

RESEARCH BRIEF

SONOMA COUNTY PROBATION

December 2013

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) Meta-analysis

MRT is an evidence-based practice being used with Sonoma County adult offenders in the Jail, the Adult Day Reporting Center and the Juvenile Evening Reporting Center. This 2012 study was done on thirty-three MRT evaluations done around the country to see how effective the program is in reducing reoffending behavior.

Study Findings:

- MRT produces a small but important treatment effect, meaning people who received MRT were somewhat less likely to reoffend than similar others who did not receive MRT.
- MRT is more effective with adults than with youth, possibly because of developmental issues that make moral reasoning harder for younger people.
- MRT is more effective in institutions (jails and prisons for example) than community-based settings.
- Results about MRT's effectiveness with women are inconclusive due to the small number of women included in the studies.
- Effectiveness with different racial/ethnic groups was not examined.
- Critique of MRT includes doubts about effectiveness with cultures that emphasize the group over the individual, concerns about focus on a person's inner self without addressing environmental concerns, and the opinion that rational thought (MRT's main emphasis) is less at issue than impulsivity, at least for some offenders.

While the study claims MRT is "not in the upper echelon of empirically-supported treatments," it notes that the program is in wide use and is producing modest but important results where it is being used, such that it has been deemed an Evidence Based Practice by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), the Oregon Department of Human Services, and The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

[Click here to read the study](#)

WHAT IS META- ANALYSIS?

Meta-analysis

attempts to identify patterns among various studies of the same program, and hopes to make a more powerful conclusion about how well the program works than is possible with individual studies.