



Re-entry Mediation: Evaluation Results

Choice Research Associates has been contracted to serve as an independent evaluator for the Community Mediation Maryland (CMM) Prison Re-entry Mediation program. Research began in mid-February 2009. This overview of evaluation outcomes provides a summary of key findings related to recidivism and to changes in the relationship between the incarcerated individual and their potential support system.

Re-entry Mediation Decreases the Likelihood of Arrest Post-Release

Participation in reentry mediation has a significant impact on the likelihood that an individual will be arrested post-release. After controlling for key factors that may otherwise explain this finding (e.g., length of criminal career, gender, age, race, days since release), the predicted probability of arrest for those who participate in mediation is 21% vs. 31% for those who do not participate in mediation (the control group). The number of sessions is also a significant factor – with each additional mediation session, the probability of arrest is reduced by an additional 6%. In addition, survival analysis, which examines the timing of events, reveals that mediation reduces the hazard (or *risk* of arrest) by 37% compared to those who do not mediate. Each additional mediation session reduces the risk of arrest by 23% compared to those who did not mediate.

Re-entry Mediation Supports Strong Relationships

Between February 2009 and June 2012, 310 cases have been mediated in Maryland prisons.

In evaluation forms completed after the first session, 510 participants reported the following:

- ❖ 99% felt they could express themselves freely during mediation
- ❖ 90% agreed they understood the other participant better as a result of mediation.
- ❖ 88% thought the other participant understood them better
- ❖ 92% agreed they were satisfied with the results of mediation.
- ❖ 96% would recommend mediation to others involved in conflict.

There is a statistically significant and positive shift in a sense of empowerment in the relationship and in the attitude towards conflict before and after the mediation. Two questions are asked at intake and again immediately following mediation: 1) “I feel I have no control over my relationship” and 2) “conflict can be dealt with productively”. Participants are asked their level of agreement with these statements on a scale of 1 to 5 (with the question about control set up so that higher values indicate a more positive response – a greater level of empowerment). With 446 participants reporting, there is a statistically significant gain of .60 ($p < .000$) in the average score on feeling more in control in the relationship, and a gain of .36 (significant $p < .000$) in feeling that conflict can be dealt with productively in the period between intake to the conclusion of the first mediation session.

Participants are also surveyed 3 months following release from the facility. Of the 96 respondents with follow-up data:

- ❖ 54% advised both communication with the other party and ability to work together was better after mediation.
- ❖ 80% agree they are both more likely to think of a lot of different ways to solve conflict before they make a decision.
- ❖ 80% agree when a conflict arises, they try to think things through before responding.
- ❖ 56% of outside participants and 80% of inside participants reported they felt that the inmate was more prepared to return home.
- ❖ 62% of outside participants and 60% of inside participants had more hope for the future as a result of mediation.