

‘Ohana is Forever III
“Working Together for Our Tomorrow”
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**Successful Reconnections with Family
Post-Foster Care**



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Successful Reconnections with Family Post-Foster Care

Each year approximately
20,000 -25,000 youths
age out of the foster care system
in the United States

(Harvard Civil Rights - Civil Liberties Review ,
Vol 43, 2008)

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50% of the youths who exited foster care
possessed less than \$250 at the time of their release
(Child Welfare, 2003)

38% were emotionally disturbed
(Cook, 1991)

58% had graduated from High School by age 19, compared to 87%
for national comparison group
(Courtney et al, 2005)

33% had changed living situations 5+ times within 4 years
(National Working Group on Foster Care & Education, 2007)

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84% of the youths will become a parent within
12-18 months after discharge

30% will have no health insurance

25% will become homeless

30% will receive public assistance

(U.S. DHHS Administration for Children & Families, 2005)

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Within 12 -18 months after leaving foster care, almost as many former foster youth lived with a relative (31%) as those who lived independently (37%).

Within 30 months, 54% will live with a relative.

(Courtney & Heuring, 2002)

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Possible Negative Outcomes: Re-victimization

- ★ New incidents of Abuse and/or Neglect
- ★ Exposure to, or participation in, highly conflicted and unstable interpersonal relationships
- ★ Exposure to, or participation in, dysfunctional behavior(s)

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Creative Intervention...

...utilize a restorative dialogue process to facilitate the healthy reconnection between interested post-foster care youth and selected family members.

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Restorative Justice Movement



Restorative Justice Practices



Victim-Offender Dialogues in Cases of Severe Violence
(VOD-SV)



Modifying VOD-SV for Post-Foster Care Reconnections



Special Consideration - "The Issue of Forgiveness"

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Restorative Justice Movement

Retributive Justice:

- Harm Against State
- Focus on Law Breaking & Guilt
- Adversarial Process
- Affected People Sidelined
- Punishment (Deterrence)

Restorative Justice:

- Harm Against People, Relationships, & the Community
- Focus on Responsibility & Fulfilling Obligations
- Dialogue-driven, Collaborative Process
- Empowerment for All Affected by the Crime
- Restitution, Reparation, and Possible Reintegration

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Restorative Justice Practices

- Victim-driven Community Restitution
- Sentencing Circles
- Crime Repair Crews
- Surrogate Victim-Offender Panels
- Family Group Conferencing
- Victim Empathy Classes

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Victim-Offender Dialogues in Cases of Severe Violence (VOD-SV)

- Brief History of the VOD-SV Intervention
- Guiding Values of VOD-SV
- Six Stages of the VOD-SV Process
- Case Example #1: The Nagao Family (Big Island)
- Case Example #2: The Streufert Family (DVD)

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Modifying VOD-SV for Post-Foster Care Reconnections

- Case Example: The Johnson Family (Big Island)
- Recommended Practice Modifications
- Training & Supervision

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Special Consideration - "The Issue of Forgiveness"

- Benefits of Forgiveness

- Physical (i.e., enhanced immune system)
- Psychological (i.e., re-engagement with life)

- Costs of Forgiveness

- Psychological (i.e., premature closure on grief work)
- Interpersonal (i.e., inappropriate reconciliation with offender)

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Some Resources...

Acquaro, F. (2007). In the wake of severe violence - Experiences of victims who engaged in facilitated victim-offender dialogue and forgave their transgressors. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Publishers.

Umbreit, M. S., Vos, B., Coates, R. B., & Brown, K. A. (2003). Facing violence – The path of restorative justice and dialogue. Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking (www.rjp.umn.edu)

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