

Final Report of the Process Evaluation of the Long Distance Dads[®] Program

Conducted by:

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Introduction

In the spring of 1999, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College's Center for Organizational Research & Evaluation (CORE) was approached by Dr. Randell Turner, Director of The Fathers Workshop, to perform a process evaluation of the "Long Distance Dads (LDD) Program." Dr. Turner and Martha C. Eichenlaub (a psychologist at the State Correctional Institution [SCI] at Albion) developed the prison-based, peer-led, fathering program that had been in place at SCI-Albion for approximately one year.

The innovative program design (i.e., that it is peer-led) coupled with anecdotal evidence of inmate satisfaction and program success generated a fair amount of enthusiasm within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC). In the summer of 1999, an LDD training session was held for seven additional SCIs throughout the state. Subsequently, at the time of this report writing, the LDD program has been adopted throughout six SCIs in Pennsylvania and in eighteen states throughout the country.

As with any program, budget and resource constraints necessitate a strict accountability of the ultimate successes/failures of a program. Hence, evaluating success (via short-term and long-term outcomes) is critical to program viability. However, prior to assessing outcomes of any program, unless one can clearly document the program process, any successes or failures might be falsely attributed to the targeted program. Therefore, it was decided that a process evaluation should be conducted to understand how the program was actually being implemented.

CORE submitted a grant application and was awarded funding by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) in the late fall of 1999 to conduct a process evaluation of the LDD program. The evaluation would consist of four phases over a period of eighteen months. In phase I, key informant interviews would be conducted with key administrators and staff, phase II would consist of interviews with the inmates, phase III would consist of observations of the LDD sessions, and phase IV would be an inventory of all parenting programs currently in use throughout the Pennsylvania DOC system.

This report is organized in distinct sections. The background (p.2) presents a brief review of the literature, national and statewide statistics relevant to parenting, an overview of the Long Distance Dads program, and a description of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the State Correctional Institution at Albion. The objectives section (p.11) states the specific goals of the project and describes process evaluations in general. The methods section (p.12) details the procedures utilized to answer the questions of the evaluation (i.e., the description of the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data). The results (p.14) are separated into the four phases of the project. Within each phase section, we first present a brief summary of the specific goals, describe the sampling methodology used in each phase, review the demographics of the sample, and then present the results for each phase. The recommendations section (p.53) provides the overall interpretation of the data coupled with recommendations for program optimization linking the findings to a proposed outcomes study. The appendices (p.66) include the data tables (appendix A), LDD curriculum synopsis (B), PA DOC mission statement (C), PA DOC programming (D), Trends in the PA DOC (E), the written informed consent forms (F),

copies of the questionnaires (G), an internet information directory (H), and the Phase IV PA DOC Parenting Programs Inventory (I).

Background

Nationwide Trends

There were 1,860,520 persons incarcerated in the United States as of June 30, 1999 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). According to recent projections from the Justice Department, the number of persons in local and state jails is expected to top 2 million by June of 2001 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). While the Department of Justice reports that crime rates are down, the prison population continues to rise. Pennsylvania state prison officials and many penologists cite stricter sentencing guidelines, reduced parole opportunities, and a crackdown on drug cases as the reason for this trend (Hahn, 2000).

Longer prison sentences and reduced parole opportunities mean that there is an increased amount of time available for rehabilitation. The increased awareness of the need to improve the parenting skills of incarcerated parents has proved to be one of the most recent trends in corrections today. Nearly 1.5 million American children have a mother or father in a federal or state prison – a figure that has grown in step with the swelling of the nation’s prison population (Crary, 2000). According to a survey of 1,000 Ohio residents, forty-one percent (41.1%) stated rehabilitation “should be the main emphasis” of imprisonment, thirty-two percent (31.9%) chose protection from society, and twenty percent (20.3%) chose punishment as most important. Overall, eighty percent (83.0%) felt that rehabilitation was important or very important in correctional policy (Applegate, 1997). Research indicates that corrections programs can go far toward humanizing the prison environment, promoting inmate accountability and institutional control (Applegate, 1997).

Although public support for rehabilitation has declined over the past ten years, the rehabilitative ideal continues to be persistent. In their research, Sundt, Applegate, and Turner (1998) reported that a third of the American public still believes that rehabilitation should be the main emphasis of prisons and more than half of the citizens endorse expanding programs. In addition, forty percent support early release for good behavior and participation in treatment programs. A large proportion of the population remains optimistic about the possibility of rehabilitating juveniles and non-violent offenders and a majority still see treatment programs as the best policy for dealing with offenders while they are incarcerated (Sundt, Applegate, & Turner, 1998).

While a substantial portion of the public supports rehabilitation, corrections officials have traditionally resisted implementing family service programs for the following reasons: 1) they do not consider inmates’ families “legitimate clients,” 2) fiscal considerations, 3) insufficient research on the ability of such programming to “soften the impact of incarceration” on inmates’ children, and 4) perceived public outcry over the “coddling” of prisoners (Couturier, 1995).

Rehabilitation in prisons has important implications for families and children. Throughout the United States, forty percent (40.0%) of all children do not live with their natural father and this proportion is growing rapidly. Research continues to show that father neglect is the most

significant factor predicting delinquency and crime (Blankenhorn, 1995). Statistics show that seventy percent (70.0%) of juveniles incarcerated in state reform institutions are from homes with no father or without natural parents (U.S. Department of Justice, 1988). Children from single mother households are eight times more likely to go to prison and twenty times more likely to exhibit behavioral problems than two parent households (Knight, 2000).

Statewide Trends

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) has made parenting a core program element for inmates. A recent Pennsylvania survey of 638 inmates showed that fifty-five percent (55.0%) had minor children and forty-two percent (42.0%) came from single parent households (Lukens, 1999). Pennsylvania Corrections Secretary Martin F. Horn stated in May of 1999 that the survey indicated a need for parenting programs inside of Pennsylvania's correctional institutions to help break the intergenerational cycle of crime and violence.

"Crime and fatherlessness are intertwined," Secretary Horn said. "Fatherless children are five times more likely to live in poverty compared to children who live with both parents... Children who do not live with their father are three times more likely to fail at school or quit...About seventy percent (70%) of violent inmates grew up in families without fathers." (News Release, Commonwealth of PA, 1999).

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, Co-Chairman of the National Governors' Association Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion, made the following remarks in a message during a Fatherhood Conference:

"As many of you know, over the last two years I've tried to elevate the discussion about the role of fathers in their children's lives in Pennsylvania. The reason is very simple: no one can take the place of a father in a child's life.

Every one of Pennsylvania's children deserves to have the nurturing touch of both a mother and a father. But far too many children grow up without a father to love them, to protect them, and to guide them.

In Pennsylvania, we've taken the lead in promoting fatherhood. In our correctional institutions, we have programs to help incarcerated men develop crucial parenting skills and reconnect with their children. One example is the Long Distance Dads Program. It encourages inmates to become responsible fathers, to stay involved in their children's lives even though they're serving time. It helps them assume the incredible responsibility that comes with being a parent – now, and after their release." (Ridge, 1999)

In September of 1999, Governor Ridge announced a partnership with the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI). The NFI National Community Building Project seeks to increase the awareness of fathers in their relationships with their children through television ads and an 800 number that

would allow access to fatherhood resources available in their communities (Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 1999).

On June 16, 1995, President Clinton requested that every agency of the Federal Government review its programs and policies to strengthen the roles of fathers in families. These activities are guided by principles such as: a) fathers can be important contributors to the well being of their children, b) when raising children, parents are partners – even when not in the same household, c) fathers' roles are diverse and related to cultural and community norms, d) men should receive education necessary for preparation for the responsibility of parenthood, and e) the government can play a major role in encouraging and promoting father involvement (National Fatherhood Initiative, 1995).

There are many issues that concern incarcerated fathers. Among these are: 1) legal issues (finding competent legal representation and the perception that contact with an incarcerated parent is not in the child's best interest), 2) economic issues (incarcerated fathers cannot provide financial support for their children), 3) environmental issues (visitation conditions are not always conducive to engaging visits), 4) emotional issues (most incarcerated fathers suffer from anxiety, depression, and lack of self esteem), and 5) relationship issues (most fathers are concerned about their relationships with their families both while they are in prison and when they get out) (Lanier, 1995). Addressing these issues is important and may not only serve to enhance the familial relationships, but also reduce the disciplinary problems within the prison system (Klein, Bartholomew, & Bahr, 1999).

The DOC offers a number of parenting programs such as "Parenting Skills Training" and "Long Distance Dads." The department invested \$350,000 in Fiscal Year 1998/1999 in parenting programs designed to increase inmate understanding and acceptance of parenting responsibilities. The DOC has also invested an additional \$500,000 in Fiscal Year 1999/2000 to fund parenting programs department-wide (Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, 2000).

The DOC plans to explore options about collecting information on inmate family background and children regularly when new inmates are received at the state's diagnostic centers at SCI Camp Hill and SCI Muncy. This will allow the Department to continue to assess the need for parenting programs in the state institutions.

The Long Distance Dads Program

According to the Father's Workshop, "The Long Distance Dads (LDD) Program is a character-based educational and support program developed in a joint effort between Dr. Randall D. Turner of The Fathers Workshop and Martha Eichenlaub of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections at the State Correctional Institute at Albion" (The Father's Workshop, 1998).

The primary focus of the LDD program is on the following issues: 1) promoting responsible fatherhood and holistic parenting, 2) empowering fathers to assume emotional, moral, spiritual, psychological, and financial responsibility for their children, both during and upon release from incarceration, 3) accentuating the psycho-social development of both father and child, 4) meeting

the challenges of being an incarcerated father, and 5) increasing and our knowledge base concerning fatherhood (The Father's Workshop, 2000).

The Long Distance Dads program is designed to assist incarcerated men in developing skills to become more involved and supportive fathers. Trained inmate peer leaders facilitate the program in 12 weekly group sessions. The sessions are structured in a small group format (8-10 inmates per group) with at least one peer leader per group.

The long-term goal is to instigate a shift in paradigms. It is believed that an investment in education, time, and peer leadership will produce more responsible fathers who are less likely to draw upon the resources of local, state, and federal tax dollars as "deadbeat dads." The anticipated results will be families who contribute to the community, reversing the cycle of poverty and dependency due to absentee fathers. Ultimately, the goal is that children will reap the greatest benefit – a father who is there for them (The Father's Workshop, 2000). A curriculum synopsis is detailed in Appendix B.

LDD Program Process – Overview

The LDD program consists of 12 individual sections or modules that correspond to the 12 group sessions offered in the program. The introductory material includes a forward, a table of contents, and information on facilitating a father's group, the role of a facilitator, and group facilitation techniques. Each section offers introductory material that list objectives, resources/discussion tools, and key questions relating to that session's topic. These materials are presented in a three-ring binder and are used by the program director(s) and peer leaders.

Session One, "Fatherhood Self-Assessment," reviews the inmates' levels of awareness and nurturance of their children, creates a fathering profile, and discusses the qualities of a good father. Session Two, "Character of a Man," discusses character, values, and morals. Session Three, "Similarities and Differences," covers the ways in which the inmates are similar to and different from their fathers/father figures, compares the attitudes of the inmates with those of their children, and rates self-image. Session Four, "My Anger: Friend or Foe?" investigates the causes of anger and offers constructive ways for the inmates to deal with their own anger and the anger of their children. Sessions Five and Six, "My Child's Life: Part I" and "My Child's Life: Part II," detail the stages of child development, provide inmates with tools to collect information on their children and their parents, explore inmates' awareness and nurturing roles, advise them on ways to reach out to their children from prison, and ways to be a better father. Session Seven, "Communication," reviews the value of listening, listening skills, and creating and using word pictures. Session Eight, "Healthy Relationships," deals with building and maintaining adult relationships. Session Nine, "Frustration and Discouragement," offers information on how to deal with the frustrating and discouraging situations inmates encounter, and shows inmates how to establish and respect personal boundaries. Session Ten, "Looking Beyond the Walls," provides inmates with assistance on how to make their release more productive, how to deal with issues that they must confront, and how to establish priorities. Session Eleven, "What Did We Miss?" reviews the materials covered in the previous ten sessions and allows time for discussion of topics about which the inmates would like more information. Session Twelve, "Fatherhood: The Next Level," discusses what the inmates have

learned, provides recommended readings, and creates a concluding profile for the “graduating” inmate.

The general inmate population is exposed to the program through various channels, including recommendations from counselors, psychologists, other inmates, or by institutional promotion. Inmates interested in participating in the program inform the program director via an “inmate request for programming form,” at which point the inmate is added to the program waiting list. When a new LDD program cycle starts, approximately 40 inmates are selected from the waiting list. The inmates are generally taken in order from the list, but the program director reserves the right to put an inmate in a session on a case-by-case basis if the inmate is approaching release and it is deemed that the inmate would benefit from attending this program before being released from the SCI.

When the program was originally implemented at SCI Albion, peer leaders were selected and trained in the LDD program and group facilitation skills. Many of the original peer leaders are still involved with the program; however, new peer leaders are trained on an ongoing basis. The original peer leaders were selected by the program director, who reviewed their records to be sure that the inmate was a father, had not been convicted of crimes against children, completed programming which addressed their offense, and had a record of good conduct. New peer leaders, in addition to the aforementioned qualifications, must have completed the LDD program, performed well in the LDD program, and were recommended by the peer leader who led their group. The program director reviews the candidates’ records for their duration of stay (it would not be prudent to train a peer leader who is leaving the institution shortly). The candidate is then brought in for an interview with the program director to determine if they are interested and if they are qualified.

Inmates selected to act as peer leaders attend a 12-week training course consisting of instruction in group facilitation, fathering techniques, and in-depth analysis of fathering issues. Newly trained peer leaders are allowed to co-facilitate a 12-week cycle of the program after having observed two previous cycles. A successful co-facilitation leads to becoming a full-fledged facilitator, capable of running a group independently. Peer leaders must meet ongoing requirements to maintain their certification. This includes attending biweekly training sessions, receiving no misconducts, and submission of one book report quarterly from the selected works established by the program director.

Prior to every LDD group session, a pre-group meeting is held between the peer leaders and the program director to review the day’s lessons, receive their materials, and set up the classroom. On the first day of the new program cycle, the inmates are randomly assigned to one of four groups in the classroom. Each group consists of one or two peer leaders who run the session, and, occasionally, an “observing” peer leader. On the first day, inmates introduce themselves and the peer leader gives the group an overview of the program and how each session will typically proceed. During the first session, a pre-test is also administered to the inmates, which solicits the inmates perspectives on their “involvement, communication, awareness, and nurturing” (the ICAN pre-test) with their children. The remaining 11 sessions follow the criteria set forth in the LDD program manual. After each session a peer leader “debriefing” takes place.

This debriefing allows the peer leaders to discuss issues that may need program director guidance or to discuss problems that arose in the groups.

At the end of the 12-week cycle, the test of “involvement, communication, awareness, and nurturing,” (ICAN) is re-administered. This “post-test” is identical to the test administered during the first session of the cycle. A sealed envelope containing the pre-test results is also distributed so that the inmate may see any improvements/growth since the start of the sessions. A short graduation ceremony is held for inmates where each graduating inmate’s name is read and certificates of completion are awarded.

As part of the LDD program, materials are regularly made available to the inmates for mailing home to their children. These materials include a book, assorted holiday materials (depending on the time of year), and a “Write From the Heart Kit” which includes cards, stationery, and stickers to promote communication with their children.

Long Distance Dads Evaluation Advisory Committee

In accordance with the grant issued by the PCCD to CORE, a cross-functional advisory committee consisting of staff members from the PA DOC, CORE, and the Fathers Workshop was formed to steer the evaluation. The purpose of the advisory committee was to provide feedback on instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data interpretation. The committee also functioned in a planning capacity with regard to preparing for an outcomes evaluation. The advisory committee was chaired by Gary Zajac, Ph.D., (Research and Evaluation Manager, PA DOC), who was responsible for organizing the meeting dates, establishing and disseminating agendas, and leading the meeting discussions.

This committee consisted of PA DOC staff at the Central office including: J. Harvey Bell (Parenting Program Coordinator), Bethany Gardner (Research and Evaluation Analyst), Kathleen Gnull (Chief of Planning, Research, Statistics, and Grants), William J. Love (Deputy Secretary for Specialized Facilities and Programs), Dave Roberts (Director of Bureau of Inmate Services), and Gary Zajac, Ph.D. (Research and Evaluation Manager). Other members of the committee included Martha C. Eichenlaub, M.A. (Psychologist, SCI Albion), Harry Wilson (Superintendent, SCI Cresson), Randell Turner, Ph.D. (Vice President, National Fatherhood Initiative), Parris Baker, MSW (Director of Education and Research, Fathers Workshop), Kimberly A. Skarupski, Ph.D. (Principal Investigator, CORE), Mark F. Mizikowski, MBA (Project Director, CORE), and Jennifer J. Pelkowski, B.A. (Research Support Associate, CORE).

The committee met four (4) times during the evaluation period. The first meeting was held February 16th, 2000. At this meeting, the goals of the project and the research protocol for the four phases were reviewed, the instruments for Phases I through III were discussed, and the Phase IV telephone survey was discussed.

The second meeting convened on June 6th, 2000. Topics reviewed at the meeting included a brief review of the goals, questions, and methods of the LDD project. Other items on the agenda included a project progress report, Phase IV survey data format, and preliminary planning for the outcomes survey.

The third meeting took place on August 2nd, 2000. Topics for discussion included a progress report on Phases I through III, review of the updated Phase IV survey, and additional planning for the proposed outcomes survey.

The fourth meeting of the LDD Advisory committee was held on February 27th, 2001. At this meeting, the preliminary draft of the report was reviewed and plans were discussed for the submission of a concept paper for an LDD outcomes evaluation.

LDD Program Process – Logic Model

CORE constructed a “logic model” (utilizing the United Way of America “Measuring Program Outcomes” framework) that graphically depicts the theoretical model of the LDD program (see Figure 1). The function of a logic model is to assure that *inputs*, *activities*, and *outputs* are linked in a rational way to effect *outcomes*. In the United Way framework, outcomes are either: *initial* (represented by changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or skills), *intermediate* (represented by changes in behavior), or *long-term* (changes in condition or status) (United Way of America, 1996).

Based on the LDD program curriculum, we identified the program *inputs* simply as facility space, staff, and materials. These inputs allow the *activities* to take place (peer leader training and group sessions). Program *outputs* are simple counts of units (e.g., programs offered, classes attended, materials distributed, etc.). Unfortunately, many programs rely solely on outputs as their “measures of success;” that is, they evaluate their program based on how much of their “product” they deliver/administer. This view is short-sighted in that it does not allow for a true accountability of the effects that result from the product.

The purpose of a process evaluation is to study these first three steps (i.e., inputs, activities, and outputs). This evaluation has considered the integrity of these components and their likelihood of effecting any long-term change in inmate behavior.

An outcomes evaluation would consider the remaining pieces of the logic model (i.e., the initial, intermediate, and long-term outcomes). An examination of the LDD program curriculum (as detailed in the program binder) suggests that by participating in the group sessions, inmates will gain new knowledge and skills that will lead to changes in behavior, and ultimately result in the inmate being a better father.

REPLACE THIS PAGE WITH THE LOGIC MODEL

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections/State Correctional Institute at Albion

Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections (DOC), under Secretary Martin F. Horn, oversees 24 State Correctional Institutions, 14 community corrections centers, approximately 50 private community corrections facilities, one motivational boot camp, and more than 15,000 employees and 36,000 inmates. The Pennsylvania Department of Correction's Mission Statement is included in Appendix C.

The State Correctional Institute at Albion (SCI Albion), in Erie County, was opened in July of 1993 as a medium-security institution for men. The 2000 facility budget for SCI Albion was \$41 million. Budget trends point towards increased spending in security enhancement and training for both staff and inmates. There are approximately 525 employees and 2,000 inmates.

SCI Albion utilizes civil service type employment procedures and operates in a union environment. Turnover is much lower than the national average of 14% (Joinson, 2000). Of the 36 employees who left SCI Albion in 1999, 20 were transferred (mostly promotions and transfers), 13 resigned, and 3 retired, producing a 2.5% dissatisfied turnover rate. Pennsylvania has a 4.3% turnover for Correctional Officers (Criminal Justice Institute, 2000). The facility has an 11% minority staff (non-white, females not included).

This prison is one of several that has specialized units for sex offenders, drug and alcohol offenders, and inmates with special needs such as physical and mental health problems. SCI Albion also has a unit for inmates who read below the fifth grade level, offering tutors to help them improve their reading skills. Appendix D details PA DOC programming and Appendix E describes trends within the PA DOC.

Objectives

The primary objective of this process evaluation is to determine how the Long Distance Dads Program is being implemented. A process evaluation is the rigorous and systematic evaluation of information regarding the operation of a program, vis-à-vis a set of explicit or implicit standards. This type of evaluation “verifies what the program is and whether or not it is delivered as intended to the targeted recipients” (Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey, 1999). Such an evaluation is a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or facilitating decision making in regards to the program.

The process evaluation is an important component to a comprehensive evaluation. Program administrators/stakeholders have been accustomed to measuring program effectiveness via outcomes. However in instances where manifest outcomes are not expected for some time in the future, it is more expedient and meaningful to measure program process. Where outcomes may be impossible to measure during the initial phase of a new program, “some process variables, which describe how the program is being carried out, are important to measure because they are expected to lead to desired outcomes” (Weiss, 1998). In the event that an outcomes evaluation of the LDD program is conducted, the assessment of these processes will prove to be a crucial foundation.

Assessing the implementation of the program serves three critical functions: a) to identify program strengths and weaknesses which can be used to refine the program, b) to strengthen external validity (generalizability) and standardization of the program as it is transported across the state and country, and c) to provide the framework upon which to conduct an outcomes evaluation.

The evaluation of the LDD program is critical to its success. As of December 2000, the program had been in operation for two years and graduated over 200 inmates. The LDD program has attracted state and national attention and is being considered for implementation in 47 other Pennsylvania facilities as well as across the nation.

Methods

The methods of research employed in this study included both qualitative and quantitative inquiry. The qualitative component began with exploratory open-ended observations and interviews. Data were accumulated in detailed field notes from interviews and monitored group sessions, archival records, and other written documentation. Analytical dimensions emerged from patterns observed in the data or patterns derived from the qualitative software package.

“Qualitative data analysis is a term applied to a wide range of methods for handling data that are relatively unstructured and considered inappropriate for reducing to numbers. Qualitative data analysis refers to any type of research that involves nonmathematical methods of interpretation, for the purpose of discovering non-statistical (or otherwise quantitative) concepts and relationships in raw data such as documents, interview notes, or recorded observations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Qualitative research usually treats the records of ideas and the reflections on these research events as data. Qualitative methods are usually superior for capturing processes that were not considered for measurement in the beginning of the research process, for understanding the meaning of program processes to people in different positions, and for revealing unexpected patterns of association in unexpected data.

Quantitative data were also accumulated to provide a comprehensive picture of the program. For example, we collected and summarized demographic data for the various groups of administrators/staff and inmates (i.e., provided means, standard deviations, and medians). Likewise, we also incorporated questions throughout the phases that utilized Likert-style response formats suitable for statistical manipulation.

The primary research question is: “How is the Long Distance Dads program being implemented?” (i.e., what is the program actually doing)? Four phases of data collection and methodologies were developed to address this question:

- Phase I: Key informant interviews with prison administrators, unit managers, psychologists, counselors, and corrections officers.
- Phase II: Face to face semi-structured interviews with inmates, including peer leaders, graduates, current attendees, waiting list inmates, dropouts, and inmates not interested in the program.
- Phase III: Direct observations of the group sessions and chart and report reviews.
- Phase IV: Inventory of Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution parenting programs to determine what programs are being used at other state institutions, how they are structured, and what they entail as a curriculum. Comparisons of the programs at multiple sites are also included.

All participants in the interviews were asked to sign two written informed consent forms (one for the participant and one for the interviewer) prior to beginning the interviews. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, that their responses would be kept confidential, that they could refuse to answer any specific questions if they so desired, and that they could end the interview at any time. The written consent forms are located in appendix F. The questionnaires used for the interviews are located in appendix G and an internet information directory was compiled and is presented in Appendix H.

Throughout the first three phases, additional data were collected via chart reviews, archival research, and inmate and facility profiles. The combination of these methodological techniques provided both qualitative and quantitative data, which resulted in a comprehensive appraisal of the LDD program. The survey of all other Pennsylvania State Correctional Institutes' current parenting programs in Phase IV (Appendix I) provided an important baseline framework for future program comparisons, modifications, and adoption. These data are critical in the development of any future outcomes evaluations.

All qualitative data were entered verbatim, along with the research team's notes, into QSR NuDIST (Qualitative Solutions in Research: Non-Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching, and Theorizing), a leading qualitative data analysis software package. The program allows the user to code data, search text or patterns of text, and test theories and hypotheses about the data using a range of qualitative tests. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 10.0 (the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Validity checks included inter-rater/inter-observer reliability tests. These are techniques utilized to measure the degree of agreement, and hence validity, between independent observers.

The results of this evaluation are presented in four sections of this report (one for each of the four phases). In phase I (p.14), seventeen (17) interviews were conducted with the administration and staff of SCI Albion. Phase II (p.22) consisted of forty-seven (47) interviews with the inmates and in Phase III (p.34), we observed six (6) LDD sessions. Phase IV (p. 41) consisted of an inventory of all parenting programs throughout the PA DOC system. All tables are presented in order in appendix A.

Results - Phase I

Seventeen (17) semi-structured, key informant interviews were conducted with institutional staff, including the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, the Program Coordinator/Psychologist, three Unit Managers, five Counselors, and five Correctional Officers. The interviews took place at SCI Albion in either a conference room or in offices.

Phase I Questionnaire consisted of thirty-eight (38) items, the majority of which were open-ended; however, some questions used Likert-style, multiple-choice answer formats (see Appendix G for full questionnaire). The specific aims of the interviews were: 1) to measure institutional “buy-in” and support of the LDD program, 2) to describe the introduction of the program, 3) to describe program implementation, 4) to list and describe institutional barriers, 5) to measure perception of program quality, and 6) to detail organizational characteristics. Each of the above aims comprised a section in the questionnaire (with the exception of #6 which was collected via institutional archival data). Additionally, other areas such as “suggestions for improvement” and “demographic characteristics” (e.g., job title, length of employment at Albion, gender, ethnicity, birth date, and education) were included in the interview questionnaire.

Sampling Methodology

The sampling design for this phase was both purposive and random. Key administrative and program staff were purposely identified and asked to participate in the interview. Employees in other relevant departments (e.g., unit managers, counselors, and correctional officers) were identified and randomly selected to participate in the interview using a scientific randomizing instrument (Urbaniak, Plous, & Lestik, 1999). The procedure for randomization consisted of the following steps: 1) a list of employees was obtained from the human resource office at SCI Albion, 2) identification numbers were assigned to each employee, 3) a pre-determined number of identifications was input into the random generator, 4) a random list of numbers was generated, 5) the identification numbers were matched with the employee identifications, and 6) a list of employees was generated and submitted to the Program Coordinator/Psychologist to determine if the employee would be interested in participating in the evaluation and to schedule a time for the interview.

Archival data were also collected addressing program-related issues. These included: organizational issues, size/age of facility, number of inmates, mission statement, nature of function, correctional trends, available programming, security level, major events/changes, business office issues, budget, trends in budget, program budget issues, human resource issues, staff turnover, staff size, employment environment, and turnover rate.

The results section has been organized to correspond exactly to the questionnaires. Thus, there is one table corresponding to each subsection of each questionnaire. For example, to find demographic information for Phase I, see Table 1-1, for Phase II, see Table 2-1, etc (tables are numbered first with the corresponding phase number, and then with the subsequent section numbers). The reader is advised to note that the total number of *responses* does not necessarily equal the number of *respondents* because multiple answers were provided for some of the qualitative questions.

Phase I Results

Demographics

Table 1-1 details the demographic information for the seventeen (17) administrators and staff interviewed for Phase I. The average interview lasted 30 minutes. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents interviewed in Phase I were either psychologists/counselors or corrections officers. The average length of employment at Albion was 4.3 years (standard deviation = 2.09 years, median = 5). The overwhelming majority of the respondents were males (76.0%), Caucasian (82.0%), and the average age was 41 years (standard deviation = 9.08 years, median = 43). Fifty-eight percent (58.0%) had a bachelor's or graduate degree (94% had at least some college).

Institutional "buy-in" and support

Table 1-2 details the results from the institutional "buy-in" and support section. The majority of the staff responses (15 responses or 68% [15/68%]) stated that the SCI Albion Psychology Department or SCI Albion Administration were responsible for the decision to implement the LDD program. All respondents predicted that the LDD program will be at the facility either permanently/indefinitely (10/56%) or long-term (7/39%). The staff/administration generally believe that the contribution of the program warrants a long-term commitment, which ultimately alludes to the staff's perception of program merit; "the program will be here as long as we have inmates," typified responses. However, one respondent did state a belief that the program would likely be eliminated should the DOC budget require cutbacks in programming.

With regard to time spent weekly on the LDD program, the program administrator (1/5%) spends by far the most time on the program (> 3 hours/week). The program administrator's time investment during program development was significant (624 hours/1 year), but current duties require 5-7 hours per week (facilities implementing this program would not require the large amount of time required to develop the program since this included curriculum development). Three respondents (16%) spend 1-3 hours per week, ten respondents (53%) reported less than one hour per week, and four (21%) spend no time on the program. Administration spends some time on publicity/public relations for the program, counselors spend some time for referrals, and Correctional Officers generally do not spend any time outside of call-outs for participants. When asked how much time was spent to date on the LDD program, the majority of respondents indicated that they spent hours (5/29%), none (5/29%), or days (3/18%) on the program. Responses also included minimal (1/6%), weeks (1/6%), full time (1/6%), and don't know (1/6%).

Regarding unit resources allocation for the program, half (47%) reported personnel time as the only resource used and approximately half (41%) noted that there were minimal/no resources used. Material used for the LDD program (based on 160 attendees per year) is as follows: 1) approximately 20,000 photocopied sheets (4 cartons of paper), 2) approximately 350 books to send home to children, and 3) 160 pencils. Space requirements are a minimum of one large classroom or meeting area that would be able to handle 40 attendees (4 groups of 10) for 2 hours per week. Space requirements would vary depending on the amount of inmates involved in the

program sessions. Equipment needs consist of a photocopier to reproduce class handouts. There will be additional information on the space issue later in the report.

Most (11/64%) of the respondents' supervisors were either supportive or very supportive of the LDD program (mean 1.79, standard deviation 0.80 where "very supportive"=1 and "very unsupportive" =5). The remainder was either neutral or considered the question to be inapplicable to their situation. Those who felt the question inapplicable were largely Correctional Officers (COs) who generally felt that: "if it's not for security, I don't really care;" CO supervision is primarily concerned with safety and security at the prison, not with the details or merits of individual programming. In no cases were there supervisors/managers who were unsupportive of the program.

Although respondents emphasized a variety of different program objectives, the staff responses generally indicate an accurate understanding of the LDD mission. Sixteen (67%) indicated responses focusing on the family (e.g., paternal relations, spousal relations, parenting skill improvement, and/or breaking intergenerational crime/neglect) while seven (29%) thought the LDD was corrections-based. There was a general feeling among those interviewed and not directly involved with the program, that SCI Albion needs to do more to directly inform and educate them regarding programming.

It is perceived that the LDD program utilizes approximately the same amount of time as other educational programs (11/65%) at SCI Albion (average 2.94, SD=0.85 where "much more"=1 and "much less" =5). Only two (12%) staff members felt that it took much more time while three (18%) staff members indicated that it requires less staff time.

Program Introduction

Table 1-3 details the results of the program introduction component of Phase I interviews. When asked how they would describe the LDD program to someone who knew nothing about it, the majority of responses (15/56%) would describe the program as a "family-services program" (e.g., improves contact and parenting). Five of the responses (19%) would define it as a Peer-Facilitated Correctional Program and four (15%) would define it as a rehabilitative program. Two (7%) of the responses describe LDD as a community-supportive program and one (4%) did not know how to describe the LDD program.

Ten (59%) of the responses were able to define a standard procedure for introducing new programs at Albion. However, these descriptions were inconsistent and varied. Of these ten, six described notification processes (via memos, postings, and bulletins) and four discussed a proposal implementation process. However, seven (41%) of the respondents remarked that there was "no standard procedure," or "it depends," or were unsure of new program introduction protocols. Furthermore, fourteen (82%) of the respondents remarked that there was no standard procedure for training and educating employees about new programs at Albion. When asked to respond to the adequacy of their LDD training, six (34%) respondents answered adequate or very adequate, two (11%) were neutral, four (22%) responded that their training was inadequate, and six (33%) felt this question to be inapplicable to them (mean 2.45, SD 1.21 where "very adequate"=1 and "very inadequate"=5). Comments regarding LDD training included: "Need

more information on the LDD program,” “No formal training,” “Counselors do not have access to programming,” and “Only those involved are trained.”

Implementation

Table 1-4 summarizes the results from the implementation section of Phase I. When administrators and staff were asked how new program information is conveyed to inmates, the two most common answers were by bulletin board (12/24%) and staff referrals (12/24%). The second most common answers were “inmate TV” (6/12%) and “word of mouth” (6/12%). The third most common answers were “inmate handbook” (5/10%) and memos (5/10%). Lastly, “brochures” were indicated as the medium for conveying new program information to inmates (3/6%).

The majority of respondents did not know or were unsure about how long it took to implement the LDD program at Albion (13/76%). Compared to other programs, those staff members who were able to reply indicated that the implementation process was generally “about the same” (3/18%), and two (12%) indicated that it was longer. One respondent (6%), reported that the process was much longer and one (6%), replied that it was shorter. However, most felt this was inapplicable or did not know (10/58%).

Close to half of the respondents (8/47%) remarked that their unit took no steps to implement the LDD program, while three (3/18%) reported that their units disseminated information or provided referrals (3/18%).

Institutional Barriers

Table 1-5 provides the results from the institutional barriers section of the Phase I Questionnaire. The majority of the respondents (13/76%) stated that they had no reservations about the LDD program upon learning that it was to be implemented at Albion. However, initially there were some concerns about the efficacy and security of peer leader run sessions, but once the program was implemented, there were no concerns. The consensus of the staff was that the program would not be as effective if it was facilitated by institutional staff.

When asked if there were any problems during the initial implementation phase, the majority (14/82%) reported that there were none. Of the three (18%) who reported problems, the issues were: inmate screening, program ownership, and resistance to peer leadership. For instance, the staff stated the following problems arose during the initial implementation phase: a) a few inmates did not want to be instructed by other inmates, b) a counselor had heard that some inmates were screened out of participation, and c) there was confusion during the development phase over who was doing what and who maintained ownership of the program. When asked how the concerns were resolved, the respondents noted that: “the few who could not adjust did not have to participate in this voluntary program,” “the only screening occurring was to screen sex offenders from becoming peer leaders,” and “problems were eliminated after development of the program was complete.”

Respondents were asked if anyone within/outside of the facility objected to the program. The vast majority (16/94%) reported that there were no objections. There was some initial resistance to peer leadership from Central Office as they felt this could be a potential security problem. (i.e. the LDD sessions could be a forum for subversive communications, etc.) However, once a session was videotaped and it was proven to have adequate supervision and validity, the LDD program was approved. When asked if Albion is different/similar to other facilities, only two (8%) respondents indicated no difference. Twenty-two responses (88%) identified differences that included the following: more treatment-oriented (7/32%), better facilities (5/23%), better staff (4/18%), more programs (3/14%), different security level (2/9%), and more politically important (1/5%). One respondent stated that Albion is more likely to be the testing ground for programs with potential political benefits, due to the proximity to the “Governor’s backyard.” Two respondents felt the major difference between Albion and other correctional institutions were those constituted by Albion’s level-3 security status, as lower levels are “country clubs.”

As a follow-up, respondents were asked how these concerns were addressed, fifteen (88%) either stated that there were “no concerns to address,” or “not applicable.” Of the remaining replies, one (6%) respondent stated that concerns were communicated to a supervisor and one (6%) respondent indicated that his/her concerns were alleviated after observing an LDD session.

Fourteen (82%) respondents indicated that the inmates expressed no concerns about the program in general, and fifteen (88%) respondents indicated that the inmates expressed no concerns about the peer leader component of the LDD program. According to the respondents, the two main inmate concerns were 1) the waiting list (which had 200 inmates at the time of the writing of this report which equates to over a one year wait) and 2) the already mentioned concern regarding peer leaders, which revolved around the inmates’ sensitivity to other inmates being in an apparent position of power or superiority. It was generally stated that inmates are supportive of any programs that aim to assist their rehabilitation and re-entry into mainstream society.

Questions about resources and logistics yielded positive responses. Fourteen (70%) respondents indicated that there were no problems related to space, resource, or equipment allocation (one counselor remarked that these assets are always at a premium and could always be augmented). All (16/94%) of the respondents reported that there were no issues or concerns about inmates going to or from the program. One person (6%) stated that their concerns were not unique to the LDD program, but were the same as with any other program.

There was some discrepancy about scheduling conflicts with other programs that make it difficult for an inmate to attend the LDD program. Six (32%) respondents identified “prescriptive programs” (mandatory programs) as a conflict issue, but six (32%) other respondents indicated that there are no scheduling conflicts. Four (21%) staff members reported that conflicts were the result of “inmate choice,” while two (11%) respondents noted that “inmates who have to pass up this voluntary class for a prescriptive program can opt to take this later.”

Perception of Program Quality

Table 1-6 summarizes the results from the program quality section of the Phase I Questionnaire. When asked to rate the quality of the LDD program, the majority (12/70%) of the respondents rated the program either “high” or “very high,” three (18%) commented that the program was average, and two (12%) did not know. Respondents were then asked to rate their perception of the staff’s support of the LDD program. Almost half of the respondents (7/41%) perceived support for the program (5/29% rated the support unanimous), while six (35%) heard no negativity, and one (6%) person noted that the COs were unsupportive. Three (18%) responded that they “did not know”. Next, respondents were asked to rate what the participating inmates thought of the program. Sixteen of the respondents (94%) felt that the inmate response was generally positive; “inmates have a positive view of the program” and “most inmates are sincere about the program” typified responses. Finally, respondents were asked what they thought non-LDD participants thought of the program. Here, the responses were mixed: nine (53%) remarked that those inmates were “indifferent,” one (6%) noted that it “depends on the inmate,” three (18%) felt that non-participating inmates viewed the program positively, one (6%) each said “negative,” and three (18%) replied that they “didn’t know.” Some of the staff felt that the inmates were doing it to look good for parole (Counselor) or it was “brainwashing” for political reasons (CO).

Respondents were then asked to compare the LDD program to other facility programs in terms of popularity, rigor, substance, format, outcomes, and creativity. Overall, the staff rated the LDD program highly across all items: 10 (59%) felt that it was more or much more popular than other programs at Albion, 7 (47%) felt that the demand (rigor) on the inmates was about the same, 10 (67%) felt that this program had more or much more substance or depth of material than other programs, 13 (100%) of respondents stated that the format of the LDD program was about the same or more structured than other programs at the institution, 12 (75%) of the staff interviewed perceived the outcomes of the program to be more or much more successful than other programs within the facility, and 11 (73%) stated that the program was more or much more creative than other programs at SCI Albion.

When asked if there were anything that would improve the LDD program, the staff provided the following response categories: a) more information/training for staff (10/30%), b) need more LDD sessions (6/18%), c) need an outcomes study (3/9%), d) need more resources (3/9%), e) need more contact between inmates and family (3/9%), f) need outside speakers (3/9%), g) need more inmate participation (2/6%), h) need more staff (1/3%), i) more empirical curriculum (1/3%), and j) preclude sex offenders from attending (1/3%).

Phase I Discussion

The demographic categories of gender, ethnicity, and age of those interviewed are generalizable to the staff at large, and no replies could be specifically tied to these demographics. While higher educational levels were generally associated with higher-ranking positions at the institution, this was not indicative of any trends in responses.

Of the demographic categories, the only cross-referencing of information that yielded any significant information was that of job title. While senior management (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent) and the Program Director all had adequate information regarding programming, lower levels of the staff did not. Counselors and Correctional Officers in particular were virtually unaware of the details of the program, and since LDD has been in place for two years, all of the staff had adequate time to be exposed to the program.

As a whole, it was evident that the institution is unclear of the LDD implementation process and the implementation of new program process, in general. A documented procedure is needed for the new program process that can detail the steps on the proposal process, approval process, and implementation process. This policy or procedure then needs to be adequately communicated to the staff, on a level equivalent to their required involvement.

The staff overall demonstrated an adequate comprehension of the objectives and characteristics of the program, but these could be improved and crystallized through better communication and information – thus creating more solidarity and consensus among prison personnel regarding LDD specifically and the rehabilitative mission of SCI Albion in general. Better dissemination of explicit program information at the onset would clear up any confusion regarding the mission of LDD and would help build staff consensus as to that mission and the program’s overall value. Such efforts may also reduce staff cynicism about or resistance to such programming. As one respondent stated: “We need more communication for a stronger awareness regarding programming.”

Eighty-two percent of the staff stated that there was no standard procedure for training and educating employees about new programs at SCI Albion. A uniform process is also needed to educate staff about programs. Minimal LDD program training was provided which led to a relatively uninformed staff. Again, the need is evident for documented procedures, training programs, communication, follow-up, and assessment. While bulletin boards, inmate TV, handbooks, referrals, and brochures do play a role in informing inmates about new programs, a documented procedure would reduce any confusion regarding the process and allow for improved communication.

Training is an area that needs marked improvement, not only in the opinion of the research team, but also in the opinion of many staff members we interviewed (six reported that their training was “not applicable” and three stated it was “inadequate”). All staff members, including Correctional Officers (who had virtually no information on the program), should have a basic knowledge of all programs at the facility and should feel that programming issues are applicable to them as representatives of the correctional system. Counselors, Administrators, and Managers should have a training program that details the goals and procedures of the program. Correctional Officers would not require a detailed training session, but should be aware of all programs at the facility. This could be done with a memo on programs to the Correctional Officers and should be reviewed at staff meetings.

It is not surprising that most respondents were unaware of the implementation time, as most of the respondents had no input in the actual implementation of the LDD program. Implementation at another facility would be dramatically less than the time at SCI Albion, as the program had

gone through the new program development stages at Albion. However, the implementation at another facility would be longer than the average program as peer leaders have to be selected and trained prior to starting sessions.

The staff had only a vague idea of their roles in the implementation. The DOC needs to develop a process for implementation that defines the staff's roles in the implementation of programming. Those most involved were the Psychology staff and SCI Administration.

Recommendations made by the staff included the aforementioned communications and training issues, additional sessions to reduce the backlog of inmates on the waiting list, establishing more actual contact between inmates and their families, and an outcomes survey to determine if the program has actually met the goals of the LDD program ("Being away from families is a concern" and "The waiting list is still a problem" typified answers in these categories). Additional commentary included a need for additional resources and outside speakers to solidify program concepts. Two respondents felt a need to preclude sex offenders from participating in the program as not to enhance their insights into the minds of children.

Strengths or positive traits of the program, as perceived by SCI Albion staff, include the belief that the program will be around the institution for a long time and the high levels of supervisory support for the program. There were very few reservations about the program and virtually no objections to the program. The staff was also of the opinion that their facility was more treatment oriented than other state institutions, the LDD program was of high or very high quality, and that the outcomes of the program were more successful than other programming at the institution.

Results - Phase II

Forty-seven (47) semi-structured interviews were conducted with inmates at SCI Albion (the initial goal was to interview 29-35 inmates). These included twenty (20) inmates who had graduated from the LDD program, nine (9) inmates currently enrolled in the program, seven (7) inmates who had dropped out of the program, four (4) LDD peer leaders, four (4) inmates not interested in the LDD program, and three (3) inmates on the LDD waiting list. We chose to interview inmates with varying degrees of involvement with the LDD program in order to obtain a more comprehensive assessment of the program. Regarding dropouts, it was discovered that 17 inmates (out of 41 total) had dropped-out of the program (a 41% drop-out rate). We were able to interview 7 of the 10 inmates whose excuse was simply “quit” in an effort to uncover their reasons for discontinuing the program. More information is offered in the dropout section starting on page 32.

The specific aims of this phase were: 1) to measure institutional and individual barriers, 2) to measure the perceived efficacy of the peer leaders, 3) to define the group process, 4) to measure the integrity of the curriculum, 5) to measure peer leader standards as set forth in the LDD program, and 6) to measure participant standards as set forth in the LDD program.

Sampling Methodology

A stratified random sample of inmates was collected for Phase II. The procedure for randomization consisted of the following steps: 1) a list of inmates from each of the six categories (graduate, current attendee, peer leader, waiting list, not interested, and dropout) was obtained from Marty Eichenlaub of the Psychology Department of SCI Albion, 2) identification numbers were assigned to each inmate, 3) a pre-determined number of identifications was input into the random generator, 4) a random list of numbers was generated, 5) the identification numbers were matched with the inmate identifications, and 6) a list of inmates was generated and submitted to the Program Coordinator to ask for cooperation and to schedule appointments for interviews.

The interviews took place at SCI Albion in private offices in the psychology department. There were six different versions of Phase II Questionnaire (see Appendix G) depending on the category of inmate (graduate, current attendee, peer leader, waiting list, not interested, and dropout). Each questionnaire had from 20 to 35 questions. The majority of the questions were open-ended, while some used Likert-style multiple-choice responses.

Sections of the questionnaires included: a) demographic information (date of birth, highest education earned, ethnicity, primary language spoken at home, religious affiliation, length of time at Albion, offense leading to incarceration, number and gender of children, and date of release), b) institutional and individual barriers, c) peer leader efficacy, d) the group process, e) curriculum, and f) suggestions for improvement.

Phase II Results

Demographics

Based on the data compiled from the staff and inmates, we were able to compile a general profile of the inmate population (less dropouts) interviewed for the LDD program (Table 2-1). The typical inmate that participates in the LDD program has been incarcerated at SCI Albion for 3.11 years (SD=1.87, Median=2.56) and is an African American male (68%) aged 32.58 (SD=8.31, Median=31.50, mode=26.00). The typical LDD participant has a high school diploma/GED or less education (84%) with a median expected release of 306 days. His offense leading to incarceration is burglary/robbery (21%) or theft/fraud (17%), and the typical LDD participant speaks English as a primary language (92%), claims that his religious affiliation is Islam (36%), and has (2) children between the ages of 2 and 7.

The results of Phase II are organized in three sections due to the diversity of the five groups of inmates. Thus, in the first section below, results from the LDD program graduates and current attendees are presented. In the second section, results from inmates on the waiting list and inmates not interested in the program are presented. In the third section, we present the results from the peer leader interviews, and in the fourth, results are presented from the program dropout interviews.

Graduate and Attending Inmates

Institutional/Individual Barriers

Twenty-nine (29) program graduates and current attendees were interviewed (20 graduates and 9 current attendees). Table 2-2 details the responses to institutional and/or individual barriers. Respondents were asked how they first learned about the LDD program. The most frequently cited methods of exposure to the LDD program were: word of mouth, bulletin board postings, and the psychology department (26/81%).

When asked how supportive Albion employees were of the LDD program, the majority (25/86%) stated either “supportive” or “very supportive.” Three respondents (10%) identified “neutral” as the level of staff support and one (3%) stated employees were “unsupportive.”

When asked to comment on what the inmates think about the program, most (22/76%) of the respondents’ comments were generally positive. A comment that typified responses was, “The participants like it and get a lot out of it.” However, when asked to comment on what the staff thinks about the program, only thirteen (13/45%) of the respondents’ comments were generally positive (6/21% stated “neutral,” 1/3% stated generally negative, and 7/24% “didn’t know”). Positive comments included, “the staff that is involved is supportive,” while negative comments typically were that, “the staff is pretty uncaring.”

The respondents were then asked what they thought the program was trying to accomplish. The responses ranged across four themes (most frequent to least frequent respectively): 1) Improve

fathering/parental skills/responsibility (15/38%), 2) Improve family relations/communications (13/33%), 3) inmate education/therapy/rehabilitation (9/23%), and 4) political motives (2/5%).

The majority of the respondents (21/72%) had no concerns regarding the LDD program. Of the remaining inmates with concerns, two respondents each had concerns about the focus of the program or were nervous about facing issues, two had concerns regarding the program methodology, and one each had concerns regarding the quality of the program and the administrative/staff involvement. Twenty-three respondents (23/74%) said there were no problems in regard to space, resources, or equipment. A couple of issues were raised regarding the noise level in classroom (which was resolved since the program was forced to relocate to the chapel) and inadequate class time (the inmates in the sessions became enthusiastic and desired more time to talk about the topic of the day). Twenty-four (24/71%) reported no ongoing activities that conflicted with the LDD program meetings (among the mentioned conflicts were: work, gym, library, yard, medical, drug/alcohol groups, and prescriptive programs).

Nineteen (19/66%) of the respondents reported never having missed a session. Among the ten (34%) who had missed a session, the reasons included: restricted housing unit (RHU), visitation, call-out, forgot, medical, and parole meeting (an inmate may have no more than two absences to receive a certificate of program completion). The majority of the respondents (25/86%) reported that their families know they are attending the program and of those, eighteen (72%) reported that their family has had a positive response. Representative positive comments included, "They think its great that I'm trying to get closer with my children," and, "My wife and kids are happy about it." When asked what the Albion facility does to make attending the program difficult/easy, twenty-three of the respondents (79%) noted that the enrollment process was easy, the staff was supportive, and since the program was voluntary it was easy to attend. Among the six respondents (21%) who reported that the facility makes attendance difficult, issues such as: unit problems, lock-downs, work, and RHU/staff interference were noted. Seventeen (59%) of the respondents reported that none of their group sessions had been cancelled or rescheduled while six (24%) reported staff problems caused a session to be rescheduled.

Peer Leader Efficacy

Table 2-3 provides the results from the questions about peer leader efficacy. The 29 program graduates and current attendees were asked if their group discussions matched the weekly topic (i.e., were meetings kept "on-task"). Eighteen (62%) of the respondents indicated that discussions "always" matched the topic. In addition, 10 (34%) reported that discussions "usually" matched the topic. More than half (15/52%) of the respondents remarked that it was easy to stay on topic, ten (34%) respondents commented that it was moderately difficult to stay on topic, and three (10%) noted that it was difficult.

The majority of respondents (24/83%) said that the peer leaders appear to have been trained adequately, are able to direct conversations (25/86%), encourage open discussion (27/93%), able to draw-out quiet members of the group (21/72%), and able to curb dominating over-talkative members (21/72%). The majority (27/93%) also replied that they respected their peer leaders. When asked why they respected their peer leaders, inmates relayed that there was mutual respect between inmates and peer leaders, that he did a good job, and that they respected his character.

Finally, most (28/64%) of the respondents felt that the peer leaders did a good job. There were few problems mentioned; these included: “peer leaders were manipulated by staff,” “acted superior,” and that “some needed to work on their instructional methods.”

The Group Process

Table 2-4 summarizes the results from the group process section of Phase II Questionnaire. Respondents were asked what they thought the best and worst things were about working in a group. The majority of the responses (21/68%) for the best aspects of group work had to do with the nature of “feedback.” Inmates appreciated hearing about their peers’ personal challenges and how they were dealing with them. When asked to discuss the worst aspects of the group process, the inmates’ most frequent response (13/43%) was that nothing qualified as “worst.” When pressed for an answer, however, some inmates admitted difficulty in “sharing” (5/17%) or having some personality conflicts within the group (4/13%).

The majority of respondents (26/90%) felt that their group members valued their opinions while slightly fewer respondents (21/72%) reported that they valued their group members’ opinions (7/24% said that “it varies”). Most respondents (24/83%) reported that they had bonded with their group members. There were two (7%) respondents who said they had not bonded with their group and three (10%) that remarked that they were friendly during sessions, but had no real contact afterwards. Half (15/39%) of the respondents, when asked to describe their group in one word, stated: “cooperative” with the remaining descriptors also positive (e.g., close, outgoing, enthusiastic, supportive, respectful, and organized). It was not uncommon to observe many of the inmates hugging each other upon entering the meeting room.

Curriculum

Table 2-5 summarizes the responses to the curriculum section of the Phase II Questionnaire. Respondents were asked to identify their favorite and least favorite topic of the program. There was a wide range of favorite topics identified, but the three most common topics chosen were: those dealing directly with parenting (6/16%), all (5/14%), and anger (4/11%). The majority of respondents (23/77%) reported that they had no least favorite, while seven (23%) respondents identified topics including: the child’s mother, own family, separation from children, infancy, adolescence, and “don’t remember.”

The majority of respondents (20/69%) indicated that none of the topics made them feel uncomfortable. Nine respondents identified uncomfortable topics as: the “children’s mother” (4/14%), own father (2/7%), family, children, and dead-beat dads.

Respondents were asked about the most difficult thing in program. Eleven (38%) respondents identified program issues (e.g., topics, group participation, not enough time, and other inmates), nine (31%) identified personal issues (e.g., emotional strain of the program, the challenge of self-evaluation), three (10%) reported facility issues (e.g., waiting list, scheduling, and the absence of the inmates’ children), and five (17%) said nothing was difficult. When asked about the easiest thing about the program, more than half (17/57%) reported program format (e.g., sharing, attending, listening/relating) and program content (8/27%) (e.g., learning process, voluntary

nature of the program) issues. Three (10%) said nothing was easy and one (3%) remarked that everything was easy.

Next, respondents were asked to identify what was missing from the program. Forty-one percent (41%) of the respondents (12) identified program structure-related issues such as more direct involvement with their children, having outside speakers, addressing special needs, more public exposure, focus on personal development, more time, and communication skills. Seven (24%) mentioned content/curriculum issues such as more discussion of the child's mother and more discussion of own father. One-third of the respondents (10/34%) said nothing was missing from the program.

Respondents were then asked to identify what one thing would cause the program to fail. Approximately half of the respondents (17/55%) identified inmate issues such as low participation, low sincerity, or inmate's ability to learn. Four (13%) identified program issues such as poor: peer leaders, curriculum, or outcomes. Four (13%) also identified DOC issues including low support, staff interference, or administrative conflicts. Four (13%) respondents remarked that the program would not fail.

Respondents were asked to compare the LDD program to other programs at the facility in terms of popularity, difficulty, information content, format, outcomes, and creativity. Sixteen (55%) of the respondents rated the LDD program as more or much more popular than other programs at the facility while 9 (31%) said that it was as popular as other program (i.e., same). The plurality of respondents (12/41%) reported that the LDD program is less difficult than other programs; however, 9 respondents (31%) said that LDD is more difficult and seven (24%) said it was the same. The majority of the respondents (23/79%) noted that there was more or much more information content to the LDD program compared to other programs (5 said it was the same and 1 said there was less information content) and twenty-two (76%) respondents said that LDD is more or much more structured than others (5 said it was the same and 2 said less structured). With regard to program outcomes, twenty-three (85%) respondents observed that LDD was either more or much more successful than other programs (4 said that it was the same). The majority of the respondents (25/86%) reported that LDD was more or much more creative than other programs (2 said that it was the same and 2 said less creative).

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any comments regarding the LDD program. Sixteen (30%) had positive feedback: one respondent noted that LDD is "the best program in the system." Those with positive feedback commented that they liked the program, liked the send-home materials, hoped it continues, and liked the peer-leader, and group aspect.

The majority (35/66%) also had suggestions/criticisms of the program. Of those, twenty (57%) comments had to do with administration/facility issues (e.g., more child involvement ["Somehow, someday, include the children in the program," "Two visits a year will not keep a family close"], expand statewide, more space, and more media exposure), eleven (31%) had to do with program structure (e.g., get more inmates involved ["Start an LDD II program," "I tried to sign up again"] and have longer sessions), and four (11%) had to do with program curriculum (e.g., need more information on dealing with our significant others).

Inmates on Waiting List and Inmates Not Interested

The data for the information gathered from inmates on the waiting list for the LDD program and for the inmates not interested in the LDD program are located in Tables 2-1 through 2-5. The results of the questionnaires were very similar to the answers given in the previous sections. To avoid redundancy, only the notable differences and additions will be discussed here.

Amongst the inmates on the LDD waiting list, the main concern was the long wait. The inmates were very anxious to get in to the program and were looking forward to participating. Typical comments from the inmates include, “From what I have heard, the inmates who went through it got a lot from it,” and “The ones (other inmates) who have gone through it were very satisfied.” Other inmates stated, “It seems like a good program to take away the stress of being away from the kids” and “The waiting is hard.”

Inmates in the Not-Interested category also had some different views. They felt that promotion of the program was poor and that Albion did not communicate information regarding the program to the extent needed. One inmate noted, “I was unaware of the program, they (SCI Albion) did not make it (the LDD program) easy by notifying us of the program.”

Not-interested inmates also felt that the DOC was not family friendly in sending inmates far from their families and thereby destroyed their families. One of the inmates remarked that the DOC provides, “constant bullshit for (inmate) families.” Furthermore, another inmate remarked that, “family issues and programs were all on paper to get additional funding that is then used for barbed wire and cameras.” Correctional officers were also mentioned – “COs think it’s a joke because inmates are just doing it to look good for parole.” This further supports the comments regarding staff training in the discussion section of Phase I. Better communication of the goals of the program, also mentioned in the Phase I discussion, may mitigate some of these mistrust issues.

Peer Leaders

The data for the information gathered from peer leader inmates are located in Tables 2-1 through 2-5. Again, the results from these questionnaires were very similar to the results from the current and attending inmates. The major difference with this group was the addition of the perceived “Peer Leader Efficacy” category. The questions and data analysis for those questions follow.

The inmates who became peer leaders primarily did so because they wanted more parenting involvement, more fathering skills, more involvement with the LDD, and most importantly, more involvement with their children. For the inmates with “no father figure,” the program was an insight into what a father could and should be. Without a positive male role model to draw from, fathering skills for many inmates are lacking. The LDD program stimulated the interest in fathering to a degree that these inmates wanted more for themselves. This manifested itself in peer leadership.

As in any group therapy/discussion, individual motivations and their specific needs often come into conversation. Each member of the group has specific needs that he would like addressed, and this can lead to discussion which veers-off the desired course. A well-trained peer leader can

re-direct conversation back to the topic at hand. Some peer leaders go beyond the meeting to talk with those inmates with specific needs outside the LDD sessions.

When asked if it was easy or difficult to stay on topic, three of four peer leaders responded that it was sometimes difficult. As stated previously, steering a group of 10 individuals down the same path can be difficult and frustrating. Ongoing training and the weekly debriefing after sessions should address this periodically. While the peer leaders expressed some difficulty directing the conversations at first, all felt that they were able to constructively direct the conversations in their sessions.

From the responses given, the peer leaders are comfortable in their situations and confident they can lead their groups through the LDD materials. Three of four peer leaders felt that they were able to encourage open conversation and were confident in their abilities to draw out quiet members of the group. All felt that they could restrict over-talkative group members from dominating the group discussion.

When asked, “Are you a good group leader?” one peer leader replied, “I am coming along well.” This statement typifies the responses of the peer leaders. Although they feel they have been adequately trained, each group is a new and unique challenge. The peer leaders feel that with each group they lead, they become better at listening, facilitating, and generating feedback during the LDD sessions.

The peer leaders are aware that they are not degreed counselors, and recognize the fact that ongoing training in group facilitation will enable them to more efficiently run their groups. One peer leader felt that some (other) leaders needed to talk less and listen more; this can be a problem if a peer leader has a dominant personality.

The peer leaders were very satisfied with the training they had received. Several of the peer leaders mentioned Parris Baker, MSW, Director of Education & Research at The Fathers Workshop, as being an excellent trainer. Mr. Baker trains the peer leaders in LDD programming and group facilitation skills.

The peer leaders stated that they have maintained a respectful relationship while group members have responded well to their leadership. The peer leaders were humble when discussing their leadership skills, which is a helpful trait when leading a group of this nature.

The peer leaders identified an LDD Part II as a course in which many inmates would be interested. The initial offering only whetted the appetite of a lot of the inmates searching to (re)establish communication with their families and children. An advanced program could address such key areas as how to most effectively deal with their children’s caregiver, advanced communication techniques, and other expanded topics, which would allow additional growth for incarcerated fathers.

Another concern was participation; this issue should also be addressed at the peer leader sessions discussed earlier so that leaders could develop skills to enhance sincere group participation. Some suggestions made by the peer leaders involved: inmate orientation prior to program

admittance, spending less time on anger, more attention to the program, making LDD Part II mandatory, and locating more space for the sessions.

The suggestions (two) to have inmate orientations would allow psychology or counseling staff to evaluate the sincerity, capabilities, and relative need of an inmate prior to admission. This would also enable staff to further detail the dynamics of the class to determine if the inmate would be able to benefit from the program once they had an overview. This may further increase the success rate and minimize dropouts.

Interviews with LDD Program Drop-outs

Upon review of the Psychology Department files, we discovered that of the 41 inmates who started the LDD program session we observed, only 24 received certificates for a completion rate of 59%. Of the 17 inmates who did not complete the program, the breakdown from the Psychology Department was as follows: three (18%) were excused for educational/mandatory programming, 3 (18%) had been paroled, 1 (6%) had been placed in RHU, and 10 (59%) quit. See Table 2-2 for tabular results.

We were most concerned about the ten inmates who quit the sessions. These ten inmates left the program after the following number of sessions: one session (5 inmates), two sessions (3 inmates), four sessions (1 inmate), and five sessions (1 inmate). After reviewing these data, it became apparent that we had to understand why the inmates left the program. Interviews were scheduled with seven of the ten “drop-outs.” Three were unable to be interviewed due to later parole or RHU.

Institutional/Individual Barriers

The program drop-outs felt that the staff was supportive (3/43%) or very supportive (3/43%) of the program, while 1 (14%) responded that he felt the question to be not applicable to his situation. Somewhat surprisingly, inmates who quit the program were generally as positive about the program as those who had graduated from the program. According to our questionnaire results, 5 (56%) felt that inmates had positive feelings about the LDD program. The common response was that “The inmates who went through the program appreciate it.” One (11%) inmate each said that inmates had mixed feelings, had negative feelings, were unsure of how other inmates perceived the program, or felt that inmates were using the program to look good for parole. Multiple responses to this question yielded some confusion in the results. Some inmates had mixed feelings prior to beginning the program, but became positive after attending.

Of the drop-outs interviewed, 7 (70%) felt that staff perception of the program was positive, while 3 (30%) said that the staff did not care or were not involved. Here again, inmates provided multiple answers to this question depending on the staff member.

Six of the seven (86%) drop-out inmates interviewed liked the program, and the lone dissenting response was from the one inmate who never made it to a class and therefore had no opinion.

When these inmates were asked if they had concerns about the program, 3 (43%) responded that they had none; 2 (29%) stated that they felt religion played too large a role in the program and 2 (29%) had concerns that a peer leader who has been “down” for a long time may be out of touch and that someone “from the streets” may be more appropriate as a leader.

When asked why they quit the program, three (43%) of the inmates essentially responded that they “didn’t quit” the program, but had to quit because they missed the call-outs or got confused about the meeting times. One (14%) of the inmates had mandatory drug and alcohol counseling that prevented attendance, another (1/14%) was in RHU and is currently re-enrolled, and another (1/14%) was in court for a month. The lone negative response (1/14%) was an inmate who had a personal conflict with his peer leader. He stated that “You (the peer leader) ain’t gonna tell me how to be a dad when you’ve been down 15 years and your kids are grown.”

Peer Leader Efficacy

When the drop-out inmates were asked to describe the efficacy of the peer leaders, the responses were surprisingly positive. Most of the inmates (6/86%) replied that they felt the peer leaders were trained adequately, 5 (71%) stated that they felt the peer leaders were able to direct the conversation, and another 5 (71%) responded that the peer leader encouraged open discussion. Most of the inmates (5/83%) respected their peer leader and 6 (60%) felt that the peer leaders do a good job. One response stated that there was a problem with the program, being the aforementioned disagreement with a peer leader. Overall, only one in seven had a problem with the peer leadership and this does not appear to be the major reason behind program drop-outs.

The Group Process

In the section regarding the group processes, the responses were consistently positive, much as the graduate and attending inmates. Five (71%) indicated that hearing perspectives of other group members was the best thing about working in a group. The remaining 2 (29%) of the responses were that communication amongst inmates was the best thing about working in a group.

When asked about the worst thing about working in a group, 2 (33%) responded that talking about their situations was difficult as was sharing their experiences. The majority of the inmates (5/83%) stated that they felt that other group members respected their opinion, while 6 (100%) of the drop-outs noted that they valued other group members’ opinions. There were no indications that the group process was linked to inmates discontinuing the LDD program.

Curriculum

In the “Curriculum” section of the questionnaire, inmates were asked if there was anything that made them uncomfortable. There were (3) “yes” responses (50%); these included: close quarters, some opinions expressed by others, and the session on anger (“a sore subject” for this particular inmate). The remaining 3 inmates indicated that there were no subjects that made them uncomfortable or that they could not remember any.

The most difficult thing for inmates was discussing their parents and memories of the past (3/43%). Other difficult areas included talking to the group (2/28%) and the topics (2/28%). The easiest thing for the inmates was the program format, specifically working in a group (3/50%), the program content or curriculum (1/17%), or everything (2,33%).

When asked what was missing from the program, 3 (50%) of the responses indicated that nothing was missing from the program. The remaining 3 (50%) inmates replied that the program could include children more with increased inmate-child activities, more consideration of individual parent situations, and more historical statistics to provide factual data and reduce arguments.

As far as comments, suggestions, or criticisms regarding the program, inmates in this section were no less vocal about their concerns than the other inmates. The responses included: more inmate-child interaction/activities, monetary assistance with phone calls or reduced phone cost, a van to transport the children to the prison, help for inmates who cannot reach their children, expansion of the program to the high school level to reduce potential parenting problems, expand state-wide, send videotapes to children, and reduced religious emphasis during the LDD sessions.

Upon reviewing all of the data accumulated in this section, it is apparent that the issues that cause an inmate to drop-out of the program are not tied to the program. In almost all cases, it was prescriptive programming, miscommunication, parole, or an inmate being in the RHU that caused the inmates to drop-out of the program.

Phase II Discussion

The responses to the question of how the inmates learned of the program point to a deficiency in communicating program information to the inmates. Word of mouth, call outs, and board postings were by far the most frequently cited means by which inmates found out about the LDD program. While word of mouth is an especially strong mode of communication in prison, and it speaks well of the program that inmates are discussing it amongst themselves (the length of the waiting list is indicative), it is nonetheless important that the institution effectively convey information to inmates regarding the LDD program and all other available programming. Although staff psychologists and counselors have been actively successful in referring the inmates to the program (24% heard about the program this way), there are limits to their effectiveness. Hearing call outs, while common, is incidental and uninformative. As noted in Phase I, bulletin boards can be an important promotional tool, but may lose effectiveness if not updated periodically, and even if they are updated, they tend to blend into the background as people walk by them day in and day out. The results from this phase solidify the point previously made that more top-down, standardized, and broad dissemination of program information both ensures thoroughness and reinforces the perception that the entire institution, not just those directly involved, is supportive of the mission of the program.

In regards to the inmates whose families were unaware or unsure what their families thought of the LDD program, there are a number of inmates who have complicated familial situations with a variety of responses. Due to their complex personal situations, including the issues related to incarceration, this is what would be expected. A few inmates were not in contact with their

families, their children were too young to understand, had a neutral familial response, or were unsure what their families thought. Development of contact methods for inmates would be very helpful as many are estranged from their families for the aforementioned reasons.

The responses to the peer leader questions overall were very positive. In the estimation of their group members, the peer leaders are well trained and keep their groups focused and on task. It is the nature of group therapy sessions to occasionally drift off topic, but a trained leader must be able to limit digression. However, it can be difficult to stay on topic as each inmate wants to relate personal experiences, but it is also important to give each their say, respond to their issues, and then re-focus on the topic. Based on the responses, most were able to do so.

The peer leaders showed little difficulty in drawing out participation in the group from all members of the group, although initially it can be difficult due to the newness of the group. As in any group, there are many types of personalities present, some of which are content to listen. However the peer leaders apparently were able to get them involved.

The peer leaders were trained adequately enough to be able to handle situations with dominating group members. Only two respondents felt that the peer leaders were unable to control dominating group members. Group leaders need to be trained on how to be aware of situations and/or group members who might hinder group progress and then how to diffuse such situations/inmates. This should be done one-on-one with the involved inmates to minimize conflict and embarrassment. Indeed, several interview subjects stated that peer leaders tend to take this approach when resolving specific problems within the group.

The group therapy-style of the LDD program fosters a high degree of intra-group empathy, problem solving, and support. This allowed them to draw from the experiences of others as they related to themselves. This approach actually led to the problem solving, getting in touch with emotions, and interpersonal bonding with other inmates - which inmates expressed as their favorite things in the group process.

When asked how the inmates felt about their groups, there were no unfavorable descriptions of the group dynamic, and the program appears to be very successful in creating a positive group atmosphere. In regard to the ways the inmates felt the program could be improved, the inmates stated that they would like more direct involvement with their children as part of the program. This would enhance the relationship between father and children and add more credence to the program. According to one inmate, "It would be nice if the state would walk the walk, as well as talk the talk." This is further shown as inmates requested reduced phone prices and the desire to be incarcerated closer to their homes as to increase the likelihood of visitation.

Making LDD mandatory would force more involvement, but it is doubtful that the same success would be achieved, as the voluntary aspect is a key part of the success of the program. More involvement would be better achieved through improved communications, which is consistent with the Phase I results. As far as reducing the amount of time spent on anger management, it is very important to deal with this issue early on and in detail, and reducing that topic could be detrimental to many of those involved.

The strengths of the LDD program, as perceived by the inmates, are the staff support of the program, the overall inmate view of the program, and the level of understanding the inmates had regarding what the program was trying to accomplish. Other positive perceptions include the limited amount of scheduling conflicts, the ease of enrollment, and the perceived positive response of the inmates' families. The inmates had a very positive response to the peer leader aspect of the program and bonded with the fellow group members. In comparison to other programs at the facility, the inmates viewed the LDD program as providing more informational content, being more structured, more successful, and more creative.

Results - Phase III

Phase III of the LDD Evaluation consisted of group observations and supplemental data collection via psychology department reports and chart reviews. In this phase, a team of four researchers observed six group sessions, reviewed 24 psychology department reports, and analyzed 24 end-of-session questionnaires.

The specific aims of Phase III were: 1) to measure the program integrity, 2) to measure leader effectiveness, 3) to identify group characteristics, and 4) to identify participant characteristics.

Sampling Methodology

The group session observations were conducted at six randomly selected Long Distance Dads group sessions (the program is comprised of twelve sessions). These six sessions were evaluated by a team of four research observers, who monitored three sessions individually and three sessions with each of the other three observers (for inter-rater reliability purposes). Thus, there are twenty-four “observations” for each indicator in this phase. The LDD group sizes ranged from five to nine inmates. Sessions included a thirty minute pre-group meeting of peer leaders, a sixty to seventy-five minute group meeting, and a short peer leader debriefing following the group meeting.

Charts were reviewed to assess compliance with LDD program specifications, (e.g., do the group leaders have the appropriate LDD literature for each group session, are required documents for program participants on file, does each group session address program requirements as well as specific modules? etc.) and to profile group and participant characteristics including number of absences, facility logistics, process of group selection, degree of staff involvement, and consistency.

Most of the group sessions were held in the Chapel at SCI Albion, where they had recently been relocated after the third session due to the conversion of their former classroom into a computer lab. The observers utilized an instrument consisting of 24 questions, including demographic questions, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions (see Appendix G). These questions were geared to measure the program integrity, leader effectiveness, and to identify participant and group characteristics.

Inter-Rater/ Inter-Observer Reliability

Inter-observer reliability is defined as the degree to which two independent observers are in agreement (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2000). In order to ensure reliability for this project, CORE staffers were trained in observation techniques prior to observing sessions.

The formula used for calculating percentage agreement between observers is:

$$\text{Percentage Agreement} = \frac{\text{Number of times two observers agree}}{\text{Number of opportunities to agree}} \times 100$$

For the Long Distance Dads Phase III Evaluation, The percentage agreement was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Percentage Reliability Agreement} = (130/138) \times 100 = 94.2\% \text{ Reliability}$$

Although there is no standard percentage of agreement that defines low inter-rater or inter-observer reliability, a perusal of the literature reveals that researchers generally report estimates of reliability that exceed 85%, suggesting that agreement much lower than that is unacceptable. (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2000). The LDD Phase III inter-observer reliability, at 94.2%, easily falls into a range that confirms the validity of the data accumulated during the group observation sessions.

Phase III Results

Demographics

The data for Phase III are presented in Tables 3-1 to 3-7. A demographic comparison was performed between inmates involved in Phase II and Phase III of the LDD program. The comparison yielded no significant differences in regards to ethnicity, age, or educational level. The demographic information provided in Phase II therefore provides an accurate demographic profile of all inmates involved in the LDD program at SCI Albion.

Program Integrity

Questions regarding the materials used during the sessions showed that the groups always had the proper new material for their LDD sessions. The program administrators supplied the weekly handouts that were distributed to the peer leaders at the pre-session meeting of peer leaders. The peer leaders then dispensed it to group members at the onset of the sessions. Most (20/83%) of the group sessions used the current week's material only, while the remaining (4/17%) used both the new material and the previous week's material.

The materials used were always directly (24/100%) from the prescribed curriculum. Occasionally, a peer leader would share some additional information such as a poem or some other relevant material they have uncovered, but by and large, the only materials used during the LDD sessions were directly from the curriculum.

The context of the discussions was always directly related to the topic of the day (16/67%) or to the topic of the day combined with the previous week's topic (6/25%). Discussion of the previous session's material was done to bring closure to the topic or to finish the materials not completed at the previous session.

The observations showed that 20 (83%) of the discussions either closely or very closely adhered to the specific topics. In regards to how the discussions related to the materials, 19 (79%) of the responses indicated that the discussions were either closely or very closely related to the

materials. Four (17%) of the respondents stated that the discussions were somewhat closely related to the materials while only one response (4%) stated that the discussion was marginally related to the LDD materials.

Upon reviewing the consistency of the materials used in the LDD sessions, twenty-one (88%) of the observers' responses showed that the materials used at the sessions were consistent between groups. The remaining observers (3/12%) indicated that they were unsure of the consistency of the materials between groups.

In responding to the question regarding how much material was used during the session, the amount of material covered during the session varied between groups. Seven of the observers (29%) stated that the group covered most of the material and another seven (29%) stated that the group covered some of the material, while five (21%) were unsure of the extent of material coverage, three (13%) responded that the previous session and the current sessions' materials were covered, and two (8%) reported that approximately half of the material was covered during the session.

Leader Effectiveness

Approximately half (11/48%) of the LDD group observations noted that the sessions were led by two peer leaders, while 9 (39%) of the observations noted that the sessions were led by three peer leaders (it should be noted that in most cases where there were three leaders, at least one of these leaders was in training and did not factor significantly into the leadership of the group). Sessions that were led by only one peer leader were explained by the fact that the leaders missing may have been missing for educational purposes, mandatory drug and alcohol programming, trade school, or being in the RHU (per Psychology Department report).

When replying to the follow-up questions regarding adequacy and effectiveness, our researchers were directed to observe both the leaders effectiveness as a leader and effectiveness of the leader in directing the group. In summation, 22 (88%) of the observations indicated that number of peer leaders leading the groups was adequate or very adequate and 17 (77%) noted that the leadership was effective. When posed the question about the effectiveness of the leader(s), the observations were evenly split (12/50% each) between "very effective" and "effective" in directing the group.

When asked why the leaders were effective in directing the group, there were a wide variety of leader attributes that the observers felt were responsible for leader effectiveness. The leading response (10/24%) was that the leader kept the group focused on the materials. Other observations included: challenged inmates, provided solutions, asked questions, provided clarification, and appeared knowledgeable.

In any group discussion, there are times when conversation can drift away from the subject or become inappropriate. The observers were asked how the leader(s) handle these situations. The majority (22/81%) of the observations noted that there were either no inappropriate comments or discussions or that comments were efficiently redirected. Furthermore, 4 (15%) observations were that the leader allowed the group member to speak and finish what they had to say.

Peer leaders received positive remarks from observers in regards to their knowledge of the LDD program; most (15/63%) of the observations were that the leaders appeared very knowledgeable and the remainder (9/37%) stated that they were knowledgeable concerning LDD. In the first of two follow-up questions, the observers were asked why they felt the leaders were knowledgeable. The main reasons given for leader knowledge included that the leaders had a good understanding of the topics (9/33%), related the discussion to the material (8/30%), and directed the discussions well (4/15%).

In the second follow-up question, the issue of how this impacted the group was discussed. Again, only positive responses were recorded by the observers, but these were as diverse as the personalities of the various peer leaders. High percentage responses include that the leaders kept the group focused (4/20%), helped inmates to understand the material better (4/20%), promoted involvement (3/15%), and that the inmates responded well to the peer leaders knowledge of the material (3/15%).

Three-fourths (18/75%) of the observers indicated that the peer leaders appeared very comfortable in his role; the remaining (6/25%) stated the peer leaders appeared comfortable. In the comfort follow up questions, six (23%) of the observations indicated that the reason why the leaders were comfortable was that they were confident, ran the group smoothly (4/15%), or were a good speaker (3/11%). The remaining observations included a wide range of positive comments; with 3 (11%) noting that the leaders were slightly hesitant.

In the second follow-up question regarding how this impacted the group, 9 (41%) of the observers felt that the peer leaders' comfort level enhanced group involvement and discussion, 5 (22%) stated that it made the entire group more comfortable, and 3 (14%) replied that it created a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Three (14%) responded that the peer leaders could have been a stronger leader.

When asked to characterize the degree of respect for the peer leaders from the group, most (20/83%) of the observations indicated that the group was very respectful of the leaders, while the remaining 4 (17%) noted that the group was respectful. The follow-up question revealed that 16 (44%) of the observers felt that the group members were attentive when the peer leaders spoke and 9 (25%) of the observers felt that all members were respectful of each other.

In turn, when evaluating the level of respect the peer leaders had for the group members, 24 (100%) of the observations reported a very respectful response. When asked why, the most frequently cited replies were that the peer leaders listened to what the group members had to say (11/29%), was supportive of the group members (10/26%), and acknowledged or appreciated participation (5/12%).

Group Characteristics

The LDD Group sizes varied, as 10 (42%) of the groups observed had a total of six group members, 5 (21%) had seven, 5 (21%) had eight, and 4 (16%) had five members. Absenteeism due to prescriptive programming, RHU, and parole meetings caused the fluctuation in the group

size. It was difficult for the observers to determine absenteeism and drop-out rate, as 14 (58%) of the observers did not know or were unsure if and how many group members were absent. This issue will be addressed further in upcoming sections.

In regards to the timeliness of the sessions, 22 (96%) of the sessions started on time and only once did the session start a few minutes late. In response to the question on tardiness, 21 (88%) of the observations were that the inmates arrived on time for their sessions and 3 (12%) of the times one or two inmates came late to the session.

Eighteen (40%) of the observations noted that the environment was conducive for learning. The remainder of the observations detailed some of the environmental problems for the sessions, including: the fact that announcements were distracting (13/28%), the noise levels were high (4/11%), the room was cold due to air condition/venting (2/4%), and that there were no tables on which to write (1/2%). A few of the observations (7/15%) noted that the move into the chapel from the previous location (classroom) was an improvement.

The observations indicated that in 14 (58%) of the sessions, it appeared as if the inmates could read. Observers twice noted that peer leaders would help inmates with reading if the inmate experienced trouble when reading aloud.

All of the observers noted positive responses when asked to describe the atmosphere. When the observers were asked to provide concluding thoughts or comments, 18 (64%) of the responses were positive in nature and 10 (36%) of the responses provided comments on areas for improvement. The positive comments included: excellent peer leader (8 responses), the peer leader did an excellent job of directing the group (6 responses), the peer leader encouraged participation and sharing (8 responses), the sessions appeared sincere and honest (3 responses), the sessions ran smoothly (3 responses), the peer leader kept the group focused (3 responses), and the peer leader did a good job of using/referencing material (3 responses). The responses that indicated an area for improvement included: the peer leader could have referenced the material more (5 responses), all of the material was not covered during the session (3 responses), and some of the discussion could have been closer to the point/less philosophizing (2 responses).

Psychological Services LDD Report

Data were also accumulated from the SCI Albion Psychological Services report of Individual or Group Counseling Services. The information gathered from these documents reports on the number of sessions offered, attended, and the level of participation. These reports showed that the graduating inmates attended at least 10 of twelve sessions and that all had a “good” or “excellent” level of participation. There were no occurrences of fair or poor levels of participation or incidences of an inmate attending fewer than the ten required sessions.

Expansion of this information might prove to be a valuable tool. The information collected could be used to evaluate the program, tailor the program, or be used as a screening tool should an LDD II Program be offered. This “report card” could be completed by the peer leader or by the peer leader and the program director. Individual areas being “graded” might include attitude, participation, comprehension of material, conduct, sincerity, and effort.

Phase III Discussion

In summation of the data accumulated in the Program Integrity section of the group observations, it is evident that the groups had the proper materials and that the discussions adhered to the topics presented in the materials. However, it appears from the data collected, that the groups need to focus more directly on the program materials and to direct the discussion more toward the actual content of the material as opposed to freelance discussion “around and about” the topics.

The observers’ consensus on peer leader numbers is that two leaders per group provide the optimal group configuration; as it provides leadership relief and promotes group interaction. Training a new peer leader with a skilled and experienced leader(s) is an excellent educational tool, but if there are three leaders, they must be careful not to dominate session dialogue. One strong leader can lead a group, but, as stated previously, two is the optimal amount.

In the “Leader Effectiveness” section of the Phase III observations, it was apparent that the peer leaders were knowledgeable and effective in directing the inmate group sessions. The comfort and respect levels were high, which equated to an environment that was conducive to a positive learning experience. The only area of concern is to closely monitor the number of peer leaders per group to maintain the effectiveness as previously mentioned.

In the estimation of the researchers and most clinical literature, the optimal size for the group sessions is 7 or 8 with an acceptable range from 5 to 10 members. Fewer than 5 members reduces the likelihood of effective group interaction, and more than ten reduces: a) the opportunity to work through each individual’s situations and b) the opportunities for consensus (Yalom, 1985).

Other observations noted included the importance of stressing timeliness to the group members at the onset of the group sessions (when norms are established) as tardiness can threaten group cohesiveness. The chapel did provide more space and reduced noise levels, a viable concern considering there are 30 to 40 inmates involved per session in one large room. When inmates are enrolled in the LDD program, it should be determined prior to starting the sessions if the inmate is literate and if accommodations are necessary to help the inmate through the program.

Overall recommendations for the peer leaders include closer adherence to the prescribed materials, a stronger effort to cover all of the materials set forth in the manual, and minimize conversation that is not focused on the session topic. Although the intent of the program was to have peer leader meetings prior to each session, the observers noted that, in actuality, the time was spent setting up the classroom and in casual conversation. In order for the program to run as intended, Program Directors should review the weekly modules with the peer leaders prior to each session, making it clear to the peer leaders what specific materials are vital and must be covered during the session. If some materials are not being used, the LDD manual and subsequent handouts should be updated. These updates should be done periodically to incorporate new materials, update current materials, or remove outdated material as prescribed by program directors.

The strengths of the LDD group sessions, as noted by the Researchers, are the consistency of the materials, and that the discussions were always closely related to the topic, although not necessarily to the materials. Other strengths included the peer leader aspect. The researchers felt that in all observations that the peer leaders were knowledgeable or very knowledgeable regarding the LDD materials, adequate or very adequate at facilitating their groups, and comfortable or very comfortable in their roles as peer leaders. The peer leaders were also very adept at running the sessions, controlling the discussion, and handling any inappropriate situations. There were also high levels of respect between peer leaders and group members which contributed to the overall positive atmosphere of the sessions.

Results - Phase IV

Introduction

Phase IV of the LDD program Evaluation consisted of a parenting program inventory of the twenty-six Pennsylvania State Correctional Institutions. The main objective of this phase was to identify all parenting programs currently operating throughout the PA SCI system and to briefly describe those programs (e.g., how the programs are structured, how they are staffed, what they entail as a curriculum, and the criteria or requirements of inmates). A summary of the data collected is presented in tables 4-1 through 4-3.

Sampling Methodology

CORE received a list of all PA SCIs from Gary Zajac, Ph.D., Research and Evaluation Manager, PA DOC. This list also included the name(s) of the parenting program(s) at each facility. A questionnaire was addressed to each individual parenting program at each SCI (i.e., some SCIs had more than one parenting program). All questionnaires were mailed to the superintendents of the SCIs in late September of 2000. The superintendents then forwarded the survey instrument to the appropriate program administrator. By mid-January, all questionnaires had been returned (N=59). Twenty-four of the twenty-six (92%) Pennsylvania SCIs have parenting programs. Across these institutions, there are a total of thirty-four (34) programs.

The questionnaire included items related to program features (e.g., name, description, length of operation, focus area, goals etc.), staff involvement, and inmate involvement/requirements. The data were tabulated and presented in the format of a “resource directory.” The directory is organized alphabetically by SCI with an index of alphabetized parenting programs as well. This information is compiled in a separate attachment, Appendix I.

In the following section, we have provided descriptive summaries for each PA SCI parenting program (listed alphabetically). The summaries were developed from the responses to the Phase IV questionnaires. The SCI that offers each program is indicated in parenthetical italics. All parenting programs are administered in each SCI except Marital Counseling and Parenting Skills Training which are coordinated by Renaissance Center, Inc. and the Pennsylvania Prison Society respectively. Next, for the three most popular programs (Long Distance Dads, Parenting Skills Training, Read to Your Children), we have provided comparisons across the institutions that administer them.

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Parenting Program Capsule Summaries

Active Parenting – The Active Parenting program is a 15-week video format program that instructs inmates on the different styles of parenting, instills courage, builds self-esteem, develops responsibility, promotes communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution, and discusses the ramifications of drug and alcohol use/abuse. (*Somerset*)

Child Development Education – The Child Development Education program is an 8-week program that presents material on child development from pre-natal to pre-teen. The program focuses on bonding techniques, providing a safe environment for children, ways to deal with oppositional behavior, and improving parent-child interaction. (*Muncy*)

Drugs and Alcohol Parenting Class – The Drug and Alcohol Parenting Class is a 10-week educational program for inmates with substance use/abuse histories. The program is geared toward inmates who are motivated to become responsible and effective parents. The program places an emphasis on recovery and sobriety issues as they relate to a family. Focus areas include the impact of drugs/alcohol on family and children, child development, appropriate discipline, age appropriate expectations, and developmental issues. (*Greene*)

Family Issues – Family Issues is a 10 to 12-week program that educates inmates on child development, managing children and adolescents, and inmate family relationships. The program enables inmates to review their familial situations in a group setting and get the perspectives of their peers. (*Greene*)

Family Values – Family Values is a 14-week program that addresses the historical basis of family, principles and values, family dignity, sexuality, and the roles of family members. The program establishes the context of family, reviews human dignity, and promotes understanding of family members. (*Laurel Highlands*)

Fatherheart – The Fatherheart program consists of 4 weekend sessions that allow the inmates to look at their individual relationship with their own fathers. The program helps them to “sift” through their good and bad experiences, and builds on the inmates parenting skills. The program helps the inmates deal with negative experiences from the past so not to repeat this behavior with their children. (*Somerset*)

Fathering Seminar – The Fathering Seminar is a 10-week program designed to address the development of positive parent/child relationships, guidance and discipline, correcting bad behavior, and teaching children the value of learning. Key focus areas are open communication, bonding with children, maintaining regular contact with children, being a good role model, setting rules and expectations, teaching problem solving, and understanding ages and stages. (*Waynesburg*)

Fathers Heart – The Fathers Heart Program is a 12-week program that helps inmates come to terms with the relationship they had with their own father. The program addresses the pains of these relationships and the forgiveness needed to move forward in a positive way. The program

also focuses on inmates bonding with their children, understanding their own behavior in parent-child relationship, and maintaining or initiating contact with their children. (*Laurel Highlands*)

Fathers Support Group for Short Timers – The Fathers Support Group is a monthly ongoing group that provides graduates of Parenting Skills and Long Distance Dads with a forum to discuss topics related to fathering or family and to give inmates an opportunity to “think outside the wall.” The program gives the inmates an opportunity to bond with other incarcerated fathers and to discuss fathering issues in a group atmosphere. (*Pittsburgh*)

Fathers Workshop for the Long Distance Dads Peer Leaders – The Fathers Workshop is a 12-week self-help support group that addresses issues related to parenting/fathering from prison. The key focus areas are the character of men/fathers, relationship with custodial mother(s), and emotions such as anger, guilt, and shame. The program is a prerequisite for becoming a Long Distance Dads peer leader. (*Albion*)

Long Distance Dads – The Long Distance Dads Program is a 12-week peer-led program that was developed to help the inmates to become better men so that they can become better fathers. Primary emphasis is placed on the child. Key focus areas are the fathering legacy, learning about their children, communication, dealing with caregivers, family roles, community integration, and improving/maintaining a relationship while incarcerated. Secondary goals are to encourage child support after release, reduce recidivism, and break the generational cycle of crime. (*Albion, Cresson, Dallas, Greene, Pittsburgh, Waymart*)

Marital and Family Pastoral Counseling – Marital and Family pastoral Counseling is an ongoing inmate requested professional intervention program. A Chaplain or counselor meets with the inmate and his family to discuss pre-marital, marital, or family related issues. The program also teaches communication skills to assist the inmates in growing toward healthy maturation and provides inmates with the skills to help them move toward healthier relationships with others. (*Greensburg*)

Marital Counseling (Renaissance Center, Inc.) – Marital Counseling is an ongoing program that meets weekly to help develop appropriate parenting and spousal relationship skills during incarceration and when the inmate is released. Focus areas are maintaining regular contact with children, bonding with children, and improving the communication between the inmate and the children’s mother/caregiver. (*Greene*)

Mom’s Story Time – Mom’s Story time is a 5-week program designed to enhance communication between incarcerated mothers and their children by videotaping the inmate mother while she reads stories to her children. Classes are about the benefits of reading to the children and teach how to show the children all of the joys and pleasures that come from reading. Other goals of the program are to make the mother a role model for her children and to bring the mother to the family via videotape. (*Cambridge Springs*)

Parenting – This 12 week program provides a theological view of parenting, identifies the roles of parents, and provides some historical information for parents. The Parenting program also develops parenting skills, helps inmates feel more comfortable with their children, and identifies parental mistakes while providing methods to correct them. (*Laurel Highlands*)

Parenting I – Cambridge Spring’s Parenting I program is a 10-week program that teaches basic parenting skills for children from 1 to 8 years old. The program focuses on teaching your child at home by: looking and listening, building self-esteem, developing good emotional health, and good behavior. The program’s secondary goals are to teach the inmates to become good role models and to stop the cycle of incarceration. (*Cambridge Springs*)

Parenting I – The Parenting I program at SCI Mahanoy is a 12-week program that gives inmates the opportunity to learn and develop effective and appropriate parenting skills that they can apply in their own familial situations. The focus is on child development, healthy family relationships, communication, discipline, self-esteem, responsibility, and healthy family functioning. (*Mahanoy*)

Parenting II – The Parenting II program is a 12-week parenting skills class offered to inmates who have children. Key focus areas are self-esteem, violence and empathy, role modeling, teens and anger management, teens and sex, peers and family, communication, and the importance of consistency and stability. Secondary goals are to teaching inmates to be better parents and to give them an awareness of what it means to be responsible. (*Cambridge Springs*)

Parenting Adjustment Group – The Parenting Adjustment Group is a 12-week program that is designed to help inmates work through separation issues and assists inmates in developing quality communication with their children’s caregivers. The program focuses on understanding the effects of separation on children and learning to deal with guilt, anger, and mistrust. The program also provides information on communication techniques and seeks to strengthen family bonds. (*Muncy*)

Parenting/Fatherhood – The Parenting/Fatherhood program is a 12 week educational class that covers the stages of child development, coping with the stress of parenting, building self esteem in children, positive discipline, communication skills, teaching values to children, single parenting, and step-parenting issues. Focus areas also include how to interact with children, participation in their education, dealing with emergencies, and helping the inmate to have realistic expectations upon reintegration into their families. (*Dallas*)

Parenting Group – The Parenting Group program is a 30-week program held in a group setting that allows the group to assist with defining parenting, parenting styles, and identifying individual strengths and weaknesses. The program also discusses the legal aspects of being a parent and the gradual method of re-entering the family upon release. Key focus areas are methods of discipline, parental rights, establishing the father-child bond through communication, and understanding the developmental stages of children. (*Rockview*)

Parenting Program – Parenting Program is a 10-week program that provides training in parenting skills, communications, parental stress, discipline, the role of the father, family rules, and developmental stages. The program also provides a forum for inmates to discuss their individual concerns. (*Houtzdale*)

Parenting Reunification Group – The Parenting Reunification Group is a 12-week program to prepare inmates to leave the correctional institution and to help the inmate set realistic goals for their return to their families. The program covers goal planning, reunification plans with children, and establishing support systems while stressing the rebuilding of relationships. The program also teaches values and how to pass these values on to children as a role model. *(Muncy)*

Parenting Skills – The Parenting Skills Program is a 13-week program of educational meetings covering basic parenting skills, communication, self-esteem, discipline, developmental stages of childhood, puberty, drug and alcohol's effect on the family, and understanding how and why gangs develop. *(Pittsburgh)*

Parenting Skills/Support Group – This is an ongoing program that is designed for inmates who have crimes against minor children and need to focus on refining parenting skills and evaluating their value system. Parenting Skills/Support Group provides basic parenting skills, role definition, positive/nonviolent discipline techniques, self-esteem building, communication skills, and anger and stress management. *(Muncy)*

Parenting Skills Training (Pennsylvania Prison Society) – Parenting Training Skills is a 12-week semi-weekly (weekly – Huntingdon) program administered by the Pennsylvania Prison Society. The program is designed to develop positive parenting skills and an increased awareness of familial responsibilities through education, skills training, group therapy, problem solving, therapeutic experiences and individualized plans of reunification. The program's primary foci are: child development, communication skills, disciplining children, bonding with children, effects of incarceration on families, effects of alcoholism and drug abuse, domestic violence, self-parenting, breaking the cycle of crime, and reintegration into the family. *(Cambridge Springs, Camp Hill, Chester, Coal Township, Dallas, Frackville, Graterford, Greensburg, Huntingdon, Mahanoy, Mercer, Muncy, Retreat, Smithfield, Waymart)*

The Parenting Workshop – The Parenting Workshop is a 6-week lecture and group process program that utilizes traditional didactic methods, audio-visuals, interactive sessions, and experiential exercises to teach parenting skills. Key focus areas are parenting in today's culture, reflection on the inmate's childhood, and how current behaviors and attitudes are impacted by childhood experiences. *(Chester)*

Parents Anonymous – The Parents Anonymous program is an ongoing self-help group that allows incarcerated parents to help each other by sharing their experiences, insight, and knowledge with other inmates to help foster a loving and nurturing relationship with their children. Group members also discuss issues and crises that arise regarding their children. The program also encourages participants to seek additional parenting assistance upon their release. *(Cambridge Springs)*

Prenatal/Postpartum Support Group – This is an ongoing weekly group designed for pregnant inmates and those who have recently delivered. The group provides support throughout the pregnancy and prepares the mother for separation and after-care for the infant. The program focuses on separation anxiety, communication, prenatal, and early childhood childcare. *(Muncy)*

Project Fathers – Project Fathers is a fivefold model which includes: a ten week fathers group that meets and discusses pre-selected topics, a fathers’ support group, connection activities with the children, a structured special visit with a parent resource specialist, and a follow-up evaluation phase. This five phase holistic program addresses the incarcerated father’s need to connect positively with his children. This “win-win” program enables the father to work at becoming a better father, while at the same time spells clear advantages to the community upon the inmate father’s release. *(Smithfield)*

Psychology of Child Development – The Psychology of Child Development program is a 12-week semi-weekly program that provides an overview of child development including the history of studying children, practices used to study children, and theories used to explain development of children from the prenatal to adolescence. Key focus areas are theory development, heredity and environmental issues, growth and physical development, cognitive development, language development, and emotional development. The secondary goal is that by educating inmates regarding the basic and general expectations of human behavior, inmates will be able to develop healthier expectations of their children’s development and behavior. *(Cambridge Springs)*

Read to Your Children – The Read to Your Children Program is a 10-12 week semi-weekly (Albion, Cresson, Frackville) or an ongoing monthly (Chester) program that consists of the inmates selecting a book and reading it to their children while being videotaped. This videotape is then mailed to the inmate’s children along with books and/or greeting cards. The goal of the program is to encourage children and inmates to read and for the inmate to maintain regular positive contact with their children during incarceration. The program also provides a positive parenting activity for inmates, fosters better institutional adjustment, improves communication with children, and allows inmates to learn the value of reading. *(Albion, Chester, Cresson, Frackville, Graterford, Greene, Retreat, Waymart)*

Successful Parenting – The Successful Parenting Program is a 13-week course designed to rebuild relationships between incarcerated fathers and their children. The program focuses on the consequences of the absentee father and the resulting effect on their children’s development. The program also teaches responsibility, support, family systems, and a successful transition from prison to family life. *(Somerset)*

Comparison of PA DOC LDD Programs

The Long Distance Dads program is currently running at six State Correctional Institutions (Albion, Cresson, Dallas, Greene, Pittsburgh, and Waymart), and is scheduled to begin operation mid-year of 2001 at SCI Pine Grove. The program has its roots in SCI Albion, where it has been operational for five years. The program has been at the other institutions, on average, for approximately one year.

The institutions were consistent in the rankings of the focus areas of the program, with nearly all stating that the primary focus was to teach inmates to be better parents during their incarceration. The secondary focus stated was to teach inmates to be better parents when released and tertiary foci included teaching the inmates to be active in their child(ren)'s life, understanding familial problems, reducing recidivism, and teaching priorities.

There appeared to be some confusion on the assessment or evaluation of the program. There needs to be standardized programming across all SCIs that utilize the ICAN pre and post test, reviews participation and attendance, and allows for review of feedback from both inmates and staff members.

The strengths of the program, as noted by program directors, were the peer leader aspect, the group discussion, the voluntary aspect of the program, and the balance between educational and experiential learning. Weaknesses noted by the program directors were that there is little follow-up after the program, no available resources to help in facilitating the reconnection of family once the inmate has been incarcerated for some time, lack of consideration by the material of the isolation inmates feel, lack of information many of the inmates have on their families, and lack of specific ways to deal with children of various age ranges.

Obstacles to the effectiveness of the LDD program include: space, financial implications due to missed worked opportunities, limited amount of session time, distance from families, and no real way for the inmates to practice the skills they have learned. Suggestions on how the program could be improved include increased staff awareness, financial incentives for peer leaders, follow-up programs, more funding, availability of a clinical therapist to work through some problems, and using fathering videos to show inmates the practical application of the skills they have learned/discussed.

Respondents noted that both the Superintendent and the Central Office have been supportive or very supportive of the LDD Program. However, lack of communication regarding the LDD program has left some staff unaware or skeptical of the program's worth. Inmate reaction at all facilities has been positive and inmates, especially graduates, recommend the program.

The staffing for LDD programs across the state ranges from one individual spending 20% of their time to three people spending 3% of their time. All LDD Program Directors received 2 to 3 days training. Most SCIs did not require program directors to have any specific educational or experiential background. However, SCI Albion noted that appropriate education and experience as a parent was required of staff members involved in the LDD program. When assessing the

responses given regarding input into the program, all but one Program Director reported that both they and the inmates involved had input into the program.

In regards to admission criteria, motivation for attendance was the only factor that was consistently viewed as being important in making a decision whether an inmate was admitted to the program. In regards to completion criteria, the inmate's level of motivation and the number of hours completed were regarded as most important criteria in determining whether the inmate has completed the program.

Five of the six SCIs have a waiting list for the LDD program ranging from 42 to 200 inmates. Class or session sizes generally range from 8-15 inmates; however, Albion runs 4 sessions of 10 inmates simultaneously for a total of 40. Through the end of 2000, the LDD program overall has graduated 617 inmates and has had 181 drop-outs for a completion rate of 71%.

Comparison of PA DOC Parenting Skills Training Programs

The Parenting Skills Training (PST) program is a twelve-week program currently running at 15 State Correctional Institutions (Cambridge Springs, Camp Hill, Chester, Coal Township, Dallas, Frackville, Graterford, Greensburg, Huntingdon, Mahanoy, Mercy, Muncy, Retreat, Smithfield, and Waymart). The program is contracted through the Pennsylvania Prison Society (PPS) and has been operational for an average of 4 months (through 12/2000).

The institutions were consistent in the rankings of the focus areas of the program, with many stating that the primary focus was to teach inmates to be better parents during their incarceration or to teach inmates to be better parents when released. Other focus areas noted by PA DOC staff included improving family relationships, teaching inmates to be better men, enhancing communication skills, showing men how to be a positive influence, and breaking the inter-generational cycle of crime.

In these programs there also appeared to be some confusion on the assessment or evaluation of the program. See the previous section for suggestions on improving program evaluation.

The strengths of the program, as noted by DOC staff (in order of frequency of response) are: the curriculum, the groups aspect, the amount of personal disclosure, communication, the program instructors, small class size, and the increased hope/interest/awareness in being part of their child(ren)'s lives. Weaknesses (in order of frequency) include: the lack of specific culture-related material, lack of time for one-on-one sessions, lack of family involvement in the program, too few sessions, the lack of follow-up, the need for more problem solving versus issue-raising, and the instructors not being from the "hood."

Obstacles to the effectiveness of the PST program noted: the distance of inmates from their families, the low priority given to non-mandatory programs, the inability to practice "new" skills, the high cost of phone calls, security inconveniences, space related issues, large class sizes, selection criteria, institutional support, and keeping instructors. The respondents observed that the program could be improved by involving the family more, special visitation arrangements, longer or more sessions, breaking the program into basic and advanced classes, reducing phone costs, follow-up phases, more diverse instructional media (audio, video, guest speakers, books), assistant instructors, one-on-one meetings between inmates and instructors, and having the instructor meet with counselors regarding inmate participants.

The respondents perceived that both the Superintendent and the Central Office have been supportive or very supportive of the PST Programs (less one institution). Most staff members are positive regarding the PST program; however, insufficient program communication tends to raise doubt about the program's efficacy. Inmate reaction at all facilities has been positive following some initial skepticism and inmates generally recommend the program.

The staffing (hiring and training) for PST programs across the state is provided by the Pennsylvania Prison Society. Most SCIs report that they and the inmates are allowed input into the program content.

In regards to admission criteria, motivation for attendance and whether the inmate was a parent were the only factors that were consistently viewed as being important in making a decision whether an inmate was admitted to the program. In regards to completion criteria, the number of hours completed and the completion of specific tasks were regarded as most important criteria in determining whether the inmate has successfully completed the program.

Twelve of fifteen SCIs have a waiting list for the PST program. Class or session sizes generally range from 7-17 inmates with the statewide average group size equaling 11.7 inmates. Through the end of 2000, the PST program overall has graduated over 500 inmates and has had 83 drop-outs for a completion rate of 83%.

Comparison of PA DOC Read To Your Children Programs

The Read To Your Children (RTYC) program is a twelve-week program currently running at 6 State Correctional Institutions (Albion, Cresson, Frackville, Graterford, Retreat, and Waymart) and an ongoing program at 2 SCIs (Chester and Greene). The program has been operational for an average of 2.4 years (through 12/2000).

The institutions were consistent in the rankings of the focus areas of the program, with many stating that the primary focus was to teach inmates to be better parents during their incarceration or to teach inmates to be better parents when released. Other focus areas noted by PA DOC staff were to improve the reading skills of both the inmate and his children, to develop a closer family connection through communication, and to show the value of education.

As in the other two programs, assessment or evaluation of the program is unclear. A standardized program evaluation component across all SCIs would facilitate program modifications and improvement and provide data to track effectiveness.

The strengths of the program, as noted by DOC staff (in order of frequency of response) are: that it fosters a relationship between the inmates and their children, increases the interaction with family, teaches reading skills, provides a positive outlet for inmates, teaches the value of education, and aids in breaking the cycle of illiteracy. The weaknesses noted by DOC staff (as noted in order of frequency) are the lack of adequate time to make videos and an insufficient number of classes so that all interested can take the class.

Obstacles to the effectiveness of the RTYC program include: security related issues, lack of staff, lack of adequate funding, lack of community support, inmate camera shyness, mandatory programming, and physical distance between inmates and their families. The program could be improved by: adding additional staff and the expansion of the number of classes, more funding, longer sessions, better video equipment, and better communication of program goals and objectives to staff members.

Respondents indicated that both the Superintendent and the Central Office have been supportive or very supportive of the RTYC programs. Most staff members are positive regarding the RTYC program and inmate reaction at all facilities has been positive to enthusiastic. In the estimation of the program directors, most inmates highly recommend the program.

Staff requirements for the RTYC program range from 1 full time DOC employee utilizing 20% of their time to 2 full time employees utilizing 30% of their time. Nearly all staff reported receiving an orientation prior to instructing the class and half reported that prior experience was required to be an instructor for this course. All of the SCIs sponsoring RTYC programs allow instructors input into the program and nearly all report that inmates are allowed input into the program content as well.

When assessing admission criteria, motivation for attendance and whether the inmate was a parent were the factors that were consistently viewed as being important in making a decision whether an inmate was admitted to the program. In regards to completion criteria, the

completion of specific tasks, the level of motivation, and behavior change were regarded as most important criteria in determining whether the inmate has successfully completed the program.

All of SCIs with RTYC programs have an inmate waiting list. Class or session sizes generally range from 5-30 inmates with the statewide average group size equaling 12.4 inmates. Through the end of 2000, the RTYC program overall has graduated 581 inmates and has had 62 drop-outs for a completion rate of over 90%.

Recommendations

Institutional Recommendations

This final section lists 23 recommendations that are institution-specific and program-specific. The recommendations are listed and discussed in no particular order with citations and references where applicable.

1. Establish an LDD steering committee at each correctional institution that has an LDD program. This committee could be comprised of peer leaders and facilitated by the program directors. Counselors or other interested staff could be included to widen the perspectives of the group. This committee can provide a forum for discussion, changes, and additions to the site LDD Program and Peer Leader Training Program. This steering committee could be involved with establishing a mission statement, programming goals and objectives, management of program development and delivery, public relations, and marketing of the program.

As an example, the Tennessee Department of Corrections (DOC) has a Central Coordinating Committee composed of inmates that provide leadership for their parenting programs such as “Parents in Prison.” The committee initiates, plans, coordinates, and implements all program activities, recruits volunteers and program participants, disseminates program information, develops resource materials, identifies new service needs, and evaluates program activities. The Tennessee DOC also has an advisory board consisting of representatives of community organizations and other interested individuals. The board provides guidance in setting program priorities and developing program plans, obtains resources from community agencies and groups, meets with DOC administration and others on behalf of parenting programs, and disseminates information (Hairston & Lockett, 1985).

2. Create a New Training Program Policy that details standard procedures for all new inmate programming statewide. This policy should address procedures for the creation of new programs, submission/proposal of new programs to the DOC, approval process, program director selection, program director roles/training, implementation of new programs, communication methods to be used to inform staff and inmate populations of these new programs, staff training procedures/methods, and assessment/evaluation procedures. A flow chart that depicts the aforementioned procedures could be included in this policy to provide a step-by-step analysis of this process along with descriptions of key staff member functions in the policy.
3. Utilize Inmate Commercials to provide information to inmates regarding the LDD Program and other programming at the prison. As mentioned in the Phase II discussion, other institutions have had great success in promoting programming in this manner.

A method implemented by Professor John Kerwin of Penn State Erie, while he was employed as a Communications Specialist in the Washington State Correctional System, was very successful in conveying information to inmates. Professor Kerwin utilized

inmate-produced videos to advertise institutional programs and also for other communication purposes. These videos were then aired on inmate television. A group of peer leaders could be used to discuss the benefits of the program and part of a session could be aired (with the permission of all involved). This would enable the inmates to get a better idea of what actually takes place during the LDD sessions so as to increase participation and eliminate any misconceptions inmates may have about the program (J.J. Kerwin, personal communication, August 24, 2000). Based on the success of the peer-led LDD sessions, it would follow that inmate-led commercials might provide a tool to better advertise institutional programming to the inmates.

4. Provide standardized training programs for staff based on their involvement with programming. All staff need to be informed and supportive of rehabilitative programming regardless of their perceived inmate motivations for participation. The collective talents, skills, and knowledge of the entire correctional staff is as important to the success of the programming and overall rehabilitation as those of counselors and program directors. The inmates are essentially the customers of the programming and it is the duty of the institutions to supply training to enable the staff to “deliver the goods” (Egan, 1990). A sample of this structure-based training is as follows:
 - a. *Executive summaries* for Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, and other senior management/administration.
 - b. *Detailed program training* for Unit Managers, Psychologists, Program Directors, and Counselors.
 - c. *Program briefs* for security-based positions including Correctional Officers.

Since there is always resistance to investing time and money in training, it is critical to evaluate program training for efficiency and outcomes. Evaluations should take place immediately following the training to note the staff’s initial reaction and then again several months later to see the long-term results and effects on staff attitudes towards programming (American Society for Training and Development, 2001).

5. Promote and increase contact between inmates and their children. While visitations can be bothersome, aggravating, and time consuming for correctional staff, the ongoing face-to-face contact with family reinforces what this culture values – family (Holley & Brewster, 1999). Frequent contact between inmates and their children is critical to create and/or maintain relationships; therefore, the program should be linked to visitation. It is believed that face-to-face contact provides benefits during incarceration such as improved conduct and also reinforces the maintenance of familial relationships that will benefit the inmate upon release (Stinchcomb & Fox, as cited by Holley & Brewster, 1999). Methods for increasing familial contact could include:
 - a. Incarcerate inmates closer to their homes. Recognizing that most inmates want to be in contact with their families, the DOC should reconsider incarcerating inmates in areas so remote from their homes that it makes visiting virtually impossible. Institutions could use transfers as a means for rewarding inmates for good behavior. In Florida, for example, inmates are eligible for a transfer after they

- serve at least six months of their sentence without any disciplinary problems (Levesque, 2000).
- b. Utilize, or more widely utilize, buses or vans to transport inmate families to institutions free of charge or at a nominal rate. Other options could include helping to establish support services with community agencies and/or churches to provide this type of service. These agencies/churches could also use this transportation time as a time for outreach to these families. Prison Family Support Services, Inc., for example, was created in Virginia in 1978 as a volunteer transportation program designed to assist low income families visit prisons in rural areas not served by public transportation. The initiative was led by Thomas A. Edmonds of the Second Presbyterian Church, who worked with other area churches and the United Way to provide this service (Prison Family Support Services, Inc., 2000)
 - c. Reduce phone rates for inmates calling spouses, caregivers, and children. Presently, prisoners can only make collect calls, which are especially profitable for phone companies. A company serving prisons is usually free to charge the maximum per-minute rate for collect calls (up to 46 cents in many cases) as well as a surcharge that can run as much as \$3 per call. A 15-minute call at that price would cost at least six times more than the dime-a-minute rate Sprint charges the outside world (Fischer, 1997). Convert long distance commissions, or a portion of those commissions, into a fund for reducing phone rates to family members.
 - d. Provide inmates additional stationery, letter writing assistance, tape recorders/tapes, and other mailable materials to promote enhanced communication between families as part of the LDD program. This would help in proving that the state is sincere in wanting to help maintain inmate-family relationships during incarceration. Continue with the current exploration of a virtual visitation (video-conferencing) system for inmates.
 - e. Implement flexible visitation schedules. Children and their incarcerated parents should be permitted to have at a minimum, weekly visits. Hairston (1996) recommends that visiting schedules should be flexible and permit weekday, weekend, and evening visits.
6. Increase/improve training for program administrators and peer leaders. Program innovation and effectiveness is affected by staff competence. “Staff who fail to remain current with the literature in their field or neglect treatment manuals will not be at the forefront of correctional innovation” (Van Voorhis, 1986). Program administrators and peer leaders should receive detailed training prior to leading the program and ideally have experience in corrections. Ongoing training to keep abreast of the latest trends in institutional programming is highly recommended. “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do” (Bandura, as cited by Myers, 2001). A good resource for information and training for peer leaders is “Peer Resources” at <http://www.peer.ca/helping.html> (Peer Resource Consulting Group, 2000). Top peer publications not published by the aforementioned site are listed at <http://www.mentors.ca/toperbks.html>. Training can help peer leaders provide the empathy and understanding to help resolve issues that arise in the group. Another good

resource for training information is the American Society for Training and Development (<http://www.astd.org>) which provides information on conferences, on-line training, trends, buyers guides, benchmarking, and publishes training and development reports (see appendix H for more related web sites).

7. Improve the environment of the sessions. Try to hold the LDD sessions in settings conducive to learning – the environment must be of adequate size, with desks, reasonable acoustics, and minimal distractions and interruptions. However, group meetings may be held in any setting, as Yalom (1985) states, provided that the room affords privacy and freedom from distraction. Penn State researchers noted a significant improvement in noise levels and atmosphere when the sessions were temporarily convened in the chapel.
8. Improve the environment of the visitation area/experience. Create a parental visiting area that includes books, games, toys, arts/crafts, and other items geared to facilitate a healthy parental interaction with their children. Other ways to improve the visitation experience may include establishing a “clothes closet” which stocks prison-approved clothing for visits, coordinating with agencies that provide overnight lodging for inmate families traveling long distances to visit, staffing the visiting rooms with non-uniformed correctional officers, and having clinical psychologists available for troubled family visits (Hostetter & Jinnah, 1993).
9. Stress the importance of the LDD program as a critical factor in the rehabilitation of prisoners. State institutions need to increase the emphasis of these types of programming to inmates through counselors and to staff via administration. A seminal study in prisoner-family relationships reviewed the impact of family ties on parole release success:

“The central finding of this research is the discovery of a strong and consistently positive relationship between parole success and the maintenance of strong family ties while in prison. The reliability of this research is substantiated by the results of other research undertakings... The positive relationship between strength of social ties and success on parole has held up for 45 years of releases across very diverse offender populations and in different localities. It is doubtful that there are any other research findings in the field of corrections which can approximate this record” (Holt & Miller, 1972)

10. Provide programming for children of inmates to “provide nurturing to develop positive mental attitudes toward themselves and others, to build decision-making skills, to understand the concept of family and friends, and to cope with their parents’ incarceration by providing a realistic view of prison life” (Hostetter & Jinnah, 1993). This programming could help the children of inmates to accept their familial situations, provide them with a forum to express their feeling about their parents’ incarceration, provide therapy sessions, and maintain or establish a base of communication with their incarcerated parent. Other areas that the programming could address are handling trauma and emotions such as anger and depression.

Family Services of Northwest Pennsylvania offers a variety of programs that are specialized for individuals and families with a range of problems (a program offered in the past was called “Families of Offenders”). A suggestion is to work with this agency to establish a program for children with an incarcerated parent. Contact Tom Vinca at 814-866-4500 or visit their website at <http://www.familyserviceserie.org>. Another organization that gets involved with children who have incarcerated parents is Rainbows. Contact Rose Jones at rjones@eriercd.org for additional information. (Appendix H)

11. Standardize programming across the state utilizing only the most effective programming. Upon reviewing the wide variety of parenting program currently in place in the PA DOC, it becomes obvious that 34 unique programs across the state is excessive. Minimizing the programming would reduce redundancy, improve effectiveness, and ease administration. This could be accomplished through a committee or by a mandate issued by senior management. This would not include specialized programs for female inmates.

A logical scenario for parenting instruction programs would be a five-tier program. This would provide basic mandatory programming to inmates, such as the Parenting Skills Training. Upon satisfactory completion of this program, the voluntary LDD program would be an excellent follow-up. A voluntary ongoing fathers discussion group would allow the parenting and personal growth to continue if desired, and the Read To Your Children program allows for continued parent-child communication. Another option is to make a therapist available to work with troubled inmates and their families. A concluding offering such as a reunification seminar would help the inmate bridge the gap from incarcerated father to released father. See outline below:

Pennsylvania Parenting Programming

- A. Parenting Skills Training – 12-week, mandatory basic training for all inmates with children and voluntary for all others (instructor led, lecture style).
- B. Long Distance Dads/Moms – 12-week, voluntary advance training available to all inmates who have completed Parenting Skills Training (peer led, group style).
- C. Read To Your Children – 12-week voluntary program to continue parent-child interaction, communication, and emphasis on education.
- D. Fathers/Mothers Group – Ongoing weekly facilitator/peer led group sessions utilizing a wide range of media to provide ongoing support for parents and to emphasize what has been learned in the prerequisite PST and LDD programs.
- E. Individual Parental Therapy – Would allow an inmate who has completed PST and LDD the option of utilizing a skilled family therapist to resolve difficult issues/situations.
- F. Reunification Seminar – A program offered monthly to offer reminders and tips on reunification issues and link to continued community programming.

LDD Programmatic Recommendations

12. Enhance the curriculum by:

- a. Incorporating material/data from research published in peer-reviewed journals and texts (e.g., standardized instructional and testing instrumentation, exercises, and activities).
- b. Implementing specific goals and objectives for each component within the weekly sessions, and review these goals and objectives at each pre-session peer leader meeting.
- c. Accessing internet accessible resources (e.g., relationship building activities, fathering websites) [see list in Appendix H].
- d. Utilizing cooperative parenting techniques. Cooperative parenting seeks to resolve conflicts between parents to help them create a written, shared agreement. More information can be seen at the Cooperative Parenting for Divided Families website located at <http://trfn.clpgh.org/cpdf/> (appendix H).
- e. Supplying methods for contacting estranged families, beyond just telling inmates that they should do so. Provide avenues for inmates to take as they attempt to establish or improve communications with their families. These could include search techniques, assistance in letter writing, and including information on what other inmates have done to successfully contact families.
- f. Update/upgrade program materials to present a more professional appearance. A general edit is necessary to remove basic punctuation, spelling, and grammatical errors. Review of material should be conducted annually to make additions, corrections, and updates.

13. Implement an evaluation system. The LDD Program Director/Steering Committee should collect feedback from inmates who have completed (and dropped out of) the program so that they may continuously make improvements and eliminate deficiencies. Questions should include topics such as: curriculum, peer leader effectiveness, institutional issues/barriers, and suggestions/remarks/criticisms.

14. Provide additional LDD sessions at institutions experiencing substantial backlogs on their waiting lists to enable the institution to provide this programming to all interested inmates prior to parole. Provide staff and peer leaders as needed to support this additional programming.

15. Do NOT screen LDD participants to eliminate non-parents. Education of stepfathers, potential fathers, and men in atypical family situations is critical to the success of the program and to the future success of the inmates themselves. However, we do recommend stratifying the groups by fathering status to provide the best group dynamics based on shared experiences.

16. Consider screening inmates with crimes against children, reading deficiencies, and behavioral disorders. It should be a requirement that inmates who have committed crimes against children have completed their offense-based programming prior to

admission to the LDD Program. Options for those with insufficient reading skills include: have a special group within LDD to accommodate those inmates with lower reading skills, assign a more literate “partner” to assist less literate inmates, and require or recommend programming to increase literacy skills prior to enrollment in LDD.

We also recommend screening the inmates for behavioral disorders that would be disruptive to the group process or impair their abilities to learn such as social phobia, oppositional defiant disorder, antisocial personality disorder, or major depressive disorder.

17. Implement multifaceted programming. Programs that incorporated a variety of instructional/intervention techniques are generally more successful than programs that utilize a single technique (Antonowicz & Ross, 1994). Techniques that could be incorporated into the LDD program include:
 - a. *Role-playing* - Participants acting out designated roles relevant to real life fathering scenarios to gain insight into behavior and motivation.
 - b. *Rehearsal* – Conscious repetition to increase the amount of material remembered. The simple principle being: “the amount remembered depends on the time spent learning” (Myers, 2001). Hence, important principles need to be reiterated to improve retention.
 - c. *Cognitive therapy* – One of the primary targets of cognitive therapy is the identification and modification of negative or distorted automatic thoughts. These cognitions are the relatively autonomous thoughts that occur rapidly while an individual is in the midst of a particular situation or is recalling significant events from the past (Wright et al., 1998). Identifying common negative thoughts and perceptions regarding parenting and working to eliminate or modify these in the program would be an important step in the inmate rehabilitation.
 - d. *Modeling* – The process of observing and imitating a specific behavior (Myers, 2001). A major function of modeling is to transmit information to observers about how subskills can be synthesized into new patterns (Bandura, 1986). Peer Leader modeling can provide an excellent source of behavior modeling for inmate group members.
 - e. *Reinforcement* – Any event that increases the frequency of a preceding response or any consequence that strengthens behavior (Myers, 2001). Peer leaders reinforcing participation, insights, and other positive contributions to the group will increase the amount of the positive contributions by all group members.
 - f. *Guest Speakers* – Utilize guest speakers such as program graduates who have been released from prison, respected community members, ministers, or an “expert” on the topic of fathering.
 - g. *Multi-Media Presentations* - Include other media such as documentaries or movie clips. Many excellent videos on the subject of fathering are available, such as the PBS documentary “Dedicated, Not Deadbeat” (See Internet information in Appendix H).

18. Reduce program drop-out rate. While it is impossible to always know when conflicts with LDD program attendance may occur (e.g. RHU), it is imperative to try to maintain consistency within the groups throughout the 12 week session. Research has shown that group therapy drop-outs make only marginal symptomatic improvement, and in addition, have an adverse effect on the remaining members of the group, who can be threatened and demoralized by the early drop-outs (Yalom, 1985). Program Directors need to be aware of upcoming parole possibilities, court appearances, and mandatory programming conflicts in order to minimize changes in group dynamics. A screening process that includes the aforementioned areas could prove helpful.
19. Better utilize the peer leader meetings before and after the sessions. Increase the emphasis on the materials, outlining what peer leaders must cover during the sessions, and what materials are considered optional. Peer leaders could track materials covered during the session via a checklist and review at the post-meeting session. This would better assure uniformity and adherence to the prescribed materials and provide information on what materials are the most used, most beneficial, and most widely accepted and respected by the inmates. This process could also be used as a forum to discuss potential changes and updates to the LDD materials.
20. Continue with the implementation of Phase II (the sequel) of the LDD Program, and perhaps even Post-LDD support groups that meet on an ongoing basis to continue with the growth and development achieved by inmates in LDD I and II. McGuire states that two of the most recent and largest meta-analyses regarding recidivism (Andrews, 1990 & Lipsey, 1992) have demonstrated that the net effect of “treatment” is, on average, a reduction in recidivism rates of between 10% and 12% and positive effects of “treatment” have been noted in 64.5% of the experiments (McGuire, 1995).
21. Link the LDD Program with community fathering and support programs so that upon release, inmates have access to information and assistance to help them continue their growth and further improve their relationships with their families, caregivers, spouses, and children. “Develop a request for proposals to encourage development of programs to improve pre-release planning and community-based support following release” (Tilbor, 1993). The establishing of ties from the LDD Program to community programs will help continue the fathering education and relationships started in the institution and will help in the transition from prison to the outside world.
22. Increase data collection/record keeping by Program Director. Data collected currently is minimal. Additional areas for data collection from attending inmates could include: attitude toward the program/parenting, level of participation, understanding of concepts, conduct, sincerity, and effort of LDD participants. The more information that is collected regarding the participants, the easier it will be to evaluate the success and failures of the program.
23. Provide LDD Program documentation for attendees. Inmates need to be provided with materials to keep for future reference. At present, inmates return program materials at the end of each class and therefore do not have materials to reference once they are released.

It would provide an excellent resource if these materials were presented in a workbook format for the inmates to use during class and to later utilize upon release. Another option would be to keep a journal or notebook to allow them to capture information and feelings during the program, which could be used for future reference.

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