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## **RESEARCH REPORT**

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### **Assessing a Residential Treatment Program in the Context of Rhode Island's Juvenile Justice Reforms**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Study Overview

Since 2003, Rhode Island juvenile justice system's aim is to deinstitutionalize as many children as possible focusing on prevention, early intervention; and utilizing local community-based resources. This strategy is a response to decades of national youthful over-institutionalization, and extant research demonstrating the ill effects of earlier policies for juveniles and for the economy. The new strategies have indeed reduced state costs for care, but no tests have been performed to assess these effects on children who are in the state system.

Of particular concern in the present research are children whose care may be enhanced by removing them from unsafe or abusive homes and providing a safe, healthy environment in which to rehabilitate. The state already has some of these programs that accept boys through further order of the court as an alternative to serving their sentence at the state's youth prison (the Rhode Island Training School, RITS): the oldest of which is Ocean Tides, Inc; an in-house residential school and rehabilitation program for adjudicated boys that has been in operation for over 40 years. However; in the state's amiable efforts to deinstitutionalize the system, they may be overlooking the effective nuances of different types of out of home placement that already exist in the state.

This research examines a large database on information about the 2,053 boys who resided at Ocean Tides for treatment and care from 1975 through 2015. State reforms are identified that began to directly affect the program around 2006, and so this study researches differences in the program's effectiveness before and after these changes focusing on child outcomes for measures of success. The following seven research questions are examined:

1. Has the completion rate for Ocean Tides boys significantly dropped since 2006?

2. Has the rate at which boys engage in violence while in residence at Ocean Tides increased since 2006?
3. Has noncompliant behavior for boys in residence at Ocean Tides increased since 2006?
4. Has academic achievement for boys in residence in the program decreased since 2006?
5. Has alcohol and drug use while in residence in the program increased since 2006?
6. Has cooperation with teachers, staff, counselors, and other residents decreased since 2006?
7. Have legal infractions committed while residing in the program increased since 2006?

One population that may particularly benefit from the Ocean Tides program, are boys who experience child abuse or who are otherwise exposed to violence at home. Their families may be ill-equipped to comply with outpatient treatment programs that aim to deinstitutionalize youthful offenders. Research on the effects of child abuse, exposure to parental interpersonal violence (PIPV), and poly-victimization is reviewed in this report and is understood in the context of General Strain Theory.

## **Research Findings**

Research findings indicate that Ocean Tides employees (administrators, staff, teachers, social workers, and consultants) have done a remarkable job providing needed care to their residents regardless of state changes that cut supports to the program. Boys in the program since 2006 are just as likely to complete the program than before; they academically perform as successfully as before; and they are no more likely than before to engage in serious drug and alcohol abuse while in treatment. The most striking results are decreases in violent behavior in the program for boys whose violence is related to child abuse and exposure to PIPV prior to entering the program. Violence in the program dropped by between 50% to 70% for boys who



experienced one of six types of child abuse, and it dropped by between 59% to 84% for boys who were exposed to any of six types of PIPV. Ocean Tides is a five-day a week program and the boys are in their own homes on weekends. They are also housed with other delinquent boys during weekdays while they are in placement, so there are plenty of opportunities for them to be deviant. These findings indicate that the effects of child abuse and exposure to PIPV are mitigated by their experiences in the program even when opportunities to offend are high.

Regardless of the successes, managing these boys requires more time, efforts, and training now than it did before 2006 due to some significant changes in the delinquent population. Boys are much more likely to have a violent past when they enter the program now; be unruly, and non-compliant in family counseling, with social workers, and residential staff in the program. They are also more likely to incur official delinquency charges while in the program for new offenses. More staff may be needed now to handle these problems, and employees may experience greater stress as a result of these changes that requires specialized training to manage.

## **Moving Forward**

Stakeholders in the Rhode Island Juvenile Justice system have admirable intentions, but they must recognize that one size does not fit all in juvenile justice approaches. Current efforts to strengthen community-based, local in-home treatment for families and their delinquent children using various counseling programs, job training, child care, and educational strategies should continue. This works for families that are capable and willing to comply with state-ordered intervention and prevention. Some boys; however, need family-surrogates that are well trained and have the resources that are necessary to provide safe and supportive environments in which

to grow and learn. Their families need counseling and troubled boys need the time and space to change and to learn how to transition back into their families and into their communities constructively. It is irrational to assume that a non-responsive, violent family would suddenly become compliant in outpatient treatment. Boys who experience violence at home are unlikely to thrive in that atmosphere. They are also unlikely to prosper in traditional confinement because they are not only offenders, but victims of crimes as well. More research is needed to assess specific strategies for handling boys who hail into the juvenile justice system from violent families.

### **Research Problem and Study Overview**

Rhode Island's juvenile justice system is guided by several committees and offices that are jointly efforts to reduce secure confinement for juveniles. The aim is to deinstitutionalize as many children in need in the state as possible focusing on prevention, early intervention; and utilizing local community-based resources. A fundamental shift in focus to family members as the primary resources for accomplishing these goals is explained in the 2003 report of the Task Force and identifies several ways in which the shift would solve many of the State's financial problems in the system that were created by out of home placements and out of state care (Izzo, Costantino, & Carl, 2003).

Research indicates that these new care strategies for youthful offenders in Rhode Island have indeed reduced the costs of care, but health care providers argue that cost reductions should not be the only marker of a successful rehabilitation program. One significant area of concern in the new strategy is that some juvenile delinquents are in abusive homes and may not be able to comply with treatment programs that do not remove the youngster from the home. Residential placement may be necessary when a youngster becomes unmanageable at home, or the family is not capable of or not willing to comply with community-based interventions. These adolescents are not necessarily the most dangerous criminals. In fact, they often are not dangerous at all, but they may not receive the rehabilitative care that they need in home confinement and outpatient treatment.

## **Background and Literature Review**

Incarcerating youthful offenders while providing no family intervention, counseling, or reintegration back into their homes and/or the community increases future violent offending. Likewise, returning delinquent youth to abusive households is a bad decision for any reason. Placing them in abusive homes for community-based intervention is not likely to be effective if they are experiencing violence at home. Bad parenting and the absence of positive parenting are sources of strain that lead to delinquency, and neither community-based interventions nor incarceration in prison relieve this strain.

### **Policy Background**

Around 1999, Rhode Island, like most states began taking great strides to reduce the number of residents housed in their youth prison; the Rhode Island Training School (RITS). This initiative was part of a much larger one to redesign the ways in which the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) responds to children in need, including delinquents. The goal was to overhaul disconnected, faulty, and costly separate programs, so that they might better serve youth and families in the state to produce better child outcomes and do it more efficiently (Izzo, et al. 2003)

Overhauling the system was prompted by national and local trends. Juvenile crime in the 1960's was 40% to 50% higher than in the previous decade due to demographic changes (President's Commission, 1967), and it correspondingly decreased by as much as 70% in the 1980s as the last of the baby boomers simply aged out of crime (Steffensmeier & Harer, 1987). A much feared, but never materialized impending increase in crime was predicted for the 1990s spurring the child super predator myth and America toughened up on juvenile offenders (The

'Superpredator' Scare, 2014). Reforms resulted in a larger proportion of them being sentenced to confinement and for longer terms.

In Rhode Island, the juvenile arrest rate fell 56% between 1995 and 2011, which closely matched the national decline of 52% (Go Local Providence, 2014). Nonetheless, juveniles were being incarcerated at alarming rates up to the new millennium; even being detained pre-adjudication while they awaited their court hearings (Holman & Ziedenberg, 2011). As crime fell and fewer juveniles were being arrested, more of the ones who were arrested were being held in confinement for less serious offences, and for longer sentences. The result was costly.

The RITS experienced serious overcrowding problems throughout the 1990s, despite a decline in the actual occurrence of crime. A report by the Rhode Island DCYF titled *The NEW Rhode Island Training School for Youth* (RI DCYF, 2004) projected massive increases in juvenile delinquency over the following six years and lacked adequate space. The building was deteriorating since it was built in the 1850s, and the programs it offered were inadequate. Recidivism rates were between 33% and 64%, and it did not offer any kind of transitional re-entry program to prepare juveniles for success beyond release (RI DCYF, 2004). The facility and the program were deemed unsafe and ineffective, and the proposed overhaul was estimated to cost \$66,499,436 (RI DCYF, 2004).

Over thirty years of research now attests to the ill effects of juvenile over-incarceration on the social, psychological, medical, and economic wellbeing of children as they grow into adulthood. These problems place a consequential burden on society at large, specifically in small states like Rhode Island. Recognizing these problems, in the new millennium national trends have about-faced implementing many recommendations that are reminiscent of those articulated by the 1965 President's Commission on Crime; primarily aiming to deinstitutionalize youthful

offenders and divert them to the help that they need for rehabilitation (President's Commission, 1967).

The DCYF oversees all youth initiatives in the state, including juvenile justice. The RI System of Care Task Force formed in 2001 and developed three committees; two (the Foster Care, and the Current Reality Committees) gathered and analyzed data on the ill effects of juvenile confinement and on possible alternatives (Izzo et al., 2003). They reported their findings to the third committee, the Ideal System of Care Committee that developed a plan for family-centered and community-based responses to children in need. The RI Children's Cabinet, established in 1991, consists of the directors of eight major departments that oversee child wellbeing in the state and is responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Task Force. A fourth Task Force committee, the System of Care Implementation Committee is staffed primarily by the DCYF, and is charged with orchestrating the changes designed by the Task Force under the guidance of the Children's Cabinet. All of these activities are governed by the RI Office of the Child Advocate, created in 1979 and charged with protecting the rights of children in state care.

The Organized System of Care for Children in Rhode Island resulted from the work of the Task Force. Rhode Island partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2009 in their efforts to reduce secure confinement for juveniles. The expressed aim of this initiative is to deinstitutionalize as many children in need in the state as possible focusing on prevention, early intervention; and when necessary, utilizing local community-based resources. A fundamental shift in focus to family members as the primary resources for accomplishing these goals is explained in the 2003 report of the Task Force and identifies several ways in which the shift

would solve many of the State's financial problems in the system that were created by out of home placements and out of state care (Izzo et al., 2003).

New strategies have been quite effective for reducing the number of juveniles that are housed in the Training School. Between 2004 and 2013, the number of juveniles in the RITS declined by nearly 54% (RI Kids Count, 2014). RI Kids Count (2014) attributes this decline to community-based alternatives to incarceration in the state such as "Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care," "juvenile hearing boards, skills training programs, restorative justice programs, day and evening reporting centers, and substance abuse and mental health treatment programs." However, it is important to note that no outcome evaluation of any of these programs has been conducted.

One important component of the RI System of Care Task Force plan was to build into it a system-wide evaluation component to test child outcomes of the program. Appendix K of the Task Force report (Izzo et al, 2003) includes several pages that detail a process that involves five levels of evaluation such as program measures and community population measures. The goals of the evaluation component are to "help answer questions about what works, for whom, under what conditions and how to improve program delivery and service," and to "determine which implementation activities and contextual factors are supporting or hindering outcomes and overall program effectiveness" (Izzo et al., 2003). In March 2015, RI Senate bill 0485 passed drawing attention to the fact that the Children's Cabinet – that is responsible for overseeing the new System of Care was remiss in its mandate to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. They were ordered to do the evaluations they had promised. Many RI politicians question the new System's overall success for child wellbeing, and argue that a reduction in confinement should not be the only marker of success.

One significant area of concern in the new strategy is that some families may not be capable of providing the kinds of support for their children that are required by the RI System of Care. Juvenile delinquents who experience child abuse or who are otherwise exposed to violence at home may not be able to comply with treatment programs that do not remove the youngster from the home placing responsibility for compliance into more capable hands than their parents. While many people are in favor of keeping troubled youngsters with their families and treating them as outpatients in their local communities, residential placement may be more effective when a youngster becomes unmanageable at home, or the family is not capable of or not willing to comply with community-based interventions.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

Agnew (2005) explains in his General Theory of Crime that family is the most prominent place in a child's life to experience strain, and juveniles use delinquency as a way to relieve that strain. Family is a good place to look for potential causes for delinquent behaviors that occur later in life. Some of the worst sources of strain that children experience occur in the home as personal abuses and exposure to parental interpersonal violence (PIPV). Domestic violence among adults occurs with children present in the home in as much as 48% of families that seek clinical mental health assistance (McDonald, Jouriles, Norwood, Ware, & Ezell, 2000). These are not isolated events in these families; on average, they occur once or twice per year (McDonald et al., 2000). Hamby, Finkelhor, Turner, and Ormrod (2011) have conducted the most comprehensive nationally representative study to date on exposure to PIPV. Data gathered from 4,549 respondents in 2008 revealed that nearly 7% of American youth were exposed to PIPV within the past year, while national lifetime estimates are as high as 26%, with 90% of



victims actually witnessing physical abuse between parents firsthand (Hamby et al., 2011). Lewis, Siegel, and Lewis (1984) report that fifth and sixth grade children rated parental conflict as one of their top three most stressful life events. Cuevas, Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, and Hamby (2013) examine the relative effects of exposure to PIPV between demographic groups and conclude that exposure to PIPV is an equal opportunity offence against children and adolescents.

Research on poly-victimization of abuses indicates children who are personally abused are often also exposed to PIPV (O'Keefe, 1994), and the ill effects of personal child abuse increase by as much as 40% in the presence of exposure to PIPV (for a review, see Onyskiew, 2003).

People would generally agree that children who are physically or sexually abused should be separated from the abusing member of the family so that the abuse stops and physical and emotional healing can occur. The RI System of Care plan supports keeping children with their families even if children are being exposed to PIPV (Izzo et al. 2003). The guiding philosophy mirrors national courts and assumes that it is not as damaging to children as removing them from the home. In the RI System of Care, when a child gets into legal trouble, he/she may be placed on home confinement even if that youth is exposed to PIPV or child abuse that might exacerbate the trouble instead of curb it.

### **Violence Begets Violence.**

Studies find strong correlations between past violent victimization and exposure to PIPV and future violent behavior. Onyskiew's (2003) review of 47 studies published over two decades found that exposure to PIPV increases aggression. Boys tend to experience more externalizing

behavioral problems than girls do such as conduct disorder. Peer aggression and bullying result from exposure to family violence as do anti-social behavior, violent crime, substance abuse, further delinquency and adult criminality (Baldry, 2003; Edleson, 1999; Osofsky, 1999). Ehrensaft, Cohen, Brown, Smailes, Chen, and Johnson (2003) examine 543 cases and find that child physical abuse increases adult violent offending. Murrell, Merwin, Christoff, & Henning (2005) find it increases adult interpersonal violence. Wekerle and Wolfe (1999) studied 1,317 high school students from ten high schools and found that the best predictor of adolescent male violence against female partners is exposure to violence in the home. Steinberg (2000) conducted a longitudinal study examining pathways to delinquency and found similar results.

Incarcerating youthful offenders while providing no family intervention, counseling, or reintegration back into their homes and/or the community increases future violent offending. Likewise, it is reasonable to understand that returning delinquent youth to abusive households for community-based intervention may be ineffective if they are experiencing violence at home. Bad parenting and the absence of positive parenting are sources of strain that lead to delinquency, and neither community interventions nor incarceration in prison relieve this strain. Geffner, Igelman, and Zellner (2003, p. 5) argue that one of the most effective intervention strategies for ameliorating the ill effects of exposure to PIPV is when support people “act as surrogate parents.”

### **A Solution: The Ocean Tides Program**

The Ocean Tides program was established in Rhode Island in 1975 and continues in operation today. It is a residential program that is an alternative to youth prison providing an in-residence rehabilitation program and school for adjudicated boys. The school is run by the La

Salle Christian Brothers and has strong ties to the community and the youngster's families. It is not a locked facility and its residents are on home placement during weekends, holidays, and extended school vacations. The program is highly structured and includes individualized education, individual and family counseling, closely supervised residential life, and a variety of recreational activities for the residents (for a complete description of each program component see Grebstein and Van Wyk, 2016). The program is designed to reduce unnecessary strain that the boys may encounter at home or in their communities; it provides the young men with positive alternatives to criminal activities, and helps to raise self-esteem. Two key components of the program are the provision of regular family counseling while the young men are in residence and gradual transition back into the community by placing them in smaller group homes where they learn how to cook, clean and care for themselves.

The Ocean Tides program is for adjudicated boys ages 13 through 17 who have been sentenced to the RITS and are placed in the program for a one-year term as Further Order of the Court (FOC). Neither religion, nor racial or ethnic backgrounds are in any way factors in determining a boy's eligibility for acceptance into the program. The cost of keeping a youngster at the RITS is considerably more than the cost of educating the youngster at Ocean Tides. For example, in 2013, Ocean Tides was reimbursed by the state \$177.76 per resident per day, which means it costs the state of Rhode Island approximately \$64,882 a year to educate one juvenile in the Ocean Tides school. Compare that to \$174,814 a year to house one juvenile at the RITS (RI DCYF, 2012). Ocean Tides is 63% less expensive to the state than its own youth prison.

### **Research Objectives and Questions**

Many changes occurred in the Ocean Tides program around 2007 following the state's implementation of the System of Care Program, which lumps the Ocean Tides program into the same category of out-of-home placement as the RITS. Strong efforts to redirect children toward in-home-placement may have forced major changes in the ability of Ocean Tides to continue to offer its successful care of delinquents. This trend is reminiscent of a larger national one. For example, Feierman, Mordecai, and Schwartz (2015) demonize what they refer to throughout their paper as "secure placement" programs, but virtually all of the research that they cite on the ill effects of youth incarceration is about traditional youth prisons. They ignore any potential differences in the services that are provided by various types of out of home placements. In fact, a recent census of juvenile residential facilities in the United States finds that "residential treatment centers and group homes outnumbered other types of facilities (Hockenberry, Sickmund, & Sladky, 2015, pg. 3). Thirty nine percent of all 1,985 facilities studied in that research were residential treatment centers that held 42% of juvenile offenders; and 21% were group homes that housed 8% of all juvenile offenders (Hockenberry et al., 2015). Clearly all of these programs are not the same. To date, no research takes a systematic look at differences in the outcomes of this diverse set of programs. Yet they are lumped into the same category with youth prisons in the push to deinstitutionalize youthful offenders to reduce costs. This strategy should be avoided until more is known about which types of programs are more effective than others.

Between 1975 and 2007, the intake policy at Ocean Tides was flexible and each youngster who was referred to Ocean Tides was considered on an individual basis. Acceptance was based on the program's ability to satisfy the rehabilitative goals and needs for the youngster

and to generate positive development. Changes in the intake policy reduced the number of boys who reside in the program at any particular time by cutting that in half – from 65 beds in 2007 to 35 today. Prior to 2007, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families most often headed the family court judge’s referral for boys to Ocean Tides. However, in 2007, the system of care in the state was reorganized into two networks that manage placements in the state. This system of networks created competition for scarce state dollars. Although the family court judges continue to refer children to Ocean Tides, most of those referrals are channeled into treatment by one of these two networks of caregivers, of which Ocean Tides is not a part. As a result of receiving fewer residential placements, four of the community based extension houses or group homes that comprised the Ocean Tides re-entry efforts were closed. The two main facilities are all that remain in Providence and Narragansett, RI. The first house was closed in 2008, followed by a second closing in 2011 and the final two closings occurred in 2013. The closing of these facilities has damaged the ability of the program to maintain a community presence. It has also removed the opportunity to gradually transition the boys’ return to their homes or the community by allowing them to live in a smaller and more intimate environment where they can develop essential life skills. Now 18 year old boys who often have few or no social support networks are being told to make it out on their own in an economic and social climate in which most twenty-somethings are still in their parents’ homes even after completing college. This unrealistic expectation may increase recidivism and undermine the work that is being done at Ocean Tides. Ocean Tides has an active program of family counseling that is maintained throughout the duration of the boys’ stay in the program. Most of this family work occurs either in home visits or a location convenient to the family. Closing the various group homes eliminated a number of

locations around the state that were close to where the families lived and provided convenient places in which the family counseling sessions could take place.

A change in the state's reimbursement policy has also seriously affected Ocean Tides. Prior to 2006, if Ocean Tides kept 90% of its beds filled, it received 100% of its allotment for the year. In 2008, the system of reimbursement changed to a per diem per day so that any day that a bed is not filled, the program is not paid. This means that the funding that Ocean Tides receives per day of operation has significantly decreased. In a residential program, temporary vacant beds are inevitable due to residents completing the program, runaways, and some residents being returned to the RITS because of noncompliance. The change in reimbursement placed severe and ultimately unmanageable financial hardships on the program. Members of the staff need to be paid, teachers, and social workers; they need steady employment. Likewise, retaining good staff members is essential to the program's success. They develop close relationships with the residents. There has been amazingly little turnover among staff despite limited salaries, and many former residents return to visit after completing the program and/or maintain contact with various staff members and administrators on into their adulthood. Funding cutbacks jeopardize these positive outcomes.

The length of time that boys are sentenced to Ocean Tides has also been significantly reduced by the social services networks in the state in efforts to save money. The Ocean Tides program was designed to be one year in length because this was the minimal amount of time that their clinical consultant deemed necessary to accomplish the goals of treatment, which include building a sense of self-worth and confidence in the boys' abilities to pursue law-abiding lives (see explanation in Grebstein and Van Wyk, 2016). With these young men, it takes time to establish a relationship and for them to accept the structure and limits of the program. With

current sentences as short as three months, this does not provide enough time to accomplish what the program is designed to do. Grebstein and Van Wyk's (2016) research clearly shows the effectiveness of a program that is based on one year in residence. There is no indication that a shorter program will be as effective in rehabilitating youthful offenders.

These are all unfortunate developments from both a financial and treatment efficacy perspective. Juvenile justice stakeholders in Rhode Island assume that Ocean Tides can continue to deliver the same high quality program it always has in spite of the massive changes imposed on it since 2007. This study tests this assumption.

### **Research Questions**

In their book, Grebstein and Van Wyk (2016) present research findings on their study of the Ocean Tides Program. That database contains information on program components and child outcomes for boys who were residents in the Ocean Tides Program from 1975 through part of 2006. The present author, completed that database that includes the same information for boys who entered the program from the second part of 2006 through the first half of 2015. This new complete database provides the opportunity to make comparisons between pre- (1975-2006) and post-implementation (2007-2015) of the RI System of Care for Ocean Tides program components and child outcomes. This is not an evaluation study – it does not evaluate the effectiveness of the RI System of Care or the Ocean Tides Program, but it does provide valuable information about the observed changes in youth outcomes following state policy changes.

The overarching objective in this research is to determine whether state mandated cuts in reimbursement, intake and treatment time affect the outcomes of program participants. This question is answered by seven research questions.

1. Has the completion rate for Ocean Tides boys significantly dropped since 2006?
2. Has the rate at which boys engage in violence while in residence at Ocean Tides increased since 2006?
3. Has noncompliant behavior for boys in residence at Ocean Tides increased since 2006?
4. Has academic achievement for boys in residence in the program decreased since 2006?
5. Has alcohol and drug use while in residence in the program increased since 2006?
6. Has cooperation with teachers, staff, counselors, and other residents decreased since 2006?
7. Have legal infractions committed while residing in the program increased since 2006?



### **Methods, Data, and Analyses**

In the book titled *Turning the Tide of Male Juvenile Delinquency: The Ocean Tides Approach* (2016), Grebstein and Van Wyk explain the Ocean Tide Program history, components, goals, strategies, and the research that produced a database containing information on all of the boys who entered the program between 1975 and the first half of 2006. The current research expands the same database to include information on the boys who entered the program from where the first project ended through the first half of 2015.

The Ocean Tides Research Project began in 2002, The original data for this project exists in hard-copy, mostly narrative format. When each boy enters the Ocean Tides program a hardcopy file is compiled that contains a plethora of information about him and his family; each one contains from 150 to 300 pages of information. The file folder is numbered and once the boy completes the program it is archived at the facility. Electronic copies of this information do not exist. Database construction began by defining terms and creating systematic mechanisms for quantifying the information contained within the files. Recording information from the files involved the careful reading of each report in the hard-copy juvenile records. This was an exacting and time-consuming process that involved careful evaluation and crosschecking of information. By the time the database was completed, the researchers had hired, trained, and supervised 45 undergraduate and 5 graduate research assistants who worked under constant supervision. The completed database includes information on the boys who entered the Ocean Tides program from 1975 through the first half of 2015. It contains 2,053 cases and 1,645 base variables from which additional important concepts have been created.

One significant strength of this database is that it contains information on adjudicated boys that comes from multiple sources – social workers, police, teachers, home visits, clinical

reports, interviews with parents; which means the data is cross-checked for accuracy and encompasses multiple perspectives on the boys' experiences.

Each boy's hardcopy file contains demographic information about the juvenile and his family (e.g., ethnicity, race, occupation of parents, socio-economic status, residence, etc.); criminal and substance abuse history of parents/ parent surrogates; written clinical psychological evaluations based on individual interviews; progress reports from school, social service and residential staff; educational and medical history prior to being at Ocean Tides, including discharge summaries if the boy was in a psychiatric hospital; interviews with parents and other family members; court records, results of psychological and educational testing; exit interviews; and, progress reports of six or three month follow-up after completing the program. The current author worked with Dr. Lawrence Grebstein to design and implement the first part of the project. Dr. Grebstein had worked as the clinical consultant at Ocean Tides from 1975 through 2015 conducting the boys' psychological evaluation interviews (among other program design and implementation tasks). The social service staff, along with the clinical consultant provide the individual and family counseling. Counselors meet with the boys for individual counseling on a regular weekly basis, whenever a resident requests it, and for an exit interview. Summaries of the information from these session contacts are included as progress notes in each student's record.

### **The Variables**

The seven questions that are examined in this research utilize multiple variables, many of them are used as control variables, such past violence, drug and alcohol use, and exposure to and experience with violence prior to entering the Ocean Tides program. Univariate statistics for these variables are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 presents totals, means, standard deviations and missing data. Files for the boys are sent to Ocean Tides shortly following their

arrival. Very limited information is available for boys who remain the program for less than a month (6.3%), so many of the variables have at least that much missing data. The average amount of missing data for the variables included in this report is only 8%, with the exception of information about the boy's cooperation with family counseling. Missing data is discussed at length later in this report.

**Table 1. Univariate Statistics for Variables that Contain Missing Data**

Variable	n	Total %	Valid %*	$\bar{X}$	$\sigma$	N / Missing
SES				2.63	1.144	1,862 / 9.3%
1. Underclass	422	20.6	22.7			
2. Borderline Poverty	361	17.6	19.4			
3. Lower-Middle	631	30.7	33.9			
4. Middle-Range	394	19.2	21.2			
5. Upper-Middle	47	2.3	2.5			
6. Upper	7	0.3	0.4			
Race				1.42	.494	1,781 / 13.2%
1. White	1029	50.1	57.8			
2. People of color	752	36.6	42.2			
Hispanic				1.20	.401	1,781 / 13.2%
1. Non-Hispanic	1423	69.3	79.9			
2. Hispanic	358	17.4	20.1			
Condition of "Exit" from OT				1.67	.472	1,929 / 6.0%
1. Unsuccessful or return to RITS	643	31.3	33.3			
2. Successful completion at OT	1286	62.6	66.7			
Age (at first entry at OT)				16.05	1.238	2,042 / 0.5%
Academic success at OT				2.02	.722	1,881 / 8.4%
1. Poor, and poor-range	473	23.0	25.1			
2. Average	899	43.8	47.8			
3. Above average	509	24.8	27.1			
Academic success prior to OT				1.24	.513	1,914 / 6.8%
1. Poor, and poor-range	1537	74.8	80.3			
2. Average	300	14.6	15.7			
3. Above average	78	3.8	4.1			
Cooperation w/OT teachers/administrators				2.19	.610	1,887 / 8.1%
1. Uncooperative	203	9.9	10.8			
2. Moderately cooperative	1114	54.3	59.0			
3. Very cooperative	570	27.8	30.2			
Cooperation w/OT social workers				2.30	.576	1,865 / 9.2%
1. Uncooperative	112	5.5	6.0			
2. Moderately cooperative	1075	52.4	57.6			

3. Very cooperative	678	33.0	36.4			
Cooperation w/OT residential staff				2.12	.633	1,921 / 6.4%
1. Uncooperative	282	13.7	14.7			
2. Moderately cooperative	1124	54.7	58.5			
3. Very cooperative	515	25.1	26.8			
The boy's cooperation w/OT family counseling				2.26	.609	1,491 / 27.4%
1. Uncooperative	134	6.5	9.0			
2. Moderately cooperative	839	40.9	56.3			
3. Very uncooperative	518	25.2	34.7			
The boy's peer relationships at OT				2.39	1.176	1,910 / 7%
1. Gets along w/peers very well all or most of the time	728	35.5	38.1			
2. Gets along well w/peers, but has trouble w/one of them	47	2.3	2.5			
3. Gets along well w/some peers, and not so well w/others	839	40.9	43.9			
4. Does not get along well w/most of his peers	261	12.7	13.7			
5. Does not get along w/any of his peers	35	1.7	1.8			

The data paint a portrait of the Ocean Tides boys that is consistent with youthful incarcerated populations across the nation. Presented in Table 1, socioeconomic status (*SES*) is measured as (1) underclass (families that qualify for significant government assistance), (2) borderline poverty (no government assistance, but the family barely scrapes by), (3) lower-middle (a family that lives check-to-check, but provides basic needs), (4) middle-range (a family that is able to provide for low-maintenance emergencies), (5) upper-middle (the kind of family that affords vacations, saves for college, and a comfortable retirement), and (6) upper (a family that by today's standards would earn over 400K annually). *SES* was assessed based on transcripts from social worker's home visits, and interviews with parents that included questions about government assistance and jobs status. About 42% of the Ocean Tides boys were living in poverty at the time of their most recent arrest prior to entering the Program.

*Race* was recorded in the database for each biological parent and for the boy. The race variable for this study was constructed from this information wherein boys who either self-

reported, or a biological parent self-identified as a person of color were coded as 2 (36.6%) and others referred to as “white” in this study were coded as 1 (50.1%). Race was unknown for an additional 13.2% of residents. Information about ethnicity was also extensively assessed in this data. The current research includes a constructed measure of *Hispanic* ethnicity wherein they are coded as 2 (17.4%) and others are coded as 1 (69.3%; 13.2% are missing information about ethnicity).

Generally, boys leave Ocean Tides for one of four reasons; (1) unauthorized, usually meaning they elope and the outcome of that elopement is not documented in the file, (2) they complete the program, (3) they are returned to the RITS for noncompliance or (4) their stay is otherwise terminated by transfers to another state or country, to in-house clinical programs, or other youth programs in the state. Condition of *exit* from Ocean Tides was constructed such that boys who eloped from the program and/or were returned to the RITS were combined into the same category. Boys whose stay was otherwise terminated by transfers to other states or into other programs were omitted so that unsuccessful completion (31.3%, coded as 1) is compared to successful completion (62.6%, coded as 2) of the program. Exit status was unknown for an additional 6% of residents.

The average *age* of residents was 16. This variable was constructed from birth year and the year during which the boy entered the program, so there is a possible 11 month overlap. Consequently, although the program officially takes boys ages 13-17, it appears that two boys entered the program when they were only 12, and 209 boys after they were 18.

Variables indicating *academic success* prior to entering the program and while residing in it were recorded from multiple sources in the boy’s files. Each variable includes three indicators whereby 1 is poor or fluctuating within a poor-range, 2 is average, and 3 is above

average. Prior to entering the program 74.8% of the boys were academically performing below average. Just over half of the boys (51.9%) had IEPs (Individualized Educational Plans), and Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) scores indicate that on average, residents were performing 2.79 grades below average for their age in math and 1.88 grades below average in reading (N=1,123). A large percentage of the boys who were performing below average before entering the program improved dramatically in the program (69% improvement rate).

The residents' level of *cooperation* with teachers/administrators, program social workers, and residential staff is measured as three different variables. This information is derived from written progress reports for each boy and incident reports. Each variable is measured as (1) uncooperative, (2) moderately cooperative, and (3) very cooperative. Close to 60% of the boys were at least moderately cooperative with teachers/administrators (59%), social workers (57.6%), and/or residential staff (58.5%).

The extent to which residents were *cooperative in family counseling* of course varies by the extent to which their legal guardians were also cooperative, so there is a large percent of missing information for this variable (27.4%). If a resident was not able to participate in family counseling due to lack of family support, then he received no score for level of cooperation (boys in this predicament still receive individualized counseling). Most boys, however were moderately cooperative in family counseling. For boys whose families participated, they were recorded as either (1) uncooperative (6.5%), (2) moderately cooperative (40.9%) or (3) very cooperative (25.2%).

Residents' *peer relationships* with other residents in the program are measured as (1) he gets along with peers very well all or most of the time (35.5%), (2) he gets along well with peers, but has trouble with one of them (2.3%), (3) he gets along well with some peers, and not so well

with others (40.9%), (4) he does not get along well with most of his peers (12.7%), and (5) he does not get along with any of his peers (1.7%). An additional 7% of residents did not receive a score for this variable.

Table 2 presents descriptive information (n, percent, mean, and standard deviation) for variables in this study for which all cases (N=2053) are included. For most of these variables, the researcher has to assume that if information about any of them was not present in a resident's file, then it had not occurred. Of course, this is an assumption, but given the depth and breadth of information in each boy's hard-copy file, and provided that this information came from multiple sources, it is a reasonable assumption to make.

**Table 2. Univariate Statistics for Variables that Contain all 2,053 Cases**

Variable	n	Total %	$\bar{X}$	$\sigma$
Time-Frame			1.22	.416
1. 1975-2006	1596	77.7		
2. 2007-2015	457	22.3		
Violence at OT			1.22	.415
1. no violent behavior while at OT	1599	77.9		
2. violent behavior while at OT	454	22.1		
Past Violence			1.62	.485
1. No past violent behavior	776	37.8		
2. Violent behavior before OT	1277	62.2		
Lifetime exposure to emotional PIPV			1.07	.260
1. No exposure	1903	92.7		
2. Exposure	150	7.3		
Lifetime exposure to physical PIPV			1.18	.385
1. No exposure	1681	81.9		
2. Exposure	372	18.1		
Lifetime exposure to sexual PIPV			1.00	.070
1. No exposure	2043	99.5		
2. Exposure	10	0.5		
Lifetime exposure to economic PIPV			1.02	.154
1. No exposure	2003	97.6		
2. Exposure	50	2.4		
Lifetime exposure to verbal PIPV			1.06	.238
1. No exposure	1929	94.0		
2. Exposure	124	6.0		

Lifetime emotional abuse			1.57	.495
1. No abuse	887	43.2		
2. Abuse	1166	56.8		
Lifetime physical abuse			1.26	.440
1. No abuse	1514	73.7		
2. Abuse	539	26.3		
Lifetime economic abuse			1.16	.370
1. No abuse	1717	83.6		
2. Abuse	336	16.4		
Lifetime sexual abuse			1.06	.232
1. No abuse	1936	94.3		
2. Abuse	117	5.7		
Lifetime verbal abuse			1.07	.247
1. No abuse	1919	93.5		
2. Abuse	134	6.5		
Alcohol use at OT			1.72	.937
1. No use	1154	56.2		
2. Light use	440	21.4		
3. Moderate use	342	16.7		
4. Heavy use	117	5.7		
Past alcohol use			2.09	1.051
1. No use	796	38.8		
2. Light use	543	26.4		
3. Moderate use	457	22.3		
4. Heavy use	257	12.5		
Marijuana use at OT			1.98	1.048
1. No use	930	45.3		
2. Light use	460	22.4		
3. Moderate use	442	21.5		
4. Heavy use	22	10.8		
Past marijuana use			2.43	1.146
1. No use	626	30.5		
2. Light use	389	18.9		
3. Moderate use	569	27.7		
4. Heavy use	469	22.8		
Other drug use at OT (no marijuana or alcohol)			1.13	.478
1. No use	1889	92.0		
2. Light use	74	3.6		
3. Moderate use	76	3.7		
4. Heavy use	14	0.7		
Past other drug use (no marijuana or alcohol)			1.27	.678
1. No use	1718	83.7		
2. Light use	164	8.0		
3. Moderate use	122	5.9		



4. Heavy use	49	2.4		
New official charges at OT			1.23	.418
1. No new charges	1589	77.4		
2. New charges	464	22.6		
Rule-Breaking at OT (range is 14-50)			22.25	7.751
Past Rule-Breaking Behaviors (range is 8-32)			18.27	5.287

Note: N=2053 for all variables in table.

One variable that is very important to the current study is *time-frame*. This variable is constructed from the year of entrance into the program the first time the boy entered into it and contains two categories: (1) 1975 – 2006 (N=1,596), and (2) 2007 – 2015 (N=457). Some boys who either did not successfully complete the program the first time, or who did, but subsequently recidivated, are placed into it a second time (6.8%, N=140). The time-frame variable was constructed from their first entrance into the program.

*Violent behavior* before entering the program and while residing in it are measured as two separate variables. They are created from multiple sources within the boys' files so interestingly, if the research relied solely on juvenile arrest records, over 8% (n=168) of those who behaved violently prior to entering the program would have been miss-coded as non-violent. All of their arrests were for non-violent offenses. Prior to entering the program, 62.2% of the boys had a history of violent behavior, which dropped to only 22.1% while residing at Ocean Tides.

*Lifetime Exposure to PIPV* (parental interpersonal violence) is measured for emotional, physical, sexual, economic, and verbal types of violence. No single event is recorded as multiple types of exposure. All parental-figure types (biological parent, step parent, foster...) were merged in the final variables. Five dichotomous variables indicate exposure to PIPV: emotional 7.3%, physical 18.1%, sexual 0.5%, economic 2.4%, and verbal 6.0%. It is reasonable to

understand that only descriptions of the most serious of events for each type of PIPV found their way into the boy's files at Ocean Tides.

*Lifetime Child abuse* is measured by the same five types as PIPV (emotional, physical, economic, sexual, and verbal). Economic abuse is perceived as intentional deprivation or financial neglect whereby poverty alone is not the only reason for it. No single event is recorded as multiple types of violence, so that if a boy was physically abused, he was not also recorded as having been emotionally abused even though physical abuse likely has emotional effects on the victim. Five final dichotomous variables identify the experience of child abuse prior to entering the Ocean Tides program: emotional abuse 56.8%, physical abuse 26.3%, economic abuse 16.4%, sexual abuse 5.7%, and verbal abuse 6.5%. Again, as with the PIPV exposure variable, it is likely that only the most serious of events were recorded into the boys' files.

*Drug and alcohol use* before entering the program and while residing in it are measured as six variables constructed from detailed information in the database: alcohol use before and during the program, marijuana use for each, and other drugs combined before and during the program. This final pair of variables includes all other types of drugs that were mentioned in the boys' files. Each variable is operationalized with three indicators: (1) no use at all recorded into the file, (2) light use, (3) moderate use in which a boy used it multiple times a week, but it does not seem to interfere with overall functioning, and (4) heavy use. Past heavy use of alcohol was indicated by 12.5%, marijuana use by 22.8%, and other drug use by 2.4%. Heavy alcohol use while residing the program was indicated by 5.7%, marijuana use by 10.8%, and other drugs by 0.7%.

Some boys incur additional official *legal charges* while they reside at Ocean Tides (22.6%). Most of them are subsequently returned to the RITS.

A scale was created for *rule-breaking* (behavior and attitudes) ( $\alpha = .862$ ) at Ocean Tides and includes the following items: aggression, antagonistic/swearing/disrespect, fights with peers, out of control with temper, problems with authority, runaway, stealing, truancy, angry, uncooperative, disrespectful, obnoxious, unpleasant, and rude. Scores for the original indices were (1) no problem, (2) slight, (3) moderate, and (4) severe problem. Scores were summed to create the final scale. Higher scores indicate greater problems. A second scale was created to use as a control for *past rule-breaking* behavior ( $\alpha = .655$ ) that includes past aggression, antagonistic/swearing/disrespect, fights with peers, out of control with temper, problems with authority, runaway, stealing, and truancy. The database does not contain information on the boys' attitudes prior to Ocean Tides, so those indicators are not included in the past behavioral scale. Removing stealing from both scales would have increased the alpha reliability scores for both measures, but not significantly so it remains in both scales.

### **Analytic Findings**

Patterns in the number of Ocean Tides residents between the two time-frames (1975-2006 and 2007-2015) and in their length of stay in the program are clarified by the data. Even though the number of residents at any given time are fewer in the program post 2006, they stay for a shorter period of time so that annual statistics indicate more boys have entered the program each year since 2006, than prior to it. From 1975-2006, 1,596 boys were in residence, which is 52 boys per year on average. For 2015, only partial statistics are available since only half of that year was recorded into the database (10 boys for 2015). Final data collection occurred during 2015 and the researcher was not allowed access to files for boys who were currently in the program during data collection. Since 2015 only includes a partial year and 10 boys, that year was omitted for this test. For the later time-frame (2007-2014), there are 447 new residents, which is 56 boys per year on average, four more boys per year than before.

The boys' length of stay in the program was 1.85 months on average shorter from 1975-2006 (10.47 months) than it was from 2007 – 2014 (8.62 months). Prior to 2007, boys were sentenced to remain at Ocean Tides for a full year, but the average stay was a bit shorter because some boys who do not comply with the program are returned to the RITS and some others move out of state with relatives and enter into other state systems of care. Due to changes in the Rhode Island system of care in 2006, boys who entered the program after that were sentenced to only three months on average. These data indicate; however, that the boys remained in the program approximately five and a half months longer on average than they were sentenced to serve.

Ocean Tides is a LaSalle school whose namesake was John Baptist de La Salle, a 15<sup>th</sup> century French aristocrat who denounced his wealth and created a system of education and care for poor boys (Hengumule 2016). He believed that every human being was entitled to a proper

education and that education was the pathway to riotousness. To him and his followers across six centuries, education and religion are inseparable. The Ocean Tides school is owned and operated by the La Salle Brothers of the Catholic Church. Brother Brendon Gerrity, FSC was the President and Director of the facility from the time it opened until he retired in 2015. When Rhode Island reduced the sentences at Ocean Tides for boys entering the program after 2006, Brother Brendon simply refused to kick the boys out at the end of their stay and often offered to allow them to remain at the facility and partake in its programs as long as they were making good progress until they could support themselves. He did so without receiving reimbursement from the state systems of care for those extended stays. To him, there was no other option. He has devoted his life to the LaSalle tradition. For him, its ideals are not policies or political in nature; they are his life's purpose. To kick the boys out of the program before they were ready to leave would have been immoral and unthinkable. Although the PI was aware that some boys were allowed to stay beyond their sentence, she did not know how pervasively this practice was applied until the data was analyzed.

Several controls are important to the current study. Probably the most important, but controversial control is patterns of prior behavior. Prior delinquency is the strongest predictor of future delinquency for all types/forms of delinquent offenses, so that prior drug use is the best predictor of future drug use; past violence is the best predictor for future violence and so forth. Two complimentary perspectives explain this process: population heterogeneity and state dependence. Nagin and Paternoster (2000) have reviewed the literature and empirical tests on each perspective and arrive at the conclusion that it probably a little bit of both that explain this phenomenon. Briefly, population heterogeneity explains that some critical characteristics that are conducive to criminal behavior are established very early (possibly before life begins) in life and

persist relatively unchanging throughout the life course increasing the likelihood for not only criminal behavior, but also affecting all kinds of correlates of crime. For example, if someone has low self-control, he/she is likely to have trouble keeping a job, and may engage in crime. From this perspective, there is little hope for change or rehabilitation later in life. The state dependency perspective assumes that something like low self-control may indeed lower the chances of getting a good job, but it is the lack of employment (in this example anyway) that directly increases criminal behavior, not necessarily low self-control. Change is possible from this perspective. Someone with low self-control could be taught to be a good employee, get a good job, and lower the risk of future offending even if low self-control remains. The Ocean Tides approach to rehabilitation certainly follows the state dependency perspective. Regardless of how previous delinquency leads to future delinquency, criminologists consistently recognize that it does and that it is important to control for it when examining the effects of other possible causes.

Demographic controls are important controls too because empirical evidence suggests that variations in age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (SES) exist in patterns of delinquency and more prominently in patterns of arrest and sentencing. The race variable is oversimplified in the present analysis as white and people of color, and so caution is warranted when interpreting racial outcomes. It is possible that racial variance is obscured by this oversimplification. Hispanic ethnicity is used as a control measure in the current research due to recent political emphasis on questions of criminality for this group. It is important to know how these demographic controls are dispersed across the two time-frames, and how they correlate with each of the other controls. These findings are presented in bivariate correlations in Table 3.

**Table 3. Time-Frame by Demographic Characteristics**

	1	2	3	4
1. Time-Frame				
2. Race	.233***			
3. Hispanic	.236**	.365**		
4. SES	-.082**	-.236**	-.153**	
5. Age	.133**	.103**	.059*	.120**

\*p≤.05, \*\*p≤.01, \*\*\*p≤.001

Demographics for the Ocean Tides population of boys changed significantly between the two time-frames. Residents at Ocean Tides in the later years (2007-2015) were more likely than in the earlier years (1975-2006) to be boys of color, Hispanic, older when they entered the program, and from lower SES. Characteristics correlated with each other as well such that boys of color were more likely than whites to be Hispanic, older when they entered the program, and from lower SES. Hispanic boys were from lower SES than non-Hispanic boys, and they tended to be older when they entered the program. Boys from higher SES tended to enter the program when they were older than boys from lower SES.

None of these findings are surprising. The first Hispanic youth entered the program in 1982 and only eight others had arrived by 1991. Ten more entered the program in the following year (1992). These changes parallel national increases in the US Hispanic population over that decade primarily due to immigration. Just over 33% of the Hispanics in the program are first generation immigrants. As explained previously in this report, some of the changes instituted in the Rhode Island juvenile justice system meant that boys were less likely to be placed outside the home with less serious or first offences, so it makes sense that the later years would see boys entering the program when they were older. It is also common that boys with lower SES and those of color are at significantly greater risk of out of home placements than their counterparts.

In sum, controlling for the effects of these changes across time in the following analyses is merited.

**Research Question #1:** *Has the completion rate for Ocean Tides boys significantly dropped since 2006?*

A boy completes the program when he completes his sentence regardless of the length of that sentence. The current research asks if the rate at which boys left the program either by elopement or return to the RITS has increased since 2006. For the years 1975-2006, 62.5% (n=997) of the boys successfully completed the program compared to 63.2% (n=289) for the later years (2007-2015). Mean scores for the two time-frames are nearly identical ( $\bar{x} = 1.67$ ; SD = .471 and .472 respectively;  $t=.039$ ,  $p=.969$ ). On average, 32 boys per year completed the program during the first time-frame and 36 boys per year during the later years. The answer to the first research question is no; the completion rate at Ocean Tides has not dropped since 2006. Boys are officially sentenced to only three months now as opposed to a full year previously, so a boy completes his sentence now in about a third the amount of time. It is reasonable to suggest that this shorter sentence is easier for a boy to complete than the longer time commitment. There is less time during which to get into further trouble.

Table 4 presents results of a logistic regression model predicting successful completion of the program that includes demographic controls. Race and age are the only variables that predict successful completion such that boys who entered the program when they were older were more likely to complete the program, and whites were more likely than boys of color to successfully complete the program.



**Table 4. Logistic Regression for Successful Completion of the Program**

Predictors	Successful Completion of the Program		
	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	<i>e<sup>B</sup></i>
Time frame	.022	.131	1.022
Race	-.318*	.123	.728
Hispanic	-.088	.145	.916
Age	.125**	.046	1.133
SES	.223	.051	1.256
Constant	-1.293	.744	.274
$\bar{\chi}^2$	.030		
<i>df</i>	1		

\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ ,  $N=1,557$

**Research Question #2:** *Has the rate at which boys engage in violence while in residence at Ocean Tides increased since 2006?*

Perhaps the richest set of variables in this study measure behaviors and attitudes both prior to entering Ocean Tides and again while they were in residence at the facility. These include measures of violent behavior. They are cumulative measures that take into consideration information from all sources in the boys' files.

First, comparing the presence of violence before entering the program to violent behavior while residing in the program across the two time-frames, some patterns are noteworthy. Results are presented in Table 5. Recall that boys in the Ocean Tides program are in residence during the weekdays, but go home for weekends. They are also housed with nothing but other delinquents the other five days a week, so there are plenty opportunities for them to get into trouble. Close tabs are kept on the boys' weekend behavior via family counseling sessions and social worker-contacts. Boys entering the program in the later years were much more likely than previously to have engaged in patterns of violent behavior before entering the program (58.5% of boys 1975-2006, and 75.3% from 2007-2015;  $\chi^2 = 42.724$ ,  $p \leq .000$ ). However, once in the program, violence dropped by 63.4% during the first time-frame and by 67.4% during the latter one.

Interestingly, differences in violence that had been present between the two time-frames prior to entering the program disappeared in the program, so that the likelihood of violent behavior for boys in the program was not statistically different between the two time-frames (21.4% and 24.5% respectively,  $\chi^2 = 1.956, p=.162$ ). At least with respect to curbing violence, the program appears to have been unaffected by changes in state policies or changes in the boy's other characterizes as they entered the program.

**Table 5. Decreases in Violent Behavior Between the Two Time-Frames**

Time-Frames	Before OT (%)	At OT (%)	% Decrease in Violence
1975-2006	58.5	21.4	63.4
2007-2015	75.3	24.5	67.4
Chi <sup>2</sup>	42.724, p=.000	1.956, p=.162	

A full model for this research question includes several controls for past violent behavior, demographic characteristics, exposure to PIPV and child abuse by all types: emotional, physical, sexual, economic, and verbal. As explained previously, child abuse and exposure to PIPV, as well as previous violent behavior are all shown to significantly affect changes in violent behavior. Bivariate correlations for this model are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Bivariate Analysis Predicting Violence**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Violence at OT																
2. Past Violence	.129**															
3. Age	-.111**	.056*														
4. Time-frame	.031	.144**	.133**													
5. SES	-.017	-.053*	.120**	-.082**												
6. Race	.040	.096**	.103**	-.233**	-.236**											
7. Ethnicity	-.012	.009	.059*	.236**	-.153**	.365**										
8. Physical Abuse	.141**	.150**	-.030	.117**	-.034	-.064**	-.015									
9. Emotional Abuse	.081**	.095**	-.055*	.136**	-.151**	.040	.023	.212**								
10. Economic Abuse	.024	.043*	.000	-.018	-.063**	-.032	-.046	.176**	.287**							
11. Sexual Abuse	.102**	.092**	-.035	-.041	.053*	-.080**	.002	.111**	.066**	.164**						
12. Verbal Abuse	.087**	.088**	-.004	.053*	.026	-.037	-.007	.237**	.079**	.054*	.105**					
13. Physical PIPV	.021	.075**	-.019	-.027	-.055*	-.071**	.060*	.280**	.135**	.117**	.032	.121**				
14. Emotional PIPV	-.019	.091**	.007	.043	-.032	-.064**	.012	.143**	.132**	.073**	.028	.123**	.300**			
15. Economic PIPV	.000	.019	.024	.166**	-.058*	.037	.057*	.057*	.074**	.135**	-.025	.035	.098**	.074**		
16. Sexual PIPV	.013	.040	-.009	-.037	-.045	-.049*	.000	.085**	.061**	.045*	.013	.010	.131**	.061**	.080**	
17. Verbal PIPV	.003	.021	.014	.022	.008	-.095**	-.015	.151**	.060**	.009	.017	.306**	.295**	.060**	.093**	.012

\*p≤.05, \*\*p≤.01

Boys who engaged in past violent behavior are more likely to also act violently at Ocean Tides than those who were not violent before, as were younger boys, and those who had been physically, emotionally, sexually, or verbally abused. No other controls predicted violence in the program. It is important to note that although it is clear that poly-victimization by multiple forms of child abuse and exposures to PIPV exist in this population, no Pearson's-r statistics approach levels that indicate multicollinearity problems for a full model. Only the variables that successfully predict violence in the program were included in the full multivariate logistic regression model. Results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Violent Behavior at Ocean Tides**

Predictors	Violent Behavior at OT		
	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	<i>e<sup>B</sup></i>
Time frame	.051	.134	1.052
Past violence	1.213***	.137	3.365
Age	-.253***	.046	.777
Physical abuse	.153***	.036	1.165
Emotional abuse	.034	.031	1.034
Sexual abuse	.154	.090	1.166
Verbal abuse	.058	.069	1.060
Constant	.025	.757	1.025
$\bar{\chi}^2$	175.766***		
<i>df</i>	7		

\*\*\* $p \leq .000$ ,  $N=2,042$

Controlling for the relevant characteristics, only past violence, age, and physical child abuse prior to entering the program successfully predict violent behavior in the program. Boys who enter the program at younger ages, who had previously engaged in violent behavior or who had experienced physical child abuse are more likely than others to act violently in the program. The answer to the second research question is no; the rate at which boys engage in violent behavior while in the program has not increased since 2006, even though they are much more likely to act violently prior to entering the program.

Child abuse and exposure to PIPV are pertinent to the ideas expressed in this report; primarily that removing a delinquent boy from his home for treatment may be conducive to rehabilitation because it is doubtful that violent adults are able to curb the violent behavior of their children. Further analysis emphasizes that point. In Table 8, change is indicated in the likelihood of violence before, compared to after, arriving at Ocean Tides for each type of violence experienced at home. So, for example, the first number in the table; 61.8 means that nearly 62% of the boys who had experienced emotional child abuse before entering the program were violent, but only 23.8% of those boys continued to act violently while they were in the program. This is a decrease in violence of 61.4%. For each type of abuse and exposure; and for each time-frame, violence decreases by between 50% and 83% in the Ocean Tides Program. That means at least while these boys are in the program, they are significantly less violent. This is as true today as it was prior to 2007.

**Table 8. Does Violence Beget Violence?**

Abuses	1975-2006			2007-2015		
	% Before OT	% At OT	Percent change	% Before OT	% At OT	Percent change
<b>Child Abuse</b>						
Emotional	61.8 (8.527***)	23.8 (6.021**)	-61.4	77.9 (3.888*)	28.4 (8.435*)	-63.5
Economic	61.8 (1.472)	24.0 (1.2130)	-61.1	87.0 (5.960**)	26.1 (0.110)	-70.0
Physical	68.0 (18.375***)	29.3 (18.191***)	-56.9	89.0 (25.987***)	37.8 (24.446***)	-57.5
Sexual	78.8 (17.962***)	38.4 (18.022***)	-51.2	88.9 (1.866)	44.4 (4.026*)	-50.0
Verbal	75.3 (11.491**)	37.6 (15.404***)	-50.0	85.4 (2.465)	31.7 (1.262)	-62.8
<b>PIPV</b>						
Emotional	74.8 (12.560***)	21.5 (0.000)	-71.2	86.0 (2.960)	14.0 (2.858)	-83.7
Economic	64.7 (0.276)	23.5 (0.045)	-63.6	69.7 (0.594)	21.2 (0.209)	-69.5
Physical	69.1 (17.174***)	23.5 (0.925)	-65.9	73.0 (0.251)	25.7 (0.065)	-64.7
Sexual	90.0 (4.123*)	30.0 (0.439)	-66.6	na	na	na
Verbal	60.9 (0.234)	25.0 (0.740)	-58.9	81.3 (0.660)	15.6 (1.467)	-80.8

Notes:  $\chi^2$  results appear in parentheses with corresponding significance levels; \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ . There were no cases from 2007-2015 in which a boy had been exposed to sexual abuse between parental figures.

In the table,  $\chi^2$  results for correlations appear in parentheses that indicate how strongly associated the abuse is to the violent behavior. Returning to the first cell, the correlation between emotional abuse and violent behavior prior to the program is 8.527 with a corresponding significance level of at least .01. Overall, the effects of child abuse on violent behavior persist for some boys when they are removed from the home, but fewer of the boys continue to be affected by it, at least as their own violent expression; which is incredibly important to know. This means that at least for some boys, removing them from abusive homes decreases the associated risk of violent behavior.

For some boys, their abuse does not lead to violence; yet, their violent behavior still drops while in the program. For example, from 1975-2006, economic abuse was not statistically correlated with either prior violence or violent behavior in the program. However, from 2007-2015, economic abuse is statistically correlated with violence prior to incarceration. These differences may reflect the result of changes in American economic stability during that time; fewer job opportunities, higher economic-related stress, higher educational costs and such. These are untestable assumptions in this data. Nonetheless, it is interesting that during this later time frame boys who were economically abused (i.e. economically neglected) before going to Ocean Tides were 70% less likely to engage in violence once they got into the program.

**Research Question #3.** *Has noncompliant behavior for boys in residence at Ocean Tides increased since 2006?*

Indicators for behaviors and attitudes at Ocean Tides and behaviors prior to entering the program are created from multiple sources. In fact, these were the very last variables to be coded

by research assistants at the end of each case so that all sources would be used to inform coding. For this analysis, two scales were created. One scale measures non-compliance, or rule-breaking while the boy was in the program ( $\alpha = .862$ ), and the second scale measures rule-breaking behaviors prior to Ocean Tides to use as a control measure ( $\alpha = .655$ ). Behaviors include aggression, antagonistic/swearing/disrespect, fights with peers, out of control with temper, problems with authority, runaway, stealing, and truancy; and attitudes include angry, uncooperative, disrespectful, obnoxious, unpleasant, and rude. Results for a full OLS regression model are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9. OLS Regression for Rule-Breaking at Ocean Tides**

Predictors	Rule-Breaking at Ocean Tides		
	<i>B</i>	<i>B SE</i>	$\beta$
Time-frame	1.063	.385	2.759**
Race	.687	.360	.043
Hispanic	-.223	.430	-.011
Age	-.800	.134	-.124***
SES	-.066	.145	-.010
Past Behavior	.803	.031	.539***

$R^2 = .329$ ,  $N=1,648$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .000$

Controlling for similar past behavioral problems and demographic characteristics, rule breaking at Ocean Tides is significantly more severe in 2007-2015 than it was 1975-2006. Younger boys and those with similar rule-breaking behavior in the past also experienced more of these problems in the program. It is noteworthy that this simple model explains over 32% of the variance in rule-breaking in the program. The answer to research question number 3 is yes: noncompliant behavior for boys in residence at Ocean Tides has increased since 2006.

These results made the author curious about how these problems may affect successful completion of the program. A logistic regression model included rule-breaking at Ocean Tides, behavioral problems prior to the program, and time-frame on successful completion of the

program. Results indicate that controlling for these other factors, boys who were less compliant at Ocean Tides were also less likely to complete the program. Prior behavior and time frame in this model are not correlated with success. These results create significant implications for policy that are discussed later in the report.

**Research Question #4:** *Has academic achievement for boys in residence in the program decreased since 2006?*

Bivariate correlations for academic success at Ocean Tides and possible correlates are presented in Table 10. Boys of color and older boys tend to do a bit better academically in the program than those who are white and/or younger. Boys performed more successfully during the later years than the earlier ones, and past academic success is the strongest predictor of similar success at Ocean Tides.

**Table 10. Bivariate Correlations with Academic Success at Ocean Tides**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Academic success at OT						
2. Past academic success	.213**					
3. Time frame	.077**	-.017				
4. Age	.192**	.024	.133**			
5. Race	.075**	-.022	.233**	.103**		
6. Hispanic	.034	-.053*	.236**	.059*	.365**	
7. SES	.022	.031	-.082**	.120**	-.236**	-.153**

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

Results for the full model are in Table 11. Holding the other variables constant, past academic success and age are the strongest predictors of academic success in the program. However, boys who experienced greater academic success prior to the program actually performed less well in the program than boys who had previously performed more poorly. Older boys performed better academically in the program than younger boys. Race makes a difference. Boys of color fare better academically at Ocean Tides than do whites. A 2012 report from the

American Psychological Association concludes that racial disparities in educational achievement are primarily due to language barriers, racist treatment by teachers and others, and quality deficiencies in schools with high rates of racial minorities. Perhaps these problems are diminished in the Ocean Tides program.

Boys performed better academically in the program in the more recent years than they did previously controlling for the other relevant variables. The answer to research question number 4 is no: academic achievement for boys in residence in the Ocean Tides program has not decreased since 2006. It is important to note; however, that the  $R^2$  for the model is low (.084), which means that past academic behavior, time frame, race, Hispanic, and age explain only 8.4% of the variance in academic achievement in the program.

**Table 11. OLS Regression Predicting Academic Success at Ocean Tides**

Predictors	Academic Success at OT		
	<i>B</i>	<i>B SE</i>	<i>β</i>
Past academic success	-.286	.035	.203***
Time-frame	.092	.043	.056*
Race	.089	.041	.061*
Hispanic	.023	.049	.013
Age	.100	.015	.167***
SES	.018	.017	.029

$R^2 = .084$ ,  $N=1,477$ , \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .000$ ,

**Research Question #5:** *Has alcohol and drug use while in residence in the program increased since 2006?*

Bivariate correlations are presented in Table 12. There are three variables that measure drug use in the program: marijuana use, alcohol use, and other drugs (this variable excludes marijuana and alcohol, but combines the use of all other drugs). It is important to note that very little drug use actually occurs on the grounds of the Ocean Tides facility. Only 29.8% of boys received incident reports for smoking marijuana at the facility, and 6.7% of them were only



caught once. Just 16.8% were issued incident reports for drinking alcohol at the facility, and half of them were only caught once. Since there are few incident reports for these behaviors at Ocean Tides, and the boys go home on the weekends, it is reasonable to believe that is where most of the drug and alcohol use occurs. For the remainder of this discussion, drug and alcohol use “in the program” refers to on and off campus.

**Table 12. Bivariate Correlations Predicting Alcohol and Drug use at Ocean Tides**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Other drug use at OT										
2. Marijuana use at OT	.171**									
3. Alcohol use at OT	.214**	.509**								
4. Past other drug use	.431**	.107**	.181**							
5. Past marijuana use	.090**	.556**	.267**	.223**						
6. Past alcohol use	.110**	.280**	.580**	.246**	.505**					
7. Time frame	-.004	.119**	-.112**	.011	.154**	-.076**				
8. Age	-.047*	.026	.010	.038	.159**	.133**	.133**			
9. Race	-.111**	-.026	-.169**	-.102**	.059*	-.120**	.233**	.103**		
10. Hispanic	-.030	-.017	-.104**	-.031	.047*	-.062**	.236**	.059*	.365**	
11. SES	.052*	-.022	.026	.084**	.018	.069**	-.082**	.120**	-.236**	-.153**

\*p≤.05, \*\*p≤.01

All drug use in the program is predictably correlated with all prior use; and boys who engaged in greater drug use of one type also consumed greater quantities of the other substances. Of the three drug types, SES only affects other drug use such that wealthier boys engage in heavier use; possibly due to their expense. Hispanics drink more than non-Hispanics, but do not consume more of the other substances. Whites drink more alcohol and use more drugs (other than marijuana) than boys of color. Younger boys engage in greater other drug use, but not marijuana or alcohol. Marijuana use is greater in the later years (2007-2015), but alcohol use was greater in the earlier years (1975-2006). These trends may reflect changes in societal attitudes. Marijuana use laws have changed significantly in the United States since 2006, and public health initiatives against alcoholism may be working.

Three full multivariate models predicting marijuana use, alcohol use, and other drug use while in the program are presented in Table 13. Past use of each drug was used as a control. For alcohol use in the program, past drug and alcohol use predict it controlling for other relevant variables. Alcohol use is lower in the later years, more severe for younger and white boys rather than older boys or those of color. For marijuana use in the program, it is predicted by past marijuana use, but not alcohol or other types of drug use in the past. So much for the old adage that marijuana is a gateway drug to other kinds of drug use. It is in greater use more recently than in the earlier time-frame. Younger and white boys smoke more than older boys or those of color. More serious drug use is predicted by past other drug use, but not past marijuana or alcohol use. Again, younger and white boys do more drugs than older boys or those of color. There is no significant difference for other drug use in the program between the two time-frames. All three  $R^2$  statistics are fairly large, so these models explain from 21% to nearly 27% of the variation in the amount of drug use in the program. Both chemical and psychological addiction most likely contribute to these high predictions. The answer to research question number 5 is mixed: has alcohol and drug use while in residence in the program increased since 2006. It has, but only for marijuana use.

**Table 13. Three OLS Models Predicting Drug and Alcohol Use at Ocean Tides**

Predictors	Drug Use at OT (no marijuana or alcohol)			Marijuana use at OT			Alcohol use at OT		
	<i>B</i>	<i>B SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>B SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>B SE</i>	$\beta$
Past other drug use	.316	.016	.445***	-.038	.033	-.024	.076	.029	.055**
Past alcohol use	.009	.012	.019	.006	.024	.006	.519	.021	.577***
Past marijuana use	-.008	.011	-.020	.527	.022	.569***	-.008	.019	-.010
Time frame	.006	.025	.005	.142	.052	.059**	-.099	.044	-.047*
Age	-.025	.009	-.065**	-.047	.018	-.054**	-.047	.015	-.062*
Race	-.061	.024	-.064**	-.136	.049	-.064**	-.137	.041	-.074**
Hispanic	.003	.028	.002	-.102	.058	-.039	-.078	.049	-.034
SES	.003	.009	.008	-.034	.019	-.037	-.025	.016	-.031
$R^2$			.212			.327			.369

N = 1,648, \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

**Research Question #6:** *Has cooperation with teachers, staff, counselors, and other residents decreased since 2006?*

There are three measures that indicate the extent to which boys are uncooperative with teachers/administrators, social workers, and residential staff. An additional variable measures how uncooperative boys are with family counseling sessions. Finally, there is a five-item variable for which high scores indicate greater problems with peers at Ocean Tides. High scores on all five variables indicate greater problems (or less cooperation). Bivariate correlations are presented in Table 14. Boys that experience greater problems with peers while they are in the program, tend to be more cooperative in family counseling and with teachers/administrators, social workers, and residential staff. This is an interesting finding that may lend support to peer-pressure theories. Boys who are less reliant on peers, may fare better in other kinds relationships in the program.

**Table 14. Bivariate Correlations for Cooperation at Ocean Tides**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Peers									
2. Family counseling	-.294**								
3. Teachers/admin.	-.456**	.461**							
4. Social workers	-.330**	.663**	.582**						
5. Res. staff	-.471**	.498**	.777**	.591**					
6. Age	-.142**	.122**	.172**	.131**	.179**				
7. Race	.007	.047	.008	.025	.025	.103**			
8. Hispanic	.022	.031	.018	.034	.052*	.059*	.365**		
9. SES	-.006	.057*	.020	.029	.027	.120**	-.236**	-.153**	
10. Time frame	.047*	.086**	.031	.096**	.082**	.133**	.233**	.236**	-.082**

\*p≤.05, \*\*p≤.01

In terms of time-frame, boys in the later years (2007-2015) did not get along as well with their peers as they did in the earlier years (1975-2006). Nor did they cooperate as well in family counseling, with social workers, or with residential staff. No significant difference was indicated

by year for cooperation with teachers/administrators. Younger boys had greater problems with peers, but they were more cooperative than older boys with everyone else in the program. Boys with higher SES were less cooperative in family counseling, but SES was not related to cooperation with others. Hispanic boys were less cooperative with residential staff.

Regression models are presented in Table 15. Controlling for the other relevant variables, residents were less cooperative with family counseling, social workers, and residential staff in the later, rather than earlier years. There were not significant differences by time-frame for peer or teacher/administrator relationships. Younger boys experience greater problems with peers, but older boys are less cooperative with everyone else. SES was only correlated with family counseling such that boys with higher SES were less cooperative. These indicators explain very small amounts of variation in cooperation with each of these groups and activities (2.1% - 3.9%). The answer to research question number 6 is mixed; has cooperation with teachers, staff, counselors, and other residents decreased since 2006. Cooperation has decreased in family counseling, with social workers, and residential staff, but it has not significantly decreased for peer or teacher/administrator relationships.

**Table 15. OLS Regression Models for Cooperation at Ocean Tides**

Predictors	Peer Relationships			Family Counseling			Teachers/Admins.			Social Workers			Residential Staff		
	B	B SE	β	B	B SE	β	B	B SE	β	B	B SE	β	B	B SE	β
Time-Frame	.129	.070	.048	.090	.039	.069*	.011	.036	.008	.110	.034	.085**	.082	.038	.057*
Race	.035	.067	.015	.038	.039	.031	-.034	.034	-.028	-.020	.033	-.017	-.038	.036	-.030
Hispanic	.033	.080	.011	.019	.046	.013	.021	.041	.014	.027	.039	.019	.063	.043	.040
Age	-.139	.025	-.144***	.063	.014	.126***	.096	.013	.192***	.064	.012	.135***	.091	.013	.174***
SES	.024	.027	.023	.040	.016	.074*	.001	.014	.001	.019	.013	.037	.010	.014	.019
R <sup>2</sup> / N	.021 / 1,571			.032 / 1,228			.037 / 1,544			.031 / 1,563			.039 / 1,563		

\*p≤.05, \*\*p≤.01, \*\*\*p≤.001

**Research Question #7:** *Have legal infractions committed while residing in the program increased since 2006?*

Since these boys are in the care of the program, even if the boy commits an offence when he is on leave from the program, Ocean Tides receives this information and it is included in his file. Bivariate results are indicated in Table 16.

**Table 16. Bivariate Correlations for New Charges at Ocean Tides**

	1	2	3	4	5
1. New Charges					
2. Time Frame	.086**				
3. Race	-.001	.233**			
4. Hispanic	.021	.236**	.365**		
5. Age	-.018	.133**	.103**	.059*	
6. SES	-.083**	-.082**	-.236**	-.153**	.120**

\*p≤.05, \*\*p≤.01

Between 2007-2015 boys were more likely to incur new charges in the program than boys in the past. SES is the only demographic variable that is correlated with new charges such that boys with lower SES are more likely to incur them. Logistic regression results for the full model predicting new charges in the program are presented in Table 17. Since every boy who is in the program is adjudicated delinquent, there is no control for prior arrest.

**Table 17. Logistic Regression Results for New Official Charges at Ocean Tides**

Predictors	New Official Charges at OT		
	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	<i>e<sup>B</sup></i>
Time Frame	.554***	.135	1.740
Age	-.040	.050	.961
Race	-.213	.134	.808
Hispanic	.029	.157	1.029
SES	-.199***	.054	.820
Constant	-.493	.795	.611
$\bar{\chi}^2$	32.403		
<i>df</i>	5		

\*\*\*p≤.000, N=1,648

Results for the multivariate model mirror bivariate results. The answer to research question number 7 is yes; legal infractions have increased for boys in the program since 2006.

## Discussion

### Limitations and Barriers

Some issues should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. Missing data is a potential area of concern for results, and that occurs mainly for two reasons. One is the archival nature of the information. Recordkeeping evolved over the program's 40 years in existence and the cardboard boxes in which most of the hard-copy files are housed were moved from one room to another within the facility. For regular personnel at the facility, it was also physically difficult to re-file information when it was necessary to retrieve it from storage. During the first phase of data collection for this project, the researchers refiled all of the cases into new boxes and moved them to a more secure location within the Ocean Tides facility where they were housed from 2002 – 2012. Then they were moved again due to remodeling. The nature of physically handling over a hundred large heavy boxes of paper records for 40 years results in some loss of information.

The second reason for missing data concerns the length of stay for boys in the program and the nature of their release. Some boys elope early, for instance, or are transferred out of state where extended family members live and so very little information is available for these residents. Regardless of the high potential for missing data, very little of it is missing. Table 18 identifies the percent of the data that was available to test each of the seven research questions in this research.

**Table 18. Percent of Data for Each Full Model**

Research Question	N	% of data	Research Question	N	% of data
1	1,557	76%	6	1,571	77%
2	2,042	99%		1,228	60%
3	1,648	80%		1,544	75%
4	1,477	72%		1,563	76%
5	1,648	80%	7	1,648	80%

Another limitation of the study is that there is no way as yet to compare the outcome of the Ocean Tides program to the outcome for delinquent boys who receive in-home outpatient care instead in the state. As previously explained, the Children's Cabinet in Rhode Island was reprimanded by the state in 2015 for not having implemented an evaluation component to assess the effectiveness of these programs as promised. Until that study is conducted, comparisons between the outcomes for outpatient and residential programs are not possible.

Another question that cannot be addressed with this data is whether or not children who experience child abuse or who are exposed to violence at home fare better in the Ocean Tides program than their counterparts who receive outpatient care and are placed back into their own homes. Data on the children who are placed back at home for care does not exist, and when it is made available, there is no indication that measures of child abuses or other exposures to violence at home will be available. The important question is not whether or not boys who are abused fare better in the Ocean Tides program than boys who are not abused, it is whether or not abused boys in residential care like Ocean Tides fare better than abused boys in in-home placement. Until comparison data is available, that question cannot be answered.

Ocean Tides is just one of many different types of residential treatment programs. The findings in this report do not imply that all residential programs produce the same results. What is clear from this study however, is that more research is needed that isolates program and outcome characteristics to assess their effectiveness in comparison to the same characteristics in other programs for juveniles who have similar experiences, such as between boys who have been abused at home. In this context, it should also be recognized that study methods influence comparisons. In the current study, information about exposure to violence was derived from

multiple sources, not just parental reports. This design meant being able to cross-check information for accuracy in data construction. The data is also archival and it should be understood that only the most serious of abuses would make it into the written archival information in a boy's file. More subtle experiences might only be accessed using a prospective longitudinal design.

### **Summary of Results**

Seven questions are tested in this research that each assess differences between the earlier years of the program, 1975-2006 and the later years, 2007-2015. This research examines whether significant changes in juvenile justice policies in Rhode Island may have impacted the ability of Ocean Tides to effectively provide the intended care to successfully rehabilitate juvenile offenders.

In the later years of the program, Ocean Tides housed fewer boys at any given time, but they resided in the program for a slightly shorter period, so the number of boys who were annually processed through the program has not significantly changed over the years. Although boys remain in the program for about two-months shorter time, completion rates are relatively unchanged (about 63%). Boys who enter the program when they are older and whites are most likely to complete the program successfully. The residents' demographic characteristics have changed so that in more recent years there are more boys of color, and Hispanics; they are older when they enter the program, and they tend to be from lower SES. It is important to note in light of recent attention paid to potential criminal problems mitigated by immigration, that Hispanics did not significantly exacerbate problems in the program. Hispanics did not feature significantly in any of the seven research questions addressed in this research.



Formal education is an important and successful part of the Ocean Tides program, and this pattern remains unchanged over time. Boys of color and older boys tend to do a bit better academically in the program than those who are white and/or younger. It may be the first time in some of these boys lives that they have received specialized education plans, especially for boys of color whose behavior in public schools is more harshly scrutinized than others (Rudd, 2014). They flourish in the Ocean Tides program.

Drug use for boys in the program is not a severe problem, and those who do have serious problems undergo specialized drug rehabilitation. Marijuana use is greater now than it was previously, but alcohol use has diminished. Other forms of drug use remain constant between the two time-frames, and few boys are seriously involved in these drugs. Past drug use has a large impact on drug use in the program regardless of other characteristics, which emphasizes the importance of addressing drug addiction in all juvenile delinquency programs.

Boys entering the program in the later years were much more likely than previously to have engaged in patterns of violent behavior before entering the program, but their experiences in the program mitigate their violence. These findings are most important to highlight in terms of policy changes in Rhode Island that advocate for keeping delinquent boys at home in outpatient care versus providing alternative programs like Ocean Tides that give them some relief from potentially stressful home lives. Consistently across its 40 years in operation, Ocean Tides has provided a safe haven for boys whose own experiences with child abuse and exposure to PIPV have influenced their own violent behavior. Across both time-frames, all types of abuse, and exposure to violence, as well as the boys' own violent behavior decreased by between 50 and 83% in the Ocean Tides Program. At least while these boys are in the program, they are significantly less violent while they undergo family counseling and other forms of rehabilitation

in transition back into more productive home lives. These results indicate that it may be wise to more carefully identify problems at home to inform placement decisions.

Although the Ocean Tides program continues to offer significant rehabilitation for juveniles in the program, changes are noted that have negative consequences for delivering their programs effectively and efficiently. The boys engage in significantly more rule-breaking at Ocean Tides since 2006 than they did previously, which may require much more staff who are better trained to address it than in previous years. Residents are less cooperative with family counseling, social workers, and residential staff since 2006 than they were previously. They are also more likely to incur official delinquency charges while in the program for new offenses. Grebstein and Van Wyk (2016) explain in their description of the Ocean Tides program that buy-in from residents is crucial to success. Since the boys have shorter sentences now, they may not experience the same kind of buy-in they have in the past. More staff may be needed now to handle these problems, and employees may experience greater stress as a result of these changes that requires specialized training to manage. The good news is that these problems are relatively simple to estimate in advance since the presence of some types of behavior and attitude characteristics beforehand explain about a third of the risk that these issues will continue to create problems in the program. So carefully planned intake interviews for residents are essential. Preparing to meet these problems directly may improve employee effectiveness and morale, and also improve the boys' overall success rate in the program. A little bit more prevention, may go a long way, but these things require greater resources.

## Conclusions

One size does not fit all in juvenile justice approaches. Nearly 50 years of examining the effects of incarcerating juvenile delinquents in youth prisons overwhelmingly identifies over-incarceration as an ineffective response at best and in most cases seriously increases recidivism and produces other damaging outcomes. Stakeholders in the Rhode Island Juvenile Justice system have admirable intentions. They hope to strengthen the state by providing families with the care and supports they need to raise healthy, productive, happy children. They are knowledgeable about the costly and dangerous effects of incarceration for juveniles and are desperately seeking alternatives.

One solution is to strengthen community-based, local in-home treatment for families and their delinquent children using various counseling programs, job training, child care, and educational strategies. This works for families that are capable and willing to comply with state-ordered intervention and prevention. However, stakeholders are so convinced that their strategies are best, that all children are better off with their own parents that they may not carefully evaluate what they are doing and make the necessary adjustments to their plan. Rhode Island is a small state with one public youth prison and six private facilities that house on average, 39% of the state's adjudicated boys in residence (Hockenberry et al., 2015). They have theoretically lumped all of these residential programs into one ignoring the unique contributions they may make toward rehabilitating young offenders in the state. It is time to stop looking for one simple solution to treating youthful offenders, and the present research leads the way toward finding alternative solutions for specific groups of offenders.

Most serious juvenile delinquency is rooted in strains that children experience directly from their families in the form of child abuse, neglect, and/or exposure to parental interpersonal

violence in the home. For the majority of delinquent youth, especially boys who tend to externalize their aggression, they must be removed at least temporarily from their homes to rehabilitate them and to redirect their behavior. What they need are family-surrogates that are well trained and have the resources that are necessary to provide safe and supportive environments in which to grow and learn. Their families need counseling and troubled boys need the time and space to change and to learn how to transition back into their families and into their communities. Families that are abusive need to be healed before they can effectively raise children and children need surrogate families that are well trained and equipped to step in and do the job when natural families fail. It really does take a community to raise a child. This research emphasizes that point and provides practical steps toward achieving that goal. Considering changes that have historically transpired in the delinquent population more resources, not fewer are needed for programs like Ocean Tides so that they can continue to provide the kind of successful care that rehabilitates juvenile offenders.

This research helps to achieve the goals expressed by Rhode Island juvenile justice stakeholders; to provide better, more effective and efficient treatments for offenders. It should also initiate necessary discussion in juvenile justice about differences in the programming and outcomes between the many different types of residential programs for adjudicated youth that exist in the United States. It may be time to clarify definitions for residential treatment centers, group homes, halfway houses, detention centers, training schools, youth prison, and juvenile shelters by creating a taxonomy that will allow researchers and practitioners a common language to use. At the very least, this research emphasizes that juvenile justice systems need to be as flexible as possible in treating America's troubled youth because one size does not fit all in juvenile justice strategies.

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