

Johnson County Juvenile Community Corrections Programming Overview Directory



Program Name: Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)

Prevention

Intervention

Diversion

Re-Entry

Program Information

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) will serve both pre and post adjudicated youth males and females, between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age. The MRT program targets high-risk youth who are resistant to treatment and unresponsive to traditional consequences. Participants will be identified and referred to the program through two primary pathways:

Problem-Solving Court Referral:

Youth who are already involved in Problem-Solving Court and are in the later stages of the program (phase four or five) may be referred. In these phases, individuals are required to engage in a self-help group. MRT fulfills this requirement while also helping participants develop moral reasoning skills, ensuring they are prepared to make positive life changes.

Court Recommendation by Probation Officers:

Youth identified as moderate or high-risk through the Indiana Youth Assessment System (IYAS) and placed on formal probation may be referred to MRT upon court recommendation. To qualify, youth must meet the following criteria, scoring in the moderate or high risk within the following domains:

- Juvenile Justice History
- Peer & Social Support
- Substance Abuse/Personality & Mental Health
- Values/Beliefs & Attitudes

Once a probation officer identifies a youth meeting these criteria, a requirement will be entered into Quest and then reviewed by the Licensed Mental Health Specialist for final approval. The specialist will determine if the youth is an appropriate candidate for the program

Agency: Johnson County Juvenile Community Corrections

Day and Time: Tuesdays; 5:00pm until 7:00pm

Number of Weeks: 16, or until completion of each step.

Frequency Offered: Continuously

Location: The Dickinson Juvenile Justice Center

1121 Hospital Road Franklin, Indiana 46131

Cost: There is no cost associated with this program.

Curriculum: Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) is a systematic, cognitive-behavioral, step-by-step treatment approach designed to enhance self-image, foster the development of a positive and productive identity, and promote higher levels of moral reasoning. MRT uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques to help participants understand themselves and live in alignment with their authentic values and principles.

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This group-based program focuses on teaching individuals how to adopt rules and structure by breaking old habits and creating new, healthier ones. MRT emphasizes choice and personal responsibility, with the ultimate goals of reducing recidivism and improving overall well-being.

The program's expectations are clear, consistent, and tailored to each participant's progress through the structured steps. These expectations are outlined from the beginning and reiterated throughout the open group format. Each step in the program has specific tasks and activities that must be completed correctly and thoroughly before progressing to the next step.

If an individual fails to meet the expectations of a specific step, they must repeat it until it is completed successfully. Commonly repeated steps are Steps 1, 2 and 3. Additionally, if participants deviate from the principles of earlier steps while further along in the program, they will be required to revisit and repeat the step they fell short on.

For example, if a participant is on Step 4 (raising awareness) admits during group discussions that they lied to a family member, they would need to return to Step 1 and complete its activities again. After doing so, they could return to Step 4. This process reinforces accountability and consistency in living according to moral reasoning.

The steps are outlined in the workbook *How to Escape Your Prison* by Dr. Gregory L. Little and Dr. Kenneth D. Robinson. Each youth required to complete the program will receive this workbook. The MRT-certified therapist will guide the group using the Facilitator's Handbook and their specialized training. Importantly, MRT is not a feelings-based or processing group but focuses on identifying and reinforcing positive behaviors while providing direct and blunt feedback to ensure adherence to expectations.

MRT is a curriculum-based program developed by Correctional Counseling, Inc. The workbook *How to Escape Your Prison – Juvenile MRT* serves as the core resource for youth participants.

While family engagement is essential in many aspects of youth programming, it plays a specific role in MRT. Family members are encouraged to provide support, encouragement, and understanding to help the youth succeed. Additionally, family involvement is particularly important during Steps 6 and 9, which require participants to complete a total of 20 hours of community service (10 hours per step). Family members may assist with transportation, brainstorming service ideas, or providing support to help the youth meet this requirement.

Although MRT does not rely directly on community partnerships, collaboration with various stakeholders—such as court services, probation, and community corrections—is vital to the success of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. These partnerships support youth across all aspects of their rehabilitation journey.

Format: Classroom, Virtual, Hybrid, etc.

Instructor Contact Information

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