Dignan, (1990). Repairing the Damage: An Evaluation of an Experimental Adult Reparation Scheme in Kettering, Northamptonshire. Sheffield: Centre for Criminological Legal Research, Faculty of Law, University of Sheffield.

NOT AVAILABLE ON LINE

DESIGN: This study reports data gathered on an experimental program located in Kettering, England. Offenders referred for possible mediation came almost entirely from the police, with an additional small number through prosecutors. Over a three year period (1987-89), two hundred and ninety-one offenders were referred of whom 74% were accepted. Twenty-six offenders and only 16 victims were unwilling to participate. A fair number of offenders were inappropriate referrals and therefore not accepted. To be eligible an offender had to be seventeen or older, have no court record, admit guilt, and be a likely prospect for prosecution. The most common charges were theft, criminal damage, and assault.

DIVERSION: One hundred and fifty of those offenders participating in the program were matched with offenders from Wellingborough in order to derive comparisons regarding systemic change. Based on those comparisons, it is reasonable to assume that at least sixty percent of the offenders participating in the Kettering program were true diversions from court prosecution. In 13% of the Wellingborough cases, similar offenders were handled informally suggesting that this percentage represents the widening the net effect of the Kettering program--much less than most would predict. There was a dramatic increase in Kettering to use cautions with the program rather than prosecute. Overall recidivism rates between the matched samples were quite similar: 18.5% for Kettering and 20.5% for Wellingborough.

PARTICIPATION RATES: Of those accepted into the program, less than half opted for face-to-face mediation. In the first year of operation, 32% chose to do so. In the third year, 43% met face-to-face. In cases where victim and offender knew each other, a little over fifty percent chose to meet face-to-face.

RESTITUTION: Across all cases, agreements were reached in 86% and of those 91% were kept. Successful completion for those involved in face-to-face mediation was 96% compared to 83% who used a go between. Overall, the number of agreements including compensation increased over the life of the project from 34% in year one to 61% in year three. Also the average amount of compensation nearly tripled during that same time period.

SATISFACTION: A smaller sub-sample was interviewed regarding satisfaction with the program. This included 50 offenders, 45 individual victims and 45 corporate victims. Sixty-two percent of individual victims and 71% of the corporate victims were satisfied. About half the offenders were satisfied, but their response rate was less than robust. Those involved in face-to-face mediation were more likely to be satisfied than those who worked with a go between.

RECIDIVISM: Recidivism rates for those going through face-to-face mediation were somewhat lower than those who did not: 15.4% compared with 21.6%. The author also cites a marginal cost savings with the implementation of the project.