

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

VICTIM-OFFENDER GROUPS

by

Sandy Prokopiw

A THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

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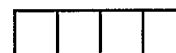
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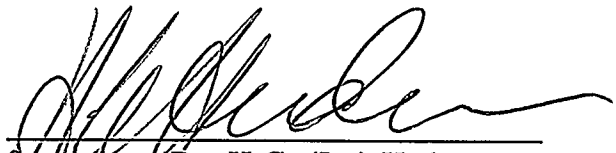
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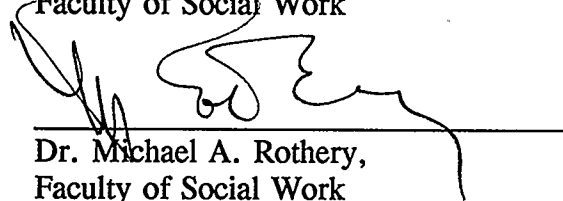
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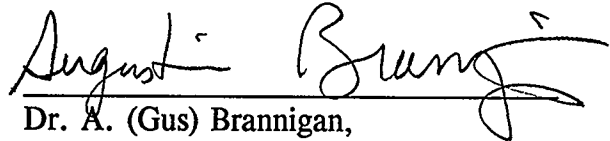
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ABSTRACT

Victims of crime and offenders need opportunities to interact, help victims deal with the victimization and enable offenders to accept responsibility. The victim-offender groups established at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre aimed at achieving these objectives.

Two program sequences were run, each consisting of five 2-3 hour sessions. Session content included information on the youth justice system and the Young Offender Centre as well as on victim services; one session was devoted to victim and offender dialogue.

Outcome measures show that victims and offenders found the information useful, however offenders in the experimental groups did not indicate more responsibility for their actions than offenders in the control groups. It is recommended that the victim-offender program continue with the addition of more joint sessions and more focused content which deals more directly with themes of individual responsibility for actions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This project has two components. First, an action component, the design and implementation of a victim-offender program for young offenders. The aims of the program are to provide an opportunity for victims and young offenders to meet and receive general information about the youth justice system and share their thoughts and feelings about experiences as offenders and victims. The second project component involves designing and conducting evaluation research on the victim-offender program. This entails pre- and post-tests for the offenders as well as post measures on victims and offenders about their views of the program.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical background of the study, and reviews pertinent literature concerning key elements of the program, including crime victims and their needs, victim-offender programs, and group work. The theoretical framework for this study is based on Gresham Sykes and David Matza's Neutralization Theory (1957), developed to explain how delinquents justify their law violations. Sykes and Matza call justifications of deviant behaviour "Techniques of Neutralization," which once learned, are instrumental in the juvenile becoming delinquent. Five major techniques are identified: Denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. Sykes and Matza deal specifically with the notion of victim denial for property offences.

Also reviewed in Chapter 2 is literature on the needs of victims of property offences. This literature shows that victims may feel left out of, or require additional information about, the criminal justice process. It also suggests that victims may benefit from meeting offenders. The basis for this is that such meetings provide an opportunity

for victims to challenge stereotypes they have of offenders, and deal with feelings of hurt and anger that have arisen as a result of the property crime.

Victim-offender programs operate throughout the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada, involving victims and offenders prior to charges being laid for an offence, prior to sentencing, and as part of a court disposition, usually probation. There are essentially two types of victim-offender programs; those where victims meet with their own offenders individually or in groups, and those where non-related victims and offenders meet in groups. The former are known as Victim-Offender Reconciliation Programs (VORP), while the latter are often referred to as Face-to-Face or Victims and Offenders in Conciliation (VOIC).

Because this project includes groups of offenders in a secure custody setting, pertinent literature on groups in correctional settings is discussed. Groups vary in length from a single session to open-ended groups lasting 6 months or more, and victim-offender groups fall into the area of short-term groups.

Steps involved in designing the victim-offender program are outlined in Chapter 3. In this program design work, literature on existing programs was reviewed and discussions held with individuals involved in victim and offender programming. Prior to implementation, final approval for the victim-offender program was obtained from the Department of Justice, Correctional Services Division, Young Offender Branch, and the Edmonton Police Service.

Chapter 4 moves to a discussion of the method used to collect and analyze data on the victim-offender groups. An experimental design was used, with random

assignment to experimental and control groups of offenders, with pre- and post-tests administered to the offenders. Richard Ball's Neutralization Scale (1973) was used. This scale was constructed by Ball to test Sykes and Matza's theory that delinquents use the techniques of neutralization. Designed as an operational measure of neutralization, the scale amounts to 40 questions based on specific offence situations. Questionnaires were also administered to victims and offenders following the last session of the group. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine what victims and offenders liked or disliked about the group. Their comments show that the groups were informative, and indicate ways in which they could be improved.

Each program sequence covered five 2-3 hour sessions. Two program sequences were run, one in August, 1992, the other in October, 1992. Process recordings were completed for each program sequence, providing details on the number of participants, activities and themes discussed in the sessions, and a discussion of the interactions in each session. The process recordings for each program sequence are found in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study. Demographic characteristics of the victim and offender participants are summarized. For victims, information is provided on age and gender. For offenders, information is provided on age, gender, ethnicity, and number of property-related offenses for which the young offender had been convicted. The results of the pre- and post-tests and questionnaire responses are summarized along with the significance of the pre- and post-test measures on Ball's Neutralization Scale. This measure was analyzed using a paired t-test for pre- and post-test measures, and analysis of co-variance to compare groups on the post-test.

Most generally, members of the victim-offender groups had positive responses to the post-test. The results of the pre- and post-test measures for offenders show no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The theoretical and practical implications of the project are discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the theoretical background of the project. Several delinquency theories are discussed and compared to Sykes and Matza's theory. Also included is a discussion of victim needs and how victim-offender groups are held to be of benefit. Types of victim-offender programs are then discussed.

THEORIES OF DELINQUENCY

Mawby and Gill (1987) note that recent texts on criminology and deviance illustrate the extent to which criminology's origins are offender focused. The authors state that most post war theories virtually ignore the victim (Mawby & Gill, p. 22). The exception is the work of Sykes and Matza (1957), who, in their article, "Techniques of Neutralization" identify denial of the victim as one of five techniques that delinquents use to justify law violations. Agnew (1990) states that the differences between three general explanations of delinquency: strain theory, subcultural deviance theory, and rational choice theory, are important in terms of program and policy development. If delinquency is to be controlled, it is necessary to know the extent to which delinquent acts are committed in response to negative events, pressure or influence from others, or advantageous situations (Agnew, p. 245). Programs can then be designed that attempt to get the delinquent to act or respond differently in a given situation, such as thinking about the victim prior to committing the delinquent act.

Agnew relates the origins of specific delinquent acts or events to strain theory, subcultural deviance theory, and rational choice theory. Strain theory focuses on the frustration engendered in the young person because of the inability to achieve future

goals, specifically the long-term goals of monetary or middle-class status by using legitimate channels. Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) theory of differential opportunity views lower-class boys as having a value commitment to success, which is measured in material terms (Gibbons & Krohn, 1991, p. 127). These boys do not necessarily want to become part of the middle-class, which means disrupting their current associations, but they so want higher status in terms of their current position (Gibbons & Krohn, p. 126). Another part of this theory addresses the differences in access to both legitimate and illegitimate opportunities for success (Gibbons & Krohn, p. 126).

Subcultural Deviance Theory in contrast, deals with internalization of values brought about through association with deviant others. Association with delinquents leads the adolescent to adopt delinquent values that in turn lead to delinquent behaviour. As an example, Miller (1958) argues that delinquent behaviour may not necessarily be a reaction to strain or rebellion against middle-class standards, but is the result of patterns of conduct acquired from the lower class culture itself (Tojanowicz & Morash, p. 56).

The third type of theory, rational-choice theory, focuses on an individual's evaluations of the costs and benefits in a particular situation (Agnew, p. 274). In this case, "a suitably predisposed individual is likely to engage in crime to the extent that these benefits are seen to outweigh the costs" (Agnew, p. 274). In questionnaires administered to 1395 delinquents, Agnew classified the explanations delinquents offer for their offences, noting the number of responses relating to each theory type. Fourteen delinquent offences, including assault, a variety of property crimes, and drug-related offences were listed in the questionnaire. Participants were asked to choose from

responses relating to the commission of the particular delinquent acts, and responses were characterized according to the above three theoretical explanations. Agnew tested the assumptions that, if strain theory is correct, delinquents would list some negative event as leading up to the delinquent act; if subcultural deviance theory is correct, delinquents would mention pressure or influence from others and if the rational choice perspective is correct, delinquents would state that they committed the offence because it was advantageous (Agnew, p. 276).

Agnew found that 60% of the explanations for property crime fell into the category of advantageous situations while explanations were seldom retaliation or revenge, as was the case with violent acts (Agnew, p. 283). The significance of Agnew's study is that it provides support for rational choice theory with respect to delinquents committing property-related offences.

These theoretical explanations have been included to illustrate the differences between theories which attempt to explain delinquency as a function of membership in a group or part of a class structure and the situational explanation of delinquency. In designing and implementing a victim-offender program, it is appropriate to use a theory which is not just offender focused, but which also addresses the offender's view of the victim. In addition it is appropriate to consider the way the offender thinks about the victim and whether this influences the committing of a property crime.

The work of Sykes and Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization" addresses the offender's perception of the victim as a factor in the decision to commit a crime, suggesting that the victim as an abstract entity, particularly in the case of property crime,

where the victim is physically absent, helps the offender to neutralize behaviour (Sykes & Matza, p. 221). After participating in a victim-offender program, and meeting and hearing from victims, offenders may think about how their crimes have affected the victims.

Sykes and Matza argue that the moral values of delinquents are fundamentally similar to those of non-delinquents. According to Minor (1981)

The distinguishing feature is that delinquents are able to excuse or justify their delinquent behaviour in the light of particular circumstances. The techniques of neutralization described by Sykes and Matza are said to temporarily remove the inhibitions of conventional morality, thus enabling delinquent actions (Minor, p. 295).

In Sykes and Matza's view, the delinquent "represents not a radical opposition to law-abiding society but something more like an apologetic failure, more sinned against than sinning in his own eyes" (Sykes & Matza, p. 223). Sykes and Matza argue that

Much delinquency is based on what is essentially an unrecognized extension of defenses to crimes, in the form of justifications for deviance that are seen as valid by the delinquent but not by the legal system or society at large (Sykes & Matza, p. 222).

Sykes and Matza believe that the delinquent conforms, at least in part, to the values held by the rest of society, but excuses or justifies delinquent acts using five major techniques:

1. *Denial of responsibility.* Using this rationalization, the delinquent defines himself as lacking in responsibility for his actions, and extends this into forces beyond his control such as unloving parents (Sykes & Matza, p. 223).
2. *Denial of injury.* This technique deals with denying harm involved in the delinquent act. For example, car theft may be viewed by the delinquent as

"borrowing," or stealing from a business as theft from someone who can afford it.

3. *Denial of the victim.* Even if the delinquent is willing to accept responsibility, and admit that his actions caused injury or hurt, the existence of the victim may be denied or the victim perceived as someone deserving of hurt (Sykes & Matza, p. 225). When the victim is physically absent, unknown, or a vague abstraction, as is often the case in delinquent acts committed against property, the awareness of the victim's existence is weakened (Sykes & Matza, p. 225). The authors state that

There is much evidence that juvenile delinquents often draw a sharp line between those who can be victimized and those who cannot. Certain social groups are not to be viewed as "fair game" in the performance of supposedly approved delinquent acts while others warrant a variety of attacks. In general, the potentiality for victimization would seem to be a function of the social distance between the juvenile delinquent and others and thus we find implicit maxims in the world of the delinquent such as "don't steal from friends," or "don't commit vandalism against the church of your own faith"...The fact that supposedly valued behaviour tends to be directed against disvalued social groups hints that the "wrongfulness" of such delinquent behaviour is more widely recognized by delinquents than the literature has indicated (Sykes & Matza, p. 221).

4. *Condemnation of the condemners.* The delinquent attacks the motivations of others who criticize his behaviour (such as police, teachers, or parents). For example police are harassing him, teachers show favouritism, and parents are not perfect, so who are they to criticize his actions.

5. *Appeal to higher loyalties.* By sacrificing the demands of the larger society for the demands of the smaller social groups to which the delinquent belongs, he neutralizes internal or external controls (Sykes & Matza, p. 225). Sykes and Matza note that:

The delinquent does not necessarily repudiate the imperatives of the dominant normative system despite a failure to follow them. Rather, the delinquent may see him or herself as caught up in a dilemma that must be resolved, unfortunately, at the cost of violating the law (Sykes & Matza, p. 225).

NEEDS OF VICTIMS OF BREAK AND ENTER

Christie (1978) refers to conflicts between victims and offenders as a form of "property" which has been taken away by the justice system. Because offenders are not made available to meet with victims, "opportunity for participation in a personal confrontation of a very serious nature is lost" (Christie, p. 240). Groups of victims and offenders provide an opportunity for victims and offenders to recover such losses.

Lurigio and Resick (1990) show that victims of serious crimes suffer adverse effects as a result of the crime, including fear, anxiety, unpleasant thoughts and upset stomach. Such emotional consequences can be more disruptive than the loss of property or physical injury, which are commonly regarded as the most unsettling aspects of victimization (Lurigio & Resick, p. 50). Lurigio and Resick state that assault, burglary and robbery victims can develop a psychiatric disorder known as post-traumatic stress syndrome, which is defined by a persistent re-experiencing of a traumatic event through

intrusive memories and dreams and by a variety of anxiety-related symptoms (Lurigio & Resick, p. 51).

A number of authors, Priestly, (1970), Mawby and Gill (1987), Walklate (1989), and Lurigio and Resick (1990) discuss the reactions and problems of victims of crime in detail. Lurigio and Resick point out that:

Reactions to crime and other deleterious experiences are often quite varied. Hence it is important to study individual differences in response to criminal victimization. Researchers should eschew the client uniformity myth when examining crime victims' distress and adjustment. Indeed, findings support that victims of crime and other traumatic episodes manifest varying levels of distress and symptoms. Variability in victim recovery can be a function of victim characteristics and predispositions, the nature of the incident, the victim's perceptions and interpretations of the occurrence and interpretation of events that transpire in the aftermath of the crime (Lurigio & Resick, p. 51).

Mawby and Gill (1987) discuss the needs of crime victims based on data from the British Crime Survey, 1984. Practical, financial, and personal/emotional problems were cited by a large number of victims such as women, especially those divorced or separated, one-parent families, those living alone, elderly, and poor. These groups might be more in need of both support, and an opportunity to talk about how they have been affected by the crime (Mawby & Gill, p. 25).

In a study based on 322 interviews with victims of burglary between 1977 and 1979 in Britain, Maguire notes that victims were "angry, afraid, or emotionally upset" (Maguire, p. 126). Victims are described as being distrustful of strangers and struggling to recapture a lost sense of security.

Watson, Boucherat, and Davis (1989) state that victims would benefit from meeting offenders. Such a meeting would enable them to challenge stereotypes and

overcome some of the hurt, anger, and fear arising from the offence (Watson, Boucherat, & Davis, p. 215). Launay and Murray (1989) state that some victims are hesitant to engage in a face-to-face meeting with the offenders who actually committed the crime in their home, but feel more comfortable confronting an offender who may have committed a similar type of offence against another person.

TYPES OF VICTIM-OFFENDER PROGRAMS

With roots dating back to the late 1960s in both the United States and Canada, victim-offender mediation and reconciliation programs now exist in numerous jurisdictions. The value base for these programs was originally a religious one premised upon a biblical perspective that views crime as "a rupture or wound in the health of the community that needs to be healed" (Zehr, 1983, p. 340). The first priority is upon the relational aspects of crime; the attitudes, feelings and needs of both victim and offender must be taken seriously (Zehr, 1983, p. 341).

Victim-offender programs may be distinguished by their purpose and their place in the criminal justice process. Launay and Murray (1989), for example, divide victim-offender programs into two categories. First are those which bring victims together with their offenders, either individually or in groups, with a trained mediator. The purpose of these types of programs is for victims and offenders to share their feelings and concerns, and also to agree on some form of reparation, such as an apology, personal service, monetary compensation to the victim, and/or community service. These types of programs can operate prior to a charge being laid, prior to sentencing, or as a

condition of a court order such as probation. These programs are commonly known as "victim-offender mediation programs" or victim and offender reconciliation programs (VORP).

The second type of program involves unrelated victims and offenders. The purpose of this type of program is twofold: First, to address and reduce the fear and anger of victims by giving them an opportunity to question, confront, and get to know offenders, and second, to challenge the offender's justifications for their criminal behaviour by confronting them with the human consequences of crime (Launay & Murray, 1989, pp. 114-115). These programs are conducted post sentencing with both adult and juvenile offenders in community and institutional settings.

This chapter has set the stage for the project, by providing a broader context in which the victim-offender programs take place. The theoretical groups mentioned illustrate the complexity of delinquent behavior, and it is acknowledged that while an offender may be justifying delinquent acts as theorized by Sykes and Matza, there may also be factors such as associations with negative peers, a strong desire for monetary gain, or background of delinquents that may come into play. Similarly, it is important to remember that victims of crime deal with victimization in different ways, and not all victims are appropriate for, or want to participate in groups with offenders.

In the context of restorative responses to crime, the victim-offender program is designed to include those affected by the crime of break and enter in a response to the crime. This means providing offenders and victims who agree to participate in such a program to understand the crime and its impact.

CHAPTER 3: STEPS IN PROGRAM DESIGN

An initial task in designing a victim-offender program included reading in the areas of theories of delinquency, needs of crime victims, and restorative justice. These topics were discussed in the preceding chapter. Literature review was done on victim-offender programs and group work, and persons knowledgeable in the area of victim-offender contact were interviewed. A list of persons who have been involved in the design and implementation of victim-offender programs, and who were interviewed is found in Appendix 1.

From the interviews and literature review, information was obtained on participant selection, size and composition of groups, types of groups, as well as content and duration of each victim only and offender only and combined victim and offender sessions. Also obtained was information on problems to be anticipated in implementing the groups, including difficulties in obtaining victim participants, keeping joint sessions evenly focused, and dealing with hostile or emotionally upset participants. The use of this information is described in the following sections.

LENGTH AND CONTENT OF SESSIONS

Program descriptions of victim-offender meetings held at Her Majesty's Youth Custody Centre in Rochester, United Kingdom; Headingly Correctional Institution, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Saskatoon Correctional Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Devon Probation Service, Devon, United Kingdom; and Her Majesty's Penitentiary, St. John's Newfoundland; indicate that victim-offender groups operate over a period of 3-7 weeks and the programs run for 3-6 sessions. The individual sessions comprising these

programs are from 1-4 hours in length. Discussions with persons involved in recruiting participants for the victim-offender program in Calgary revealed that difficulties were encountered in getting victims to make a time commitment (B. Cook, personal communication, August 12, 1991; K. Pate, personal communication, March 3, 1992). Therefore, there must be enough sessions to deal with pertinent subject matter, but not so many that participants lose interest, or refuse to commit to attending for the duration.

Davis (1991) and Rodrigues (1991) argue that prior to meeting offenders, victims must be prepared adequately in respect to the justice system in general, and for the type of offenders they will meet. Similarly, Pate (1992) and Gibson, (Personal communication, March 3, 1992) note that a number of victims with whom they have had contact in mediation sessions had questions regarding the youth justice system. Questions included types and length of sentences offenders typically receive for specific types of offences. Victims also wonder about the age of offenders, their education and their families.

Sessions where victims meet together as a group can provide participants with support through "installation of hope," by seeing that others have similar problems and are coping with them (Northen, p. 13). Victim feedback questionnaires show that victims appreciated the opportunity to meet other victims and share experiences.

Offenders also have questions about victims, such as how old they are, what kind of property was taken, and how victims reacted to the Break and Enter, and appreciate the opportunity to ask these questions of the leader without the victims present (Janine Miani, personal communication, June 5, 1991). The opportunity for offenders to express

their fears about meeting victims is seen as an integral part of a victim-offender program (Pate, 1992, Gustafson, Personal Communication, March 3, 1992).

DESIGN

The two sequences making up the program implemented at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre were run from August 10-28, 1992, and September 30-October 14, 1992. Each sequence consisted of five 2-3 hour sessions over a three week period; two victims only and offenders only sessions and one joint victim-offender session. The general content of the sessions was as follows:

Session	Victims	Offenders
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentation on the Young Offenders Act - discussion of their own break and enter, damage, items stolen, and how it has affected their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discussion of the offenders' records and property-related offences that they have been involved in - discussion of what the offenders would like to tell/ask victims
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - orientation to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre - discussion - preparing to meet the offenders by discussing what they would like to tell/ask offenders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentation on the impact of residential break and enter on victims from the perspective of a Victim's Services Unit representative, Edmonton Police Service - discussion
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - telling their own experiences as victims and offenders with all participants being given an opportunity to speak - responses, questions and discussions 	

SETTING

The victims only sessions were held in the administration boardroom at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre. Offenders only sessions and the joint victim-offender session were held in the visitor's lounge at the Centre. Janine Miani, Caseworker at Calgary Young Offender Centre, noted that victims had expressed to her unease about being inside the Young Offender Centre. The informational component included an orientation to the Young Offender Centre and was aimed at easing some of the discomfort the victims might have felt.

TYPE OF GROUP

Group work with young persons involved in the criminal justice system has been widely used in the past two decades. Groups allow for an exploration of attitudes, fears and behaviours in a non-threatening, supportive environment, while providing a forum for sharing of information (Klarreich, 1989). Group work is used extensively in Alberta by the Correctional Services Division in institutional programming for young offenders. These programs include Lifeskills, addiction treatment, and education/job preparation as well as Native Spirituality and anger management (Orientation to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre, 1989). The focus of victim-offender groups is on sharing information, attitudes and feelings with other offenders and with the victims.

Arnold (1974), Trotzer (1977), Finckenauer (1984), Minor and Elrod (1990), and Gibbons and Krohn (1991) favour the use of groups in correctional settings. Utilizing small group approaches with offenders reflects an effort to replicate the deviant group

while attempting to change its focus in the direction of pro-social norms and behaviours (Martin, 1989, p. 151).

The length of treatment groups in correctional settings varies from a one day session of approximately six hours to ongoing over one year or more, depending on the length of sentence served and the purpose of the group. Short term groups have the advantage of limiting anxiety, but they also can limit the investment of participants and the resulting changes. Longer groups are held to be effective in changing behaviours but not necessarily underlying attitudes (Martin, 1989, p. 152).

Victim-offender groups can be categorized within the primary purposes of treatment groups outlined by Toseland and Rivas (1984). These are education, growth, remediation, and socialization. Toseland and Rivas maintain that, in practice, there are many variations that combine these purposes. Victim-offender groups are a combination of educational and growth groups.

The primary purpose of educational groups is to help members learn about themselves and their society by increasing member's information and skills (Toseland & Rivas, 1984, p. 19). These groups involve presentation of information and sharing of knowledge by experts, and often include opportunities for group discussion to foster learning (Toseland & Rivas, p. 20). "Members of educational groups are bonded together by a common interest in the material to be learned as well as common characteristics such as being adolescents" (Toseland & Rivas, p. 22). While the informational component of victim-offender groups is important, discussion of feelings

and experiences by group members is equally important and therefore the purpose of the groups goes beyond being educational, into the area of personal growth.

The educational component of the victim-offender groups consists of the information sessions on the Edmonton Young Offender Centre and the youth justice system for victims, and the presentation about the impact of residential break and enter on victims by a representative from the Victim Services Unit for offenders. Where the growth component begins is with the sharing of experiences between victims and offenders in the joint session. Growth oriented groups provide an opportunity for members to become aware of, expand, and change their thoughts and feelings, and behaviour regarding themselves and others (Toseland & Rivas, p. 22). They focus on promoting socio-emotional health rather than remediation, through improved relationships with others, and provide a supportive atmosphere for individual members to gain insights, experiment with new behaviours and get feedback from others (Toseland & Rivas, p. 23). During the sessions for victims only, and offenders only, participants discussed the questions they were going to ask in the joint session, and the topics they were going to raise. Other participants gave feedback. In the joint session, victims and offenders addressed each other, with support from other group members.

ROLE OF THE LEADER

The role of the leader in victim-offender groups is a combination of two roles, as the groups are a combination of educational and growth groups. Toseland and Rivas describe the role of a leader in an educational group as that of the teacher who provides structure for group discussion (Toseland & Rivas, p. 20). The leader in a growth group

is a facilitator and role model (Toseland & Rivas, p. 20). The leader in victim-offender groups acted as an educator when presenting information on the Young Offender's Act, the Young Offender Centre, and Victim Assistance programs. The role of facilitator was assumed by the leader when victims and offenders were sharing their stories among each other, and together in the last session.

SIZE OF GROUPS

The number of victims and offenders in the victim-offender groups in Rochester, United Kingdom; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Calgary, Alberta varied from 1-5 victims and 2-5 offenders in each joint session. Because of the size and layout of the rooms available at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre, the maximum number of participants was set at 8 victims and 8 offenders. This number would also allow for attrition, which had been identified as a problem in victim-offender groups by Kim Pate (1992).

VICTIMS

In order to run a group which included victims of residential Break and Enter, it was necessary to have access to information about such victims within a specific jurisdiction during a particular time. Approval was obtained from the Edmonton Police Service to utilize the log book in which the Identification Section records addresses to which a team was sent to dust for fingerprints and examine the crime scene. Addresses of victims in Edmonton who had their homes broken into between June 1 and August 31, 1992, were obtained from the log book. The Edmonton Police Service file numbers were

also obtained from the book and run through the central Police Service computer to get phone numbers. Individuals in the identified pool of victims were then sent letters which introduced the project and outlined the program (Appendix 2). Victims were given the option of declining to participate immediately via the bottom portion of the letter which was to be detached and mailed in a stamped, addressed envelope. If there was no response within two weeks, victims were contacted by telephone and asked if they wished to participate. A total of 97 letters were sent for the two program sequences, which resulted in 6 victims who expressed a willingness to participate in the victim-offender program.

The rationale for sending the letter with the response form was to safeguard the victims' privacy. If a victim was not interested in participating, little effort was involved in communicating this. Obtaining participants in this way is described by Northen (1988) as a reaching out approach in which "there is no typical application by the recipients of service, but rather a seeking out of persons thought to be in need and an active offering of service to them" (Northen, p. 154).

OFFENDERS

Offenders considered for the program were those serving a secure custody disposition at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre between July 1 and October 31, 1992 with at least one conviction for residential Break and Enter. A list of young offenders who met these criteria was obtained from the Correctional Services Management Information System. The offenders on the list were approached, the program was explained to them, and they were then given the option to participate.

None of the 20 offenders who were asked to participate declined. They were then randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups. This procedure is outlined in Chapter 4.

Approval to access the Correctional Services Management Information System and run the victim-offender groups was obtained from Paddy Meade, Executive Director of the Young Offender Branch, Correctional Services Division, Department of Justice. Before approval was given, the project proposal was reviewed and recommended for approval by Dr. Patrick Thauberger, Director of Treatment Services, Correctional Services Division.

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY DATA SOURCES

Hostile/Emotionally Upset Victims

Keith Brooks, Calgary Police Service (1991), expressed concern that victims need to feel comfortable expressing anger in the group, and Gerry Wright, Program Director, Edmonton Young Offender Centre (1992) raised questions about how the offenders would react to angry victims (passively or aggressively). This was dealt with by having the victims discuss these feelings at any time during both victims only sessions. In the victims only sessions, feelings of anger surfaced when the victims were relating their experiences as victims of Break and Enter. Little of the anger that was originally expressed towards young offenders in general was directed at the young offenders that the victims met. In the sessions for the young offenders only, the offenders were told that the victims were angry, and reasons for these feelings were discussed.

Keeping Joint Sessions Evenly Focused

Kim Pate (1992), Keith Brooks (1991), Staff Sergeant Richards (1991), Staff Sergeant Zaharko (1992), and Constable Whitback (1992), were of the opinion that victims must be given equal opportunity in the joint sessions to express their feelings and relate their experiences. They felt that the main focus of the sessions should not be offenders talking about themselves and providing victims with excuses for their actions. This was addressed in both program sequences by giving ample time for questions and discussion in victims only sessions, and asking each victim and offender in turn to tell about their experiences and address other victims or offenders.

Emotionally Upset Offenders

Dr. Patrick Thauberger, Co-ordinator of Treatment Services, Correctional Services Division, (1992) requested that plans be in place to deal with offenders who might be upset as a result of the sessions. Therefore, staff on the units at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre where participants were housed were made aware of a young offender's participation in the group and asked to be alert to any unusual behaviours following participation in the group.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

Different designs were used to assess the program from the perspective of victims and offenders. An experimental design was used for evaluation of the victim-offender group for offender participants. This design is appropriate for use in attempting to establish a connection between the independent variable, in this case, the victim-offender program and change (Grinnell, 1988, p. 235). Offenders who met program criteria were randomly assigned to the experimental or control groups to ensure that the groups were equivalent in terms of characteristics such as age and number of offences. Offenders in both experimental and control groups were given a pretest, which was administered in the visitors lounge one day prior to the first offenders only session. The experimental group then prepared to meet victims and subsequently met with a group of victims for a total of two offenders only and one victim-offender session. The control group were given no questionnaire sessions. A post-test was administered in the visitors lounge to both experimental and control groups the day after the final program session. In addition to the post-test, the experimental group completed a feedback questionnaire on the sessions. The design for groups of offenders is as follows:

$$E = O_1 X_1 O_2$$

$$C = O_1 X_0 O_2$$

E = Experimental group

C = Control group

O_1 = Pre-test

O_2 = Post-test

X_1 = Program sequence (3 sessions)

X_0 = No sessions

A post-test only, single-group design was used to evaluate the victim participants. The post-test was administered immediately after the final session of the program, and took the form of a feedback questionnaire. The design for groups of victims is as follows:

$X_1 O_1$

X_1 = Program sequence (3 sessions)

O_1 = Post-test

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions addressed are as follows:

1. Whether bringing offenders together with victims of crime will lead to a decrease in the frequency with which offenders justify their behaviour, or avoid taking responsibility for it.
2. Whether bringing victims of crime together to share their experiences as victims, receive information on the youth justice system, and meet offenders, will be seen by victims as useful.
3. Whether bringing offenders together with victims of crime to hear how crime has impacted them and share experiences will be seen as useful by offenders and give them a better understanding of how victims experience crime.

HYPOTHESES

The question of whether participation in the victim-offender program has had an effect on offender participants can be stated in the form of the following hypotheses:

- #1: "Groups of between 3 and 8 offenders who meet with a group of between 3 and 8 victims will show less acceptance of delinquent acts as indicated by an increase in their scores on Ball's Neutralization Scale."
- #2 "Groups of between 3 and 8 offenders who meet with a group of between 3 and 8 victims will find the information and experience useful and express a better understanding of how victims experience crime, as indicated by their answers to the feedback questionnaire."

The question of whether participation in the victim-offender group has had an effect on victim participants can be stated in the form of the following hypothesis:

- #3: "Groups of between 3 and 8 victims who meet with a group of between 3 and 8 offenders will find the information and experience useful, as indicated by their answers to the post-test questionnaire."

SAMPLE SIZE

The number of participants in the victim-offender groups for the two program sequences totalled 6 victims and 10 offenders in the two experimental groups and 9 offenders in the two control groups. One victim who attended the first session of the first program sequence did not return for the last two. One offender attended only one session out of three of the first program sequence.

MEASUREMENT

This study included both qualitative and quantitative measures. Three measurement instruments were used. First, all victims and offenders were asked to

complete a questionnaire (Appendices 3 & 4) in order to provide the leader with feedback on the program. This instrument was administered after completion of the third session of the program sequence. Second, changes in the offenders' justification or neutralization of behaviour were measured utilizing Ball's Neutralization Scale (1973). The scale consists of 40 items (Appendix 5). It was administered to all experimental and control group offenders the day before the first offenders-only session, and again the day after the third session of each program sequence. A split-half method of administering the scale was used pre- and post-test, with the odd numbered items in the pre-test, and the even number items in the post-test. Third, process recordings were completed by the leader on each session, in order to provide a record of the topics covered in the sessions, and participant interaction. These recordings were used in determining whether the objectives of the program had been met in terms of session content, and are provided in detail in Chapter 5.

QUALITATIVE MEASURES

Feedback Questionnaires

In constructing the feedback questionnaires, questions were obtained from samples of questionnaires from the programs at Calgary Young Offender Centre, Calgary, Alberta; Drumheller Institution, Drumheller, Alberta; Her Majesty's Youth Custody Centre, Rochester, United Kingdom; and Headingly Correctional Institution, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Janine Miani (1991), Kim Pate (1992), and Keith Brooks (1991), stressed the value of obtaining feedback from participants about the groups, in order to determine if

the objectives of the sessions had been met and in terms of making improvements for further sessions.

Process Recordings

Programs at Calgary Young Offender Centre, Drumheller Institution, and Headingly Correctional Institution utilize process recordings to give the reader an indication of what was discussed in the groups. They also provide verification that the proposed content of the sessions was covered and the objectives of session met. If not, the recordings give an indication why this happened.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE

Ball's Neutralization Scale

The scale was constructed in order to test assumptions in Sykes and Matza's theory that delinquents accept more justifications for law violations than do non-delinquents.

Ball's Neutralization Scale or inventory presents the respondent with fairly specific hypothetical offense situations. The scale was pre-tested with fifteen and sixteen year old boys held in Ohio detention facilities. The scale was then submitted to judges from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ohio State University to investigate and confirm it's validity. The panel consisted of two professors with specialties in criminology and deviant behaviour, two professors with special competencies in research methods, and one advanced graduate student specializing in criminology. Each judge was

given Sykes and Matza's original article and asked to rate each item according to how well it indicated neutralization as presented by Sykes and Matza.

Reliability and validity was established by use of the Kuder Richardson formula, which yielded a reliability coefficient of .98 (Ball, 1973, p. 31). According to the judges, the inventory appeared to possess face validity. Correlation obtained between the neutralization inventory and related measures, including the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Index of Incipient Alienation, and the Srole Scale were .36, .28, and .41 respectively (Ball, p. 31). The coefficients are statistically significant ($p < .05$) (Ball, p. 31).

ETHICAL ISSUES

Confidentiality was discussed with both victims and offenders at first contact. During group sessions no last names were used. A detailed explanation of the program was given by the leader to offenders and victims, and a written program description provided. Each participant was required to sign a consent form (Appendices 6 & 7)

Unit Staff at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre were made aware of the program, what it involved, and who was participating. Dr. Patrick Thauberger, Director of Treatment Services, Correctional Services Division, had requested that staff members on the Units be aware of what the program entailed in order that they could deal with the situation if an offender became upset because of something that transpired in the group.

CHAPTER 5: PROCESS RECORDINGS

This chapter provides an account of what took place in the groups that made up the two program sequences. The objectives of the victim-offender program were as follows:

- Victims will express their views and feelings about being victimized by the offence of Break and Enter, and the offenders will express their views about committing such offences;
- Victims will discuss their individual experiences of being victimized and how they have coped with these experiences;
- Offenders will verbalize a better understanding of the consequences of their actions in respect to victims;
- Offenders will verbalize more responsibility and use fewer excuses for their actions;
- Victims and offenders will relate conceptions they have of each other, thus providing an opportunity to gain a better understanding of each other as individuals rather than stereotyped labels;
- Victims will identify and discuss questions, concerns and feelings that they have about being victimized with offenders, and through this discussion, reduce anxiety, enabling them to leave the event behind them and go on with their lives;
- The Edmonton Police Service will increase their involvement in the area of victim-offender contact;

- The victim-offender program will add to the range of programming offered at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre.

Each meeting within each program sequence is presented, including when the group was held, members present, goals of the group, activities, and major themes that came out of the discussion. Finally a summary of the discussion is provided with a brief analysis.

PROGRAM SEQUENCE #1

Victim's Group - Session #1

August 10, 1992

Members Present

Rob H.
Dennis G.
Gail G.
Gail U.

Members Absent

None

Purpose/Goals

- For victims to tell their own stories about their experiences at being victimized by a Break and Enter
- To provide victims with information on the youth justice system
- To provide victims with the opportunity to ask questions about aspects of the Young Offender Act that they are uncertain about

Activities

- Going around the group and asking each victim to tell their story

- Presentation of information on the history of the Young Offender's Act, its principles, youth court, and programs provided in Alberta under the Act
- Opportunity for the victims to ask questions at any point
- Victims were asked to think about what they would like to say to the offenders, and questions they would like to ask, and write these down for the next meeting

Major Themes

- Feelings of anger, and of having been violated, that the victims had when their homes were broken into, especially when they were at home at the time of the break-in
- Lack of responsibility taken by parents of youth who engage in crime
- Leniency of the Young Offender's Act and the youth justice system
- Car thefts that the victims have experienced, and the anger that they feel

Discussion

The victims were given the proposed agenda for the evening and invited to interject with questions at any time. To begin, victims were asked to tell about themselves and their experiences as victims of residential Break and Enters. All victims reported having their homes broken into more than once -- twice each for Gail G., Dennis G., and Rob H. and three times for Gail U. Gail G. and Gail U. stated that they are fearful in their homes and have dreams about intruders. While neither of these victims had seen the offenders, they had heard them in the house. The two male members expressed anger, and speculated on what might have happened if they had

confronted the offender during the act. Much detailed information was given in discussing victimization experiences.

Gail G. became visibly upset when discussing the last Break and Enter when she had been at home. Other victims made supportive comments such as "I know how you feel," and nodded in agreement with statements that she made.

Group members appeared interested in the information presented on the Young Offender's Act. Several times during the presentation, members interjected with comments such as: "I had no idea that was how sentencing worked" and expressed surprise and disagreement with the fact the young offenders are given the same legal representation as adults.

Two members complained about seeing young people "wandering around" their neighbourhood at all hours of the night and questioned their parental supervision. Group members asked questions about "typical" offenders and their backgrounds as well as about differences in the types of offences committed by males and females. All victims agreed that the Young Offender's Act is too lenient with respect to sentencing and that 16 and 17 year old young people should be considered as "adults" for court purposes.

During the discussion on Break and Enters, Dennis G. noted that his car had also been stolen. He stated that he was almost angrier about the car than about the house, although the car had been returned undamaged. Rob H. then joined in the discussion, relating that his car had also been stolen. Concern was expressed about still being angry over the offences, and not being able to hold back from expressing this when meeting

offenders. Dennis G. expressed the view that the opportunity to talk and share concerns had helped to calm him down and he was now more curious about the offenders.

Offender's Group - Session #1

August 12, 1992

Members Present

Kelly G.
Shane H.
Donald J.
Fred K.
Duane G.
Shane B.
Donald H.

Members Absent

None

Purpose/Goals

- For group members to become acquainted
- For group members to discuss their crimes
- For group members to consider how their offences may have affected the victims
- To share with offenders some of the questions and concerns voiced by the victims in their first session
- To provide information to offenders about the victims they will be meeting

Activities

- Going around the group with offenders taking turns summarizing their records and the types of property offences committed
- The group leader summarizing concerns and questions voiced by victims
- Discussing victim concerns and situations that offenders had been in that are similar to those that concern victims

Major Themes

- Feelings of fear and helplessness that the victims have after a Break and Enter when they were at home
- Images offenders have of victims
- When and why the offenders became involved in crime
- Types of property taken and vandalism done

Summary/Discussion

The offenders were given information by the leader about the victims, including their approximate ages, number of times victimized, and that all the victims had been at home when the Break and Enters occurred. Three group members then related their experiences at finding victims at home during their commission of offences. All offenders agreed that they do not intend to commit offences when the victims are at home and that victims have a right to protect their property.

When asked what they thought the victims of the homes they had broken into looked like, the consensus was that they tried not to think about that. One group member recalled that he had once turned a wedding picture on it's face because it made him feel like he was "robbing a person." Two others then told of instances where they had ended up at the residence of some people that they knew. One member stated that "I did it anyway because I knew that they were worse criminals than me."

Each member was encouraged to discuss why they had become involved in crime. All noted having started with committing property crimes at 10 or 11 years of age, aside from "candy from the store" as one offender put it, which started earlier. Two offenders

indicated that they started for "thrills" and the rest said it was "peer pressure." All agreed that they like the money that they get from crime, with two reporting the need for money to buy drugs as a prime motivator. Members stated that the type of property stolen depended on a number of factors, including time and seeking particular items. The most popular items related were televisions, videocassette recorders, stereo equipment, jewellery, and cash. As one member noted, these items are easily replaced by insurance. He also claimed to "know" of victims who had reported items stolen that had in fact been lost or sold before the Break and Enter.

Victims Group - Session #2
August 17, 1992

Members Present

Gail G.
Dennis G.
Gail U.

Members Absent

Rob H.

Although Rob H. did not show up for the group on August 17, he came on August 19, saying that he got his dates mixed up. He was asked to join the scheduled victim/offender session on August 26.

Purpose/Goals

- To provide victims with information about the Young Offender Centre
- To provide an opportunity for victims to discuss their feelings about having been victimized by residential Break and Enters

- To provide an opportunity for the group to address any thoughts or questions arising as a result of the last meeting

Activities

- Presentation of information on the Young Offender Centre
- Discussion of the information presented
- Each victim was asked to list and discuss the questions they wanted to address with the group of offenders

Major Themes

- Misconceptions that victims had about the Centre
- Concerns about meeting offenders

Summary/Discussion

The victims were given a presentation by the group leader on the Young Offender Centre. The presentation was based on the orientation manual used to familiarize new residents with the Centre. Material included rules and regulations, the different units and number of offenders on each unit, as well as programs offered, work details and incentive allowance. All victims expressed the view that the Centre operates more like a jail than they had been led to believe by the media. They were particularly interested in the day to day workings of the Centre. One member expressed surprise that offenders over 16 years are not allowed to smoke and noted that this seemed harsh to her.

During the first session victims had been asked to think of questions they would like to ask offenders. Some of those identified included their backgrounds, particularly if they came from one or two-parent families, and if they felt remorse for their actions.

Group members were then told about the number of offenders they would be meeting, the length of their records, and amount of time being served. By the end of the session, victims stated that they were forming mental images of the offenders.

The victims admitted that the information provided defused their anger towards the offenders and the court system. As one member remarked, by the end of this session he felt that he had "vented enough." None of the victims were interested in role plays to help them prepare for meeting the offenders. They agreed that they felt more comfortable not doing so. Also, they had numerous questions and preferred pursuing that topic in the joint meeting.

Offenders Group - Session #2
August 19, 1992

Members Present

Kelly G.
Shane H.
Donald J.
Fred K.
Duane G.
Donald H.

Members Absent

Shane B.

Purpose/Goals

- To provide offenders with information about what is available to victims through the Edmonton Police Service, and kinds of services they might need after experiencing property crime

Activities

- Presentation of information on the Edmonton Police Service, Victim Services Unit by an Edmonton Police Service member
- Discussion of the information and questions

Summary/Discussion

The offenders were attentive while the officer was speaking, and each offender had at least one question. All members expressed surprise that victims are in need of support after property crimes have been committed, and the point made that many victims do not have insurance for items stolen.

Shane H. asked the officer if victims are allowed to assault offenders found breaking into their homes. The officer recounted incidents where this had been the case, and the concept of reasonable force was discussed.

Discussion also covered offenders' views on the police in general, and arresting officers in particular. The officer said that he enjoyed hearing the offenders' opinions in a non-arrest situation.

Victim/Offender Group - Session #3
August 26, 1992***Members Present***

Gail G.
Dennis G.
Gail U.
Kelly G.
Shane H.
Donald J.
Fred K.
Duane G.
Donald H.

Members Absent

Rob H.
Shane B.

Purpose/Goals

- To provide victims with information about the records of the offenders in the group
- To provide an opportunity for victims to tell the offenders about the circumstances of their Break and Enter victimizations and how they felt about these incidents
- To provide a forum for victims and offenders to ask questions of each other and engage in discussion

Activities

- Going around the group and having offenders summarize their records, length of sentence being served and backgrounds
- Providing victims with an opportunity to tell about the incidents when their homes were broken into, and express feelings about being victimized
- Providing an opportunity for victims and offenders to ask questions of each other

Major Themes

- Interest by victims about the offenders in terms of background, family, and what led them into crime
- The type of homes offenders look for in terms of security, and the type of property taken
- Offenders' plans upon release from custody
- How victims of break and enter feel uneasy in their own homes

Summary/Discussion

The joint session was devoted entirely to victim and offender questions and individual stories. Initially there was little interaction between victims and young offenders. The victims sat quietly, looking around the visitors lounge. Dennis G. remarked that it was an experience "just to be in here." The leader welcomed everyone to the group. The process for the meeting was explained, and to get discussion going offenders were asked to provide a brief summary of their previous records, and highlight any areas they thought might be of interest or that they wanted to share. Victims were asked to state how many times they had been victimized. Participants were asked to save their questions until everyone had a chance to speak. They were assured that they did not have to answer questions that made them uncomfortable, but to say why they were uncomfortable if they could.

After presentations by each member, questions were asked by most participants. Gail G. directed her question concerning family background to all the offenders and addressed each one in turn. Only Donald J. was hesitant in answering, and gave no reason. Shane H. answered in detail and provided a history of his movement from foster home to foster home.

Dennis G. asked what offenders look for in a home before committing a Break and Enter, and how one is done. Two offenders answered the question by relating past incidents in detail, including how the houses were chosen, how entry was gained, and what items were taken. Dennis G. did not express shock or disapproval, but stated that it was interesting to hear an offender's perspective.

While the victims did not appear adverse to discussing how they felt with the offenders, they expressed more interest in how the offenders felt about being in custody, and programs they were in. Victims were prompted by the leader to discuss feelings that were brought up in the victim sessions. Dennis G. expressed his feelings of helplessness in terms of protecting his family while Gail G. told of difficulties sleeping and a general feeling of being unsafe in her home. Gail G. also related a story about her cat, who had previously been a friendly, relaxed animal, but since the Break and Enter had become nervous and distrustful.

Discussion was animated and continuous. All members participated to some degree. Gail U., who had been eager to talk during the victims only sessions spoke little in the joint session. Two of the offenders also spoke less than they did in the offenders only sessions. At the end of the group, victims stated that they thought the combined session could have been longer, although they felt they had been given ample opportunity to express their feelings. Gail U. stated that her fears about meeting offenders were unfounded. Three of the offenders admitted that their concerns about victims being angry and lecturing them about their crimes were unfounded. They were relieved.

PROGRAM SEQUENCE #2

Goals and activities for the sessions comprising the second program sequence were the same as the first. Therefore they will not be repeated in the following narrative. Themes for each victim, offender and joint session differed from one program sequence to another, and are listed prior to the summary and discussion.

Victims Session #1 & #2 combined

October 5, 1992

During this program sequence there was only one session for victims only. On September 28, there was an attempted escape from one of the units at the Young Offender Centre, and due to the publicity received, the Director felt that having members of the public in the institution on September 30 would not be advisable. After discussion with the victim participants by telephone, it was agreed that the material to be presented would be given at a longer session on October 5.

Members Present

Ian H.
Fay A.
Craig T.

Members Absent

None

Major Themes

- How the youth justice system encourages young offenders to avoid taking responsibility for their actions
- Concerns about meeting offenders
- The way the victims felt violated after their homes had been broken into, and the way this has changed their behaviour and habits regarding their homes
- A strong interest in what offenders are really like as opposed to people they see on television and read about in the newspaper

Summary/Discussion

As in the first sequence, the victims were given an overview of the material to be presented and invited to respond with questions. To begin, victims were asked to tell about their experiences as victims of residential break and enter. All victims had their homes broken into once, and unlike the first group, none of the victims had been at home when the offences occurred.

Two victims asked numerous questions right from the beginning of the session. Ian H. stated that he believes that not only is the Young Offender's Act too permissive, but parents are not accepting responsibility for the actions of their children. He related how the police had arrested two suspects who had broken into his house, but had been told by the parents that their children were home at the time when the break-in had occurred. Ian H. expressed anger that it seemed to him that parents were covering up for their children. He had a page of questions prepared that he wanted to ask offenders. Craig T. also had prepared a list of questions to ask the offenders, as well as questions about the Young Offender's Act and the Young Offender Centre. He told the group that his wife was working at night and was sorry that she could not attend the sessions, but some of the questions were hers as well.

Fay A. expressed some apprehension about meeting the offenders. At this time the leader described the young offenders who had agreed to participate in the group in terms of age, previous convictions and sentences. She was also told that during the offender sessions in August, the offenders had also been apprehensive about meeting victims. Fay A. also stated that she has had difficulties sleeping and does not like to go

out as much as before. She has also discussed improved security with the manager of her apartment building. Craig T. related how he had installed a security system in his home, and would like the opportunity to ask the offenders about security systems as deterrents. He also mentioned that he and his wife are from a small town, and had their home broken into one month after they had moved to Edmonton. Craig T. stated that as a result of the break-in, his wife does not like to be at home by herself.

Fay A. expressed curiosity as to what young offenders are like. She stated that she has a 30 year old son, and admitted that at times she was afraid that he would become involved in illegal activities. Another victim concurred and spoke about his own son. Both victims agreed that parents may have difficulties directing their children despite the best of intentions.

Offenders Group - Session #1
September 30, 1992

Members Present

Donald M.
Jason C.
David T.
Dustin W.

Members Absent

None

Major Themes

- Images offenders have of victims
- When and why the offenders became involved in crime
- How property crime is seen by this group as a "job" and how lucrative that job can be

- Types of property taken and vandalism done
- Security systems as a deterrent to residential Break and Enter

Summary/Discussion

As with the first group, the offenders were given information by the leader about the victims, including the number of times they had been victimized. This information had been obtained from the victims during telephone contact, as there was no victim session prior to the first offender session. Donald M. reacted to the ages of two of the victims by stating that he didn't "think of victims as being old people." He said that it would bother him to know that he was taking something from someone like his grandmother. Dustin W. said that it would depend what it was, and pointed out that "a television's a television."

Each offender was given the opportunity to tell when and how he became involved in crime. The earliest age from the offender accounts was 10 years of age. All offenders agreed that they started committing property offences for "thrills," but continued when they discovered how much money could be made. Each offender had a story regarding the most money he had made from a single break and enter. David T. pointed out the youth workers and probation officers who try to tell him to go out and get a job don't realize that the kind of job he could get is only "pocket change." The others nodded in agreement. The leader then asked David how the time he is spending at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre is figured in, and he admitted that "it is a definite downside." This same offender was serving the longest single sentence of any

of the offenders in the group, 20 months for possession of stolen property obtained from Break and Enters.

The offenders gave examples of the types of property that were taken and how much particular items could be sold for. None of the group members admitted to vandalism, agreeing that "its a waste of time." At this point, the offenders discussed how security systems are not necessarily a deterrent. There was a general consensus that some security systems are easier to get through than others, and that a system can be an indication that there is something in the house to steal. At this point, the leader interjected that victims may install systems in order to feel safe rather than just to protect property. Discussion of how victims may feel exposed in their own home continued as a way to distract the offenders away from what was beginning to be a "brag session."

The offenders had to be redirected to discuss how their actions affected victims. When asked for questions or comments to be directed to the victims, Dustin W. expressed surprise that not all victims have insurance on all property, and stated that "they should." David T. remarked that "maybe they can't afford it." Donald M. then asked if the female victim would likely cry in the joint session, and said that he would find this hard to deal with. David T. concurred. When asked what they might do if confronted with such a situation, Donald M. said that he would just keep telling the victim that he is sorry, even though he was not the one "who did her house." David T. said that he would tell the victim that "I won't do houses anymore, just businesses."

Offender Group - Session #2
October 7, 1992

Members Present

Donald M.
Jason C.
David T.
Dustin W.

Members Absent
None

Activities

At the last minute, the Edmonton City Police member who addressed the first group in August was unable to attend this session. A substitute speaker could not be obtained on short notice. The leader was provided with a substantial amount of material from the Victim Services Unit, which she presented to the offenders during this session.

Summary/Discussion

Material presented included statistics on the number of residential Break and Enters, the role of the Victim Services Unit, and the volunteers who work with victims of crime.

There was about the same amount of discussion as there had been in the first sequence. However, the discussion digressed less from the information presented. For example, in the first group, there were questions directed at the police officer on unrelated topics. Jason C. expressed surprise at the follow-up that is done with victims following a Break and Enter. He said that he really couldn't understand a victim being as upset about a property offence as they would be about a violent crime.

Since the offenders had been provided with only basic information about the victims during the first session, they were given more detail in terms of the topics discussed in the victim session. All of the offenders agreed that it was reassuring to

know that none of the victims sounded as if they would be "really angry" in the joint session. Jason C. in particular said that he hoped that they wouldn't have to listen to a lecture.

Victim/Offender Group - Session #2/3
October 14, 1992

Members Present

Ian H.
Fay A.
Craig T.
Donald M.
Jason C.
David T.
Dustin W.

Members Absent

None

Major Themes

- Interest on the part of victims about the offenders in terms of background, family, and what led them into crime
- What types of homes offenders look for in terms of security, and what types of property are taken
- The differences between offenders who do crime "off and on" and those who make a lot of money doing it, and look upon it as a "career"
- What offenders plan to do upon release, and with the rest of their lives
- How the habits of victims change following a Break and Enter in their home
- Stereotypes that victims have about offenders, and how this meeting has challenged those stereotypes

Summary/Discussion

Unlike the first sequence, there was little or no initial discomfort visible on the part of the victims and offenders. The victims helped arrange the chairs, and walked around the visitors area asking questions about the intercom system and security. In the first session, the victims had sat quietly. Two of the offenders came to the meeting area a little earlier than the other two, and made "small talk" about baseball with the victims prior to the arrival of the other two offenders. This lead to a discussion between the victims and the two offenders about the televisions in the Centre.

When the leader introduced the outline for the meeting, the offender who had been speaking volunteered to summarize his record first and get the discussion going. Fay A. said that she was eager to tell the offenders about her Break and Enter, and all the offenders expressed sympathy concerning her feelings about having her personal things gone through. David T. stated that she shouldn't take it personally that her underwear had been gone through as the perpetrators were likely looking for money and jewellery. The victims in this group seemed less hesitant to talk about themselves, and all three spoke equally.

At one point the discussion did digress on the topic of security systems. Both Ian H. and Craig T. had worked in the area of electronics and were interested to find out what the offenders knew about various systems. While the victims seemed sincerely interested in what the offenders had to say, the offenders, particularly Jason C. and Donald M. seemed to be trying to outdo each other in terms of their knowledge in the area. Then Craig T. remarked that the offenders seemed to be really knowledgeable, and

questioned whether they have tried to apply their "intelligence" to getting a formal education. Donald M. pointed out how lucrative crime can be, but Jason C. admitted that the risk of getting caught is making crime as a career much less attractive. He then told the group that he is taking grade 11 and 12 courses at the Centre. The other three offenders then talked about their goals for the future.

As in the first sequence, the offenders stated that they enjoyed the fact that the victims were interested in them as individuals. Ian H. admitted that the young offenders did not look like he had pictured them. When asked why by one offender who is Native, Ian H. admitted that he had pictured more offenders as being Native, and "not too bright." The young offender did not seem to take offence, and agreed that they have a "bad reputation."

Everyone in the group seemed to be listening to each other. One offender in particular said that he wanted to stay and continue talking to one of the victims, Ian H., tell him that he was remorseful for his crimes, and share more about what he planned to do upon release. The group agreed that they would have liked another session, just to talk to each other and "visit." Again, the victims were of the opinion that they had been given ample opportunity to express their feelings.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will present and discuss study findings. These will be divided into several areas. First the demographic information on offenders and victims will be presented. This information was obtained from the victims themselves and offender data was obtained from the Correctional Services Management Information System. Information on young offenders given community or custodial dispositions by youth court is inputted into this data base.

Demographic information on young offenders includes age, number of offences for which they have been convicted, number of convictions for Break and Enter, and racial origin. Demographic information on victims includes gender and age.

Next, the results of the feedback questionnaires will be presented. The questionnaires, divided into two parts, were administered to victims and offenders following the victim-offender sessions. The first part consists of questions to be answered by circling the number best describing the respondent's reaction to each of the statements. The second part consists of questions calling for open-ended responses. There are four questions in each part for offenders, and ten questions in part one and four in part two for victims. The information obtained from these questionnaires is presented first for offenders, then for victims.

The data obtained from the offender scores on the pre- and post-tests utilizing Ball's Neutralization Scale will then be presented.

Finally, the objectives of the victim-offender program are listed and discussed in terms of whether these were met during the sessions. This information was obtained from the group discussions as well as responses to the questionnaires.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Offenders

Table 1 shows that the age of the offenders in the victim-offender program. They ranged in age from 14-18 years. Both control groups included one offender aged 14 years old and one 18; the experimental groups had no one under 15 years. The first experimental and control group had mean ages of 16.5 and 16.4 while the means for the second group were 17.71 and 16.5. The second experimental group was composed entirely of 17 and 18 year olds.

Table 1 - Age of Offenders

Age	Experimental Group 1	Control Group 1	Experimental Group 2	Control Group 2	Totals
14	0	1	0	1	2
15	1	0	0	0	1
16	2	1	0	0	3
17	2	2	2	2	8
18	1	1	2	1	5
Total	6	5	4	4	19
Mean	16.5	16.4	17.71	16.5	

Table 2 shows the number of convictions by charge on the young offender records. As shown in the table, both experimental groups had a mean of 15 convictions on their records, (which includes convictions whose dispositions are currently being served) while control group #1 had a mean of 15. Convictions and control group #2 a mean of 18.5, the range of convictions varied; from 9 to 21 in experimental group #1, 10 to 19 in experimental group #2, 12 to 18 in control group #1, and 16 to 23 in control

group #2. The highest number offences was 23 in control group #2 and the lowest was 9 in experimental group #1.

Table 2 - Number of Convictions by Charge

	Experimental Group #1		Control Group #1		Experimental Group #2		Control Group #2	
	1	19	1	18	1	13	1	23
	2	13	2	15	2	10	2	15
	3	9	3	12	3	19	3	16
	4	11	4	17	4	17	4	20
	5	15	5	17				
	6	21						
Mean		15		15.8		15		18.5

Table 3 shows number of convictions for Break and Enter on the young offender records. As is evident from inspection of this table experimental groups had mean numbers of Break and Enters of 5.3 and 5.8, and control groups had mean numbers of Break and Enters of 5.8 and 7.3. Number of convictions for Break and Enter ranged from 2 to 10 in experimental group #1, 3 to 7 in experimental group #2, 2 to 10 in control group #2 and 1 to 13 in control group #2. The highest number of Break and Enters was 13, by an offender in control group #2, while the lowest was 1, also in control group #2.

Table 3 - Convictions for Break and Enter

Experimental Group #1		Control Group #1		Experimental Group #2		Control Group #2	
1	6	1	7	1	6	1	13
2	4	2	5	2	7	2	6
3	4	3	2	3	3	3	1
4	6	4	10	4	7	4	9
5	2	5	5				
6	10						

Table 4 shows information on ethnic origin that was obtained from the Correctional Services Management Information System. The categories are those used to describe ethnic origin at admission to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre. All groups were composed of over 50% Caucasians. Experimental Group #2 had the highest composition of young offenders of Native origin, while control group #2 had the lowest at 25%. Of the total number of participants in both program sequences 63.2% were Caucasian.

Table 4 - Racial Origin

	Experimental Group #1	Control Group #1	Experimental Group #2	Control Group #2	Total
Caucasian	4	3	2	3	12
Metis	1	1	1	0	3
Registered Indian	1	1	0	0	2
Non-Registered Indian	0	0	1	1	2
Total	6	5	4	4	19

Victims

Table 5 presents the gender of the victims who participated in both program sequences. The sample consists of a total of 6 victims, 3 in each program sequence. As shown in the table, the number of females and males were different for the two sequences.

Table 5 - Victim Gender

Gender	Program Sequence #1	Program Sequence #2	Number
Male	1	2	3
Female	2	1	3
Totals	3	3	6

Table 6 shows the age of the victims. As evident in the table, there was a wide range of ages among participants. Victims in program sequence #1 however, were all within the 40 to 50 year old category, while the 3 victims in program sequence #2 were at opposite ends, one in the 20-30 year old category, and 2 in the 70-79 year old category.

Table 6 - Victim Age

Age	Program Sequence #1	Program Sequence #2	Number
20-30		1	1
31-39			
40-50	3		3
51-59			
60-69			
70-79		2	2
TOTALS	3	3	6

RESULTS OF FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

Each questionnaire consisted of 2 parts. The first part was made up of a series of statements to which the participants were asked to respond on a five-point scale. There were 4 such statements in the offender questionnaire and 10 in the victim questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire was made up of 4 open-ended questions, to which participants were asked to respond with whatever comments they thought appropriate.

The results of the feedback questionnaires will be presented in table form, first for offenders, then for victims. A discussion of the results as they relate to the hypothesis follows the results for offender and victim questionnaires.

Offenders

Part 1

Offender participants in the program were asked if they found their experiences with the program helpful. These data are presented in Table 7. As evident by inspection of the table, out of 10 offenders who responded to this question, one strongly agreed with the statement that the experience with the program was helpful, while 7 agreed. Two offenders were undecided, and none disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 7 - "My experience with the program was helpful."

	Value	Number	%
Strongly Agree	1	1	10
Agree	2	7	70
Undecided	3	2	20
Disagree	4	0	
Strongly Disagree	5	0	
Total		10	100

Offender participants were asked to express their views on whether the sessions challenged impressions they had about victims. The information is presented in Table 8. As shown in that table, two offenders strongly agreed with this statement, 7 agreed, and one was undecided. No one disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 8 - "The sessions challenged impressions I had about victims in general."

	Value	Number	%
Strongly Agree	1	2	20
Agree	2	7	70
Undecided	3	1	10
Disagree	4	0	
Strongly Disagree	5	0	
Total		10	100

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the sessions provided them with a better understanding of victims and how they experience crime. This information is presented in Table 9. As can be seen from the table, one offender strongly agreed with the statement, while 9 agreed. None of the respondents were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 9 - "The sessions provided me with a better understanding of victims and how they experience crime."

	Value	Number	%
Strongly Agree	1	1	10
Agree	2	9	90
Undecided	3	0	
Disagree	4	0	
Strongly Disagree	5	0	
Total		10	100

Offenders were asked to indicate if participation in the program made them want to change their lifestyles upon release. These data are presented in Table 10. As evident in the table, 3 offenders strongly agreed with the statement, 5 agreed, while 2 were undecided. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 10 - "Participation in the program has made me want to change my lifestyle upon release."

	Value	Number	%
Strongly Agree	1	3	30
Agree	2	5	50
Undecided	3	2	20
Disagree	4	0	
Strongly Disagree	5	0	
Total		10	100

Part 2

Offenders were asked which of their opinions were changed or remained the same as a result of the program. This information is presented in Table 11. As is evident from this table, responses were short. Half the offenders did not answer this question. Two simply put "none" and one said "I don't know." The other two stated that they were remorseful and "won't do houses anymore."

Table 11 - *"Which if any, of your opinions were changed or remained the same as a result of the program."*

Response	Frequency	%
"None"	2	20
"Don't know"	1	10
"Won't do houses anymore"	2	20
No response	5	50
Total	10	100

Participants were asked to describe the overall experience. Their responses are displayed in Table 12. Again, the responses were short answers. Two of the offenders did not answer the questions, and one put "I don't know." Other responses included "interesting," "helpful," "thought provoking" and "a good learning experience." One offender responded that he would "think twice before doing a Break and Enter next time." Two offenders said that it was good to talk to victims.

Table 12 - "How would you describe the overall experience?"

Response	Frequency	%
"I don't know"	1	10
"Interesting"	1	10
"Thought provoking"	1	10
"Helpful"	1	10
"A good learning experience"	1	10
"Think twice"	1	10
"Good to talk to victims"	2	20
No response	2	20
Total	10	100

Offenders were asked for suggestions on how they thought the program could be improved. This information is presented Table 13. It is apparent from the table and the short responses that the offenders either thought the program was satisfactory or did not want to bother commenting. Of the 5 offenders who answered this question 3 said that they didn't know, one wrote that "it's good as it is" and one said that there should be more time to share feelings with victims.

Table 13 - "How would you recommend that the program be improved?"

Response	Frequency	%
"I don't know"	3	30
"It's good as it is"	1	10
"More time to share"	1	10
No response	5	50
Total	10	100

Finally, respondents were invited to comment on anything they wanted to about the program. One said that he thought the female victims were "nice," and hoped that his sharing of knowledge about Break and Enters would help her to prevent another "criminal" from choosing her house. Another thought that families should also be involved in talking about crime with their kids who are in jail. One said that what made him think the most was that the victims were such nice people and weren't hostile.

Summary

Post-test questionnaires were used in addressing questions about whether participation in the victim-offender program had a positive effect on, and was seen as useful by offender participants, as stated in the following hypothesis:

"Groups of between 3 and 8 offenders who meet with a group of between 3 and 8 victims will find the information and experience useful and express a better understanding of victims and how they experience crime as indicated by their answers to the feedback questionnaire."

Overall, the offenders found the program helpful and all agreed that they were provided with a better understanding of how victims experience crime. Eight out of ten offenders agreed that meeting with victims made them want to change their lifestyle upon release, with 8 responding with comments about "not doing houses anymore." Individual comments about the overall experience were positive, and did indicate that 8 out of 10 offenders got something out of the program.

Victims

Part 1

Victims who participated in the program were asked in the questionnaire previously mentioned, if their experiences with the group sessions were helpful. This information is presented in Table 14. As is evident by looking at the table, two victims strongly agreed with the statement and four agreed. None were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 14 - "My experience with the group sessions was helpful."

Response	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	4	66.7
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Victim participants were asked to express their views on whether the session had challenged impressions and stereotypes they had of offenders in general. This information is presented in Table 15. As shown in the table, four victims agreed with the statement, while two were undecided. None strongly agreed, strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Table 15 - *"The sessions challenged impressions and stereotypes I held about offenders in general."*

Response	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	0	0
"Agree"	2	4	66.7
"Undecided"	3	2	33.3
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Participants were asked if they had come away from the sessions with a better understanding of offenders and their motivation for committing offences. This information is presented in Table 16. As is evident from the table, 5 victims agreed with the statement, and one was undecided. None strongly agreed, or strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Table 16 - *"The sessions have given me a better understanding about offenders and their motivation for committing offences."*

Response	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	0	0
"Agree"	2	5	83.3
"Undecided"	3	1	16.7
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Participants gave their opinions on whether the information presented in the sessions helped them to deal better with some of the feelings they had about being victimized. This information is presented in Table 17. Two victims strongly agreed and

3 agreed that the information helped them. One victim disagreed, and none strongly disagreed or strongly agreed.

Table 17 - *"Information obtained as a result of the program enabled me to better deal with some of the feelings I had about being victimized."*

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	3	50.0
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	1	16.7
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Victims were also asked if they generally found the information that was presented on young offenders and the criminal justice system helpful. These data are found in Table 18. As is evident from the table, two victims strongly agreed and four victims agreed with the statement. No participants were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 18 - *"I found the general information provided on young offenders and the criminal justice system helpful."*

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	4	66.7
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Victims participants were asked to respond to a statement about the value of talking about their victimization with other victims. The frequency of their responses are presented in Table 19. The table shows that two victims strong agreed with the statement, and three agreed. One victim was undecided and none disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 19 - *"I found it helpful to talk about the experience of having had my home broken into with victims of a similar offence."*

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	3	50.0
"Undecided"	3	1	16.7
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Another statement in the questionnaire related to whether or not the victims felt the offenders were being honest. These responses are presented in Table 20. Responses were all positive. One victim strongly agreed and five victims agreed with the statement. Again, no respondents were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 20 - *"I found that during the meeting, the offenders were honest."*

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	1	16.7
"Agree"	2	5	83.3
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Participants were asked if they were glad to have had the opportunity to confront offenders with the results of their actions. These data are presented in Table 21. Two victims strongly agreed and 4 agreed with the statement. None were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 21 - "I am glad to have had the opportunity to confront the offenders with the results of their actions"

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	4	66.7
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Victims commented on whether they found offenders to be like ordinary youth. This information is found in Table 22. As is evident from this table, there was a range of responses. Two victims strongly agreed with the statement, 3 agreed, and 1 disagreed. None were undecided or strongly disagreed.

Table 22 - "I found that the offenders were very much like any ordinary youth."

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	3	50.0
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	1	16.7
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Victims indicated their interest in listening to the offenders' side of the story. This information is presented in Table 23. As is evident by examination of this table, responses to this statement were positive. Two victims strongly agreed and 4 agreed with the statement. None were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 23 - "I have found it interesting to listen to the offenders' side of the story."

Responses	Value	Frequency	%
"Strongly Agree"	1	2	33.3
"Agree"	2	4	66.7
"Undecided"	3	0	0
"Disagree"	4	0	0
"Strongly Disagree"	5	0	0
Total		6	100

Part 2

Victims were asked which of their opinions were changed or remained the same as a result of the program. Their responses are presented in Table 24. Over half of the victims found the offenders to be different from their previous conceptions. The most frequent responses was that offenders did not look like they had pictured them. One victim stated that after meeting the offenders, he/she was now of the opinion that more young offenders need to be given a chance to "reform." One victim simply stated "none."

Table 24 - "Which, if any of your opinions where changed or remained the same as a result of your meeting with the offenders?"

Response	Frequency	%
"Offenders didn't look like I pictured them"	3	50.0
"Didn't look as hardened"	1	16.7
"Young offenders need to be give a chance"	1	16.7
"None"	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

Victims were asked to describe their overall experience with the program. Their responses are listed in Table 25. All of the victims answered briefly and gave positive responses which showed that they felt they had learned from the program.

Table 25 - "How would you describe the overall experience?"

Response	Frequency	%
"Interesting to meet offenders"	1	13.7
"Interesting to learn about the system"	1	13.7
"Experience was enlightening"	1	13.7
"Experience was interesting"	1	13.7
"Thought-provoking"	1	13.7
"Educational"	1	13.7
Total	6	100.0

Victims were asked for recommendations on how they thought the victim/offender program could be improved. Their responses are listed in Table 26. The table shows

that the victims had few recommendations. Three had no recommendations at all, while 1 thought more sessions were needed, and another felt the group should be larger.

Table 26 - "How would you recommend that the groups be improved?"

Response	Frequency	%
"None"	3	50.0
"More sessions needed"	1	16.7
"Group should be larger"	1	16.7
No response	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

Summary

Post-test questionnaires completed by victims were used in addressing the question of whether participation in the victim-offender program had an effect on victim participants, as stated in the form of the following hypothesis:

"Groups of between 3 and 8 victims who meet with a group of between 3 and 8 offenders will find the information and experience useful, as indicated by their answers to the post-test questionnaire."

All victims agreed that they found the group session helpful, and that the information presented on young offenders and the criminal justice system was also helpful in a general sense. All victims were glad to have had the opportunity to confront offenders. Responses were more diverse in terms of whether the sessions challenged impressions victims held about offenders in general, gave victims a better understanding of why offenders commit crimes, and helped them to deal with feelings that they had about being victimized. Although 1 victim disagreed that information provided had

helped him/her to better deal with feelings about being victimized, no elaboration was given in the comments section. The same respondent was undecided as to whether talking about the experience of being victimized with other victims was helpful.

From the answers to the questionnaires it can be concluded that the victims who participated in the program found some or all components of the program helpful.

Scores on Ball's Neutralization Scale

Changes in the offender's justification or neutralization of behaviour were measured using Ball's Neutralization Scale (1973), an operational measure of neutralization. All tests were completed by experimental and control groups together, and supervised by the group leader.

The question of whether participation in the victim-offender program had an effect on offender participants is stated in the form of the following hypothesis:

"Group of between 3 and 8 offenders who meet with a group of between 3 and 8 victims will show less acceptance of delinquent acts as indicated by an increase in their scores on Ball's Neutralization Scale."

Since random assignment to experimental and control groups was used, and pre- and post-test scores were compiled, the data was analyzed using analysis of co-variance (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 23). SPSS was used for analysis with the level of significance at .05. A direction is indicated in the hypothesis, therefore the two-tailed probabilities are to be divided by two.

The pre- and post-test scores for experimental and control groups for both sequences are presented in Table 27. While all groups showed an increase in post-test

over pre-test mean scores, the highest post-test score was in control group #1, while the lowest was in control group #2.

Table 27 - Test Scores

	Sequence #1				Sequence #2			
	Experimental Group		Control Group		Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	61	65	78	83	50	54	66	78
2	55	57	64	70	71	71	79	68
3	71	73	59	63	64	62	52	54
4	68	78	56	57	60	60	46	45
5	78	79	65	66	-	-	-	-
6	43	42	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mean	66.67	65.67	64.90	67.80	61.25	61.75	60.75	61.25

For both program sequences, the differences between post-test scores, allowing for differences in the pre-test scores were statistically significant at the .05 level (sequence #1 - $F = 132.03$; sequence #2 - $F = 11.04$). The significance of t for sequence #1 was .000, for sequence #2, .021. In relation to the victim/offender program, the above results indicate that for this particular program and group of offenders, the control groups showed less acceptance of delinquent acts as measured by the offenders scores on Ball's Neutralization Scale. Given that this group received only the regular programming at Edmonton Young Offender Centre, the results suggest that the program had no effect on Balls Neutralization Scale as an outcome measure.

There are several possible reasons for these results. First, the sample of offenders is small and only two program sequences were delivered. The results might be different

with larger groups and more program sequences; they would likely be more representative of the actual population value (Norusis, p. 174). Second, the groups were run over a period of four weeks, with pre- and post-tests given before and after the program. The time between tests may have been insufficient for changes to take place in the neutralization of delinquent acts. Third, the offenders spent relatively few hours in the group session as compared to the number of hours between sessions that were spent in the institutional environment. In this environment, the offenders are in constant contact with other offenders who are supportive of rationalizations/excuses for delinquent acts. This supports Miller's theory that delinquent behavior is related to association with other delinquents, and constant exposure to their values. Fourthly, there was only one meeting between victims and offenders, and the lack of change in justifications of delinquent acts may be due to lack of commitment by the offenders to change. Martin (1989) notes that short-term groups limit anxiety, but also the investment of participants and the resulting changes. Finally, the composition of the groups may have been a factor while random assignment was used to divide the offenders into groups. The groups were made up of offenders with varying numbers of convictions for break and enter, and who were different ages. The number of other types of offences in proportion to the number of break and enters, as well as how old an offender was at the time may have affected their responses to the pre- and post-tests.

OBJECTIVES OF THE VICTIM-OFFENDER PROGRAM

The success of the Victim-Offender program is measured according to the following objectives. Each objective is listed and discussed, with brief examples of how the objective was measured.

- *Victims will express their views and feelings about being victimized by the offence of Break and Enter, and the offenders will express their views about committing such offences.*

This objective was met. Victims and offenders expressed their views and feelings during these sessions in both program sequences. As noted in Chapter 5, not all victims and offenders spoke equally during the sessions, and the group had to be redirected from discussions of general topics to do with security systems and boasting of exploits. Maguire (1982) comments that victims in his survey were mistrustful of strangers and tried to recapture a lost sense of security. This was reflected in the feelings the victims brought up in both program sequences. When they stated that they found themselves going out less as a result of their victimization and were interested in how security systems might deter offenders.

- *Victims will discuss their individual experiences of being victimized and how they have coped with these experiences.*

This objective was met. Particularly in the victims only sessions, victims discussed their individual experiences, the ways they have coped with these experiences, and how the experiences have affected their lives. Victims responded to comments and stories from each other, and in this way stimulated further discussion. They found that there were commonalties such as number of times victimized and vehicles being stolen.

- ***Offenders will verbalize a better understanding of the consequences of their actions in respect to victims.***

This objective was met. Offenders responded to comments made by victims in ways that showed they heard what was being said. For example, offenders responded to one victim's concern about having her personal things gone through by trying to point out that "she shouldn't take it personally." They also expressed a better understanding of what losses can amount to when property is uninsured, and how the need for a security system can be an attempt to feel safe at home again.

- ***Offenders will verbalize more responsibility and use fewer excuses for their actions.***

This objective was not met. Measurement of responsibility and excuses was done using Ball's Neutralization Scale. As noted in the previous section, significant changes were found for the four week time frame in the the control group, which recorded no sessions.

- ***Victims and offenders will relate conceptions they have of each other, thus providing an opportunity to gain a better understanding of each other as individuals rather than as stereotyped labels.***

This objective was met. In the victims only, offenders only, and joint sessions, participants discussed images they have of each other. For example, one offender stated that he did not think of victims as being old people. In a joint session, one victim shared his mis-conception of young offenders as Native with a group that included Native young offenders.

- ***Victims will identify and discuss with questions, concerns and feelings that they have about being victimized by offenders, and through this discussion, reduce***

anxiety, enabling them to leave the event behind them and go on with their lives.

This objective was partially met. Victims did identify questions they had about the criminal justice system, particularly in the second program sequence. These questions had more to do with crime in general, such as what young offenders are like in terms of background and operations of the Young Offender Centre. Question #4 on the feedback questionnaire solicited views on whether victims felt the sessions enabled them to better deal with some of the feelings they had about being victimized. Five out of six victims agreed.

- *The Edmonton Police Service will increase their involvement in the area of victim-offender contact.*

This objective was partially met. With police involvement in the first program sequence the objective was met, however when the officer was unable to address the offenders in the group, it was not possible to find a replacement officer.

- *The victim-offender program will add to the range of programming currently offered in the Edmonton Young Offender Centre.*

This objective was met in the short term. No commitment was made either by the Young Offender Branch or the group leader to continue to run the program beyond the time frame of the action research project. Since the completion of these program sequences, no victim-offender programming has been offered at the Young Offender Centre.

CHAPTER 7: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has described the design and implementation of a victim-offender program along with the research procedures used to test assumptions dealing with victims in Sykes and Matza's theory of delinquency, Techniques of Neutralization. The results of the two program sequences have been presented, along with the evaluation research findings. There are both theoretical and practical implications of the study findings. The theoretical implications relating to Sykes and Matza's Techniques of Neutralization will first be discussed, followed by the practical implications relating to the operation of victim-offender programs.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in Chapter 2, Sykes and Matza identify denial of the victim as one of five techniques of neutralization that delinquents use to justify law violations. This technique deals with the failure of offenders to admit that their actions caused injury or hurt, and suggests that "the potentiality for victimization would seem to be a function of social distance between the delinquent and others" (Sykes & Matza, p. 221). The victim-offender program was an attempt to target this technique by confronting offenders with victims, and lessen the "social distance." Success was measured by the level of excuses or justifications for law violations as itemized on Ball's Neutralization Scale.

There was a significant difference in the scores between experimental and control groups after participation in the program, however, it was in the opposite direction from that which was hypothesized. Possible reasons have been offered in Chapter 6 to account for these findings. Although the analysis of co-variance suggests results that are opposite to those that were anticipated, the number of offenders in the sample was very

small. Further studies involving larger samples and allowing for more program sequences over a longer period of time might yield different results.

The size of the sample also limits the generalization of the findings, and while there was random assignment, there was not random selection. In addition, the composition of the groups underscores the complexity of the question: why offenders commit crimes, and what programs will work under what circumstances. In further studies, consideration of individual characteristics of offenders such as age, educational levels, family background and involvement in other types of crimes is strongly recommended.

It is also possible that once offenders have committed a number of break and enters, they are less likely to be affected by meeting victims than first time offenders. The setting of the study, as noted previously, not only limited the offenders available for selection, but limits generalizing the findings of the study to any other setting other than Edmonton and Calgary Young Offender Centres. Despite these limitations, the study does serve a purpose as more indepth evaluation of a victim offender program of the same type as existing programs. This is a starting point for further study in the area of victim-offender programs.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Review of literature on victim-offender programs and interviews with persons involved in victim-offender programming was extremely useful not only in the design and

evaluation of the sessions, but in predicting how victims and offenders would respond to the material presented and to each other.

The content of the sessions and areas which victims found useful were based on the above information. Given the responses to the feedback questionnaires and comments made in the sessions, future sessions would include topics such as the Edmonton Young Offender Centre, the Youth Justice System, and time for victims and offenders to share their experiences.

Although the Edmonton Police Service was supportive of the program in terms of providing information (and having an officer come once), they were not prepared to offer a time commitment for staff for ongoing presentations. In future the presentation on victim services could be done by the group leader (as in program sequence #2) or by a volunteer with the Victim Services Unit. The most desirable situation however, would be for the Victim Services Co-ordinator to speak as in program sequence #1.

Similarly, the Young Offender Branch, Correctional Services, provided the facility for the groups for the duration of the research project, but were not prepared to commit any staff to continuation of the program. In addition to the time involved in actually running the groups, a considerable amount of time was spent compiling lists of eligible victims, sending letters and making follow-up phone calls. Some or all of these tasks could be completed by volunteers with the Edmonton Police Service or the Young Offender Centre. Decreasing the frequency of the program sequences from one every eight weeks to one every three months would decrease the number of staff hours needed

to run the groups. Whether there are staff who have the necessary qualifications to run the groups is not known.

In Chapter 6 it was noted that the lack of change in justifications of delinquent acts may be due to the lack of commitment by the offenders to change. To address this, the content of future groups could be more focused, dealing directly with themes of individual responsibility for ones actions, and the inappropriateness of excuses. Again however, whether or not there would be qualified staff to run this type of group is not known.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the information generated by this study, three recommendations are offered. The first relates to implications for further research and the others with practice.

Ball's Neutralization Scale

Victim-offender programs that were reviewed as background to this study used strictly feedback questionnaires to evaluate the benefits of the programs. It is recommended that future groups continue to use the Neutralization Scale in a pre- and post-test form, even though the results of the study were inconclusive on this outcome measure. A link between meeting victims and decrease in justifications and excuses for delinquent behaviour may yet be found by increasing the number of victim and offender joint sessions. The scale could also be used with groups that have a different content such as the anger management group to evaluate program effectiveness.

Future Victim-Offender Groups

Feedback from victims and offenders did indicate that the program was helpful to participants. This type of program should continue in its present form with the addition of more joint sessions.

Use of Volunteers

Given the restrictions in terms of staff from the Edmonton Police Service and the Young Offender Branch every attempt should be made to continue the program utilizing volunteers from both organizations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - List of Persons Interviewed

APPENDIX 2 - Letter to Victims

APPENDIX 3 - Feedback Questionnaire - Victims

APPENDIX 4 - Feedback Questionnaires - Offenders

APPENDIX 5 - Balls Neutralization Scale (Pre- and Post-test)

APPENDIX 6 - Consent Form - Victims

APPENDIX 7 - Consent Form/Program Description - Offenders

APPENDIX 1 - Persons Interviewed

Kim Pate, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society. Personal Communication, March 3, 1992.

Kathay Gibson, Co-ordinator, Kelowna Mediation Services, B.C. Personal Communication, March 3, 1992.

Dave Gustafson, Executive Director, Community Justice Initiatives, B.C Ministry of Attorney General. Personal Communication, March 3, 1992.

Constable Bob Cook, Victim Services Unit, Calgary Police Service. Personal Communication, August 12, 1991.

Keith Brooks, Research Assistant, Calgary Police Service. Personal Communication, August 12, 1991.

Janine Miani, Caseworker, Calgary Young Offender Center. Personal Communication, June 5, 1991.

Wayne Reddon, Director, Edmonton Young Offender Center. Personal Communication, June 5, 1991.

Staff Sargent Hugh Richards, Youth Unit, Edmonton Police Service. Personal Communication, October 14, 1991.

Staff Sargent Peter Zaharko, Youth Unit, Edmonton Police Service. Personal Communication, February 26, 1992.

Constable Leray Whitback, Co-ordinator, Victim Services Unit, Edmonton Police Service. Personal Communication, February 26, 1992.

Gerry Wright, Deputy Director, Programs, Edmonton Young Offender Centre. Personal Communication, January 12, 1992.

Dr. Patrick Thauberger, Co-ordinator, Treatment Services, Correctional Services Division Alberta Justice. Personal Communication, March 26, 1992.

APPENDIX 2 - Letter to Victims

Dear

My name is Sandy Prokopiw, and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. I am writing to request your help with a graduate thesis on the topic of victim offender groups. Your name and address were obtained from the Edmonton Police Service, who are assisting me in my research.

The program involves persons who have experienced residential Break and Enter meeting with other person who have had the same experience to share their thoughts and feelings and receive information about the Youth Justice System. This victim-offender program also offers victims the opportunity to meet as a group with young offenders who have committed Break and Enter offences and are housed at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre.

A significant number of residential Break-ins remain unsolved, or do not go to trial. Victims in these situations do not have the opportunity to find out about the offender, and often have no opportunity to discuss their concerns. The victim offender program provides this opportunity.

The program will involve a series of two consecutive Mondays, and the next Wednesday, with the first session on September 28, the second on October 5, and the third on October 14, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. The meetings will take place at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre. I will be available to assist with transportation, if needed. There will be 4 to 8 victims in the first and second sessions, and the same number of victims as well as 4 to 8 offenders in the second session. I will serve as group leader and moderator for the discussion. The agenda is as follows:

Session #1 - group of 4 - 8 victims

- introduction of group leader and participants and the agenda for session #1 (approx. 15 min.)
- presentation on the Young Offenders Act (approx. 45 min.)
- questions and discussion (approx. 15 min.)
- break (approx 10 min.)
- orientation to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre (approx. 1/2 hour)
- questions and discussion (approx. 10 min.)
- wrap-up and reminder of date/time/plce of next meeting (approx. 10 min.)

Session #2 - group of 4 - 8 victims

- introduction of the agenda for Session#2 (approx. 10 min.)
- discussion within the group about the experiences of each participant around their own Break and Enter such as damage, items stolen, subsequent difficulties, ec. (approx. 1 hour)
- break (approx 10 min.)

- preparation to meet the offenders through discussion of what each victim would like to tell/ask offenders (approx 1/2 hour)
- role plays in which one victim plays the victim, and another the offender in order to try out ways of expressing their feelings to offenders (approx 1/2 hour)
- summary of the discussion and reminder of the date/time/place of the next meeting (approx.. 15 min.)

Session #3 - victims and offenders - 4 - 8 of each

- introduction of participants and the agenda for Session #3 (approx. 15 min.)
- victims and offenders will talk about their own experiences, one victim, one offender, alternating, until all participants have had a chance to speak (approx. 1 hour)
- break (approx 10 min.)
- victims and offenders will address individual participants with questions and responses to what has been said (approx. 1 hour)
- completion of questionnaires (approx. 15 min.)

Confidentiality will be observed so that neither victims or offenders will use last names, and responses to questionnaires will be anonymous. The results of the questionnaires, as well as the results of the program will be made available once the research is completed if you are interested.

If you do not want to participate in the program, please fill in the bottom part of this letter, and place it in the envelope provided. You will not be contacted again. If you would like to participate in the program or would like more information, disregard the bottom part of the letter. If I do not hear from you by September 21, I will be contacting you by telephone to arrange a personal interview.

Thank-you for your time.

Sandy Prokopiw, B.A., B.S.W.
 Probation Officer
 Correctional Services, Young Offender Branch

I do not wish to participate in the victim offender program.

APPENDIX 3 - Feedback Questionnaire - Victims

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VICTIM PARTICIPANTS

Please circle the number which most accurately describes how you feel about the statement.

Part I

1. My experience with the group sessions was helpful.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

2. The sessions challenged impressions and stereotypes I held about offenders in general.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

3. The sessions have given me a better understanding about offenders and their motivation for committing offences.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

4. Information obtained as a result of the program enabled me to better deal with some of the feelings I had about being victimized.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

5. I found the general information provided on young offenders and the criminal justice system helpful.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

6. I found it helpful to talk about the experience of having had my home broken into with victims of a similar offence.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

7. I found that during the meeting, the offenders were honest.

Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5

8. I am glad to have had the opportunity to confront the offenders with the results of their actions.

APPENDIX 4 - Feedback Questionnaire - Offenders

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OFFENDER PARTICIPANTS

Please circle the response which most accurately describes how you feel about the statement.

Part I

1. My experience with the program was helpful.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

2. The sessions challenged impressions I had about victims in general.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

3. The sessions provided me with a better understanding about victims and how they experience crime.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

4. Participation in the program has made me want to change my lifestyle upon release.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

In order to provide me with general feedback to be used in improving the program, please answer the following questions as completely as you can.

Part II

5. Which if any, of your opinions were changed or remained the same as a result of the program?
6. How would you describe the overall experience?
7. How would you recommend that the program be improved?
8. Other comments, suggestions and/or concerns

APPENDIX 5 - Ball's Neutralization Scale (Pre- and Post-test)

THE WAY A GUY LOOKS AT THINGS

Adults make a lot of statements about guys that get into trouble and guys that stay out of trouble, but we think it is best to let guys speak for themselves. We want to find out how you look at things. We don't want your name, just how you look at things.

A sixteen-year-old boy, named Jack, gets into trouble. Read each situation carefully and see how you feel about the various excuses given. If you strongly agree with the statement, circle SA (Strongly Agree). If you agree with the statement, circle A (Agree). Circle U (Undecided) if you are undecided. If you disagree with the statement, circle D (Disagree). Circle SD (Strongly Disagree) if you strongly disagree with the statement.

REMEMBER! This is not a test.

There are no right or wrong answers. The right answer for you is how you feel about the various excuses. Try to answer for one excuse at a time without thinking about any of the others.

SITUATION #1

Jack gets a club and goes with his friends to look for another group of boys. They find them in a park, and a fight starts. During the fight Jack hits another boy with the club, and almost kills him.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| SA A U D SD | 1. People should not blame Jack this time <u>if</u> he was trying to protect himself. |
| SA A U D SD | 2. People should not blame Jack this time <u>if</u> the other boys were trying to take over his part of town. |
| SA A U D SD | 3. People should not blame Jack this time <u>if</u> he just "went crazy" with anger for a second. |
| SA A U D SD | 4. People should not blame Jack this time <u>if</u> he had been drinking. |
| SA A U D SD | 5. People should not blame Jack this time <u>if</u> he was swinging the club just to scare the boy. |
| SA A U D SD | 6. People should not blame Jack this time if all the boys were using clubs. |
| SA A U D SD | 7. People should not blame Jack this time if the other boy had been trying to hit him. |
| SA A U D SD | 8. People should not blame Jack this time if the boy was an outsider who came to cause trouble. |
| SA A U D SD | 9. People should not blame Jack this time if the other boy had once made him look like a coward. |

- SA A U D SD 10. People should not blame Jack this time if the other boy was beating one of Jack's friends.

SITUATION #2

While loafing around in a store, Jack takes some things without paying for them.

- SA A U D SD 11. People should not blame Jack if this was the normal thing to do where Jack lived.

- SA A U D SD 12. People should not blame Jack if the owner had fired his father without any reason.

- SA A U D SD 13. People should not blame Jack if the store has more of the things than it can ever sell.

- SA A U D SD 14. People should not blame Jack if the owner is rich and won't miss it.

- SA A U D SD 15. People should not blame Jack if the things were old and could not be sold anyway.

- SA A U D SD 16. People should not blame Jack if everybody knows the owner sells things that are against the law.

- SA A U D SD 17. People should not blame Jack if the owner himself had stolen a lot of money and left town.

- SA A U D SD 18. People should not blame Jack if he was getting even with the owner for cheating him.

- SA A U D SD 19. People should not blame Jack if everyone knows that the owner is very crooked.

- SA A U D SD 20. People should not blame Jack if the owner cheats poor people out of everything.

SITUATION #3

Jack stops a man on a dark street one night when nobody else is around. He pulls knife and makes the man hand over his money.

- SA A U D SD 21. People should not blame Jack if the man had stolen money from Jack.

- SA A U D SD 22. People should not blame Jack if the man is a big crook himself.

- SA A U D SD 23. People should not blame Jack if the man had dared anybody to try to rob him.

- SA A U D SD 24. People should not blame Jack if the man had got his money by cheating the poor people.

- SA A U D SD 25. People should not blame Jack if he had to prove to his friends he could do it.

- SA A U D SD 26. People should not blame Jack if all the boys had promised to try it.
- SA A U D SD 27. People should not blame Jack if someone said he was too afraid to try it.
- SA A U D SD 28. People should not blame Jack if he did it to prove his courage to everybody.
- SA A U D SD 29. People should not blame Jack if his mother needed some money bad.
- SA A U D SD 30. People should not blame Jack if he was doing it just to help a friend.

SITUATION #4

Jack goes along with his gang. All the boys carry knives and guns. They attack another gang, and Jack shoots a boy. The boy is badly hurt, but he lives.

- SA A U D SD 31. People should not blame Jack if the other gang had been getting ready to attack.
- SA A U D SD 32. People should not blame Jack if the other gang had asked for the fight.
- SA A U D SD 33. People should not blame Jack if the other boy jumped him.
- SA A U D SD 34. People should not blame Jack if the other boy said he would kill him.
- SA A U D SD 35. People should not blame Jack if the other boy was trying to shoot him.
- SA A U D SD 36. People should not blame Jack if the other boy came at him with a knife.
- SA A U D SD 37. People should not blame Jack if the other boy was always looking for trouble.
- SA A U D SD 38. People should not blame Jack if he was only trying to prove he was a man.
- SA A U D SD 39. People should not blame Jack if he had to go along to show he was a real friend.
- SA A U D SD 40. People should not blame Jack if it was either fight or leave his friends alone.

APPENDIX 6 - Consent Form - Victims**CONSENT FORM FOR VICTIM PARTICIPANTS**

I have recieved a letter which describes the victim offender program, and I have discussed the program with Sandy Prokoplw, Masters of Social Work student. I understand what the victim offender program at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre involves.

I agree to participate in the victim offender program on
_____, _____ and _____,
from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

APPENDIX 7 - Consent Form/Program Description - Offenders

Your assistance is requested to participate in a pilot program at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre. The program is part of research being done for a graduate thesis on the topic of victim offender groups.

The program involves persons who have experienced a Break and Enter in their homes meeting with other persons who have the same experience to share their thoughts and feelings and receive information about the Youth Justice System. Victims will also be given the opportunity to meet with young offenders such as yourself, who have committed Break and Enters and are housed in the Edmonton Young Offender Centre.

Young offenders who participate in the program will receive information about how victims feel about what has happened to them from two sources: A presentation from a representative of the Victim Services Unit of the Edmonton Police Service, and from victims themselves. Young offenders will also have the opportunity to discuss how they feel about their offences in a group session with only other young offenders present, and prepare questions to ask victims or anything else they might want to say to the victims.

The program will involve a series of meetings, one per week, for three weeks, commencing on _____ from about 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. The agenda for these meetings is as follows:

Session #1

- introduction of group leader, resource person, and participants as well as agenda for the session
- presentation on the impact of residential Break and Enter on victims from the perspective of a Victim's Assistance Program representative, Edmonton Police Service
- questions and discussion
- wrap-up and reminder of date/time/place of next meeting

Session #2

- introduction of the agenda for the session
- discussion within the group about their own records
- preparation to meet the victims through discussion of what each offender would like to tell/ask victims
- role plays where one offender plays the offender, and another the victim in order to try out ways of expressing their feelings to victims
- summary of the discussion and reminder of the next meeting

Session #3 - victims and offenders

- introduction of participants and the agenda for the session
- victims and offenders will talk about their own experiences, one victim, one offender, alternating, until all participants have had a chance to speak
- break

- victims and offenders will address individual participants with questions and responses to what has been said
- completion of questionnaires

If you agree to participate in the program, you will be given a questionnaire to complete. After this is done, your name will be put on a list of other persons who have also agreed to participate. From that list, half will be chosen to participate. You have a 50/50 chance of being selected. If selected, you will go on to participate in the sessions, if not, you will be asked to complete another questionnaire in about a months time. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out your attitude towards offences, and if that changes after one month. If you complete the program, you will be given a third questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how you liked the program and what you would like to see improved.

Participation in this program is strictly voluntary. There are no incentives with regard to levels, or early release. The program will provide an opportunity to find out what victims feel about their experiences, and for you to tell them anything you might want to.

Confidentiality will be observed in that neither yourself, or the victims will use last names. Responses to questionnaires will be kept confidential and anonymous. The results of the questionnaires will be used in a general way for a Master's Thesis. A summary will be made available to you once the research is completed if you are interested.

If you have any questions about the program, you can ask the group leader at any time. Also, if something was discussed in group which made you feel uncomfortable or upset, you can call the group leader and discuss it one-to-one.

The above program description has been explained to me by Sandy Prokopiw, Masters of Social Work student, and I understand what the victim offender program at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre involves.

I agree to complete the questionnaire.

Offender

University of Calgary, Thesis Advisor: Joe Hudson 492-0405