervention Period**

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<sup>19</sup> We consider only youth on formal probation and 654.2 informals in the analysis of drug testing, since youth on informal handling status cannot be compelled to take a drug test.

<sup>20</sup> Youth on informal handling status were excluded from this analysis, since they could not legally be compelled to submit to drug testing.

## Restitution<sup>21</sup>

One of the original Challenge Grant objectives was to increase restitution payments made by youth on probation. Table 5.1 summarizes the restitution assigned and paid by SOCP and comparison youth. Approximately 40 percent of all study participants were ordered to pay restitution, primarily by the court; about 10 percent had restitution requirements imposed by their probation officer. Most restitution impositions were not for the offense that led to random assignment to SOCP or comparison group, but for other offenses committed either before or after random assignment.

**Table 5.1**  
**Restitution During the Intervention Period**

| <i>Variable</i>                       | <i>SOCP Youth</i><br>( <i>N</i> = 264) |        | <i>Comparison Youth</i><br>( <i>N</i> = 275) |       |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------|-------|
|                                       | %                                      | N      | %                                            | N     |
| Assigned restitution                  | 38.3                                   | 101    | 40.7                                         | 112   |
| Court-ordered                         | 27.6                                   | 73     | 33.8                                         | 93    |
| For random assignment offense         | 6.1                                    | 16     | 9.1                                          | 25    |
| For other old or new offense          | 21.6                                   | 57     | 24.7                                         | 68    |
| Assigned by probation officer         | 11.7                                   | 31     | 8.0                                          | 22    |
| Completed court-ordered restitution   | 4.9                                    | 13     | 5.1                                          | 14    |
| Completed restitution ordered by P.O. | 1.9                                    | 5      | 2.6                                          | 7     |
| Of those assigned restitution:        |                                        |        |                                              |       |
| Mean restitution assigned             |                                        | \$669* |                                              | \$307 |
| Mean restitution paid                 |                                        | \$56   |                                              | \$33  |

\* SOCP and comparison youth significantly different,  $p < .05$

Thirty-eight percent of SOCP youth and 41 percent of comparison youth were ordered to pay restitution. Among those assigned restitution, the average amount ordered was \$669 for SOCP youth and \$307 for comparison youth, a statistically significant difference.<sup>22</sup> Median amounts were \$210 for SOCP youth and \$120 for comparison

<sup>21</sup> Family income and youth employment data, although potentially available, were not collected for this evaluation. Future studies should address the relationship between income and the ability to pay restitution.

<sup>22</sup> Unusually large restitution assignments or payments (more than \$10,000) were excluded in calculating means.

youth. Actual payments by both SOCP and comparison youth were modest. The mean amount paid by SOCP youth was \$56, while comparison youth paid \$33. Most youth who were assessed restitution did not complete their requirements during the intervention period.

### Community Service

Increasing the rate of successful completion of community service was another goal established by the Legislature for Challenge Grants. As Table 5.2 shows, more than half of all youth--60 percent of SOCP youth and 65 percent of comparison youth--were assigned community service hours during their intervention. Courts directly imposed relatively little community service; the vast majority of service requirements were assigned by probation officers. However, in some cases, the court did assign community service but left it to the probation officer to determine the exact number of hours to be served.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 5.2**  
**Community Service During the Intervention Period**

| <i>Variable</i>                             | <i>SOCP Youth</i><br><i>(N = 264)</i> |          | <i>Comparison Youth</i><br><i>(N = 275)</i> |          |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------|----------|
|                                             | <i>%</i>                              | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i>                                    | <i>N</i> |
| Assigned community service                  | 59.8                                  | 158      | 65.1                                        | 179      |
| Court-ordered                               | 9.8                                   | 26       | 14.2                                        | 39       |
| For random assignment offense               | 4.9                                   | 13       | 6.2                                         | 17       |
| For other old or new offense                | 4.9                                   | 13       | 8.0                                         | 22       |
| Assigned by probation officer               | 54.6                                  | 144      | 53.4                                        | 147      |
| Completed court-ordered community service   | 3.8                                   | 10       | 4.4                                         | 12       |
| Completed community service ordered by P.O. | 9.8                                   | 26       | 7.6                                         | 21       |
| Of those assigned community service:        |                                       |          |                                             |          |
| Mean hours assigned                         |                                       | 15       |                                             | 14       |
| Mean hours completed                        |                                       | 15*      |                                             | 8        |

\* SOCP and comparison youth significantly different,  $p < .05$

<sup>23</sup> For purposes of this table, community service assigned by the court on a "to be determined" basis is counted as being imposed by the probation officer, not the court.

The average number of community service hours ordered by either the court or the probation agency was 15 hours for SOCP youth and 14 hours for comparison youth. SOCP youth performed significantly more hours of community service than did comparison youth. However, most youth in both groups failed to complete their community service requirements during the intervention period.

### **Recidivism**

We examined three major recidivism outcomes--arrests<sup>24</sup>, sustained petitions or convictions in adult court, and juvenile and adult incarcerations. Figures 5.5 through 5.8 report the recidivism data during the intervention period.

SOCP and comparison youth were similar during the intervention period in terms of the *percent* of referrals/arrests, sustained petitions/convictions, and commitments. Fifty five percent of SOCP youth and 49 percent of comparison youth had no new arrests leading to a referral to probation during their intervention period (see Figure 5.5). Slightly less than one-quarter of SOCP and comparison youth had a referral/arrest; few study youth had a sustained petition; approximately a quarter of both SOCP and comparison youth were institutionalized (juvenile hall, Colston Youth Center, Juvenile Restitution Program, boot camp, or California Youth Authority) during the intervention. As we examined these measures in more detail, however, some differences appeared in terms of the seriousness of the charges evoked.

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<sup>24</sup> Only arrests that resulted in a referral to probation are counted.

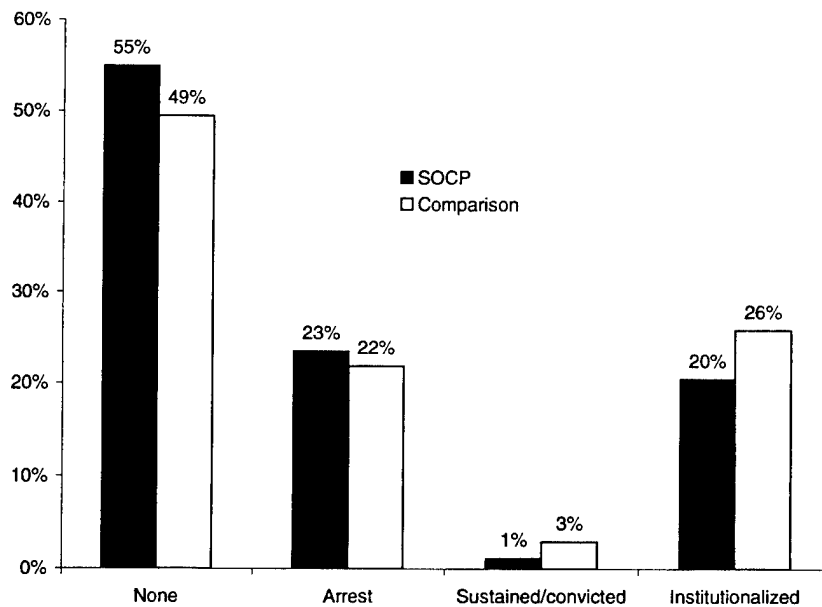


**Fig. 5.5 - Most Serious Recidivism During the Intervention Period**

For those youth who had a new referral to probation, Figure 5.6 displays the most serious offense. Property offenses (19 percent of SOCP youth and 16 percent of comparison youth) and violent offenses (10 percent of SOCP youth and 12 percent of comparison youth) were the most prevalent type of referral. For both SOCP youth and comparison youth, the violent offenses were primarily for misdemeanor charges (74 percent and 70 percent respectively).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Violent offenses are crimes such as homicide, robbery and assault. Property offenses include crimes such as burglary, vandalism, and theft. Drug offenses include crimes such as possession or sale of narcotics, marijuana, or dangerous drugs.

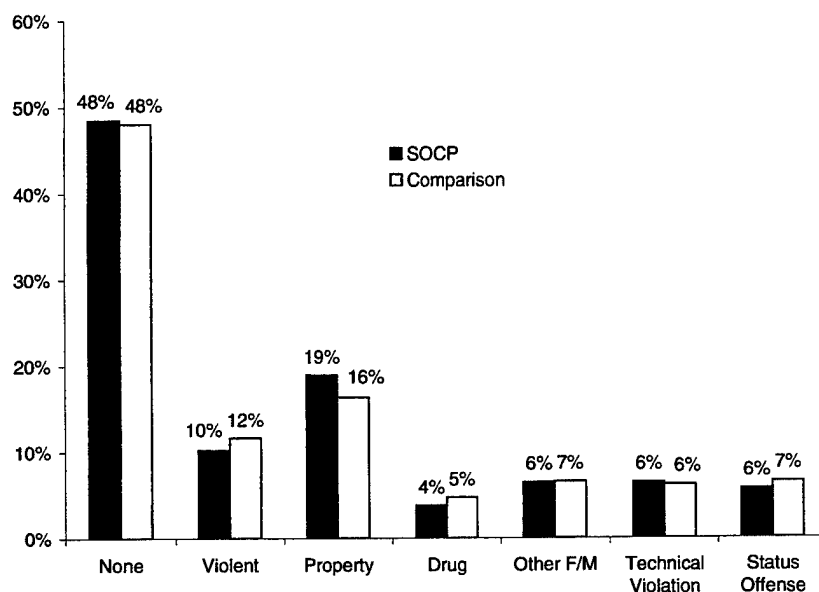


**Fig. 5.6 - Most Serious Type of Referral Offense During Intervention Period**

Figure 5.7 presents the most serious sustained petition during the intervention period. SOCP youth were more likely to be sustained on technical violations than were comparison youth (9 percent and 6 percent respectively), although the difference was not statistically significant. Property offenses followed technical violations as the second most prevalent sustained petition during the intervention period for both the SOCP youth (7 percent) and comparison youth (9 percent). Overall, SOCP youth had significantly less serious sustained petitions than comparison youth. Differences between the seriousness of offenses *referred* to probation (Figure 5.6) and *sustained* petition offenses (Figure 5.7) may be the result of multiple referrals. For example, a youth may be referred for both a violent offense and a technical violation during the intervention period. The most serious referral--the violent offense--would be displayed in Figure 5.6. However, if the violent offense is not sustained by the court and the technical violation is, the technical violation would be represented in Figure 5.7 as the most serious sustained petition.

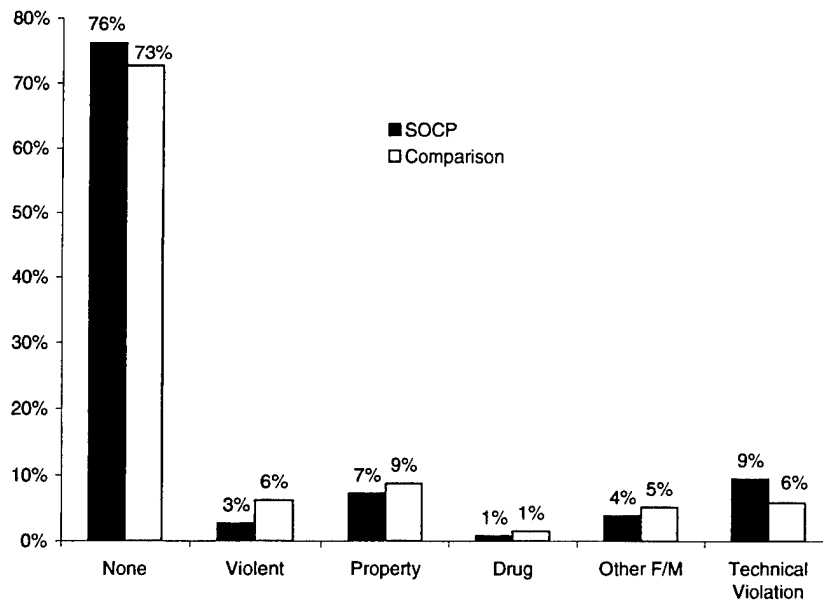


**Fig. 5.7 - Most Serious Sustained Petition Offense During Intervention Period**

Figure 5.8 reports the number of days that study participants spent in custody. About 25 percent of all study youth spent time institutionalized during the intervention period, with SOCP and comparison youth spending similar durations of time. Slightly more than 10 percent spend 10 days or fewer institutionalized; a small percent spent more than 30 days institutionalized during the intervention period.

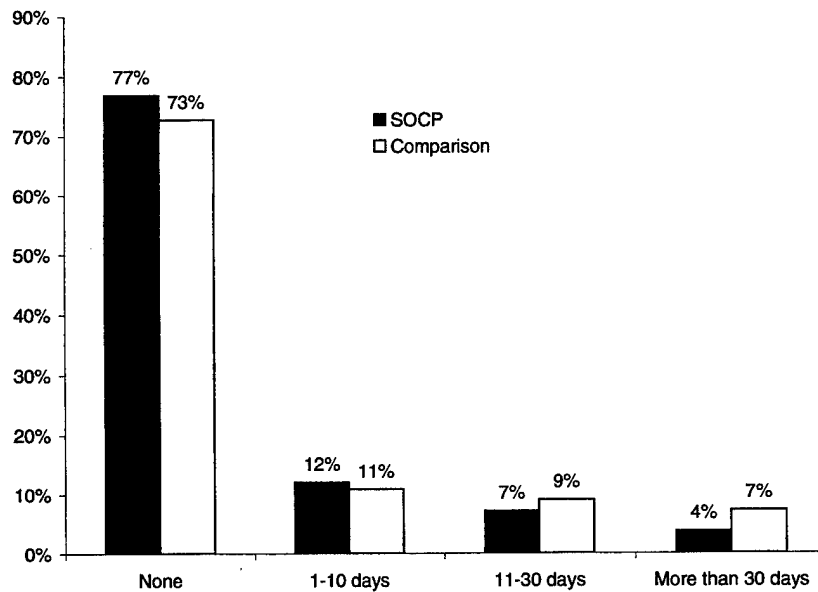


**Fig. 5.8 - Number of Days Institutionalized During Intervention Period**

### **Completion of Probation**

**Case Status.** In Ventura County, youth assigned to formal probation can remain on probation for several years. As a result, we would not expect to see a large percent of formal probation cases closed at the end of the intervention period. Cases handled informally, however, are generally closed out by probation more quickly. As noted earlier, at random assignment more than two-thirds of both SOCP and comparison youth were on informal probation or being handled informally. Table 5.3 summarizes case status of participating youth.

**Table 5.3**  
**Case Status at End of Intervention**

| <i>Variable</i>                                      | <i>SOCP Youth</i><br><i>(N = 264)</i> |     | <i>Comparison Youth</i><br><i>(N = 275)</i> |     |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------|-----|
|                                                      | %                                     | N   | %                                           | N   |
| Status                                               |                                       |     |                                             |     |
| Completed Probation (case closed)                    | 15.9                                  | 42  | 43.2*                                       | 119 |
| Remaining on Informal Handling or Informal Probation | 48.8*                                 | 128 | 18.9                                        | 52  |
| Remaining on Formal Probation                        | 30.7                                  | 81  | 27.3                                        | 75  |
| Informal Status Upgraded to Formal Probation         | 3.8                                   | 10  | 10.5*                                       | 29  |
| SOCP Case Terminations By Staff                      |                                       |     |                                             |     |
| Service Coordinators                                 | 15.6                                  | 14  | N/A                                         | N/A |
| Probation Officers                                   | 39.2                                  | 29  | N/A                                         | N/A |

\* SOCP and comparison youth significantly different,  $p < .05$

At the end of the prescribed intervention period, significantly fewer SOCP cases (16 percent) were closed compared to routine probation cases (43 percent). This figure, however, does not necessarily imply that only 16 percent of SOCP youth successfully completed their SOCP requirements. It may reflect a practice by SOCP staff of retaining youth after the intervention period to provide additional services to the families. SOCP staff were expected to close out cases; however, they could keep a case open to maintain a relationship with the youth and family if they felt they could provide needed services. Local probation managers speculated that SOCP service coordinators became very involved with their clients and their families and were hesitant to close them out.<sup>26</sup> This speculation was supported by termination for informal cases, shown in Table 5.3. For youth on informal probation/handling, service coordinators closed out cases at less than half the rate for probation officers. Despite the large base differences in closed cases between SOCP and comparison youth (43 percent vs. 16 percent), similar proportions of closed youth cases were closed successfully: 75 percent of SOCP cases and 60 percent of routine probation cases.

During the intervention period, youths who were on informal probation or informal handling who performed poorly could have been reclassified to a formal status. Four percent of the SOCP youth compared to 11 percent of the comparison youth were re-categorized during their intervention. This significant difference may have been due to the greater willingness of SOCP staff to explore more alternatives prior to placing the youth on formal probation or reflect (as we see later) the fact that SOCP youth have less serious sustained petition offenses during the intervention period.

### Sub-Group Analyses

In some instances, the impact of a program may not be similar across all youths--some subgroups may perform better than others. For example, prior research has often shown that higher risk youth may benefit more from a program than lower risk. In order to examine whether SOCP was more effective for some youth, we conducted supplementary analyses using a number of background characteristics and examined how these related to youth drug and alcohol use, community service, restitution, and recidivism outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

Our analyses revealed an interesting pattern, often aligned with seriousness of the youth's background characteristic. In several instances, less serious SOCP youth (for example younger youth, those on informal probation and those without a prior 601 offense) received less serious petition offenses than their lower risk control counterparts during the intervention period, suggesting better performance for the lower risk youth when placed in SOCP. They were not, however, *referred* for less serious offenses during the intervention.

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<sup>26</sup> Managers speculated that SOCP service coordinators, more so than probation officers, did not have the adversarial mindset and training to systematically close out cases within a specified time frame.

<sup>27</sup> Differential impact was tested by creating interactions between each background characteristic and youth program (either SOCP or comparison). Each outcome was then tested using the regression equation Outcome = Background Variable + SOCP/Comparison + interaction term (Background X SOCP/Comparison).

The available data do not allow us to tease apart the cause of these relationships. However, the observed results are consistent with several possible explanations. Less serious SOCP youth may be treated in a less severe manner than comparison youth (although they receive *referral* offenses similar to comparison youth, their *petition* offenses are more likely to be for technical violations) in an effort to give them every opportunity to improve. The more serious SOCP youth (for example higher risk youth, or those with drug and alcohol use) performed more poorly than similar comparison youth on a range of outcomes, including petition offenses, commitments, and recorded drug and alcohol use. The poorer outcomes for the more serious youth might reflect the greater scrutiny afforded in SOCP and consequently greater identification of problems behaviors. Higher levels of surveillance can lead to increased levels of reported recidivism (Petersilia and Turner 1993).

## **VI. SIX-MONTH, TWELVE-MONTH, AND EIGHTEEN-MONTH FOLLOW-UPS**

The previous chapter presented key findings for SOCP and comparison youth during the intervention period. We now turn to the outcomes during the follow-up periods after the intervention phase. Analyses are presented separately for each of the three separate six-month follow-up periods. Tabled results are specific to each individual follow-up period; they are not cumulative. We discuss cumulative results for the major outcome measures within the text.

### **RESTITUTION DURING FOLLOW-UP PERIODS**

As noted in the previous chapter, 28 percent of SOCP youth and 34 percent of comparison youth were assigned court-ordered restitution during the intervention period. Of those that were assigned, 17 percent of SOCP youth and 18 percent of comparison youth had paid all restitution ordered by the end of the intervention period. As shown in Table 6.1, between five and seven percent of youth paid all restitution during each of the three six-month follow-up periods, including both the original restitution assigned during the intervention period and any other restitution subsequently imposed by the court. By the end of the entire 18-month follow-up, 40 percent of SOCP youth and 35 percent of comparison youth assigned restitution during the intervention period had completed payments in full.<sup>28</sup> These differences were not statistically different from each other.

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<sup>28</sup> These percentages are based on youth for whom we were able to obtain restitution data during the entire 18-month follow-up period (225 SOCP youth and 236 comparison youth).

**Table 6.1**  
**Court-Ordered Restitution During the Follow-Up Period<sup>29</sup>**

|                                  | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |          | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|
|                                  | <i>%</i>          | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i>                | <i>N</i> |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>           |                   |          |                         |          |
| Completed                        | 5.3               | 14       | 5.1                     | 14       |
| Did Not Complete                 | 25.9              | 68       | 26.9                    | 74       |
| None Assigned During This Period | 68.8              | 181      | 68.0                    | 187      |
| Total                            |                   | 263      | 275                     |          |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i>          |                   |          |                         |          |
| Completed                        | 6.8               | 17       | 5.0                     | 13       |
| Did Not Complete                 | 28.3              | 71       | 25.9                    | 67       |
| None Assigned During This Period | 64.9              | 163      | 69.1                    | 179      |
| Total                            |                   | 251      |                         | 259      |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>           |                   |          |                         |          |
| Completed                        | 6.6               | 15       | 5.1                     | 12       |
| Did Not Complete                 | 26.6              | 60       | 25.7                    | 61       |
| None Assigned During This Period | 66.8              | 151      | 69.2                    | 164      |
| Total                            |                   | 226      |                         | 237      |

## COMMUNITY SERVICE DURING FOLLOW-UP PERIODS

As with restitution, most SOCP and comparison youth did not have a community service requirement imposed by the court. Thirty-eight percent of SOCP youth and 31 percent of comparison youth who were assigned community service by the court completed their requirement during the intervention period (see Table 5.2). Youth in both groups continued to complete their community service requirements during the follow-up periods, though very few were ever assigned community service by the court, as seen in Table 6.2. By the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 43 percent of SOCP youth and 26 percent of comparison youth who had court-ordered community service

<sup>29</sup> Percentages in this table are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

hours had completed them.<sup>30</sup> The difference between the two groups was marginally significant ( $p < .07$ ).

**Table 6.2**  
**Court-Ordered Community Service During the Follow-Up Period<sup>31</sup>**

|                                  | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |     | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
|                                  |                   | N   |                         | N   |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>           |                   |     |                         |     |
| Completed                        | 3.8               | 10  | 1.8                     | 5   |
| Did Not Complete                 | 6.5               | 17  | 2.2                     | 6   |
| None Assigned During This Period | 89.7              | 236 | 96.0                    | 264 |
| Total                            |                   | 275 |                         | 236 |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i>          |                   |     |                         |     |
| Completed                        | 1.2               | 3   | 1.2                     | 3   |
| Did Not Complete                 | 3.6               | 9   | 2.7                     | 7   |
| None Assigned During This Period | 95.2              | 239 | 96.1                    | 249 |
| Total                            |                   | 251 |                         | 259 |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>           |                   |     |                         |     |
| Completed                        | 3.1               | 7   | 1.3                     | 3   |
| Did Not Complete                 | 2.2               | 5   | 3.4                     | 8   |
| None Assigned During This Period | 94.7              | 214 | 95.4                    | 226 |
| Total                            |                   | 226 |                         | 237 |

## RECIDIVISM DURING FOLLOW-UP PERIODS

As in the intervention period, we used re-arrests as one measure of recidivism during the three follow-up periods. Since many of the study participants, all minors at the time of random assignment, would have reached 18 years of age during the follow-up periods, we combined sustained petitions and adult convictions into the our second measure of recidivism during the follow-ups.

<sup>30</sup> These percentages are based on youth for whom we were able to obtain community service data during the entire 18-month follow-up period (225 SOCP youth and 236 comparison youth).

<sup>31</sup> Percentages in this table are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

## Arrests

Figure 6.1 shows the number of arrests in each of the three follow-up periods. For study participants who were still minors, we considered only arrests leading to a petition. For those over 18, we counted all adult arrests. As Figure 6.1 indicates, both SOCP and comparison youth had fewer arrests in each succeeding follow-up period, possibly reflecting the fact that some of the youth were incarcerated during the intervention period, and thus had no opportunity to re-offend. Within a given follow-up period, there were no statistically significant differences in arrest rates between SOCP and comparison youth, although SOCP youth did show slightly lower arrest rates than comparison youth during the second and third follow-up periods. At the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 65 percent of SOCP youth and 69 percent of comparison youth had been re-arrested since random assignment. The difference between groups was not statistically significant.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> These percentages are based on youth for whom we were able to obtain data on re-arrests during the entire 18-month follow-up period (225 SOCP youth and 236 comparison youth).

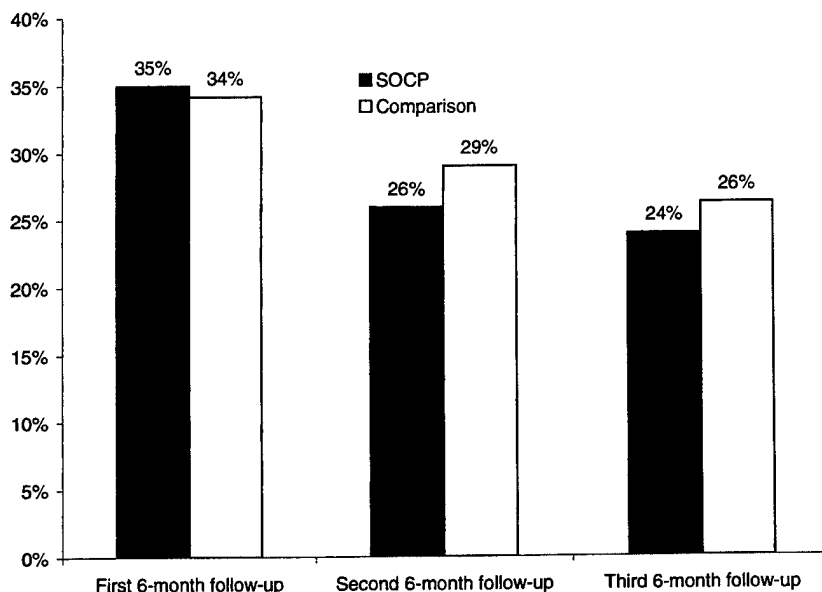


**Fig. 6.1 - Percentage with One or More Arrests During the Follow-Up Period<sup>33</sup>**

In addition to the frequency of re-arrest, we looked at the severity of the offense charges for SOCP and comparison youth during the follow-up periods. These findings are reported in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 below. As Table 6.3 indicates, most arrests for both SOCP and comparison youth during the follow-up periods were not for violent, property, or drug-related offenses, but for "other" offenses--usually technical violations, status offenses, or misdemeanors. Although SOCP youth tended to have fewer arrests for violent offenses in the first two follow-up periods, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.

<sup>33</sup> Percentages in this figure are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

**Table 6.3**  
**Most Serious Arrest During the Follow-Up Period<sup>34</sup>**

|                         | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |    | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |    |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
|                         | %                 | N  | %                       | N  |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Violent                 | 5.3               | 14 | 10.5                    | 29 |
| Property                | 9.5               | 25 | 6.2                     | 17 |
| Drug                    | 1.5               | 4  | 1.5                     | 4  |
| Other                   | 23.2              | 61 | 20.4                    | 56 |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i> |                   |    |                         |    |
| Violent                 | 3.6               | 9  | 5.0                     | 13 |
| Property                | 5.2               | 13 | 3.1                     | 8  |
| Drug                    | 3.6               | 9  | 2.7                     | 7  |
| Other                   | 18.3              | 46 | 20.8                    | 54 |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Violent                 | 6.2               | 14 | 5.5                     | 13 |
| Property                | 4.0               | 9  | 7.2                     | 17 |
| Drug                    | 1.3               | 3  | 1.7                     | 4  |
| Other                   | 18.1              | 41 | 16.0                    | 38 |

Table 6.4 shows the same arrest data broken down by the severity of the offense charges. During the first follow-up period, both SOCP and comparison youth who were re-arrested were most likely to be charged with a misdemeanor. During the latter two follow-up periods, the modal category for both groups was a technical violation.

<sup>34</sup> Percentages in this table are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

**Table 6.4**  
**Most Serious Arrest During the Follow-Up Period<sup>35</sup>**

|                         | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |    | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |    |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
|                         | %                 | N  | %                       | N  |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Felony                  | 4.9               | 13 | 8.4                     | 23 |
| Misdemeanor             | 17.1              | 45 | 14.2                    | 39 |
| Technical Violation     | 10.3              | 27 | 11.3                    | 31 |
| Status Offense          | 6.8               | 18 | 3.6                     | 10 |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i> |                   |    |                         |    |
| Felony                  | 6.0               | 15 | 3.9                     | 10 |
| Misdemeanor             | 10.0              | 25 | 10.4                    | 27 |
| Technical Violation     | 12.0              | 30 | 13.1                    | 34 |
| Status Offense          | 2.8               | 7  | 4.2                     | 11 |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Felony                  | 8.0               | 18 | 7.6                     | 18 |
| Misdemeanor             | 7.1               | 16 | 9.3                     | 22 |
| Technical Violation     | 9.7               | 22 | 11.8                    | 28 |
| Status Offense          | 3.5               | 8  | 1.7                     | 4  |

### **Sustained Petitions and Adult Convictions**

Figure 6.2 shows the percentages of SOCP and comparison youth who had one or more arrest leading to a sustained petition or adult conviction during each of the three follow-up periods.<sup>36</sup> While SOCP youth had fewer such arrests in the first and third follow-up period than did comparison youth, they had more during the second follow-up, so that overall no clear pattern of differences between the two groups seems apparent. At the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 43 percent of both SOCP and comparison groups had at least one sustained petition or adult conviction since random assignment.

<sup>35</sup> Percentages in this table are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

<sup>36</sup> Analyses for sustained petitions and adult convictions are based on the date of the arrest that led to the sustained petition or adult conviction, rather than the date of the actual sustained petition or conviction.

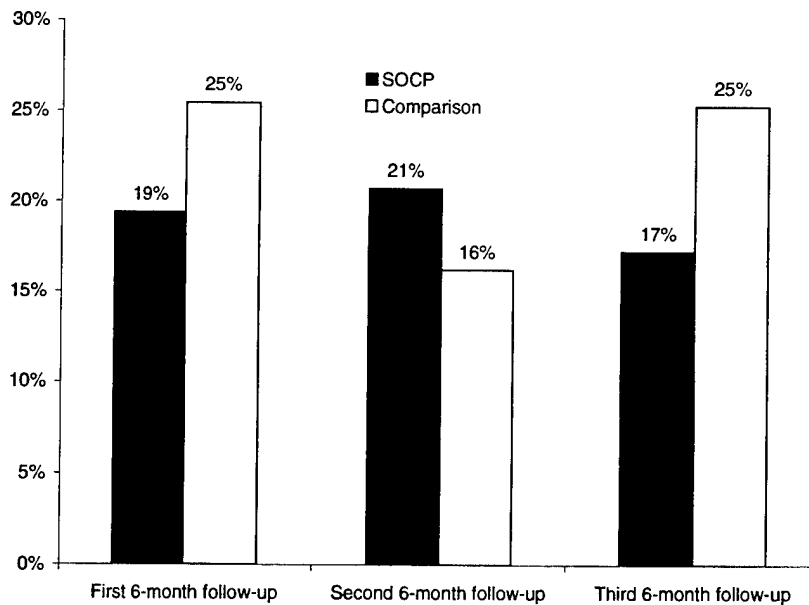


**Fig. 6.2 - Percentage with a Sustained Petition or Adult Conviction During the Follow-Up Period<sup>37</sup>**

As with arrests, we also examined the severity of sustained petitions/adult convictions during each of the follow-up periods. These analyses are shown in Tables 6.5 and 6.6 below. As we saw in the analysis of re-arrests above (see Table 6.3), the most common offense charge that led to a sustained petition or adult conviction was the "other" category--neither violent, nor property, nor drug-related offenses.<sup>38</sup> During the first and third follow-up periods, SOCP youth had lower rates of conviction for violent offenses, although none of the differences between the two groups were statistically significant.

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<sup>37</sup> Percentages in this figure are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period. Determination of relevant arrests is based on date of arrest, not date of the subsequent sustained petition.

<sup>38</sup> "Other" offenses were most often status offenses or misdemeanors.

**Table 6.5**  
**Most Serious Offense Leading to a Sustained Petition or Adult Conviction During the Follow-Up Period<sup>39</sup>**

|                         | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |    | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |    |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
|                         | %                 | N  | %                       | N  |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Violent                 | 1.1               | 3  | 4.7                     | 13 |
| Property                | 4.9               | 13 | 2.5                     | 7  |
| Drug                    | 0.4               | 1  | 0.4                     | 1  |
| Other                   | 19.0              | 50 | 14.9                    | 41 |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i> |                   |    |                         |    |
| Violent                 | 3.6               | 9  | 0.4                     | 1  |
| Property                | 3.2               | 8  | 2.7                     | 7  |
| Drug                    | 0.0               | 0  | 0.8                     | 2  |
| Other                   | 15.5              | 39 | 14.7                    | 38 |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Violent                 | 2.7               | 6  | 5.1                     | 12 |
| Property                | 2.7               | 6  | 4.2                     | 10 |
| Drug                    | 0.9               | 2  | 0.0                     | 0  |
| Other                   | 11.5              | 26 | 16.5                    | 39 |

In Table 6.6, we present the same offenses that led to sustained petitions/adult convictions, broken down by the severity of the offense charge. Both groups tended to be convicted most often of technical violations during all three periods. During the first and third periods, SOCP youth had fewer sustained petitions/adult convictions for violent offenses than comparison youth. None of the differences between the two groups, however, were statistically significant.

<sup>39</sup> Percentages in this figure are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

**Table 6.6**  
**Most Serious Arrest Leading to a Sustained Petition or Adult Conviction During the Follow-Up Period<sup>40</sup>**

|                         | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |    | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |    |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
|                         |                   | N  |                         | N  |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Felony                  | 6.1               | 16 | 7.3                     | 20 |
| Misdemeanor             | 8.0               | 21 | 4.7                     | 13 |
| Technical Violation     | 11.0              | 29 | 10.5                    | 29 |
| Status Offense          | 0.4               | 1  | 0.0                     | 0  |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i> |                   |    |                         |    |
| Felony                  | 6.0               | 15 | 1.2                     | 3  |
| Misdemeanor             | 6.8               | 17 | 8.9                     | 23 |
| Technical Violation     | 9.6               | 24 | 8.5                     | 22 |
| Status Offense          | 0.0               | 0  | 0.0                     | 0  |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>  |                   |    |                         |    |
| Felony                  | 3.5               | 8  | 8.0                     | 19 |
| Misdemeanor             | 4.9               | 11 | 6.8                     | 16 |
| Technical Violation     | 9.3               | 21 | 11.0                    | 26 |
| Status Offense          | 0.0               | 0  | 0.0                     | 0  |

#### COMPLETION OF PROBATION DURING FOLLOW-UP PERIODS

As we noted above, most SOCP and comparison youth did not complete probation during the intervention period, although a higher proportion of comparison youth completed their probation (see Table 5.3). During any of the three follow-up periods, relatively few youth in either group completed probation, as shown in Table 6.7 below. There was no significant difference between SOCP youth and comparison youth in completing probation during any of the three follow-up periods. By the end of the third 6-month follow-up period, 15 percent of both SOCP and comparison youth had completed probation.

<sup>40</sup> Determination of relevant arrests is based on date of arrest, not date of the subsequent sustained petition.

**Table 6.7**  
**Youth Who Completed Probation During the Follow-Up Period<sup>41</sup>**

|                         | <i>SOCP Youth</i> |     | <i>Comparison Youth</i> |     |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
|                         | %                 | N   | %                       | N   |
| <i>First Follow-Up</i>  |                   |     |                         |     |
| Completed               | 3.8               | 10  | 3.6                     | 10  |
| Did Not Complete        | 73.8              | 194 | 57.5                    | 158 |
| Not on Probation        | 22.4              | 59  | 38.9                    | 107 |
| Total                   |                   | 263 |                         | 275 |
| <i>Second Follow-Up</i> |                   |     |                         |     |
| Completed               | 4.8               | 12  | 3.5                     | 9   |
| Did Not Complete        | 48.2              | 121 | 47.5                    | 123 |
| Not on Probation        | 47.0              | 118 | 49.0                    | 127 |
| Total                   |                   | 251 |                         | 259 |
| <i>Third Follow-Up</i>  |                   |     |                         |     |
| Completed               | 5.8               | 13  | 8.0                     | 19  |
| Did Not Complete        | 42.5              | 96  | 39.7                    | 94  |
| Not on Probation        | 51.8              | 117 | 52.3                    | 124 |
| Total                   |                   | 226 |                         | 237 |

### **Wardship Status During Follow-up Periods**

Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of SOCP and comparison youth who were wards of the court at the end of each of the three follow-up periods. Slightly fewer SOCP youth remained wards at the end of the first follow-up period, but the pattern was reversed for the later two follow-up periods. None of the differences in wardship rates were statistically significant. By the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 37 percent of SOCP youth and 34 percent of comparison youth remained wards. This difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.

<sup>41</sup> Percentages in this table are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

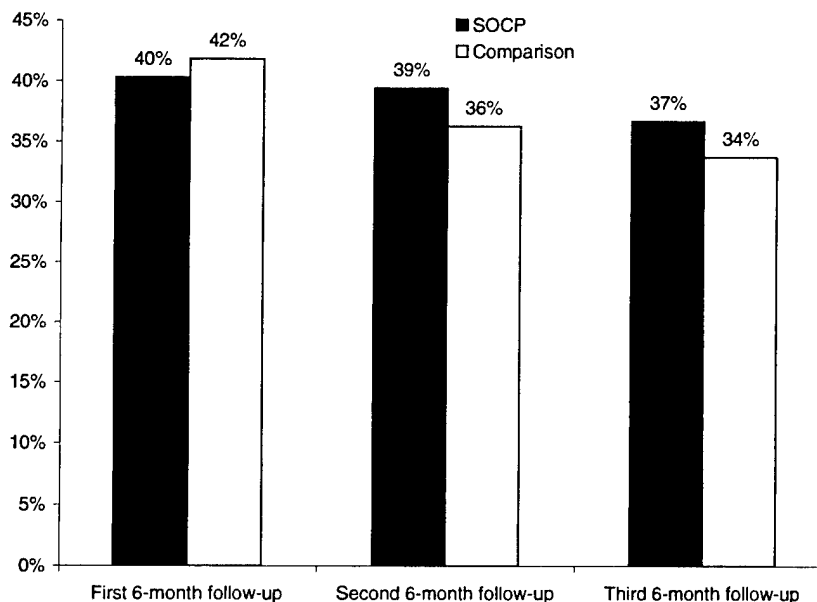


**Fig. 6.3 - Percentage of Youth Who Remained Wards at the End of the Follow-Up Periods<sup>42</sup>**

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS

SOCP and comparison group youth were similar across a wide range of outcomes, including restitution and community service, as well as recidivism outcomes. These similarities were apparent during the intervention period and persisted up to 18 months following the end of the intervention period. Thus, the program did not achieve the changes in youth behavior that were hypothesized. In the Conclusions chapter we discuss some of the potential reasons for the lack of differences in observed outcomes. What the results do not tell us, however, is which, if any, of the individual components of the SOCP program might have been effective. Like so many correctional interventions, SOCP consisted of a "package" of different program components, ranging from increased supervision, family involvement, and provision of multiple services. Outcomes observed tell us that the program as a whole did not affect outcomes. We may be able to gain some

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<sup>42</sup> Percentages in this figure are based on youth for whom data are available within a given follow-up period (see Figure 4.1).

insights into individual components by examining correlations between youth who received varying degrees of services and outcomes; however, without systematically testing individual program components, we cannot know conclusively which ones are the most and least effective in changing youth behaviors.

## **EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The randomized field experiment was successfully implemented in the context of SOCP. Youth were placed into the program (SOCP or comparison) to which they were assigned, and the random assignment resulted in comparable study groups. Thus, observed differences between SOCP and comparison youth could be attributed to the program, rather than to systematically biasing characteristics of one study group or another.

Data collection was comprehensive. The evaluation was able to gather background, intervention, and follow-up data for youth within applicable periods. However, the full 18-month data were not available for all youth. This was because about 14 percent of both SOCP and comparison youth had not completed the full 18 months of follow-up time after the intervention period by the time data collection for the project was completed in June 2001. All applicable youth data, however, were analyzed at each of the three separate six-month follow-up periods.

Information for the common data elements required by the Board of Corrections was gathered from official records. A criticism of official record data is that it only reflects what the system records for individual youth. Thus, behaviors that are not directly observable, such as changes in attitudes or actual drug and alcohol use, do not show up in official statistics. These, however, can be measured during interviews in which youth are asked to describe their personal experiences as a result of an intervention. In the current evaluation, we collected interview data from both youth and probation officers in an attempt to better understand the more subtle impact of SOCP. These findings will be presented in a forthcoming report specifically focused on self-report findings.

## **VII. PROCESS EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS**

This chapter presents findings on the process evaluation. In other words, did the youth receive the program as intended? We discuss the number and type of contacts, time spent, and services received by both SOCP and comparison group youth during the intervention time period.

### **YOUTH CONTACTS**

After youth are referred to SOCP, staff completed weekly contact sheets to record all contacts youth received from project staff. Figures 7.1 through 7.4 illustrate staff contacts with SOCP youth during the intervention period. Figure 7.1 presents the average number of monthly contacts by type of staff; Figure 7.2 shows the average length of time per month by type of staff. Figure 7.3 examines the relationship between the amount of time (in minutes) that staff spend with youth and total youth risk score. Figure 7.4 explores the type of contact between staff and youth.

In Figure 7.1, "All Contact Types" includes all methods used by staff to contact youth or discuss a case (i.e., phone, face-to-face, collateral, and attempted contacts). "Successful Direct Contact" indicates the number of times staff members had direct contact with youth (does not include collateral contacts or attempted contacts).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The monthly averages have been adjusted for time institutionalized and length of time in the program.

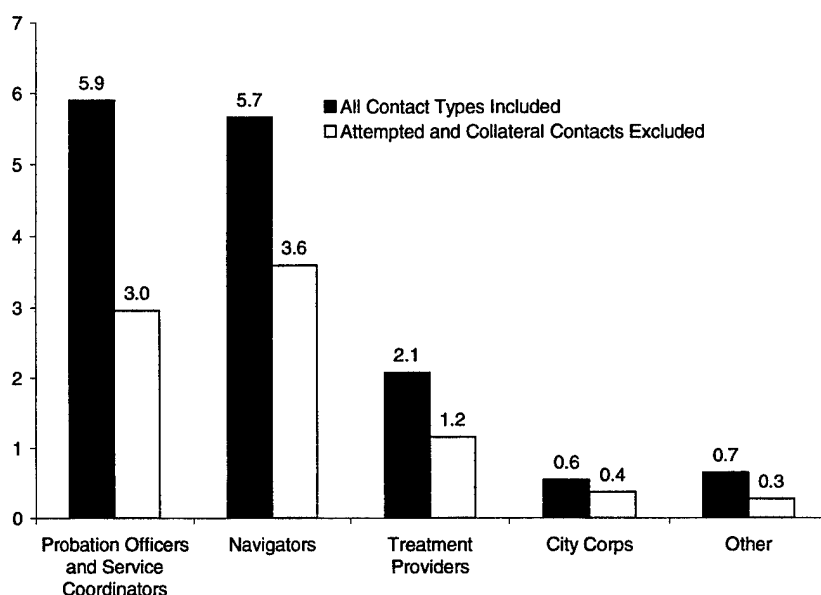


**Fig. 7.1 - Mean Number of Monthly Contacts Per Youth by Type of Staff (SOCP Only)**

SOCP youth were contacted most frequently by probation officers, service coordinators<sup>44</sup>, and navigators. In addition, SOCP staff made frequent attempts to contact the youth (no direct contact made) and to engage in multiple monthly collateral contacts with other staff members. SOCP youth received an average of 5.9 contacts a month from their probation officer or service coordinators. However, half of these contacts were not directly with the youth, but were attempted and collateral contacts. Not counting attempted and collateral contacts, probation officers or service coordinators provided an average of 3.0 contacts a month directly with the youth. Youth were seen most frequently by their navigators, with an average of 3.6 direct contacts a month--reflecting the program design.

The average *number* of contacts, however, does not indicate the amount of *time* that youth and others received from staff, which may be substantial. For example, when the mental health worker was implementing a version of Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

<sup>44</sup> Formal and informal probation cases were supervised by probation officers; informal handling cases were supervised by service coordinators.

and had primary responsibility for up to six youths at one time. At the beginning of MST, each youth would receive one contact per day, which may have lasted several hours.

The initial expectations for SOCP were that the service coordinators/probation officers would spend about two hours total time per month with each youth and their family. Figure 7.2 reveals the average length of time (minutes per month) each youth actually spent with different staff. The average length of time for all youth contacts with SOCP staff was about 8 1/4 hours per month, including attempted and collateral contacts. Excluding attempted and collateral contacts, youths received about 6 3/4 hours of contact from all SOCP staff in a given month. On average, probation officer/service coordinator monthly contact intensity was almost 3 hours--above the goal. Excluding collateral and attempted contacts from the analysis, probation officers/service coordinators spent approximately 2 hours per month with youth and families.

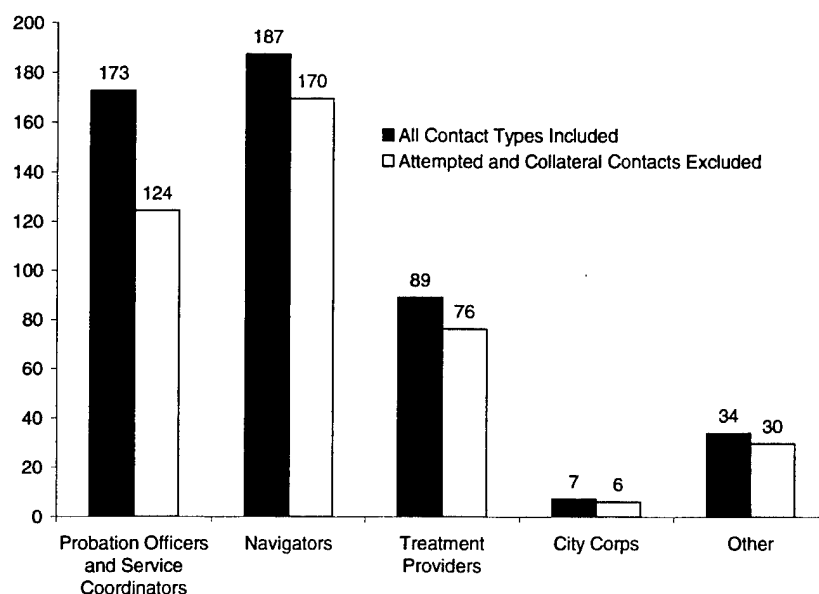


**Fig. 7.2 - Monthly Contact Time (in Minutes) Per Youth by Type of Contact (SOCP Only)**

Navigators were expected to have at least one hour of contact with the youth each week, or four hours per month. The analysis shows that actual navigator contact is about

71 percent of the originally anticipated amount, with slightly less than 3 hours of youth contact with individuals a month.

Further analysis was conducted to determine which youth were more likely to be contacted by SOCP staff. Figure 7.3 reveals a relationship between risk score and level of contact (in minutes) received at SOCP. The analysis shows that medium risk youth spent the most time with probation officers/service coordinators during the intervention period. In addition, high-risk youth have more contact with treatment providers than low-risk youth. Although, the treatment provider category includes both mental health workers and alcohol/drug specialists, the significant difference in contact levels is due to the increase in mental health services.

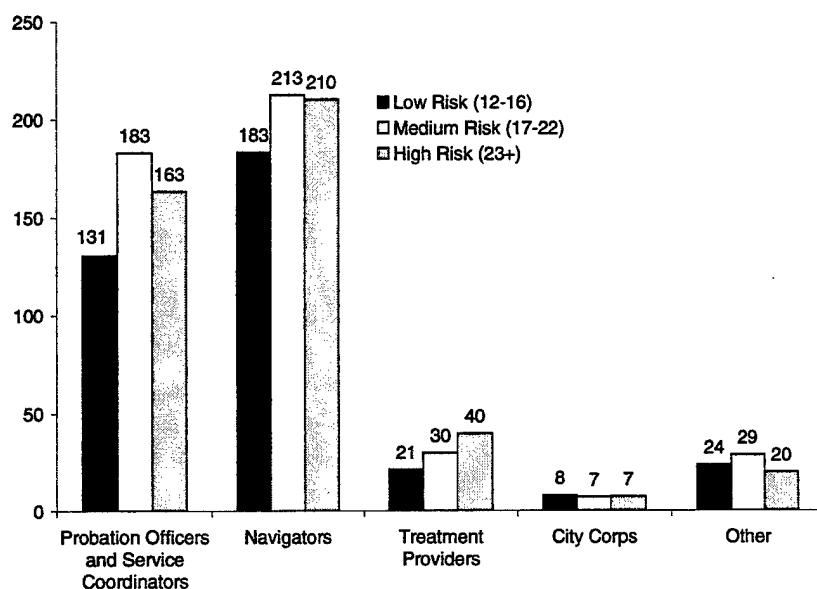


**Fig. 7.3 - Contact Time by Risk Assessment Score (SOCP only)**

## **SERVICES RECEIVED**

Family related services were the most frequently received services for SOCP youth during their intervention. Family services included activities such as crisis intervention, family counseling, parent-child mediation, and parenting workshops. Figure 7.4 shows

that approximately 78 percent of the SOCP youth were exposed to these services, compared to only 6 percent of the comparison youth. The majority of SOCP youth also received some type of mentoring services--usually by a navigator.

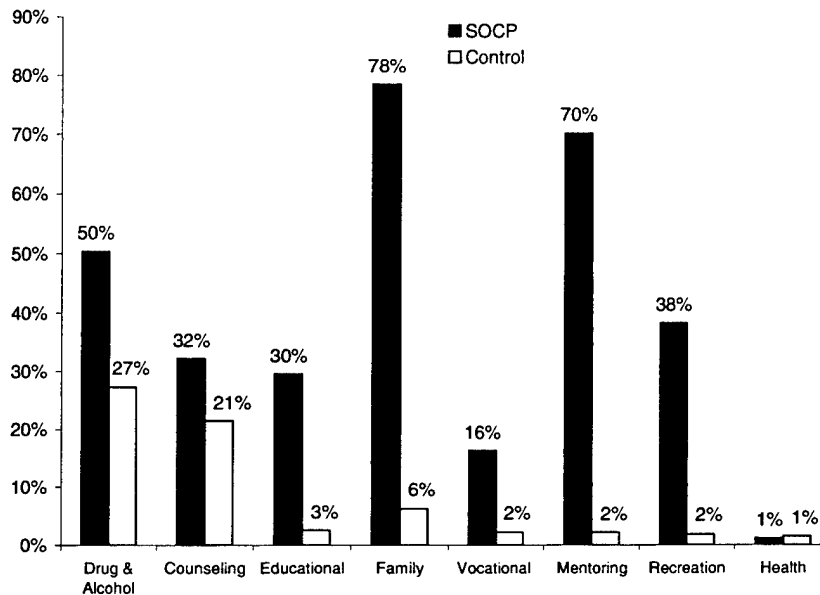


**Fig. 7.4 - Type of Services Received**

For comparison youth, the two primary services received during the intervention were drug and alcohol related services (27 percent) and counseling (21 percent). It is important to note that the percentages for comparison youth may be undercounted. Comparison youth were often referred out for services; information about actual services received may not have been recorded in their probation files.

## **CRITIQUE OF APPROACH TO PROCESS EVALUATION**

Two major issues affect our understanding of SOCP and routine probation implementation. First, we relied on records of contacts which were filled out by probation officers and other staff. Information was recorded on the dates, length of time, parties involved, and purposes of the contact. Such information may tell us about the intensity of the program, but it does not tell us about the quality of the program contacts.

This is often an issue in program evaluation, where measures of quality are not only ill-defined or undefined by programs themselves, but logistically difficult to obtain.

Another limitation is the nature of recorded information. Data collected from official records is only as complete and accurate as that recorded in the files. In the evaluation of SOCP, not all information was shared across agencies, nor was all information recorded in files. Of particular concern is information about referrals to other agencies that may or may not have resulted in the actual provision of services. This problem is not unique to this evaluation. Because systems are not linked, information is partial in any one system. Tracking systems that are able to record not only referrals but also provision of services by all agencies involved in collaborations would greatly improve our understanding of how well youth are actually served.

## **VIII. CONCLUSIONS**

In this chapter, we integrate the findings from the implementation and outcomes chapters, along with observations of the difficulties inherent in adapting a new program model for the field.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The average length of time for SOCP youth contacts with all staff was about 8 hours per month, including attempted and collateral contacts. Excluding attempted and collateral contacts, youths received about 6 3/4 hours of contact from all SOCP staff in a given month. Family services were the most frequently received services for SOCP youth during their intervention. Family services included activities such as crisis intervention, family counseling, parent-child mediation, and parenting workshops. Approximately 78 percent of SOCP youth were exposed to these services, compared to only 6 percent of comparison youth. At the end of the intervention period,<sup>45</sup> fewer SOCP cases were closed compared with routine probation cases. This may reflect a practice by SOCP staff of retaining youth after the intervention period in order to provide additional services to families. By the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 15 percent of both SOCP and comparison youth had completed probation.

### **OUTCOMES**

In terms of youth outcomes, analyses revealed generally similar outcomes for both SOCP and comparison youth on a wide variety of measures, including alcohol and drug use, restitution payments, community service and school. Fewer than 30 percent of either group used alcohol during the intervention period; about one-third used drugs. Drug testing results showed that marijuana was the most frequently used drug, and SOCP youth had a higher proportion of positive tests than comparison youth.

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<sup>45</sup> Intervention period was nine months for youth on formal probation, seven months for those on informal probation and informal handling.

### **Restitution**

Twenty-eight percent of SOCP youth and 34 percent of comparison youth were ordered by the court to pay restitution during the intervention period; 18 percent of SOCP and 15 percent of comparison youth with court-ordered restitution satisfied their requirements during intervention. SOCP youth paid significantly more restitution (\$669) than did comparison youth (\$307) during the intervention period. By the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 40 percent of SOCP youth and 35 percent of comparison youth with court-ordered restitution payments had completed them. This difference was not statistically significant.

### **Community Service**

More than half of all youth were assigned community service, usually by their probation officer. Court-ordered community service was imposed for 10 percent of SOCP youth and 14 percent of comparison youth; 38 percent of SOCP and 31 percent of comparison youth with court-ordered community service satisfied their requirements during the intervention period. The average community service performed by SOCP youth was 15 hours, significantly higher than for comparison youth, who performed an average of 8 hours. By the end of the 18-month follow-up, 43 percent of SOCP and 26 percent of comparison youth with court-imposed community service requirements had completed them. The difference between the two groups was marginally significant ( $p < .07$ ).

### **Recidivism**

Three major recidivism outcomes were examined--referrals/arrests, sustained petitions/convictions (adult), and juvenile and adult commitments to an institution. SOCP and comparison youth were similar during the intervention and follow-up periods in terms of the percent of referrals/arrests, sustained petitions/convictions (adult), and juvenile and adult commitments. During the intervention period, approximately half of all study youth had no new arrests leading to a referral. Few study youth had a sustained petition; approximately a quarter of both groups spent time incarcerated during the

intervention. However, for those youth with sustained petitions, SOCP youth were more likely to be sustained on technical violations than comparison youth. By the end of the 18-month follow-up period, 65 percent of SOCP youth and 69 percent of comparison youth had at least one re-arrest since random assignment; 43 percent of each group had at least one sustained petition or adult conviction.

### **Arrest Rates**

Looking at the juvenile justice system as a whole, we also see no evidence of major changes in youth crime, as measured by arrest rates per 100,000 youth. Juvenile arrest rates for Ventura County from 1996 through 2000 were 8,186; 7,958; 8,162; 7,908; and 9,132 per 100,000, respectively.<sup>46</sup> The rates show small fluctuations in the early years of SOCP, but an increase in 2000. Even if SOCP were able to substantially decrease the number of youth who had subsequent contacts with the justice system, the relatively small number of youth involved in SOCP would not have had a great impact on arrest rates in general. And, despite the fact that arrest rate is one of the legislatively mandated outcomes for Challenge Programs, one cannot conclusively tie changes in system level outcomes to any particular program. Too many changes occur at the same time to be able to draw solid causal inferences about program impact and overall crime rates in any county.

### **EXPLAINING SIMILAR OUTCOMES FOR SOCP AND COMPARISON YOUTH**

Program planners expected the SOCP model to result in substantially improved outcomes for youth participating in the program. As we have seen, in many instances, this was not the case. Why were no differences observed? Although we do not have direct evidence, part of the explanation is the perception that the introduction of SOCP changed the way routine probation is delivered. With the introduction of SOCP, routine probation officers were able to reduce the size of their caseloads by referring eligible

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<sup>46</sup> Source: [http://www.bdcorr.ca.gov/cppd/cpa\\_2000/helpful\\_resources/helpful\\_resources.htm](http://www.bdcorr.ca.gov/cppd/cpa_2000/helpful_resources/helpful_resources.htm)

youth to SOCP.<sup>47</sup> As a result of the reduced caseloads, routine probation officers could provide more intensive supervision to a smaller number of youth. Another possible reason for the similar outcomes for SOCP and routine probation is that some routine probation units had already implemented similar strategies to those used at SOCP to address youth and family needs. For example, one routine probation unit delivers intensive case management and regularly refers youth to City Impact (a program that provides mentors) while other units use a team approach (i.e., probation officers, correctional service officers, and social workers) to work with youth. As a consequence of similar program components being delivered to some control and SOCP youth, similar outcomes may have resulted. Although our implementation and service data indicate significantly fewer contacts and services for comparison youth, control contacts may have been undercounted, as described earlier.

Alternatively, the lack of differences in youth outcomes may reflect the reality that more intensive services are required to change youth behaviors. The average length of time SOCP staff worked directly with youth and their families was about two hours per week. Many of the contacts by probation officers and navigators were attempted and collateral contacts, as opposed to direct services. The program model may need to be more intensive to affect the underlying criminal behaviors of the youth as well as to address the environmental factors surrounding the youth. The original SOCP model was in fact more intensive and comprehensive than the model actually delivered. This was due, in part, to the complex nature of collaborations of this type. We discuss below some of the lessons learned regarding collaboration.

## **IMPLEMENTING A NEW CONCEPT**

Taking a broad, abstract theory about an ideal world into probation practice is a difficult endeavor. Traditional probation services do not attempt to include other social service agencies as true partners in addressing youth needs, and they do not attempt to

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<sup>47</sup> As discussed earlier, half of the eligible referrals would be placed in SOCP, half would remain on routine probation.

focus on anyone other than the youth who committed a crime. SOCP attempted to join multiple agencies as equal partners in addressing families, including young offenders, and their communities, including victims. From the outset, one of the toughest struggles for the local agencies was creating a "true" collaboration approach through a consensus decision-making model. First, it is difficult to implement a true collaboration when one agency is awarded the grant and distributes the money to other agencies through service contracts. Through design, responsibility to the funding agency ultimately lies with the agency awarded the grant. No matter how much effort is put into gaining a consensus, this responsibility to the funders can result both in a more "directive" approach when implementation difficulties arise and in a lack of stake in the project for those who are on contract. To obtain a true collaboration, funds might be given directly to each participating agency with specific conditions about the necessary interconnections between agency partners.

Working together as a collaboration proved much more time consuming than the traditional, agency-specific approach to dealing with social problems. In fact, local service providers met for hours to work out practical strategies for implementing restorative justice through interagency methods. But, because of their different training and experience, they often found it difficult in practice to quickly and efficiently come to an agreement on strategies of program implementation. And, because practical reality differed from traditional approaches when line staff from different agencies were working together on a daily basis, agreements made in meetings often were not workable in the field and had to be revised once line staff attempted to implement management decisions. Even with the potential rewards, collaborations are at their best much more difficult and time consuming than single agency methods of working with clients.

In addition, SOCP faced the challenge of implementing a restorative justice model within a traditional bureaucratic governmental system. There is an inherent difficulty for probation officers who are by law required to perform certain duties for the courts (e.g., monitoring offender probation terms, filing violations) attempting to implement a program that is not based primarily upon their responsibility to monitor the youth.

Probation officers were asked to contradict their training and experience and develop a new way of doing business--i.e., giving more attention to the family than the youth. It was uncomfortable ground for officers who knew they ultimately answered to the courts, and who at the same time wondered if the rest of the agency and the law enforcement community perceived their work as "soft" in the midst of the "get tough" movement on crime.

Restorative justice also calls for direct consideration of community feelings in responding to offenses. According to Clear's theory, the ideal community to include in healing transactions is the immediate, micro community--those people directly affected by the particular offense. These people might include those who live on the street where graffiti was painted or people who live within a few blocks of a murder scene. Initially, the Ventura staff interpreted Clear's definition of community to mean "macro" community and conducted outreach to the broader community as a whole. Still, SOCP had great difficulty in generating interest from a broad base of South Oxnard residents. South Oxnard is approximately 70 percent Latino, and despite considerable outreach efforts to local minority communities, SOCP believes that people of color in South Oxnard continued to feel disconnected and disenfranchised and consequently did not participate. Traditionally active community members were involved in the SOCP Community Advisory Group; however, these members were often not those most directly affected by the SOCP program.

Reaching out to victims, a key component of restorative justice, was another challenge for SOCP. After the project began, SOCP recognized that in practice, workloads easily inhibit efforts of client-oriented staff (e.g., probation, mental health, alcohol and drug specialists) to broaden their service base to include victims. As a result, SOCP hired a restorative justice advocate to focus on incorporating victims through mediations with offenders. However, this component of SOCP never reached large numbers of victims.

## **IX. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ventura County project staff faced two major challenges in implementation, one dealing with local collaboration and the other with translating a restorative justice model into practice. We discuss each of these below.

Clear's model of restorative justice is one of several being tried across the country. COP is an intensive and inclusive model, bringing together the community, victims, and offenders. COP is meant to work outside the justice system. The correctional system is thought to be a resource, not the driving force in the model. In Ventura, Probation was a major resource for the program; however, there was no one involved that was truly outside the justice system (other than the community members). Thus SOCP lacked some of the widespread community basis envisioned by COP. In addition, the community had already established some of the components that Clear suggested as good COP practices. These included neighborhood watch groups, neighborhood councils, neighborhood clean-ups and beautification projects such as community gardens. Some members were resistant to revamping their current efforts for an untested program. The notion that the victim also has some responsibility in restoring justice was a COP premise that was not well received by community at large members (in particular police and victim advocates). What these experiences suggest is that planners think carefully about the type of restorative justice model they seek to implement. COP may not have been a good fit in Ventura County because the community had a number of restorative justice practices in place and were skeptical of a redefinition being made by SOCP. In addition, SOCP may have attempted to change too many things in the community with this type of model. According to the program manager, SOCP might have fared better had it focused on a few components of restorative justice and tried to implement them well.

The second implementation issue has been discussed throughout this report--the difficulties in conducting a collaborative project. Collaboration between agencies was difficult. Recommendations for improvements in this area include better staff training,

more commitment from all involved departments, and clearer role definitions. In addition, selecting partners and staff who believe in both the collaborative process and the model being implemented should help forge better collaboration, as well as build a stronger program.

A number of staff felt that the additional services provided to youth and their families was one of the great successes of the program. Staff indicated that the "one stop shopping" provided youth and their families with services they needed. One recommendation from the SOCP experience is to incorporate centralized services into juvenile programming. The county's CPA 2000 Day Reporting Programs, will incorporate this approach.

Finally, future research should continue to track innovative changes in how youth are served in Ventura County. Understanding how programs are implemented and their impact on individual youth will help provide hard data on their appropriateness for reducing juvenile crime and protecting public safety.

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**APPENDIX**

**SOUTH OXNARD CHALLENGE PROJECT  
RISK ASSESSMENT**

## SOUTH OXNARD CHALLENGE PROJECT RISK ASSESSMENT

### Eligible youth must:

1. Be between 12 and 18 years of age.
2. Be exhibiting behavior related to future delinquency.
3. Live in Oxnard south of Wooley Rd., east of Ventura Rd., west of Rice Rd., and north of Hueneme Rd. or in Port Hueneme south of Teakwood St., east of Ventura Rd., west of "J" St. and north of Pleasant Valley Rd.

Youth's name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Ethnicity \_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_ CSA Client # \_\_\_\_

Youth's school \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's name \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas Guide Page \_\_\_\_ Grid \_\_\_\_

Youth's Phone # (805) \_\_\_\_\_

Arresting Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Current offense or violation: **Most Serious**

Code Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Arrest Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Referring CSA Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

New \_\_\_\_ Inactive \_\_\_\_ Current \_\_\_\_

### Risk Factors

Please check the **one** statement in each section which most closely applies to the youth's situation. (If you need to clarify anything to complete this form, please call Jodi Lane at 271-9594.)

### 1. Age at first referral to probation

17 or older \_\_\_\_\_0  
15 or 16 \_\_\_\_\_4  
14 or younger \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 2. Current Problem

Home or school problem \_\_\_\_\_1  
Technical violation of probation \_\_\_\_\_2  
Non-violent misdemeanor or infraction \_\_\_\_\_3  
Non-violent felony \_\_\_\_\_4  
Violent misdemeanor \_\_\_\_\_5  
Sale or possession for sale of drugs \_\_\_\_\_6  
Violent, sex or firesetting felony \_\_\_\_\_7  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 3. Prior problems: Code section for most serious prior offense:

No prior referrals \_\_\_\_\_0  
Police diversion \_\_\_\_\_0  
Prior probation referral, No sanctions \_\_\_\_\_0  
Informal Agreement \_\_\_\_\_2  
Informal Probation \_\_\_\_\_4  
Formal Probation, Non-violent offense \_\_\_\_\_5  
Violent, sex or firesetting offense \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 4. Drug or alcohol use

None \_\_\_\_\_0  
Some use, no known interference with functioning \_\_\_\_\_2  
Some use, some interference with functioning \_\_\_\_\_4  
Chronic use, serious disruption of functioning \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 5. School issues

Attending, graduated or GED \_\_\_\_\_0  
Moderate problems with truancy or behavior, handled at school \_\_\_\_\_2  
Severe truancy, failing classes or behavior problems \_\_\_\_\_3  
Not attending at all \_\_\_\_\_4  
Expelled \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 6. Family supervision

Generally effective \_\_\_\_\_0  
Inconsistent or ineffective \_\_\_\_\_2  
Little or no apparent supervision \_\_\_\_\_4  
Serious parent or sibling problems (e.g., mental illness, child abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, or crime etc.) \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 7. Peer and adult relationships

Good support and influence \_\_\_\_\_0  
Negative influence from companions \_\_\_\_\_3  
Tagging crew affiliation \_\_\_\_\_4  
Gang affiliation \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

### 8. Out of home placements or Commitments of 30 days or more

None \_\_\_\_\_0  
One \_\_\_\_\_3  
Two ore more \_\_\_\_\_6  
Unknown \_\_\_\_\_0

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

### Other factors related to risk of

**Offending:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Classification

1. If the youth scores **12 or more points**, please call Jodi Lane at 271-9594 (pager 445-3205) for Random Assignment, then check the appropriate designation below:

**Experimental** \_\_\_\_ **Control** \_\_\_\_  
**Sibling of Experimental** \_\_\_\_  
**Sibling of Control** \_\_\_\_

2. If the youth scores **less than 12** points, check Low Risk:

**Low Risk** \_\_\_\_

3. Please send this form to **Carme Flores**, South Oxnard, Challenge Project, L#5295, 200 E. Bard Rd. Oxnard, CA 93033.

**Thank You**