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Variations in Victim Presence in Restorative Youth Conferencing Programs: The Use of
Surrogate Victims Increases Reparation Completion

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Abstract

Victim-offender conferencing programs have expanded the type of victims involved in restorative rituals. However, little research has examined how variations in victim presence might impact these interventions. The aim of this study was to examine whether conferences involving actual victims resulted in higher reparation completion and how surrogate characteristics might impact reparation outcomes. Using regression modeling, we estimated how the variables of interest predicted reparation completion. Conferences with surrogates had a higher probability of completion than those with actual victims. Using surrogates may be a promising strategy to expand restorative justice practices when actual victim participation is not possible.

Keywords: juvenile justice, restorative practices, victim presence, surrogate victims, conferencing.

Variations in Victim Presence in Restorative Youth Conferencing Programs: The Use of Surrogate Victims Increases Reparation Completion

Juvenile justice professionals, researchers and evaluators are continually trying to find programs that are developmentally appropriate and effective at preventing delinquency (Lipsey, 2009). A common aim of juvenile justice programming is to prevent subsequent delinquent or illegal behavior if youth have already broken the law. Prior research has demonstrated the impact of restorative practices, specifically that victim-youth conferencing may be effective at reducing delinquency (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Juvenile Justice Bulletin., 2001). One aspect of restorative approaches that may be especially effective for first time offenders is contact with the victim, especially if that contact allows youth to understand the impact their offense had on another person.

There may be times, however, where the actual victim is unwilling or unable to meet with the youth who caused the harm. In these cases, surrogate victims allow the restorative conference to occur, but it is unknown whether the use of surrogates is as effective as when the actual victim participates. Moreover, little is known about whether conferences are as effective if the surrogate and the actual victim do not have similar characteristics, specifically whether age matches, because many times victims may be other youth (i.e., mutual assault) and adult surrogates may be utilized instead. Examining the effect of variations in victim presence, as well as the impact of surrogate's characteristics, on restorative outcomes is essential in the development of effective juvenile justice programming.

Restorative Justice and Conferencing

Restorative Justice (RJ) practices are based on the principles of participation, accountability, reparation, and reintegration (Latimer et al., 2005). One of the restorative practices that has been widely applied worldwide, and in the United States, is restorative justice conferencing (Van Ness, 2005; Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Schiff & Bazemore, 2012).

Restorative conferencing is a process that bases its intervention on the dialogue among victims, offenders, secondary victims (such as family members or friends), and supporters of offenders and victims (Van Ness et al., 2001; Zinsstag et al., 2011). Although restorative conferencing has sometimes been used as a broader category to describe any restorative practice involving a face-to-face dialogue between victims and offenders (i.e., Victim-Offender Mediation, VOM), it is more accurately understood as a specific type of RJ practice, characterized by the involvement of other participants besides the victims and offenders (Garvei, 2003; Van Camp, 2017; Jonas-van Dijk, et al., 2020).

Restorative conferencing has demonstrated recidivism reduction (De Beus & Rodriguez, 2007; Hayes, 2004; Nugent et al., 2001). Results from a quasi-experimental study suggest that the effects of restorative conferencing on recidivism remain consistent, even after controlling for the youth's age at referral, gender, race, ethnicity, history of prior offending, and whether the youth committed a property or violent offense (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013). Moreover, restorative conferencing has been associated with other positive outcomes, such as increased community and victim involvement in the justice process, greater victim and community satisfaction (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013), and increased perceptions of procedural fairness (Latimer et al., 2005; Leonard & Kenny, 2011; Barnes et al., 2015).

Although all restorative conferencing programs share essential values and general characteristics, interventions may include variations to respond to the context where the harm occurred. Specifically, variations may involve strategies to meet the needs of the victims and offenders, including different types of facilitators (i.e police officers, civil servants, volunteers), a varied social actors running the programs (i.e., state run, community run; Zinsstag, 2011), and different types of victim presence. To illustrate, interventions may involve the use of indirect

victim communication (e.g., letters or impact statements), community members serving as proxies for the victim (Bouffard et al., 2017), or the use of surrogate victims that stand-in for the actual victim (Saulnier & Sivasubramaniam, 2015; Umbreit et al., 2007).

Reintegrative Shaming Theory and Shame Management

Reintegrative Shaming Theory (RST) has been widely used to explain why RJ interventions are effective. This theory distinguishes two types of shaming: stigmatic shaming and reintegrative shaming (Braithwaite, 1989). Stigmatic shaming implies treating the offender as the problem (Harris et al., 2004), communicating disapproval disrespectfully, and labeling the offender as a bad person (Harris & Maruna, 2005; Losoncz & Tyson, 2007; Kim & Gerber, 2012). Conversely, reintegrative shaming implies communicating disapproval toward the delinquent act (instead of toward the person) and works to dissipate disapproval with clear gestures of forgiveness and reacceptance into the community (Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 2001). While the former is thought to increase criminal behavior (Braithwaite, 1989; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2005), the latter has been associated with future law compliance (Braithwaite, 1989). Although RJ is not synonymous with reintegrative shaming (Walgrave & Aertsen, 1996) and RJ practices do not automatically produce reintegrative shame (Tyler et al., 2007), observations of restorative conferences suggest that these types of interventions are more likely to produce reintegrative shaming than the traditional court interventions (Braithwaite & Mugford, 1994).

A more contemporary version of RST shifts the focus from shaming to shame management (Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 2001), which suggests that RJ interventions reduce recidivism—not because its rituals induce shame feelings, but because it helps the offender manage feelings of shame constructively (Harris & Maruna, 2005). According to the shame

management framework, people may handle shame in different ways (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2012). On the one hand, offenders might be able to handle shame feelings by acknowledging the wrongdoing and harm, and wishing to make amends, known as shame acknowledgement. On the other hand, they might respond to shame feelings by blaming others or external factors, known as shame displacement.

Drawing from the RST and shame management, Harris and colleagues (2004) depict the emotional dynamics of RJ practices and the role of victim presence in managing shame and the offender's experience of reintegrative shame. According to the authors, when offenders are confronted with their victim's suffering, they are more likely to experience empathy toward the victim, even if they were initially indifferent. Meeting the direct victim helps offenders to think of their victims as human beings with needs and feelings rather than an 'object with a handbag' or 'some anonymous owner of a car' (p. 201). As the offender's emotional understanding of their victim's suffering increases, the offender becomes more likely to recognize their acts as wrong, and consequently shame-related feelings emerge or become more concrete. Following the contributions of the shame management framework, Harris and colleagues (2004) suggest that when conferences are successful, offenders seek to resolve emotions, such as feelings of shame, through reparation in the restorative ritual, especially if the offender experiences support and gestures of reacceptance along the restorative meeting. Thus, offenders accept their shame and seek to resolve the unpleasant feeling by taking responsibility for the suffering and offering ways to repair the harm.

In general, scholarship and practice suggest that interacting with victims in restorative conferences is central to the offender's experience of empathy, shame, and responsibility. However, not all restorative conferences have the same level of victim participation. Indeed,

some RJ programs have included variations in the type of communication with the direct victims and the type of victims present.

Victim Presence Variations

Face-to-face victim-offender dialogue has been considered the ideal procedure in RJ practices (Umbreit et al., 2007), with the assumption that direct contact between offenders and victims facilitates positive offender outcomes (Taft, 2000; Miller & Hefner, 2015). Moreover, the purist RJ perspective considers victim participation a major requirement for having a fully restorative process (McCold, 2000; Gray, 2005; Wood & Suzuki, 2016). Although victim presence is theoretically associated with offenders' experience of empathy and remorse (Miller & Hefner, 2015), research indicates that RJ interventions with lower or null levels of victim participation (indirect mediation, RJ meeting without victim) are still more effective in reducing recidivism than traditional court procedures (Bouffard et al., 2017). While most research has examined how face-to-face RJ programs reduce recidivism—with most demonstrating promising results (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007; Latimer et al., 2005), others have examined the effects of victim presence on other restorative outcomes. Specifically, Scheuerman & Keith (2015) found that offenders' perceptions of procedural justice (PJ) and reintegrative shaming (RS) were negatively associated with victim presence in the restorative conferences.

Empirical evidence on the use of surrogate victims in RJ procedures has been limited; however, in practice, it seems to be an increasing type of variation in RJ programs (Blankley & Caldwell-Jiménez, 2019; Umbreit et al., 2001; O'Mahony & Doak, 2004). A surrogate victim is generally defined as an individual who has experienced actual harm, but not by the offender who participates in the process (Umbreit et al., 2007). Surrogates are commonly associated with Victim Impact Panels (VIP), also called surrogate impact panels (Kerrigan & Mankowski, 2020).

This type of RJ intervention involves bringing together victims and offenders that are not related by the same crime, but who have committed or experienced similar offenses (Van Ness & Strong, 1997). An important difference between the surrogate impact panels and other RJ practices, such as conferencing, is that panels are not focused on addressing a specific crime or harm involving individuals from the same incident, nor do panels result in reparation agreements intended to repair the victims (Kerrigan & Mankowski, 2020). However, the use of surrogate victims has been extended to other RJ practices such as VOM (Umbreit et al., 2001) and conferencing (Blankley & Caldwell-Jimenez, 2019; O'Mahony & Doak, 2004).

In VOM and restorative conferencing, the use of surrogates has become an increasing alternative when victims decline participation. Studies have shown that around 40 - 60 % of victims chose to participate in VOM and conferencing when they are offered the opportunity (Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Umbreit et al., 2004; Bolivar, 2013). However, a significant proportion of victims still chose not to participate, and programs should ensure victims do not feel pressured to participate (Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Bolivar, 2013). Victims choose not to participate for a variety of reasons. Studies have found reasons associated with the meeting itself (i.e., negative evaluation of the potential meeting; Umbreit et al., 2004), the offender (i.e., being afraid of the offender or tend to perceive more negatively; Bolivar, 2013), the victim's characteristics and self-related concerns (i.e., self-image, being afraid of not being able to cope with the meeting; Bolivar, 2013), the victim-offender relationship (i.e., victims of unknown offenders tend to present lower perceptions of damage and better perceptions of the offender than victims of known offenders; Vanfraechem et al., 2015; Bolivar et al., 2013), and the context (i.e., reactions of significant others or supporters; Wemmers and Cyr, 2005; Umbreit et al., 2004).

The use of surrogates in VOM and conferencing has been primarily documented in juvenile programs (Umbreit et al., 2001; Blankley & Caldwell-Jimenez, 2019; O'Mahony & Doak, 2004); however, it does not appear to be associated with lower victim willingness to participate in processes involving juveniles. Indeed, qualitative research suggests that in cases involving a juvenile offender, victims might be more willing to participate as they see the offender's actions as a consequence of their lack of awareness or carelessness, stemming from their age (Van Camp, 2017). A greater availability of research documenting the use of surrogates on juvenile restorative programs may be because programs, especially those using conferencing, are mostly facilitated with juvenile offenders, as opposed to adult offenders (Van Camp, 2017; Umbreit et al., 2004).

While some research has examined the use of surrogates in RJ practices, these studies have been limited in methodology. Using observational methods with a small sample of 17 cases, O'Mahony and Doak (2004) evaluated a police-led juvenile conferencing program in Northern Ireland. The program used variations in victim presence that included a surrogate victim, non-victim presence (i.e., a letter or report of the victim's experience from the facilitator), and the actual victim. Results suggest that surrogate victim presence had a higher impact on offenders' outcomes than non-victim presence. Using experimental methods with college students that varied the type of victim presence (direct, surrogate, ambiguous), Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam (2015) tested participants' perceptions of an offender's subjective experience of offering an apology and the quality of the apology. Apologies offered to surrogate victims were rated as higher in remorse, with more potential for dispute resolution, than those displayed in the direct and ambiguous victim conditions. Also, apologies in the surrogate condition were evaluated as communicating more guilt acceptance than those given in the ambiguous victim condition.

Surrogate Victims Variations

The surrogate process appears to vary widely and is not well-documented. Based on the few programs that have documented the use of surrogates in VOM and VYC, surrogate victims can be community members that act as indirect victims, program staff volunteers (Umbreit et al., 2001), trained volunteers (O'Mahony & Doak, 2004; Blankley & Caldwell Jimenez, 2019), or even former youth offenders who are trained to act as surrogate victims (Blankley & Caldwell Jimenez, 2019). Similar to the variations in victim presence, the different types of surrogate victims may have a distinct impact on the restorative process. Surrogates who have experienced similar offenses to the actual victim or are more similar in demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and race may bring a more accurate representation of the actual victim and increase empathy (Blankley, 2020).

The Current Study

The current research examines the effects of using surrogate victims in victim-youth conferencing (VYC) programs. Drawing from the Reintegrative Shaming Theory (RST; Braithwaite, 1989) and the shame management framework (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2012; Harris et al., 2004), we examined the reparation process, and whether agreements were reached at similar rates when actual victims participated, as compared to surrogates. Research on RST and shame management, suggest that the presence of victims in restorative conferences may trigger the offender's experience of empathy and shame, which in turn, facilitates shame acknowledgment through reparation (Harris et al., 2004). Thus, we expect that youth meeting the actual victim would be more likely to propose or accept more reparation terms in an agreement and more likely to complete them. Similarly, as reparation can be perceived by offenders as a way to solve their feelings of shame (Harris et al., 2004), and any positive act intended to repair

the victim would be seen as an indicator of acknowledging responsibility (Sharpe, 2013), we hypothesize that those youth who are willing to accept or propose more terms will also be more likely to complete them because they are driven by their motivation to acknowledge shame, despite the fact that completing more terms might be more difficult. Additionally, our study explores the influence of matching the age of surrogate victims to the actual victims on reparation outcomes. As a surrogate who is similar to the actual victim would facilitate a more empathetic experience for the offender (Blankley, 2020), we expect that when a surrogate was used, and the surrogate's age group matched the actual victim's age group, there would be a greater number of terms agreed and youth would be more likely to complete them, than when the age groups did not match.

Method

Participants

The final sample consisted of 205 pre-adjudicated juveniles who participated in VYC conducted through one of four mediation centers in a large Midwestern State between September 2018 and March 2020. Although 232 juveniles were referred for VYC during the study period, 27 juveniles (12%) were not included in the final sample; the reasons included that the youth was "unreachable," the referral source requested that the case be returned, or the data indicated that no reparation agreement was necessary.

Mediation Centers

Youth participated in VYC in one of four mediation centers that receive state grant funding to conduct VYC with pre-adjudicated juveniles. Most juveniles participated in VYC at mediation center 4 (86 %; $n = 176$), followed by mediation center 2 (9%; $n = 18$), mediation center 1 (4.4%; $n = 9$), and mediation center 3 (1%; $n = 2$). Mediation centers 3 and 4 are both

located in larger urban/suburban counties; however, mediation center 3 only recently started receiving grant funded referrals for pre-adjudicated juveniles and thus have fewer cases.

Mediation centers 1 and 2 are both located in rural counties and take referrals from several surrounding rural counties.

In this state, local mediation centers fall under the jurisdiction of a statewide Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR), statutorily created to handle disputes that end up in the court system (divorce, custody, employment issues, law violations). The state's Supreme Court appoints members to the ODR Advisory Council, who in turn oversee the activities of the office. Importantly, ODR collaborates with six non-profit ODR-approved mediation centers (i.e., two were not grant funded at the time of data collection), allowing for uniform training and availability of alternative dispute processes, even in rural locations. As part of receiving state grant funding, mediation center staff enter data for each youth served into the Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS), a statewide data entry system that utilizes common definitions across programs, developed by the first and third authors.

At each of these mediation centers, surrogates may be used in place of the actual victim. Surrogates are volunteers who typically have experience as a victim or work in a field where they interact with victims regularly (i.e., child advocates). Surrogates undergo training prior to participating in a VYC. Where possible, the mediation centers attempt to match surrogates based on the age of the actual victim. For instance, if the actual victim is another juvenile, they attempt to use a surrogate of similar age (i.e., another teenager). When a juvenile surrogate is not available or possible, the mediation centers will utilize an adult surrogate.

Measures

Within the JCMS, program staff entered basic demographics, referral information, and outcomes for each case.

Type of Victim Present

Program staff entered information about the conference, including whether there was a surrogate victim or actual victim, and the type of surrogate or actual victim (adult, youth or community). Each mediation center determines the type of victim to participate in the conference. For example, when the offense involves a community victim such as a public space, public institution or organization, then a member of the community who was directly affected served as the community victim. A community surrogate is someone who served as a surrogate to a community victim, but was not directly affected by the crime or delinquent act.

Surrogate Age Group Alignment

In cases where a surrogate was utilized, we further coded those cases for surrogate age group alignment. Specifically, we created a variable that captured whether the surrogate and actual victim age group matched (i.e., adult or juvenile). When the actual victim and surrogate age groups aligned, we coded it as 1, when they did not align it was coded as 0.

Reparation Agreements

For each case, program staff indicated whether a reparation agreement was reached (yes or no). If an agreement was reached, staff also entered the terms of the agreement and whether the reparation agreement was fulfilled: yes, partially, or no. An agreement was considered successfully fulfilled if all of the terms were completed, partially fulfilled if more than half of the terms were met, and unsuccessfully fulfilled if less than half of the terms were met.

Results

Participants included 113 males (55%) and 92 females (45%), ranging from ages 11 to 18 ($M = 14.62$, $SD = 1.59$). With respect to race/ethnicity, approximately 48% of the sample was White ($n = 98$), 23% was Black ($n = 47$), 13% was Hispanic/Latino ($n = 27$), and 16% indicated

other or more than one race/ethnicity ($n = 33$). Most youth were referred to VYC by their school (63%; $n = 129$) and the remaining from a juvenile diversion program (37%; $n = 76$). The most common reason for referral was assaultive behaviors (65%; $n = 134$), followed by disorderly conduct (17%; $n = 39$), property crimes (8%; $n = 17$), and other reasons such as disruptive behaviors, conflict with another student/verbal altercation, or criminal mischief (5%; $n = 11$).

Overall, a surrogate or actual victim was present in 98% of the cases ($n = 201$), and in the remaining 4 cases, only an informal meeting was held with the juvenile and a family member or support person, and there was no victim present. Of the cases that included a conference with a victim, 84% of the cases ($n = 168$) utilized a surrogate, while the actual victim participated in 16% of cases ($n = 33$). Table 1 displays the frequency for each type of surrogate or actual victim. Overall, cases were most likely to use a youth surrogate (50.7%), followed by an adult surrogate (26.9%), an actual victim (14.4%), a community surrogate (6.0%), and an actual community victim (2.0%).

[Table 1 here]

In most of the cases where a surrogate victim participated, the surrogate and victim age group matched (72%, $n = 129$), with the remaining cases having a mismatch between the actual victim's age group and the surrogate's age group (28%, $n = 50$). In cases with a mismatch in age group, most of the cases included an adult surrogate taking the place of a youth actual victim ($n = 46$), with the remaining 4 cases involving a youth surrogate taking the place of an adult actual victim.

In 99% of the conferences that occurred, the youth and victim or surrogate were able to reach a reparation agreement with terms for how the youth offender would repair the harm caused. Reparation agreements had a range of 1 to 4 specific terms per agreement ($M = 1.91$, SD

=.75). An apology was the most common activity within the reparation agreement, listed as a term in 73% ($n = 150$) of the reparation agreements reached. Community service was included in 28% of agreements ($n = 57$), and restitution in 7% of agreements ($n = 1$). Approximately 63% ($n = 129$) of agreements included “other” requirements, which included activities like requesting the youth write a reflection statement, a personal action plan, or that the youth participate in a decision-making class. In 9% of cases ($n = 19$), information of the specific goals of the reparation agreement were missing. In examining reparation agreement outcomes that had outcome data, approximately 59% of the youth completed all of the goals set forth in their reparation agreement ($n = 121$), 16% did not complete the goals in their agreement ($n = 34$), and 15% partially completed ($n = 31$).

Bivariate Analysis

Using Chi Square analysis, we tested whether the type of victim present was associated with the number of reparation agreement terms $X^2(3) = 8.48, p = .04, \eta = .22$. Table 2 displays the frequency for the number of terms for each victim type. Overall, reparation agreements with an actual victim tended to result in fewer reparation terms. Specifically, 48% of actual victim conferences resulted in a single reparation term whereas 26% of surrogate victim conferences resulted in a single reparation term. On the other hand, 28% of actual victim conferences resulted in two reparation terms, whereas 55% of surrogate victim conferences resulted in two reparation terms. There were no differences for three or four reparation terms. Notably, only conferences with a surrogate resulted in four terms.

[Table 2 here]

Next, we tested whether surrogate age group alignment was associated with the number of reparation agreement terms $X^2(3) = 11.42, p = .01, \eta = .26$. Table 3 displays the frequency for the

number of terms for surrogate victim age group alignment. Similar to patterns revealed when comparing victim type presence, there were no differences in age group alignment for whether the reparation agreement had three or four terms. There were, however, differences for having a reparation agreement with one and two terms. Specifically, when the surrogate age group is aligned, the conferences had more reparation agreements with two terms than when they did not align. And when the surrogate age group did not align, the conferences had more reparation agreements with one term than when they aligned.

[Table 3 here]

Logistic Regressions

Lastly, we estimated two logistic regressions to predict whether youth completed their reparation agreement, which was recoded into a binary variable, such that youth who completed all terms were coded as 1 and youth who did not complete or partially completed were coded as 0. The first model included whether victim type present at the conference (surrogate or actual) and number of reparation agreement terms contributed to agreement completion. The model statistically predicted reparation agreement completion $X^2(4) = 27.79, p < .001, r^2 = .14$ and correctly classified 72% of the cases. Both number of terms and victim type significantly predicted completing the reparation agreement. Contrary to our hypotheses that youth who agreed to more reparation terms would be more likely to complete them, conferences with two, three, and four terms had a lower probability of completing the reparation agreement than those with one term. Also contrary to our hypothesis, victim youth conferences with a surrogate victim (coded as 2) had a higher probability of completing their reparation agreement, than conferences with actual victims (coded as 1), while controlling for the number of terms.

[Table 4 here]

[Table 5 here]

The second model included whether surrogate age group alignment and the number of reparation agreement terms contributed to agreement completion. The model statistically predicted reparation agreement completion $\chi^2(4) = 20.72, p < .001, r^2 = .12$ and correctly classified 73% of the cases. In this model, only the number of terms significantly predicted completion, but the surrogate age group alignment did not. Again, conferences with two, three, and four terms had a lower probability of completing the reparation agreement than those with one term.

Discussion

These results support previous research suggesting that RJ interventions with lower levels of victim participation are effective (Bouffard et al., 2017; Saulnier & Sivasubramanian, 2015). Although RJ effectiveness is usually measured in terms of recidivism outcomes, restorative outcomes such as the quality of interactions and the ability to reach a reparation agreement inform the success of a restorative process (Sherman et al., 2005; Kenney & Clairmont, 2009). Our results showed a positive impact of the use of surrogate victims on youth's reparation outcomes, suggesting that the use of surrogates is a promising strategy to expand RJ implementation. This is a very important finding for restorative programs, where the gold standard has been actual victim presence. This is also an important finding for youth who have wanted to engage in the process, but the victim is not willing or able.

However, our findings indicate that conferences with a surrogate victim had a higher probability of completing their reparation agreement than conferences with actual victims, even after controlling for the number of terms. This finding adds to an emerging body of research

showing better outcomes in RJ processes that have less actual victim participation (Bouffard et al., 2017) and variations in the type of victim present (Saulnier & Sivasubramaniam, 2015).

Although perhaps contrary to what we may intuitively think about the importance of using actual victims, the positive effects of surrogate victims on restorative outcomes is an important, and increasingly common, finding among the few studies looking at the effects of different types of victim presence. Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam (2015) found that apologies offered to surrogate victims were rated as higher in quality than those offered to the direct victim. Specifically, apologies delivered to surrogate victims were rated greater in remorse and potential for dispute resolution than those offered to direct victims; indicating perhaps, that potential emotional responses to meeting with the actual victim (fear, defensiveness, anxiety) may outweigh the internal change we hope youthful offenders undergo through the process (understanding, remorse, empathy, vulnerability). In agreement with RST (Braithwaite, 1989), conferences with actual victims may be more likely to involve disapproval toward the youth as is the case with stigmatic shaming (Harris et al., 2004), as compared to a surrogate who may just disapprove of the delinquent act, in accordance with reintegrative shaming (Ahmed et al., 2001; Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 2001). This pattern sheds light on the normative interactional dynamics of RJ and the victims' role in fostering offenders' shame (Scheuerman & Keith, 2015; Maruna et al., 2007) and its consequent impact on restorative outcomes, such as reparation agreements. Research exploring differences in emotional responses and the offenders' experience of shame, under different victim presence conditions, may provide insight into the debate on shame and shaming in RJ procedures (Van Stokkom, 2002; Maruna et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2004).

Another explanation for why VYC with surrogates may contribute to more reparation terms is that surrogates are trained, and actual victims may not undergo training. As such, they may learn techniques for developing reparation agreements and engaging youth offenders during the conference that untrained actual victims may not inherently possess. Furthermore, training may allow surrogates to more fully express forgiveness and reacceptance of the youth into the community.

In terms of recidivism outcomes, Bouffard et al., (2017) compared RJ interventions with different levels of victim participation (direct mediation, indirect mediation, and no-victim contact) and found that those participating in direct mediation (mediation with actual victim) reoffended more quickly than youth in RJ interventions with lower levels of victim participation (indirect mediation and no-victim contact). Aligned with these previous findings, our research suggests that the use of surrogates has a greater impact on youth's reparation outcomes than those with the direct victim; however, we did not examine long term outcomes beyond the VYC reparation agreement. In general, additional research is needed, examining the circumstances under which surrogates demonstrate better outcomes for juvenile offenders in both the short and long term. Do our findings extend only to completion of the reparation agreement, or will surrogate victims also be associated with lower recidivism?

Our results also show that the surrogate age group alignment may play a role in the number of terms that victims and offenders agree upon, which in turn, influences successful completion. These findings can inform programs on whether they should work to find surrogates with characteristics similar to the victim. Future research should explore other types of alignments, such as whether the surrogates experienced similar offenses to the actual victim or are similar in other aspects such as gender, race, or ethnicity. Finally, further research examining

the effects of different victim presence conditions on offenders' empathy and the effects of actual and surrogate victims' alignments (i.e., age, gender, race, and ethnicity) on empathy is recommended. This research area is essential, not only for the development of best practices in using surrogates in RJ programs, but also for expanding the understanding of the psychological mechanisms and emotional dynamics in RJ.

Limitations

Our findings suggest that the use of surrogates is a promising strategy to expand the implementation of restorative justice practices, when victim participation is not possible. However, we had limited demographic data on actual victims. It may be that age alignment was in fact muted by gender, racial or ethnic alignment. In addition, we did not have measures of whether the youth had reoffended because insufficient time had passed (i.e., some youth had just completed the RJ conference). Research examining the impact of this RJ variation on restorative outcomes should be extended to include recidivism rates and the types of subsequent law violations.

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Table 1. Frequencies for Surrogate Victims and Actual Victims

	Frequency	Percent
Surrogate Victim Conference		
Adult Surrogate	54	26.9 %
Youth Surrogate	102	50.7 %
Community Surrogate	12	6.0 %
Actual Victim Conference		
Victim	29	14.4 %
Community Victim	4	2.0 %
Total	201	100.0 %

Table 2. Frequency of the Number of Reparation Agreement Terms by Victim Type Present

Victim Type	Number of Reparation Terms			
	1	2	3	4
Actual Victim	48.0% ^a	28.0% ^a	24.0% ^a	0.0% ^a
Surrogate Victim	26.1% ^b	55.4% ^b	15.3% ^a	3.2% ^a

Note. matching superscript denotes that differences between victim type present do not differ at $p < .05$.

Table 3. Frequency of the Number of Reparation Agreement Terms by Surrogate Age Alignment

Age Alignment	Number of Reparation Terms			
	1	2	3	4
Alignment	23.1% ^a	61.2% ^a	12.4% ^a	3.3% ^a
No Alignment	44.2% ^b	32.6% ^b	20.9% ^a	2.3% ^a

Note. matching superscript denotes that differences between surrogate age alignment do not differ at $p < .05$.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Predicting Completion of Reparation Agreement with Victim Type and Number of Reparation Agreement Terms

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Constant	0.71	0.49	0.15	2.03		
Number of Terms						
Two	-0.96	0.44	0.03	0.38	0.16	0.91
Three	-2.43	0.55	<.001	0.09	0.03	0.26
Four	-2.16	1.00	0.03	0.12	0.02	0.81
Victim Type Present	1.05	0.5	0.04	2.86	1.07	7.61

Note. Having one term in the reparation agreement was the comparison group; victim type present was coded as 1 = actual victim and 2 = surrogate victim.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Predicting Completion of Reparation Agreement with Surrogate Age Group Alignment and Number of Reparation Agreement Terms

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Constant	1.39	0.46	<.001	4.02		
Number of Terms						
Two	-1.11	0.49	0.02	0.33	0.13	0.86
Three	-2.32	0.60	<.001	0.10	0.03	0.32
Four	-2.33	1.02	0.02	0.10	0.01	0.72
Alignment	0.65	0.42	0.12	1.92	0.84	4.38

Note. Having one term in the reparation agreement was the comparison group; surrogate age group alignment was coded as 0 = no alignment and 1 = alignment.