

Moral Reconciliation Therapy-MRT® is an evidence-based cognitive behavioral intervention developed 25 years ago. It is currently being used in 50 states and 7 countries and consistently yields successful results with varying target populations. MRT has been proven to increase life purpose, increase moral decision-making, increase medication adherence AND decrease risk-taking behaviors, substance abuse, and recidivism.

Problem:

The World Economic Forum has found that behavioral health conditions costs are higher than non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, the costs of behavioral health conditions are significantly greater than cardiovascular disease, and greater than the anticipated loss from all cancers, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease combined (SAMHSA, 2012). Co-occurring disorders impact Americans residing throughout all of our communities. However, there is a profound over-representation of co-occurring disordered persons in the criminal justice system with “over 70 percent of offenders having substance use disorders, and as many as 15 percent have major mental disorders — rates that greatly exceed those found in the general population” (Ditton, 1999). Furthermore, individuals with CODs stay incarcerated longer in both jail and prison than inmates without CODs, and have a 17% higher risk of recidivism than individuals with only a mental or substance use disorder (Hunt et. al., 2015). The prevalence of mental illness in the criminal justice system is growing, and the ineffective treatment for mental health is costing the U.S. **\$15 billion annually** (James and Glaze, 2006) (SAMHSA, 2005)(Hunt et. al., 2015). Abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs is exacting more than **\$700 billion** annually in costs related to crime, lost work productivity and health care (USDH, 2014)(CDC, 2015).

Solution:

Many approaches have been tried in behavioral health interventions and attempts have been made to treat symptoms of these issues; housing, jobs, education, etc. To date cognitive behavior models have had superior results. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists cognitive behavioral therapy as an evidence-based and promising practice. Amongst the various cognitive behavior treatment methods is most notable Moral Reconciliation Therapy- MRT®. MRT has shown long-term and significant results in addressing co-occurring disorders. The documented evidence of success of **MRT has earned recognition by SAMHSA on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices**. The MRT approach has been continuously documented to be effective in achieving positive outcome results.

- Reduction in recidivism
- Reduction criminal justice involvement
- Reduced substance abuse
- Reduced risk taking behavior
- Reduced violations/violence prison, jail, probation & parole
- Increased housing & job retention
- Integrated treatment
- Increased medication adherence
- Improved psychiatric symptoms and functioning

Conclusion:

Untreated behavioral health has wide spanning consequences, but overcoming the barriers to treatment is possible. Employing an evidence-based intervention will increase success rates. MRT is a manualized system run in an open-ended group format and can be completed with 24-30 group sessions. The MRT intervention will comprehensively treat both the mental and substance use

disorders, and decrease recidivism. I end with this question: “Why are we using unsuccessful old treatment models?” The answer is: “ Often times we are more resistant to change than the clients.”

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