
PAPERS ARE AVAILABLE INDIVIDUALLY ON LINE:

#1 The right kind of shame for crime prevention Lawrence W Sherman and Heather Strang

#2 The victim's perspective Heather Strang and Lawrence W Sherman

#3 Restorative justice and offenders' respect for the law Lawrence W Sherman and Geoffrey C Barnes

#4 Restorative justice and deterring crime Lawrence W Sherman and Heather Strang

Each paper is based on efforts of Australian Federal Police in Canberra to adapt reintegrative shaming into justice techniques. The attempt is to shame the act, not the individual, making it more likely for the person to give up certain behaviors. One mechanism for doing this is through Family Group Conferencing.

DESIGN: The research design included post measures with a control group. Eligible offenders were randomly assigned to court or to conference. Included were 111 young offenders and 437 drink drivers, many of whom had no natural victim. Young offenders (up to age 29) had offenses ranging from shoplifting to sexual assault. Court cases and conferences were observed. The average length of an FGC was 71 minutes. Offender interviews were conducted at the conclusion of the process.

PARTICIPATION RATE: 86% of those victims invited to participate in conferences attended.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FGC: Results include: FGC yielded more reintegrative shaming than tradition court procedures; FGC evoked more forgiveness; more expressions of remorse; offenders going through FGC were more likely to feel the shame of the crime; 80% believed they had paid their debt and gotten the crime behind them. 77% of the young offenders felt they expressed their views in conference compared with 54% of those in court. Nearly all the drink drivers felt they understood the process in conference, compared to 75% of those in court. 63% of conferenced youth offenders said their rights were respected a lot, contrasted with 38 % of those processed through the courts.

RESTITUTION: A smaller sub-sample of victims was also interviewed: 35 victims of offenders going to conference and 36 victims of offenders going to court. Those victims participating in conferences were ten times more likely to receive some form of "repair."

IMPACT: Victims who went to conference felt safer than their counterparts who went to court and were less likely to feel that their offender will commit another crime. For offenders, those going through conferences were more likely to feel that if they reoffend they will be caught than those prosecuted in the courts. Both youth and drink offenders were more likely to believe that they felt encouraged to obey the law than those who were traditionally processed.

FAIRNESS: 74% of the offenders felt the outcome of FGC to be fair, compared with 54% of those prosecuted in the courts.