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## The Effectiveness of Counseling Juveniles and Guardians as a Measure of Recidivism

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# Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Robert Dionel Johnson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2024

Abstract

The Effectiveness of Counseling Juveniles and Guardians as a Measure of Recidivism

by

Robert Dionel Johnson

MA, Boston University, 2011

BA, Ashford University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

February 2024

## Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences and perceptions of 10 juvenile justice professionals who had interacted with juvenile offenders and their guardians. This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to examine the outcomes of functional family therapy (FFT) between juvenile offenders and their guardians and their impact on recidivism rates in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan area. The theoretical framework that guided this study was FFT, which focuses on family dynamics and interactions while addressing a youth's problem behavior. During semi-structured interviews (conducted via Zoom (due to COVID-19 restrictions), participants were asked open-ended questions about their feelings, experiences, and perceptions regarding the effects and impacts of counseling on both juveniles and their guardians. Two themes were identified using an inductive approach: (a) contributing factors to juvenile delinquency and (b) social and family environment. Findings indicated that therapy effectively reduces recidivism rates of juvenile offenders when the juveniles and their guardians are involved. Implications for positive social change include (a) implementing family therapy into the processing of juvenile defendants when they first enter a juvenile corrections facility and when they have been released from the juvenile justice system and (b) educating and providing counseling and therapy resources to assist with the reduction of juvenile recidivism rates.

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## Dedication

I want to dedicate this research study to my mother, who unfortunately passed away on April 19, 2023, due to Stage 4 pancreatic cancer. My mom was that beacon of light who instilled strength and hard work in me. Watching her fight as she was transitioning showed me truly what strength was. Though she is not here to witness me reach another milestone in my life, I know she is watching over me, and I thank her every day for showing me never to give up despite the circumstances. Also, I would like to dedicate this study to my little brother, who passed away on October 24, 2021. My brother was that individual who taught me the importance of keeping perspective and knowing your worth in life. After losing my mother and brother, I lost focus on finishing my doctoral journey. However, witnessing how they fought despite the odds made me realize that I must fight through and finish what I started. Thank you both, and I hope I made you two proud.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Juvenile delinquency continues to be an issue throughout the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area. Once released, after a brief period, most juveniles tend to reoffend. Research has indicated that each day in the United States, 2.2 million people are incarcerated, including one million young Americans under age 30. An estimated 200,000 youth under eighteen are sent into the adult criminal justice system each year, often for misdemeanor offenses. Approximately 60,000 teens are held in juvenile detention facilities on any given day in this country (Rizor, 2017). While juvenile arrest rates have declined since 1980, the recidivism rates for many states lack uniformity, which has presented a public safety concern (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, 2019). Furthermore, research has indicated that many factors can influence delinquency, including uninvolved parenting and violence between juveniles and their parents (Kakonzi, 2019).

Youth disconnection poses significant costs to communities and businesses, resulting in wasted talent, diminished communities, lost earnings, reduced tax revenues, and increased reliance on social services (Rizor, 2017). These consequences highlight the urgent need for effective interventions that address the underlying issues contributing to juvenile delinquency. In response to this pressing concern, I aimed in the present research study to examine the outcomes of implementing functional family therapy (FFT) between juvenile offenders and their guardians in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia [DMV]).

Specifically, I sought to investigate the impact of FFT on recidivism rates among juvenile offenders in this region.

Youth disconnection refers to the disengagement of young individuals from education, employment, and social support systems, leading to a range of adverse outcomes for both the individuals and the communities they belong. These consequences include decreased educational attainment, limited employment opportunities, increased likelihood of involvement in criminal activities, and a higher probability of reliance on public assistance programs. Such disconnection not only hampers the potential of young individuals but also burdens communities and businesses as they bear the costs associated with lost productivity, reduced tax revenues, and increased demand for social services (Rizor, 2017).

In this research study, I focused on implementing FFT as a potential solution within the juvenile justice system, recognizing the significance of addressing youth disconnection. FFT is a well-established therapeutic approach that emphasizes the involvement of the entire family unit in addressing the underlying factors contributing to delinquent behavior. By targeting family dynamics, communication patterns, and problem-solving skills, FFT aims to strengthen family relationships, improve individual well-being, and reduce the likelihood of reoffending (Rizor, 2017).

By specifically examining the impact of FFT on recidivism rates in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area, I aimed in this study to provide localized insights into the effectiveness of this intervention. The DMV area, encompassing Washington, DC, and its surrounding regions, was an ideal setting for this

research due to its diverse population, distinct socioeconomic factors, and unique challenges faced by juvenile offenders within the jurisdiction. The potential social implications of this study are profound. By analyzing the outcomes of FFT, this research has the potential to demonstrate to policymakers the critical importance of integrating family therapy into the processing of juvenile defendants within the juvenile corrections system. By initiating family therapy at the outset of a juvenile's entry into a corrections facility and continuing it after their release, this study was intended to emphasize the significance of a comprehensive and continuous approach to rehabilitation (Rizor, 2017).

Moreover, in conducting this research study, I recognized the necessity of educating and providing counseling and therapy resources to reduce juvenile recidivism rates when a juvenile is reintegrated into the care of their guardian. By highlighting the potential positive impact of family therapy on recidivism, this study can advocate for implementing post-release programs that offer ongoing support and resources to both the juvenile offender and their guardian. Such initiatives can facilitate successful reintegration into the community, address the underlying emotional and psychological factors contributing to delinquency, and ultimately reduce the likelihood of reoffending. The significance of this research extends beyond individual cases. By demonstrating the potential benefits of implementing family therapy within the juvenile justice system, this study has the potential to influence lawmakers and policymakers. The findings can provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of family therapy as an integral component of the processing and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders by prioritizing the inclusion of family therapy and allocating resources (Rizor, 2017).

## **Background**

Juvenile delinquency has been a significant concern in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan area (DMV). Children under 18 are entering the juvenile justice system at a higher rate than those entering prison as adults. According to Metropolitan Police Department data, 166 people died in a murder in the district in 2019. That figure represented the highest murder rate in the nation's capital since 2008. However, the district's homicide rate was not the only troubling statistic in 2019. Juveniles were arrested for more than half of all robberies in the district in 2019. Overall, a total of 417 kids under the age of 18 were arrested for committing that crime (Henry, 2019).

In 2016, Marquez Jackson, then 18 years old, pleaded guilty in a northern Virginia court to second-degree murder charges related to his involvement in a robbery. He was placed in juvenile confinement until age 21 but was expected to be released on probation. Jackson was one of 208 juveniles living at the center in the small town of Bon Air, a 20-minute drive from Richmond. As of 2005, the state had eight facilities like this one, housing more than 1,300 delinquent juveniles. State leaders have touted the shuttered facilities and declining population, but recidivism remains a problem. According to the state Department of Juvenile Justice, more than 70% of Virginia juvenile inmates were rearrested within three years of release (Pollock, 2016).

According to Rizor (2017), the issue of incarceration in the United States is a significant concern, with a staggering number of individuals finding themselves behind bars. Approximately 2.2 million people are incarcerated daily in the country; among them

are 1 million young Americans under 30. This statistic alone highlights the magnitude of the problem and the dire need for effective interventions to address the underlying issues contributing to youth involvement in the criminal justice system (Rizor, 2017).

Even more alarming is that an estimated 200,000 juveniles under 18 are sent to the adult criminal justice system each year, often for misdemeanor offenses. This practice raises concerns about the appropriateness and effectiveness of treating young offenders as adults, as it may exacerbate the likelihood of future criminal behavior and hinder their chances of successful rehabilitation and reintegration into society (Rizor, 2017).

Furthermore, approximately 60,000 teenagers are held in juvenile detention facilities nationwide on any given day. These facilities are meant to provide a rehabilitative environment for young offenders. However, their overpopulation and limited resources often challenge their ability to address the underlying issues contributing to delinquency (Binczewski, 2018).

Although juvenile arrest rates have declined since 1980, recidivism rates in many states remain a cause for concern (Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, 2019). Recidivism refers to the tendency of individuals to re-offend after their initial involvement in the criminal justice system. The lack of uniformity in recidivism rates across states highlights the need for evidence-based interventions to reduce reoffending and ensure public safety effectively (Rizor, 2017).

The above statistics underscore the urgency of addressing the challenges faced by the juvenile justice system. It is a matter of ensuring young individuals' well-being and prospects and protecting communities. Implementing interventions that target the root

causes of delinquency, such as family dynamics, social support systems, and mental health, can play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of criminal behavior and reducing the recidivism rate (Binczewski, 2018).

Although past researchers have explored the experiences of juveniles being placed in the juvenile justice system, a qualitative approach is necessary to provide insight into how juveniles are impacted and affected after they have been released into the care of their guardians. This study addressed a gap in knowledge by examining the impact and effect that counseling and therapy have on juveniles and their guardians after being released into society. This study also provides a general understanding of the possible challenges and barriers that juvenile offenders and their guardians endure when participating in a counseling or therapy program issued by the juvenile justice system.

### **Problem Statement**

Juvenile delinquency has become a significant problem in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan area (DMV), primarily because of the high number of arrests and crimes committed. According to the DC Office of the Attorney General, in 2015, the number of juveniles rose 35% from 110 to 149 at the end of the fiscal year (Jaffe, 2016). On any given day, 53,000 youths sit in U.S. juvenile or criminal facilities due to involvement with the justice system, according to a 2018 report by the Prison Policy Institute (PPI). The report also noted that two out of every three confined youths in the most restrictive facilities have almost 1 in 10 incarcerated juveniles in adult facilities. Moreover, though there is no national average recidivism rate for juveniles, reports from individual states remain stubbornly high, with many rearrest

rates at more than 50% over a 1- to 3-year period, according to a paper prepared by The Council of State Governments Justice Center (Binczewski, 2018).

Research suggests that juvenile recidivism rates lack results. The reason is that what is reported is the downside, and too often, society complies with what is to be the norm. To most, juvenile delinquency is a threat to society and never will be a contributor to social change. Frank (2019) viewed it differently. He found that an intervention program to decrease the chances that juveniles convicted of crimes would re-offend had finally made its way to Southwest Virginia. Last month, FFT services became available to fourteen underserved Southwest Virginia locations, including Tazewell County. Jeff Brintle, court services director for Virginia's 29th judicial district, said the family-based treatment and diversion services are to intervene with youths before they get in deep with the court system. The program addresses juveniles with substance use behavioral or emotional issues.

A meaningful gap in the current research literature is the limitation per FFT. A limitation noted with FFT is that it is predominantly studied with White samples. Darnell and Schuler (2015) argued that more research is needed with African American and Latino samples due to their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system. Including these samples in the research regarding FFT would provide evidence that FFT is most effective with a racially and ethnically diverse selection. While Celink et al. (2019) agreed with Darnell and Schuler regarding race and ethnicity, they further recommended that gender be studied. Boccio and Beaver's (2019) findings indicated that there may be a relationship between parental divorce and juvenile delinquency but that there was no

appearance of substantial influence on juvenile delinquency. A limitation of this study was that it was not considered that prior juvenile delinquency may have influenced parental relationships before a shift in the family structure occurred. They suggested that future research needs to be conducted to explore the nuances of the relationship between juvenile delinquency and the family structure.

### **Purpose of this Study**

This qualitative study aimed to examine the outcomes of FFT between juvenile offender and their guardian and its impact on recidivism rates in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan area (DMV). Research has indicated that intervention programs that focus on juvenile offenders' behavioral problems, mental health concerns, violence, and drug use are effective when parents are involved (Darnell & Schuler, 2015; Gottfredson et al., 2018; Robbins et al., 2016; Sexton, 2019; Sexton & Turner, 2010; Turner et al., 2019; Weisman & Montgomery, 2018). The central concept or phenomenon of interest was participants' perceptions and experiences concerning whether FFT has impacted both the parent and juvenile offender and the recidivism rates in the National Capital Region portion of the DMV. The participants in this study were juvenile justice professionals in the DMV area.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency?
2. How significant is the parent's role in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism?

## **Theoretical Framework**

Boccio et al. (2019) have provided compelling evidence regarding the influence of family structure and parent-child relationships on juvenile delinquency. Their studies suggest that the dynamics within a family, including the quality of the parent-child bond and the overall family structure, play a significant role in determining the likelihood of delinquent behavior among adolescents.

The current study adopted a theoretical framework that combined Murray Bowen's family systems theory with FFT to explore this phenomenon further. Bowen's family systems theory emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of family members, suggesting that disruptions or dysfunctions within the family system can contribute to behavioral issues in children. FFT, on the other hand, is a treatment model rooted in systemic and cognitive-behavioral theories. It targets explicitly at-risk adolescents and their families, aiming to address a range of challenges, including behavioral problems, mental health issues, violence, and substance abuse (Darnell & Schuler, 2015; Gottfredson et al., 2018; Robbins et al., 2016; Sexton, 2019; Sexton & Turner, 2010; Turner et al., 2019; Weisman & Montgomery, 2018).

The effectiveness of FFT and similar family therapy-focused treatment programs has been well documented. Studies have shown sustained clinical outcomes and demonstrated the real-world effectiveness of these interventions (Karam et al., 2017), indicating that not only do these programs have a positive impact on the immediate treatment of youth behavioral issues, but they also offer long-term benefits by equipping

families with the necessary tools and strategies to maintain positive changes beyond the therapy setting (Karam et al., 2017).

Extensive research has unequivocally established that integrating counseling and therapy within the juvenile justice system yields highly favorable outcomes in cost-effectiveness. These interventions have proven instrumental in mitigating various adverse outcomes, including rearrest, conviction, substance abuse, and the need for residential or foster care placements for juvenile delinquents (Robbins et al., 2016).

One notable study by Robbins et al. (2016) examined the impact of counseling and therapy programs within the juvenile justice system. The findings indicated substantially reduced recidivism rates among juveniles who received these interventions. Addressing underlying behavioral issues and mental health concerns and providing support for substance abuse problems, counseling, and therapy interventions contributed to breaking the cycle of delinquency and criminal behavior.

Immediate benefits are realized regarding reduced rearrest rates and convictions, and the long-term implications extend to substance abuse prevention, avoiding costly residential or foster care placements, and implementing counseling and therapy programs within the juvenile justice system. The cost-benefit analysis strongly supports the integration of counseling and therapy as essential components of the comprehensive approach to juvenile delinquency intervention. These interventions not only address the immediate needs of the juvenile but also promote personal growth, social reintegration, and successful reentry into society, ultimately contributing to safer communities and improved overall outcomes for juvenile offenders (Robbins et al. 2016).

### **Nature of the Study**

The concept of the study was derived from a phenomenological qualitative study. The prime focus was on FFT between the juvenile offender and guardian of a lived experience of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system. Creswell (2013) described phenomenology as an approach to qualitative research focusing on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of this approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon. The key concepts and phenomenon under investigation were qualitative research methods, phenomenology, research questions, interviews, methodology credibility, and the participant's perception/lived experiences about FFT between the juvenile offender and their guardian and its impact on recidivism rates in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). This study occurred in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). Data was collected using a qualitative approach. The data were analyzed from notes the participants provided during our one-on-one in-depth interview, responses to research questions, and transcribed recordings. I then compared the data and checked for any inconsistency so that it would not threaten the data's reliability.

### **Definitions of Terms**

*Delinquency:* Conduct that is out of accord with accepted behavior or the law, especially juvenile delinquency (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

*Developmental influences:* Developmental psychology is a scientific approach that aims to explain growth, change, and consistency throughout the lifespan.

Developmental psychology examines how thinking, feeling, and behavior change throughout a person's life (McLeod, 2017).

*Education:* Education, whether formal or informal, can shape an individual's life, both in the classroom and outside of it. A quality education can lay the groundwork for a successful career, but that is far from its only purpose. Education imparts knowledge, critical thinking skills, and, in many cases, an improved ability to approach unfamiliar situations and subjects with an open mind (Psychology Today, 1991–2020).

*Externalization:* A defense mechanism in which one's thoughts, feelings, or perceptions are attributed to the external world and perceived as independent of oneself or one's own experiences. A common expression of this is projection (American Psychological Association, 2020).

*Family interaction:* The primary purpose of family interaction is to maintain the parent-child relationship and other family attachments (ND).

*Family therapy:* Family therapy is a form of psychotherapy whose practitioners seek to reduce distress and conflict by improving the systems of interactions between family members (King, 2020).

*Internalization specifically:* Incorporating (values and patterns of culture) within the self as conscious or subconscious guiding principles through learning or socialization (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

*Recidivism:* A tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior, especially criminal behavior (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

*Rehabilitation:* The action, process, or result of rehabilitating or being rehabilitated, such as restoring someone (such as a criminal) to a valuable and constructive place in society (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

*Social change:* Social change is how human interactions and relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time, profoundly impacting society (Dunfey, 2019).

### **Assumptions**

The aspects of the study that are believed but cannot be determined to be trusted are participant bias, vulnerability, inadequate equipment, inappropriate interview location, transcript influence, and honest answers. Wargo (2015) suggested some common assumptions: Participants will answer the interview questions honestly and candidly. Second, the inclusion criteria of the samples are appropriate for all participants who experience the same or similar phenomenon in this study. Third, all participants are sincerely interested in participating in the research and do not have any other motives, such as getting a better grade in a course if they are college students or impressing their supervisor because they agreed to be in the study. Smith and Noble (2014) described participant bias as understandable and stated that bias is relevant for several reasons: It exists in all research across research designs and is hard to eliminate. It can occur at each stage of the research process and impacts the validity and reliability of study findings; misinterpretation of data can have severe consequences for practice (Smith & Noble, 2014).

There are no innocent questions for an interviewer using vulnerability in qualitative research; the questions that interviewers ask, or sometimes their presence, can make the participant (and the researcher) vulnerable (Guillemin et al., 2009). If the equipment is inadequate and the location is inappropriate for an interview, then the transcript could be influenced by the environment in which it was recorded. The interviewer must understand that using inadequate or inappropriate equipment may lead to errors in the transcript (Kvale, 1996; MacLean et al., 2004; Poland, 1995). Furthermore, the quality of the transcript is influenced by the interviewee's spoken intonation (e.g., soft, hard, with a heavy dialect; Oliver et al., 2005), the ambiance and rapport created with the interviewer, and the interviewee's tendency to stammer and allow long pauses during a discussion and emit intentional sounds on their mental status or health, which may affect voice quality and the transcriber's understanding of the situation. The assumption is necessary for the context of this study because those who read it will believe that the information obtained is verified and that the participants' responses are valid. It is imperative to know what an assumption is when applied to general research and the dissertation. Wargo (2015) mentioned that in the *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology*, W. Paul Vogt defined an assumption as "(a) A statement that is presumed to be true, often only temporarily or for a specific purpose, such as building a theory; (b) The conditions under which statistical techniques yield valid results."

### **Scope**

The specific aspects of the research problem addressed in this study were the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency and the significance of a parent's role in

helping reduce juvenile recidivism. Research has indicated that treatment programs focusing on family therapy have “sustained clinical outcomes and real-world demonstration of effectiveness” (Karam et al., 2017, p. 44). This study included correction officers, family counselors, and attorneys from the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV) who had experience with family counseling as ordered by the juvenile justice system. Their experiences provide a better concept of their perception of court-ordered family counseling and the juvenile justice system.

### **Delimitation**

This study did not include family members such as brother, sister, cousin, aunt, or uncle. If not sequestered by the courts, they do not need to participate in family counseling with the juvenile offender and their parents. A qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by doing an excellent job transcribing the research context and the assumptions central to the research. The person who wishes to transfer the results to a different context is responsible for making the judgment call on how sensible the transfer is. The potential transferability behind this study will be conclusive. That is because the evidence found from prior and current research applies to the studied population. Research indicates that transferability refers to the degree to which qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the generalizing person (Trochim, 2020).

### **Limitations**

A potential limitation in this study is likely due to the lack of information that will support the theory or the questions that need answering. Secondly, it could be that the participants must be more honest and consistent when sharing their stories, eager to participate to obtain sufficient data, or how to recruit. Research indicates that there may be unknown conditions or factors at the facility where the participants reside, work, or study that bias participant's responses. When data are collected from older adults, some of their recollections of events, situations, and feelings must be more transparent. Moreover, the number of participants or subjects was enough to conclude adequately. It is further noted that in qualitative methods, the number of participants reaches a level where data saturation gets accomplished and no new data or meaning units are discovered (Wargo, 2015).

The potential biases that could have influenced this study's outcome were observer bias, missing data, human error, and unfair prejudice practices that could have altered the study results. Sabin (2010) stated that biases occur when there is a systematic difference between the results and the situation. Once introduced to a study, it can be informative at any stage of the appropriate statistical methods; that can reduce the effect of unfairness but may not eliminate it. She stated that many forms of bias exist and can be distinguished as a form of selection bias of the patients in the study who are not representative of the population where the results apply. Information bias occurs during data collection when measurements of the exposure outcomes are systematically incorrect. The disadvantages of qualitative research are unique. The techniques of the

data collector and their observations can alter the information in subtle ways. These are qualitative research limitations: The process is time-consuming. The other problem is that the interpretations could be more extensive. Personal experience and knowledge influence observations and conclusions. It is further noted that because qualitative research is open-ended, participants have more control over the content of the data collected (Radu, 2019). However, several measures could address limitations. As the researcher, I could visualize, map out, and then document what could have the most significant impact on this study. Measures include reducing data collection and reviewing whether the questions were clear and appropriate to achieve better responses. Radu (2019) stated that it is important to cross-reference the data obtained with quantitative data while doing qualitative research. Marketers can build a database designed to survey prospects and customers continuously.

### **Significance**

When addressing this research problem, the potential contribution to advance knowledge in the discipline behind this study could change how we communicate our discovery of new information/knowledge and new ideas behind prior research that may have been overlooked. Also, it could shed light on the problem and why things are the way they are. The potential contributions that this study will develop include insight and understanding of the importance of FFT for juvenile offenders and their guardians and its effectiveness in coping with their reentry back into their homes, schools, and communities. Furthermore, it provides insight from the juvenile offenders and their

parents regarding reducing recidivism. Fuller-Iglesias et al. (2015) suggested that the role of family shapes adult psychological well-being over time.

Furthermore, if there is new research discovery, it can help influence policymakers towards the understanding that structural family therapy is effective and can help reduce juvenile recidivism and give a different perspective beyond the previous research that would educate lawmakers and society with new knowledge on what has not been before now. This study can help change how children are processed before incarceration and after being released to their guardians. It is imperative because delinquency continues in youth and has caused societal outrage and flooded the juvenile courts. However, this does not take away from the fact that there is causation behind every act. Depending on the child's age, courts cannot determine whether they are stable enough to deal with the trauma of imprisonment. Furthermore, family counseling may be the better alternative to understanding where the juvenile offender and their parent's aggression began.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 served as an introduction to the research study, providing a comprehensive overview of various aspects. It began by presenting the research problem and offering background information to provide context. Additionally, the chapter outlined the research questions and described the methodology employed in the study. The theoretical framework was discussed to highlight its relevance to the research, and the nature of the study was explained.

Furthermore, this chapter included a list of defined terms to ensure clarity of concepts. I also addressed the study's delimitations, limitations, and scope. A concise summary of the existing research literature was provided to underscore the significance of the problem. The chapter also outlined the library databases and search engines utilized for the literature review, explaining the rationale behind their selection.

Moreover, in this chapter, I elucidated how the chosen phenomenology theory related to the present study and how the research questions aligned with, challenged, or expanded upon existing qualitative methods. Key concepts and phenomena were identified and defined within the theoretical framework, accompanied by relevant statements and definitions.

The chapter highlighted how the current study contributed to filling gaps in the research literature and extended the existing knowledge on the subject matter. It emphasized the novelty and value of the research, setting the stage for the subsequent chapters that delve into the detailed analysis and findings.

The literature review conducted in this study plays a crucial role in enhancing the understanding of the research problem. Chapter 2 will present a comprehensive literature review encompassing relevant studies and scholarly works. In this review, I will discuss the theoretical framework, providing a foundation for the research; therefore, drawing on existing literature, I could synthesize previous research findings and identify gaps or areas that warrant further investigation. This study went beyond merely summarizing existing knowledge. Instead, it contributed new insights and advancements in understanding the examined topic.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of family counseling in reducing juvenile recidivism. The Eastern United States has witnessed a significant increase in juvenile delinquency, evidenced by alarming arrests and committed crime rates. While the juvenile justice system has implemented various measures such as sanctions, treatments, and rehabilitation to address the problematic behavior of juveniles, there is a growing consensus that reforms should prioritize improving access to mental health services for all juveniles and developing effective alternatives to traditional residential placement facilities (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011).

In this chapter, I exhaustively review the relevant literature about parental involvement, juvenile delinquency, aftercare services, and recidivism rates. Moreover, I focus on the family systems theory's theoretical framework, which encompasses FFT principles. Family systems theory emphasizes the interconnectedness and dynamics within the family unit. At the same time, FFT is a therapeutic approach designed to address the specific needs of at-risk adolescents and their families (Celinska et al., 2019).

Through this study, I aim to contribute to understanding how family counseling, grounded in family systems theory and FFT principles, can effectively reduce juvenile recidivism by examining the existing literature. The literature review will provide valuable insights into the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence surrounding these approaches, shedding light on the potential for positive outcomes in reducing juvenile reoffending rates.

### **Literature Review Strategy**

In Chapter 2, the literature review was conducted using various scholarly resources in the Walden University Library. To ensure the relevance and value of each academic journal, article, or website, the selection process involved reading the abstracts of the sources. This approach ensured that only literature pertinent to the research was included.

The research strategy focused on identifying literature published within the past five years to maintain currency. All the sources utilized in the study were scholarly and contributed valuable insights, enhancing the overall quality of the research.

For this study, a comprehensive collection of literature was gathered from reputable publishers and databases to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. Scholarly articles from renowned sources such as SAGE Journals, ProQuest, Criminal Justice & Security, Psychology Education, and Public Policy & Administration were included in the review.

The study also extensively used the resources available in Walden University Library, which provided access to various databases. Databases such as SocIndex, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Criminal Justice Database, and Taylor & Francis were extensively utilized to obtain relevant and up-to-date information for the literature review. By employing these diverse sources, I aimed to capture a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on the topic of interest and ensure a robust foundation for the research analysis. Specific keywords were employed to conduct an effective search, including

juvenile delinquency, recidivism rates, parental involvement, and juvenile reentry. These keywords helped narrow the search and identify literature related to the research topics.

### **Theoretical Framework of Family Systems Theory and Functional Family Therapy**

Counseling involves investigating and treating issues or problems within diverse client populations (Skowron, 2004). Grounded in systemic and cognitive-behavioral theories, FFT is a treatment theoretical model that has been used for at-risk adolescent youth and their families that focuses on youth behavioral problems, mental health concerns, violence, and drug use (Darnell & Schuler, 2015; Gottfredson et al., 2018; Robbins et al., 2016; Sexton, 2019; Sexton & Turner, 2010; Turner et al., 2019; Weisman & Montgomery, 2018). It has been highly recognized as an evidence-based intervention program that has evolved from a theory to a treatment model that is “a comprehensive family-based and relationally focused intervention model” that relies on the “collaborative and relational nature of the interactions among client, family, and therapist as the mechanism of change” (Sexton, 2019, p. 171). A vital cognitive component concentrates on systemic skill training in family communication, parenting skills, conflict management, and numerous other skills that are not possible or offered in other intervention programs (Sexton & Turner, 2010; Turner et al., 2019). By following defined goals and skills that are guided by core principles, the client, family, and therapist can be as creative as they like to match the client and their family’s unique structure, functioning, and interaction style that reduces the recidivism rates of the juvenile (Sexton, 2019; Turner et al., 2019).

To understand the concept of FFT, five core theoretical principles shape how therapists understand the client and their families and the clinical change process that the therapist will follow in helping the client and their families change (Sexton, 2019). The principles are as follows: (a) families are stable multisystemic relational systems; (b) relations patterns are central to family relationships; (c) problem narratives and attributions form the meaning dimension of understanding families; (d) youth behavior and clinical problems are family problems; and (e) families are “glued” together through relational attachments or functions that help explain the homeostatic nature of family systems (Sexton, 2019, pp. 173–174). In essence, the core principles highlight (a) the fact that there is a relational pattern that influences the problematic behavior of the juvenile, (b) the fact that juveniles respond to the unspoken relational patterns that they observe around them, (c) the fact that relational patterns develop and define the juvenile’s problematic behavior by obtaining an understanding of what causes the pain and struggle in the family unit; (d) how the family experiences and interacts with the problematic behavior; and (e) how families function and are connected through their experiences (Sexton, 2019). FFT focuses “on family dysfunction as the root of delinquent behavior and seeks to establish and maintain new patterns of family behavior and communication that reinforce more adaptive youth behavior” (Darnell & Schuler, 2015, p. 75).

Celinska et al. (2019) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine FFT's impact on recidivism. They found a significant reduction in the likelihood of reconvictions regarding new drug offenses, new property offenses, and sanctions for technical violations (p. 272). They also found that juveniles court-ordered to attend FFT

benefited more than juveniles who were in individual therapy or mentored. They agreed that the general premise of FFT was “that delinquency is not an individual problem but rather a family issue and as such it should be addressed within the family” (p. 272). They suggested that future research should focus on examining the differences in the effectiveness of FFT by race, ethnicity, and gender, as well as how FFT impacted juveniles with drug problems.

Gottfredson et al. (2018) examined the use of FFT on juveniles who were “court-involved, gang-at-risk, or gang-involved” in Philadelphia’s Family Court. They used an alternative version of FFT that “was designed to involve more direct treatment to address ongoing pressure from neighborhood gang members as well as greater preparation prior to treatment, ” called the FFT-G (Gottfredson et al., 2018, p. 941). Their findings indicated that the FFT-G was effective in reducing recidivism in the first 18 months, and Gottfredson et al. concluded that FFT-G is as effective as FFT when reducing recidivism rates. They concluded that the behavior of juveniles “in a high-risk, minority population” improved and that the FFT-G provided cost savings to the juvenile justice system (Gottfredson et al., 2018, p. 952). Robbins et al. (2016) also argued that FFT is a cost-effective approach when working with youths in the juvenile justice system, among other settings. It is primarily because of “its implementation, and a supervision and monitoring system” (p. 552).

In a study conducted by Sexton and Turner (2010), the effectiveness of FFT and community probation services in reducing criminal recidivism in a community juvenile

justice setting was examined. The study involved more than nine hundred juvenile offenders, and the outcomes were evaluated 12 months after the completion of treatment.

The findings yielded intriguing insights after carefully analyzing the data gathered from all therapists involved in the study. The results indicated that FFT did not exhibit a statistically significant advantage over supervised probation regarding reducing recidivism rates among the participants. In other words, no substantial difference was observed between the effectiveness of the two approaches in preventing further criminal behavior within the overall sample (Celinska et al., 2019).

These findings provide valuable information regarding the comparative effectiveness of FFT and supervised probation as intervention strategies for reducing recidivism. While FFT is a widely recognized and evidence-based therapeutic approach that emphasizes family dynamics and communication patterns, the results of this study suggest that it may not offer a distinct advantage over the alternative of supervised probation in terms of preventing future criminal behavior (Celinska et al., 2019).

However, the study also revealed an essential distinction based on the therapist's adherence to the treatment protocol. When therapists followed the prescribed treatment protocol for FFT, significant reductions in felony and violent crimes were observed, amounting to 34.9% and 30%, respectively. Additionally, there was a significant 21.1% reduction in misdemeanor crimes. These findings highlight the significance of fidelity to the treatment protocol in achieving positive outcomes with FFT. When therapists adhered to the established guidelines and implemented the intervention as intended, notable reductions in more serious criminal offenses were observed—this underscores the

importance of ensuring that therapists receive appropriate training and support to deliver FFT effectively (Celinska et al., 2019).

It is worth noting that the study focused on a community juvenile justice setting, which can present unique challenges and contexts compared to other environments. The findings suggest that while FFT may not inherently outperform supervised probation in reducing overall recidivism rates, its effectiveness becomes evident when implemented with fidelity (Celinska et al., 2019).

The study by Sexton and Turner (2010) adds valuable insights to understanding FFT's impact on criminal recidivism in a community juvenile justice context. It emphasizes the need for therapists to adhere to the treatment protocol to achieve maximum benefits. By doing so, FFT has the potential to significantly reduce felony and violent crimes and contribute to a decrease in misdemeanor offenses among juvenile offenders. These findings support the notion that when implemented as intended, evidence-based interventions can make a meaningful difference in reducing recidivism rates and promoting positive outcomes for youth in the justice system. A limitation noted with FFT is that it has been predominantly studied with Caucasian participants. Darnell and Schuler (2015) argued that more research should be conducted on African American and Latino samples due to their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system.

Including these samples in the research regarding FFT would provide evidence that FFT is effective in a racially and ethnically diverse sample. While Celinska et al. (2019) agreed with Darnell and Schuler (2015) regarding race and ethnicity, they further recommended that gender be studied. Celinska et al. provided an example indicating that

“female adolescents were less likely to be reconvicted while Latina adolescents were more likely to be re-institutionalized” (p. 273).

Research has shown that the Bowen family systems theory has been used for “predominately White, non-Hispanic, middle to upper middle class, and highly educated” individuals (Erdem & Safi, 2018, p. 470). To further examine the effects that counseling has on diverse client populations, Skowron (2004) conducted a study using the Bowen family systems theory with individuals of color. Using the Differentiation of Self Inventory, Skowron’s study included 61 individuals of color to examine whether the Bowen family systems theory was relevant for people of color. Skowron posited that family systems theories “define themselves and function not in isolation, but rather in the context of significant relationships with family, friends, and loved ones” (p. 447).

The concept of differential of self is central to the Bowen family systems theory in that it “determines how roles, rules, and boundaries are constructed in the family,” and it refers to “how one makes a distinction between thought and emotional processes” and “how one relates to significant others while maintaining coherent sense in self” (Erdem & Safi, 2018, p. 470). The findings indicated that psychological adjustment and social problem-solving skills were more significant among individuals of color compared to their European American counterparts of similar age and gender. Moreover, the findings further indicated that individuals of color “with the greatest psychological adjustment were least emotionally cut off and more comfortable with family connections” and other important individuals (Skowron, 2004, p. 453). Also, individuals who engaged in self-directed behavior “and acknowledge ownership of their thoughts and feelings” had better

social problem-solving skills (p. 453). While Skowron's study represented an initial effort to explore how family system theories, specifically Bowen family systems theory, impact individuals of color, further research is needed to evaluate "the validity of family systems theories" in treating different ethnic and cultural groups (Erdem & Safi, 2018, p. 447).

According to Maschi et al. (2008, p. 1376), individual and social-environmental factors, beyond legal considerations, play a crucial role in youths' entry, exit, and extended involvement in the juvenile justice system, as supported by research. Maschi et al. proposed that individual risk factors encompass elements such as minority or majority status, socioeconomic status, and gender, as well as a history of trauma, mental health issues, or substance abuse problems. Social and environmental risk factors include unmet service needs and previous treatment experiences (Maschi et al., 2008, p. 1382).

Furthermore, studies have consistently demonstrated that utilizing FFT within the juvenile justice system yields favorable cost-benefit outcomes. These outcomes include a reduction in rearrest and conviction rates, as well as a decrease in substance abuse among juveniles. Implementing FFI also helps avoid unnecessary incarcerations and placements of juveniles in residential or foster care settings (Robbins et al., 2016).

The juvenile justice system is influenced by a wide range of factors, including both individual and social-environmental elements. Understanding and addressing these factors, along with integrating evidence-based interventions like the FFI, can lead to positive outcomes in terms of reducing recidivism rates, substance abuse, and unnecessary institutional placements for juvenile offenders (Robbins et al., 2016).

### **Parental Involvement and Juvenile Delinquency**

Research has consistently highlighted the crucial role of parental involvement within the juvenile justice system. Scholars have long recognized that parents play a significant part in shaping the development and behavior of their children (Burke et al., 2014; Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019; Van As & Janssens, 2002; Walker et al., 2015). Consequently, parents are often held responsible and accountable for their children's actions and conduct.

The influence of parents on their children's behavior is multifaceted. Children observe and imitate their parents' behaviors, internalizing the values, norms, and moral principles conveyed to them (Mwangangi, 2019). Through parental guidance, children learn to discern right and wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. Parental involvement is pivotal in instilling discipline, teaching empathy, and promoting prosocial behaviors (Mwangangi, 2019).

However, as children mature, they may become adept at concealing their delinquent behaviors from their parents, creating a challenging dynamic where the lack of parental supervision and communication can contribute to developing delinquent tendencies (Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019). The quality of the parent-child relationship and the extent of parental supervision become crucial factors in determining a juvenile's engagement in delinquent activities.

Research consistently emphasizes the need for effective parental involvement programs within the juvenile justice system. Interventions that enhance parent-child relationships, improve communication, and strengthen parental supervision have

positively reduced delinquency rates (Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019). These programs typically focus on equipping parents with the necessary skills and knowledge to support their children's positive development, enforce appropriate discipline, and create a nurturing and structured environment.

Within the juvenile justice system, there is a widespread belief that parental involvement should be an integral part of the process because parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's behavior, instilling values, norms, and morals (Mwangangi, 2019; Walker et al., 2015). One common approach to incorporating parental involvement is designating parents as de facto extensions of the court's surveillance and authority when juveniles are released or placed on probation (Walker et al., 2015, p. 411). Research by Walker et al. (2015) indicated that parental involvement in the court process primarily affects the parents. Similarly, Burke et al. (2014) argued that parents' contributions should be more valued due to a lack of comprehensive understanding. To address this, Walker et al. (2015) recommended that courts enhance communication with parents, aiming to improve the youths' experiences and reduce the risk of them receiving conflicting messages from the court.

The juvenile justice system can benefit from parents' valuable insights and support, increasing communication and collaboration between the court and parents. Parents have unique knowledge about their children's strengths, needs, and challenges, which can inform effective intervention strategies. Moreover, involving parents in decision-making can enhance their sense of ownership and accountability, ultimately promoting positive outcomes for the youth involved (Mwangangi, 2019).

To fully leverage parental involvement, the court must establish clear and consistent communication channels with parents, including regular updates on the youth's progress, court decisions, and expectations. By ensuring that parents are well-informed and included in the process, the court can minimize misunderstandings and conflicting messages that may hinder the rehabilitation and reintegration of the youth (Mwangangi, 2019). Burke et al. (2014) and Walker et al. (2015) suggested that further research is needed to understand how parental involvement in the juvenile court system impacts the youth's delinquent behavior outcomes.

Research has indicated that family structure and the relationship between a parent and child have an impact on juvenile delinquency (Boccio & Beaver, 2019; Cicerali & Cicerali, 2018; Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2020; Mwangangi, 2019). Jacobsen & Zaatut (2020) conducted a study that used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health that focused on the household structure and its impact on juvenile delinquency. While previous research has indicated that youths are at a greater risk of engaging in deviant behavior when they come from a single-parent household than those with both parents, Jacobsen and Zaatut's (2020) findings did not support this assertion. The authors found the total opposite to be true. They suggested that youths who live in single-parent households do not engage in delinquency at a higher rate because they have chores that structure their time and limit them from having the opportunity to engage in delinquent behaviors.

Moreover, they argue that youths in households with a biological parent and a stepparent were likelier to engage in delinquency than in other households. They also

suggested that it is not the quantity of parents that a youth has in their household that matters but the quality of the relationship between the youth and their parents. They argue that youths with a strong relationship with their parents are less likely to engage in delinquency mainly because they fear losing or jeopardizing that family bond (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

To understand how changes in the family structure impact juvenile delinquency, Boccio and Beaver (2019) focused on parental divorce and delinquent behavior in adolescence and adulthood. Since research has suggested a link between juvenile delinquency and parental divorce, Boccio and Beaver (2019) sought to find an explanation for this relationship. Previous research findings suggested that parental divorce negatively affected the juvenile and lasted well into adulthood. Boccio & Beaver's (2019) findings indicated that there may be a relationship between parental divorce and juvenile delinquency but that there was no appearance that there is influenced juvenile delinquency. A limitation of their study was that they did not consider that there may have been prior juvenile delinquency that influenced parental relationships before a shift in the family structure occurred. They suggested that future research be conducted to explore the nuances of the relationship between juvenile delinquency and the family structure.

To comprehend the relationship between parental involvement and juvenile delinquency, Moitra et al. (2018) used the Home Environment Inventory, Moitra et al. (2018) to examine parenting behaviors and juvenile delinquency among low-income families. Their study consisted of twenty-seven juvenile delinquents and one hundred

juvenile nondelinquents in India. Their findings indicated that a “lack of restriction and less stringent parental rules” were common among those juveniles who were delinquents (p. 342). Furthermore, their findings indicated that juvenile delinquents were less likely to be reprimanded and punished by their parents, whereas the nondelinquents’ parents were more authoritative and more likely to discipline their behavior.

Meldum et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive study emphasizing the significance of juvenile and parental involvement in completing probation and reducing juvenile delinquency. They argued that successful outcomes were more likely when both parties actively participated in rehabilitation. This involvement could take various forms, such as attending counseling sessions, engaging in constructive activities together, and maintaining open lines of communication.

On the other hand, Mwangangi (2019) suggested that when parents showed disinterest or were uninvolved in their children's lives, the likelihood of juvenile delinquency increased. This lack of parental engagement could lead to neglect or lack of guidance, making juveniles more susceptible to negative influences and deviant behaviors.

Although previous research has indicated a relationship between parental involvement and juvenile delinquency, further investigation is needed to understand the nuances of this relationship. Future studies should employ alternative methodologies, such as longitudinal or qualitative research, to explore the underlying factors and mechanisms contributing to parental involvement's impact on juvenile delinquency. Delving deeper into this topic, researchers can better understand how parental

involvement influences delinquent behavior and inform effective intervention strategies Moitra et al. (2018).

### **Functional Family Therapy and Juvenile Delinquency**

FFT is a highly regarded and comprehensive therapeutic intervention specifically designed to address the complexities of juvenile delinquency. It operates on the understanding that delinquent behavior is influenced by a multifaceted interplay of individual, familial, and environmental factors. Focusing on the family system, FFT aims to reduce delinquency while improving overall family functioning effectively (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

One of the critical strengths of FFT lies in its recognition of the integral role that family dynamics play in the development and maintenance of delinquent behaviors. It acknowledges that the behavior of juvenile offenders is deeply intertwined with the functioning and interactions within their family unit. FFT emphasizes understanding and addressing the underlying issues and dysfunctions within the family system that contribute to delinquency (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

Through a structured and evidence-based approach, FFT seeks to promote positive changes within the family by targeting specific areas of concern. These areas include improving communication patterns, enhancing problem-solving skills, strengthening family relationships, and fostering a supportive and nurturing environment. By addressing these aspects, FFT aims to reduce the risk factors associated with delinquency and reinforce protective factors within the family system (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

Furthermore, FFT recognizes the importance of considering environmental factors influencing delinquent behavior. This approach acknowledges that their family dynamics do not solely determine an individual's behavior but are also influenced by broader societal and community factors. As a result, FFT incorporates strategies and interventions that consider the broader context in which the family resides and operates (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

The therapy process typically involves multiple phases. The first phase, engagement, focuses on establishing rapport and building a therapeutic alliance with the family - this is crucial for fostering trust and encouraging open communication. The motivation phase follows, during which therapists work with family members to explore their goals and aspirations, highlighting why change is necessary. This phase helps to enhance motivation and commitment to the therapeutic process Mwangangi (2019).

Subsequently, the behavior changes phase addresses specific problem areas and risk factors associated with delinquency. Therapists assist families in identifying and modifying patterns of communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution that may contribute to delinquent behaviors. They also work on enhancing parental monitoring, setting appropriate boundaries, and addressing negative peer influences. This phase emphasizes skill-building and provides families practical strategies to implement positive changes (Mwangangi, 2019).

The final phase of FFT is a generalization, where the focus shifts towards ensuring that the changes made within the therapy setting are effectively applied in real-life situations. Therapists assist families in transferring the skills and insights gained in

therapy to their everyday lives, promoting lasting behavior change and preventing relapse into delinquent behaviors Mwangangi (2019).

Numerous research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of FFT in reducing delinquency and improving outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. These studies have shown that FFT significantly reduces recidivism rates and externalizing behaviors among participating youth. Moreover, it has been associated with improved family functioning, enhanced parent-child relationships, and increased overall well-being Mwangangi (2019).

The success of FFT can be attributed to its comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying factors contributing to delinquency. By targeting the family system, FFT recognizes the importance of familial relationships, dynamics, and communication patterns in shaping behavior. It also acknowledges the influence of broader environmental factors, such as peer influences and community resources, and works collaboratively with the family to address these factors Mwangangi (2019).

FFT provides a valuable and practical approach to addressing juvenile delinquency. By empowering families, building on their strengths, and promoting positive change within the family system, FFT offers a promising intervention for reducing delinquent behaviors and improving the well-being of at-risk youth Mwangangi (2019).

FFT provides a valuable and practical approach to addressing juvenile delinquency. By empowering families, building on their strengths, and promoting positive changes within the family system, FFT offers a promising intervention for

reducing delinquent behaviors and improving the well-being of at-risk youth. Its collaborative and strengths-based approach, supported by research evidence, highlights the importance of engaging families as active participants in the intervention process and leveraging their existing resources to facilitate positive change Mwangangi (2019).

### **Aftercare Services and Recidivism**

Aftercare services play a crucial role in reducing recidivism rates among individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system, including juvenile offenders. These services are designed to support and assist individuals as they transition back into the community after being incarcerated or completing a period of supervision (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

One of the primary goals of aftercare services is to address the underlying factors contributing to criminal behavior and promote positive reintegration, providing access to educational and vocational programs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, life skills training, employment assistance, and housing support. By addressing these needs, aftercare services aim to reduce the risk of reoffending by equipping individuals with the necessary tools and resources for a successful transition (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

Research has consistently shown that providing aftercare services is associated with lower recidivism rates. These services help individuals establish a stable and productive lifestyle, reduce their involvement in criminal activities, and increase their chances of successfully reintegrating into society. Effective aftercare programs often emphasize individualized treatment plans, ongoing support, and collaboration between

various stakeholders, including probation and parole officers, counselors, community organizations, and family members (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

Furthermore, the duration and intensity of aftercare services are critical factors in achieving positive outcomes. Longer durations of aftercare, with ongoing support and monitoring, have been associated with more significant reductions in recidivism rates. It is important to note that the effectiveness of aftercare services can vary depending on individual needs, program quality, and the availability of community resources (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

It is crucial to adopt evidence-based practices and regularly evaluate program outcomes to enhance the effectiveness of aftercare services. These practices may include using validated assessment tools to identify individual needs, monitoring progress, and adjusting interventions accordingly. Collaboration between criminal justice agencies, community service providers, and other stakeholders is essential for coordinating and delivering comprehensive aftercare services (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

In the past, the number of juveniles released from incarceration in the juvenile justice system exceeded the number of juveniles placed in community-based programs (Anthony et al., 2010). These juveniles were often released after serving several years of incarceration for various offenses, with limited access to aftercare services or resources. The lack of adequate support upon release posed challenges to successful reintegration into the community (Anthony et al., 2010).

To effectively address juvenile delinquency and meet the individual needs of youth and their families, community-based intervention programs play a crucial role.

These programs aim to reduce recidivism rates and provide necessary support and services to aid juvenile offenders' rehabilitation and successful reintegration (Ryon et al., 2017, p. 59).

The increasing costs associated with aftercare services for formerly incarcerated juveniles and juvenile delinquents have prompted many states to explore alternatives to traditional community-based interventions. The financial considerations have led to reevaluating existing programs and searching for more cost-effective approaches to achieve positive outcomes for the youth involved (Anthony et al., 2010; Karam et al., 2017; Ryon et al., 2017).

It is necessary to find innovative solutions that balance the need for effective intervention with the economic constraints many states face, fueling the exploration of evidence-based practices, such as FFT, restorative justice programs, and community mentoring initiatives, which have shown promise in reducing recidivism rates and addressing the underlying factors contributing to delinquent behavior (Ryon et al., 2017).

Investing in alternative community-based interventions that are tailored to the needs of juvenile offenders and their families, states can strive to reduce the reliance on incarceration and provide more comprehensive support systems. These alternatives can be more cost-effective and contribute to better long-term outcomes for youth, fostering successful reintegration into society and reducing the likelihood of future criminal involvement (Ryon et al., 2017).

Research has indicated that treatment programs focused on family therapy have “sustained clinical outcomes and real-world demonstration of effectiveness” (Karam et

al., 2017). One such program examined has been Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL), an integrative group and family approach. Karam et al. (2017) conducted quasi-experimental research that included 115 juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 referred to PLL while in the juvenile justice system. They found that the recidivism rates of juveniles who successfully graduated from PLL were reduced. They also found that juveniles assigned to PLL had fewer police contacts and that juveniles with “more severe offenses were more likely to complete PLL than those with lesser offenses” (p. 343).

Ryon et al. (2017) conducted a significant study examining the impact of PPL (Probation-Promoting Leadership) on reducing juvenile delinquency. PPL was implemented in Florida's juvenile justice system in 2004 as a cost-effective alternative to traditional juvenile incarceration and was officially introduced in 2005. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of PPL as compared to residential programs (Ryon et al., 2017, p. 66).

The findings of the study revealed several noteworthy outcomes. Juveniles who participated in PPL had lower adjudication/conviction rates compared to those who participated in residential programs. In cases of re-offense, the likelihood of being convicted of a felony was significantly reduced for juveniles who had engaged in PPL. Furthermore, the study found that juveniles who completed the PPL program were less likely to return to a residential facility, be placed on juvenile or adult probation, or be sent to adult prison (Ryon et al., 2017, p. 66).

Ryon et al. (2017) noted that their research did not examine the parents and juveniles who did not participate in the PPL program. Therefore, the impact of

community-based interventions, such as PPL, on this group was not assessed. The authors suggested that future research should consider and clarify the effects of community-based interventions on a broader sample, including those who did not engage in the specific program under evaluation.

These findings highlight the potential of PPL as a community-based intervention for reducing juvenile delinquency. The study proves that PPL can lead to positive outcomes, including lower adjudication/conviction rates and reduced likelihood of more severe legal consequences. The cost-effectiveness of PPL compared to residential programs further supports its viability as an alternative approach within the juvenile justice system (Ryon et al., 2017, p. 66).

The research literature on formerly incarcerated juveniles and their reentry into society has been limited, as noted by Anthony et al. in 2010. More qualitative and observational research studies in this area are needed, further emphasizing the need for more comprehensive investigations (Anthony et al., 2010 & Ryon et al., 2017).

One specific aspect that requires attention is the examination of family therapy and its impact on the effectiveness of reentry programs and reducing juvenile delinquency and recidivism rates (Gill & Wilson, 2017). Understanding the role of family dynamics and support systems in the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated juveniles is crucial (Anthony et al., 2010).

Formerly incarcerated juveniles face numerous barriers when attempting to reenter society, such as finding stable housing, securing employment, and accessing education or vocational training opportunities. These challenges often contribute to high

recidivism rates and hinder their successful transition back into the community (Gill & Wilson, 2017).

Treatment programs should be tailored to the specific needs of formerly incarcerated juveniles and designed to facilitate their successful reintegration into society to address these issues (Gill & Wilson, 2017). These programs may involve providing comprehensive support services that address educational, vocational, mental health, and substance abuse needs. Additionally, programs should focus on building life skills, promoting positive social connections, and fostering a sense of belonging and purpose for these individuals (Gill & Wilson, 2017).

### **Empirical Review**

Historically, there has been a higher number of juveniles released from incarceration compared to those placed in community-based programs as an aftercare measure, highlighting a concerning trend within the juvenile justice system (Anthony et al., 2010). This trend raises important issues regarding the rehabilitation and successful reintegration of juvenile offenders into society. When juveniles are released from incarceration after serving time for various offenses, they often lack access to proper aftercare services or resources, which means that they are returned to their communities without adequate support, guidance, or resources to assist in their reintegration and to prevent them from reoffending.

The lack of comprehensive aftercare services for juveniles leaving incarceration is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, without appropriate support, these individuals may struggle to reintegrate into society successfully. They may face challenges in finding

employment, housing, or accessing education or vocational training, which are crucial for their reintegration and long-term success Ryon et al. (2017).

Additionally, the absence of proper guidance and resources increases the risk of recidivism among juveniles. Without access to counseling, mentoring programs, or other forms of support, they may find themselves falling back into negative patterns of behavior or associating with individuals who engage in criminal activities. This cycle of reoffending not only harms the juveniles themselves but also perpetuates the revolving door of the juvenile justice system. It is essential to prioritize and invest in community-based programs as an integral part of the juvenile justice system to address this concerning trend. These programs can provide a range of services tailored to the needs of juvenile offenders, including counseling, educational support, vocational training, substance abuse treatment, and mentorship opportunities. Offering these comprehensive aftercare services can significantly improve the chances of successful reintegration and reduce recidivism Ryon et al. (2017).

Furthermore, collaboration between various stakeholders is crucial in tackling this issue. The juvenile justice system, community organizations, schools, families, and other relevant parties should work together to ensure a smooth transition for juveniles leaving incarceration. This collaborative approach can help create a supportive network that addresses the multifaceted needs of these individuals and increases their chances of leading productive and law-abiding lives. The absence of aftercare services or resources for these juveniles upon release poses significant challenges. After leaving the structured environment of a prison, these youths may face difficulties readjusting to their

communities, accessing education, finding employment, or receiving necessary support for their rehabilitation and reintegration. This situation underscores the importance of comprehensive aftercare programs for juveniles leaving the justice system. Adequate aftercare services are critical in ensuring successful reintegration, reducing recidivism rates, and providing the necessary support for these individuals to make positive changes and avoid further involvement in the justice system Ryon et al. (2017).

Community-based intervention programs are recognized as vital for effectively reducing juvenile delinquency and addressing the specific needs of youth and their families (Ryon et al., 2017). However, the rising costs associated with aftercare services for formerly incarcerated juveniles and juvenile delinquents have prompted many states to seek alternatives to traditional community-based interventions (Anthony et al., 2010; Karam et al., 2017; Ryon et al., 2017). This shift in approach may be due to financial constraints, resource limitations, or a reevaluation of the effectiveness and cost-benefit ratios of existing aftercare services. States may be exploring alternative methods, programs, or interventions that are cost-effective and efficient in meeting the diverse needs of juvenile offenders and their families.

It is crucial to strike a balance between cost-effectiveness and the ability of interventions to address the specific needs of these individuals and their families. Finding alternative approaches that effectively serve rehabilitation goals, reduce recidivism, and provide comprehensive support within a cost-effective framework is a critical consideration in managing juvenile justice programs Ryon et al. (2017).

Research has demonstrated that treatment programs focused on family therapy have shown sustained clinical outcomes and proven effectiveness in real-world applications (Karam et al., 2017); this underscores the importance and success of family therapy interventions in juvenile justice and rehabilitation. For instance, one specific program examined in this context is Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL), an integrative group and family approach. Karam et al. (2017) conducted quasi-experimental research that included 115 juveniles aged between 14 and 18 referred to PLL while in the juvenile justice system.

The study found that juveniles who successfully graduated from the PLL program had reduced recidivism rates, indicating that the program effectively prevented further involvement in criminal activities among these individuals. By addressing the underlying issues within the family system and providing support and guidance, PLL contributed to positive outcomes for the participants. Also, the research revealed that juveniles who were assigned to the PLL program had fewer police contacts compared to those who did not receive the intervention and that family therapy interventions like PLL can have a broader impact beyond reducing recidivism rates. By improving family dynamics and strengthening support systems, these programs contribute to a decrease in interactions with law enforcement agencies (Karam et al., 2017).

Additionally, the study found that juveniles who had more severe offenses were more likely to complete the PLL program than those with lesser offenses. This finding highlights the importance of tailoring interventions to everyone's needs and circumstances. By recognizing the varying levels of complexity and addressing them

effectively, family therapy programs can engage and support a diverse range of juvenile offenders. The success of PLL and similar family therapy interventions underscores the value of a holistic approach to juvenile justice and rehabilitation. By involving families and addressing the underlying familial and systemic factors that contribute to delinquent behavior, these programs can create lasting change and improve outcomes for juvenile offenders (Karam et al., 2017).

Another study that examined the impact of Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) on reducing juvenile delinquency was conducted by Ryon et al. (2017). PLL was initially implemented in Florida as an alternative to traditional juvenile incarceration, specifically in residential programs. The study found that juveniles who completed the PLL program were "less likely to re-enter a residential facility, be placed on juvenile or adult probation, or be sent to adult prison" (Ryon et al., 2017, p. 66). The results indicate that the program positively reduced further involvement in the justice system among participants.

However, one limitation of the study was that it did not examine the outcomes of parents and juveniles who did not engage in the PLL program, meaning the research findings were limited to those who participated in the program, and a comparison group was not included. Ryon et al. (2017) acknowledged this limitation and suggested that future research should examine and clarify the impact of community-based interventions like PLL on a broader sample of juveniles involved in the justice system. Despite this limitation, the study by Ryon et al. (2017) provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of PLL as a cost-effective treatment for juvenile offenders. The findings suggest that participation in PLL was associated with lower rates of

adjudication/conviction compared to other residential programs and that PLL may be a promising intervention for reducing recidivism and preventing future criminal behavior among juvenile offenders. Furthermore, the study found that juveniles participating in PLL were less likely to be convicted of a felony, reinforcing that family-based interventions like PLL can significantly divert juveniles from more severe criminal involvement and guide them toward positive outcomes.

The study by Anthony et al. (2010) shed light on the limited research on reentering formerly incarcerated juveniles into society. The authors highlighted a particular scarcity of qualitative and observational research studies in this area, resulting in a significant gap in our understanding of these individuals' challenges and experiences during their reintegration. The absence of qualitative research in this domain is a notable concern, as it prevents us from understanding the factors contributing to successful or unsuccessful reentry outcomes for juvenile offenders. Qualitative research methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observations, can provide valuable insights into the individuals' experiences, perspectives, and emotions.

Observational research is also essential in examining the behavior and interactions of formerly incarcerated individuals as they return to society. This type of research can assist in identifying their specific challenges, such as difficulties in finding stable housing or employment, strained relationships with family and friends, or limited access to education and support services. Observational studies can provide a comprehensive overview of the reentry process and insight into the factors contributing to successful reintegration or recidivism. One specific area that requires more comprehensive research

is the impact and effectiveness of family therapy interventions in reducing juvenile delinquency and recidivism rates. Family therapy has shown promise in addressing the underlying issues that contribute to delinquent behavior among juveniles, such as family dysfunction, poor communication, and inadequate support systems. However, the specific mechanisms through which family therapy influences the behaviors and reintegration of juvenile offenders into society are not well understood (Karam et al., 2017).

In-depth research is necessary to explore the specific ways in which family therapy interventions can positively impact the lives of formerly incarcerated juveniles. This research should examine the effectiveness of different therapeutic approaches, the optimal timing and duration of interventions, and the long-term outcomes of family therapy in reducing recidivism rates. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate the role of other factors, such as community support, educational opportunities, and employment prospects, in conjunction with family therapy to provide a comprehensive understanding of the reentry process. By conducting more comprehensive studies in the domain of family therapy and its impact on reducing juvenile delinquency and recidivism rates, researchers can contribute to the development of evidence-based interventions and policies targeted toward juvenile offenders. This research can inform the design of effective reentry programs that address the unique needs and challenges faced by formerly incarcerated juveniles, ultimately improving their chances of successful reintegration into society and reducing the likelihood of future criminal involvement (Karam et al., 2017).

Upon reentering society, formerly incarcerated juveniles encounter numerous obstacles that hinder their successful transition. Gill and Wilson (2017) emphasized the necessity of treatment programs specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of these individuals. Such programs aim to assist them in effectively reintegrating into the community by addressing their challenges, providing support, and equipping them with the necessary skills and resources to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. For instance, one key challenge that formerly incarcerated juveniles face is the stigma associated with their criminal history. This stigma can lead to social exclusion, discrimination, and limited opportunities for education, employment, and housing. Treatment programs should include components that address stigma and promote social acceptance and integration to overcome this barrier. This treatment might involve education and awareness campaigns to challenge misconceptions about juvenile offenders and foster a more supportive and inclusive community environment (Karam et al., 2017).

Another challenge is the lack of social support networks. Many formerly incarcerated juveniles may have strained relationships with their families or limited contact with positive role models and mentors. Treatment programs should focus on strengthening and rebuilding these support networks by involving family members, facilitating communication and reconciliation, and connecting individuals with mentors or supportive community organizations. Building robust support systems can enhance the juveniles' sense of belonging, provide emotional stability, and offer practical assistance during reentry. Formerly incarcerated juveniles often lack essential life skills and education. Treatment programs should provide comprehensive educational and

vocational training opportunities to equip these individuals with the necessary skills for employment, financial management, and decision-making. By addressing these skill gaps, programs can enhance their self-esteem, increase their employability, and reduce the likelihood of resorting to illegal activities due to limited alternatives (Mwangangi, 2019).

Substance abuse and mental health issues are also prevalent among formerly incarcerated juveniles. Effective treatment programs should incorporate appropriate interventions for addressing these underlying issues, which may involve counseling, therapy, and access to substance abuse treatment services. By addressing these co-occurring disorders, programs can enhance the juveniles' overall well-being, reduce the risk of relapse, and improve their ability to reintegrate into society successfully. Also, access to stable housing is a critical factor in successful reentry. Many formerly incarcerated juveniles may face homelessness or unstable living arrangements, which can impede their ability to secure employment, maintain stability, and adhere to supervision requirements. Treatment programs should collaborate with housing agencies and assist in finding safe and affordable housing options for these individuals. Housing support can be a foundation for stability and facilitate their successful reintegration into society (Mwangangi, 2019).

Understanding the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated juveniles and developing tailored interventions, such as family therapy and other support programs, are crucial for their successful reintegration into society and for reducing recidivism rates.

However, further qualitative and observational studies are necessary to provide deeper insights into their experiences and needs during reentry (Mwangangi, 2019).

Qualitative research is vital in capturing formerly incarcerated juveniles' lived experiences and perspectives. It allows researchers to explore the complexities of their reentry journey, exploring the emotional, social, and psychological challenges they face. Through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and narratives, qualitative studies can shed light on these individuals' struggles, aspirations, and motivations. This information is essential for informing the design and implementation of effective interventions that address their needs. More specifically, observational studies complement qualitative research by providing a comprehensive understanding of the behaviors and interactions of formerly incarcerated juveniles as they navigate their way back into society. By directly observing their actions, interactions with family and peers, and engagement with support services, researchers can gain valuable insights into the barriers they encounter, the coping mechanisms they employ, and the factors contributing to successful reintegration or recidivism. This observational data can inform the development of evidence-based interventions grounded in the realities of their experiences (Mwangangi, 2019).

Family therapy has shown promise as an effective intervention for formerly incarcerated juveniles. However, further research is needed to understand how family therapy influences their behaviors and reintegration into society. Qualitative studies can explore the subjective experiences of both the juveniles and their family members during therapy sessions, highlighting the processes of healing, communication, and rebuilding

trust. Observational studies can analyze the dynamics within family therapy sessions, identifying the therapeutic techniques and strategies that lead to positive outcomes. This research is crucial for refining and expanding family therapy interventions to better meet the needs of formerly incarcerated juveniles and their families. Qualitative and observational studies can uncover the contextual factors that influence successful reintegration. These factors may include access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare services, and community support. By understanding the external challenges faced by formerly incarcerated juveniles, practitioners and policymakers can advocate for resources and policies that facilitate their successful reentry and reduce recidivism rates (Mwangangi, 2019).

Family therapy programs have demonstrated enduring clinical outcomes, indicating that these interventions' positive effects and improvements are maintained over time. These programs have effectively addressed immediate concerns and sustained positive changes in the long term, particularly within real-world settings involving juvenile offenders and their families. The effectiveness of family therapy in the juvenile justice system highlights the significance of involving and working with families to address and rectify behavioral issues among juveniles. By engaging the entire family unit, family therapy programs often target underlying issues that contribute to juvenile delinquency. These issues may include family dysfunction, poor communication, inadequate support systems, or unresolved conflicts. By addressing these underlying problems, family therapy helps to improve communication patterns, enhance problem-solving skills, and foster healthier relationships among family members. These positive

changes in family dynamics directly impact the juvenile's behavior and overall well-being (Mwangangi, 2019).

One of the critical strengths of family therapy is its ability to address the systemic nature of juvenile delinquency. Instead of solely focusing on the individual juvenile, family therapy recognizes the influence of family dynamics, relationships, and the broader social context on the juvenile's behavior. By involving the family in the therapeutic process, family therapy programs facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to delinquency and create opportunities for collective problem-solving and healing. Moreover, family therapy offers a unique opportunity for family members to develop empathy, understanding, and support for one another. It provides a safe and structured environment for open communication, expressing emotions, and exploring individual and family strengths and challenges. Through the therapeutic process, family members gain new insights, develop coping strategies, and acquire skills to resolve conflicts constructively. These changes in family dynamics improve the juvenile's immediate environment and contribute to positive and lasting changes in their behavior (Mwangangi, 2019).

The enduring clinical outcomes of family therapy programs have been observed in various real-world settings within the juvenile justice system. These programs have been implemented in correctional facilities, community-based settings, and probation programs. The positive outcomes have been associated with reduced recidivism rates, improved family functioning, increased adherence to treatment plans, and enhanced overall well-being for the juvenile and their family members (Mwangangi, 2019).

Family counseling provides a holistic approach to exploring the familial environment and dynamics that may contribute to a juvenile's behavior. It creates a safe and supportive space to delve into the roots of aggression, aiming to uncover and address underlying issues contributing to delinquent acts. By involving the juvenile offender and their parents or other family members, counseling sessions offer an opportunity to understand the familial context and dynamics, potentially unveiling the triggers or sources of aggressive behavior within the family unit. Also, Family counseling recognizes that a juvenile's behavior is influenced by various factors within their family system. By examining family relationships, communication patterns, and the overall functioning of the family unit, counselors can gain insight into the dynamics that might be contributing to the juvenile's aggression. This approach acknowledges that interactions and relationships within the family shape individual behavior, and it seeks to address those underlying dynamics to create positive change Ryon et al. (2017).

During counseling sessions, the counselor works with the juvenile and their parents or other family members to explore the family's history, values, and belief systems. The aim is to identify dysfunctional patterns or unresolved conflicts that may contribute to the juvenile's aggressive behavior. Through open and honest communication, family members can better understand each other's perspectives, experiences, and emotions. This process fosters empathy, compassion, and a willingness to work together toward positive change. Family counseling also provides an opportunity to develop and enhance communication skills within the family. Improved communication allows family members to express their needs, concerns, and emotions

more effectively, fostering healthier and more constructive interactions. By learning effective conflict-resolution strategies, problem-solving techniques, and active listening skills, family members can develop healthier ways of resolving conflicts and addressing issues that may contribute to the juvenile's aggression Ryon et al. (2017).

In addition to addressing immediate concerns, family counseling aims to strengthen the family system. It focuses on building resilience, improving family support networks, and enhancing the overall well-being of family members. By promoting positive family dynamics, counseling can create an environment that supports the juvenile's personal growth, social development, and successful reintegration into society. For instance, family counseling can contribute to long-lasting changes in the juvenile's behavior by addressing the underlying issues within the familial context. It offers an opportunity to break the cycle of aggression by addressing the root causes and providing support and guidance for the juvenile and their family members. Through ongoing counseling sessions, the family unit can develop healthier relationships, improve communication, and foster a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes positive behavior and reduces the risk of further delinquency Ryon et al. (2017).

Moreover, considering a child's age and psychological preparedness is essential, especially when dealing with the impact of incarceration. Family counseling, tailored to the child's developmental stage and needs, can potentially offer a more supportive and constructive environment to address trauma, help them comprehend and manage feelings of aggression, and foster healthier familial relationships. Children who have experienced the incarceration of a parent or family member may face a range of emotional and

psychological challenges. They may feel confused, angry, or guilty and struggle to understand and cope with the complex emotions associated with the absence of a loved one. Considering the child's age and developmental stage, family counseling can be specifically designed to provide age-appropriate support, guidance, and interventions Ryon et al. (2017).

Family counseling offers a platform for exploring the root causes of aggression in a child's behavior. It provides an opportunity to delve into the underlying factors that contribute to delinquent tendencies, such as family dynamics, exposure to violence, or the presence of substance abuse. By understanding these factors, counselors can work with the child and their family to develop strategies and coping mechanisms that address the root causes and prevent future delinquent behavior. Also, family counseling provides a supportive space to address the impact of trauma on the child and their family dynamic. Incarceration can be a traumatic event for both the child and the incarcerated family member. Through counseling, the child can process their emotions, discuss their experiences, and receive validation and support. Family counseling can also help the child and their family members develop practical communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and healthier coping mechanisms to manage their emotions and strengthen their relationships Ryon et al. (2017).

By promoting healthier familial relationships, family counseling can potentially mitigate the risk of further delinquent behavior. By addressing the underlying issues contributing to aggression and delinquency, counselors can empower the child and their family to develop healthier ways of relating to one another, including fostering empathy,

improving communication, setting boundaries, and establishing positive parenting techniques. Family counseling tailored to a child's age and psychological preparedness offers a valuable and comprehensive approach to addressing the impact of incarceration and mitigating the risk of delinquent behavior. It provides a supportive and constructive environment for the child to process trauma, manage aggression, and develop healthier familial relationships. By understanding the root causes of aggression and addressing them within the family dynamic, family counseling can pave the way for long-term positive outcomes for the child and their family Ryon et al. (2017).

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Juvenile delinquency has emerged as a significant problem within the United States, with a concerning number of arrests and crimes being committed by young individuals. In response, the juvenile justice system has implemented a range of interventions, including sanctions, treatments, and rehabilitation programs, aimed at modifying the problematic behaviors exhibited by juveniles. However, a crucial aspect that remains unknown is the impact of counseling on both juveniles and their parents or guardians, as well as its influence on the rates of recidivism among juvenile delinquents. Consequently, further research is necessary to delve deeper into the effects of family therapy on juvenile delinquency and the recurrence of criminal behavior, as highlighted by previous studies conducted by Anthony and colleagues in 2010 (Anthony et al., 2010 & Ryon et al., 2017).

The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) holds promise for providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of counseling in the context of juvenile

delinquency. This theory postulates that the acceptance or rejection experienced by a child from their parents or primary caregivers significantly influences their psychological and behavioral development. In counseling, this theory suggests that if the therapeutic process can foster a more accepting and supportive environment within the family, it may positively impact the outcomes for the juvenile and their guardians (Anthony et al., 2010 & Ryon et al., 2017).

Family therapy, as a form of counseling, offers a unique opportunity to address the complex dynamics within the family system and its impact on juvenile delinquency. By involving not only the juvenile but also their parents or guardians in the therapeutic process, family therapy recognizes the interconnectedness of family relationships and their influence on the behavior of the juvenile. It provides a space for open communication, expressing emotions, and exploring underlying issues that may contribute to delinquent behaviors. Through family therapy, juveniles and their parents or guardians can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to delinquency and recidivism. It offers a platform to explore the root causes of these behaviors, such as family conflict, ineffective parenting strategies, or a lack of emotional support within the family unit. By addressing these underlying issues, family therapy can help develop healthier communication patterns, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation within the family (Anthony et al., 2010 & Ryon et al., 2017).

Moreover, family therapy has the potential to enhance the parents' or guardians' understanding of their role in preventing and addressing juvenile delinquency. It provides them with tools and strategies to effectively support and guide their child, promoting

positive parenting techniques and strengthening the parent-child bond; in turn, it can lead to increased parental involvement, improved supervision, and a more nurturing and supportive family environment, which may reduce the risk of recidivism. So, the impact of family therapy on recidivism rates among juvenile delinquents is a critical area requiring further investigation. By evaluating the long-term outcomes of counseling interventions, researchers can gain insights into the effectiveness of family therapy in reducing the likelihood of future criminal behavior. This research can contribute to developing evidence-based practices within the juvenile justice system, guiding the implementation of interventions that have a tangible impact on reducing recidivism rates and promoting positive rehabilitation outcomes (Ryon et al., 2017).

Court-involved youths often experience significant psychological distress (Tillman & Juntunen, 2013). While it might seem apparent that individuals within the legal system would exhibit acting-out behaviors and might be at a higher risk for externalizing disorders, it is vital to understand the complex interplay between their circumstances and mental health. Many of these youths have faced adverse life experiences, such as trauma, abuse, neglect, or unstable family environments. These adversities can significantly impact their mental health and emotional well-being, potentially leading to externalizing behaviors, including aggression, defiance, or rule-breaking. While externalizing behaviors might be more visible and draw immediate attention, it is equally crucial to recognize the internalizing aspects of psychological distress. Many court-involved youths might internalize their struggles, leading to feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or intense emotional pain, which may not be as readily

observable. Efforts to address these issues should involve mental health professionals, social workers, and other support systems to create a supportive environment that recognizes and addresses the psychological distress these youths may be experiencing. Early identification and intervention for mental health issues can significantly impact their well-being and their ability to reintegrate into society successfully (Tillman & Juntunen, 2013).

Understanding the complex relationship between legal involvement and the health of court-involved youths is crucial for implementing effective interventions and support systems that cater to their multifaceted needs. One critical aspect of addressing the well-being of court-involved youths is recognizing and addressing their mental health needs. This comprehensive approach focuses on their immediate legal circumstances and provides tailored mental health support, counseling, and interventions to address their needs (Ryon et al., 2017).

Court-involved youths often experience significant psychological distress due to the stressors associated with their legal involvement. The process of court appearances, the uncertainty about the future, and the stigma attached to being in the legal system can further exacerbate their psychological well-being. This distress can manifest in various ways, including heightened anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress symptoms, or even symptoms associated with externalizing disorders. Providing mental health support for court-involved youths requires a multi-dimensional approach. First and foremost, it is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment where these young individuals feel comfortable discussing their emotional challenges. Mental health professionals working

with court-involved youths can play a vital role in providing counseling and therapeutic interventions tailored to their needs (Ryon et al., 2017).

Individual counseling sessions can help court-involved youths explore and process their emotions, build coping mechanisms, and develop resilience in adversity. This type of counseling may involve techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, which aims to identify and modify negative thought patterns and behaviors, or trauma-focused therapy, which addresses the psychological impact of past traumatic experiences. Individual counseling and group therapy can be a practical approach for court-involved youths. Group therapy provides a supportive and nonjudgmental space where these young individuals can connect with peers who share similar experiences. It allows them to gain insights, develop empathy, and learn from others who have faced similar challenges. Group therapy can also foster a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation, common among court-involved youths (Ryon et al., 2017).

Addressing the mental health needs of court-involved youths should involve collaboration between mental health professionals and the legal system. Establishing effective communication and coordination between legal professionals, probation officers, and mental health providers is crucial to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to support these young individuals. This collaboration can facilitate information sharing, identify specific mental health concerns, and develop appropriate interventions and treatment plans. Implementing mental health screenings within the legal system can also help identify court-involved youths who may require additional support. Early identification of mental health concerns can lead to timely interventions and appropriate

referrals to mental health professionals. This proactive approach can help mitigate the negative impact of legal involvement on the mental well-being of these young individuals (Ryon et al., 2017).

Recognizing the intricate relationship between legal involvement and the health of court-involved youths is crucial for implementing effective interventions and support systems. By addressing their mental health needs through comprehensive approaches that consider their legal circumstances and provide tailored mental health support, counseling, and interventions, we can better support the well-being of court-involved youths. By recognizing the psychological distress they may experience and providing appropriate mental health care, we can help mitigate the negative impact of legal involvement and promote their overall well-being and successful reintegration into society (Ryon et al., 2017).

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, focusing on juvenile delinquency, counseling as an intervention strategy, and the importance of parent engagement. Specifically, the significance of parent engagement was explored about juveniles who reintegrate into the community following a period of incarceration. Chapter 3 will shift the focus toward the study's methodology, outlining how it will be conducted, how participants will be identified and selected, and how the gathered information will be organized and analyzed.

Chapter 3 will begin by detailing the research design and approach adopted for the study, including whether a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approach will be employed and the rationale behind the chosen methodology. The chapter will also

describe the specific methods and procedures that will be utilized to collect data, such as surveys, interviews, or observations. The selection of appropriate measures and instruments will be addressed, ensuring they align with the research objectives and are valid and reliable.

Next, the participant identification and selection process will be outlined, and it will involve providing a clear description of the target population and the criteria used to determine eligibility for participation. The chapter will explain how potential participants will be recruited through schools, correctional facilities, community organizations, or other avenues. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, will be discussed to protect participants' rights and privacy.

Finally, this chapter explained the techniques utilized to organize and analyze the collected information, including coding and categorizing qualitative data and the statistical analyses employed for quantitative data. Additionally, how a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches may be used will be discussed. The specific software or tools used for data management and analysis will be mentioned, accompanied by a justification for their selection based on their suitability for the research objectives and the nature of the data collected.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the function of family counseling in reducing juvenile recidivism. This qualitative study examined the outcomes of FFT between juvenile offenders and their guardians and its impact on recidivism rates in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV); the previous chapters provided a descriptive insight into the participants' experiences on whether they believe family counseling has impacted both the parent and juvenile offender and recidivism in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). In this chapter, I will discuss an analysis of the literature review concerning recidivism outcomes, juvenile incarceration rates, FFT, and countermeasures that are already in place to face the challenges of juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, I will introduce the research methodology used in this research study.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The two research questions that were the driving force behind this research study and helped guide the data collection and analysis process were as follows:

RQ1: What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency?

RQ2: How significant is the parent's role in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism?

The central concept(s)/phenomenon(a) of the study involved gaining knowledge and an understanding of the participant's perceptions and experiences on juvenile reentry recidivism in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area

(DMV). Also, I sought to examine whether FFT between the juvenile offender and their guardian has been an effective measure to help reduce juvenile recidivism in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). Several qualitative traditions exist for conducting research: narrative research, case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory. Several options were suitable, but ethnography is like ethnography. That is because ethnography research takes a cultural lens to study people's lives within their communities (Fetterman, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The phenomenological method aims to describe, understand, and interpret the meanings of experiences of human life. It focuses on research questions such as what it is like to experience a particular situation (Bloor & Wood, 2006). When one looks at the big picture, though both methods share similarities, the ethnography method is limited and less effective, whereas phenomenology is not. Phenomenology can answer what ethnography cannot. Phenomenology was appropriate in examining whether FFT is the best measure for lowering juvenile reentry recidivism rates. This approach's fundamental goal was to describe the nature of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

The rationale for the chosen tradition was equivalent to why people do not trust anything without using the five human senses: touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste. Those senses are the pathway to what is reality. For example, if an individual goes to a restaurant and tries food that is not good, their perception would be not to try anything else. Why? The food was not enjoyable when it was first experienced. This scenario is no different than the chosen tradition. If someone has not experienced it, how can they relate to those who lived through it? The author of *Mona's ePortfolio* stated that

phenomenology is the study of conscious experience from a firsthand perspective, along with relevant conditions of experiences (“The Phenomenological Tradition,” 2012). Conscious experiences involve experiencing something, living through, performing, experiencing, observing, engaging, and interpreting. However, it is essential to note that when people are experiencing, it does not involve vision and hearing alone; it involves all the senses. In simpler terms, phenomenology is how human beings come to understand the world through direct personal experiences (“The Phenomenological Tradition,” 2012).

### **Role of the Researcher**

In the interviewer role, the techniques I followed were like those presented by Valenzuela and Shrivastava (ND). I determined the interview setting and outlined how the interview would be conducted. I attempted to maintain neutrality throughout the interview, encouraged responses from the participants, and was careful in their note-taking process. The purpose of the interview was explained to the participants, and terms of confidentiality were addressed to ensure their comfort and trust. I explained the format and process of the interview and indicated the expected duration.

During the interview process, I randomly verified the functioning of the tape recorder to ensure accurate recording of the interview. I asked questions one at a time and maintained a neutral appearance while taking notes. I provided transitional cues between relevant topics to ensure a smooth flow and maintained interview control. I also provided contact information and allowed the participant to seek clarification on any doubts regarding the interview. I prepared a method for recording data and taking notes.

The only personal or professional relationships between the individual participants and me came from networking from one profession to another but with similar or diverse backgrounds. There were no personal relationships or relationships between me and individual participants beyond networking outside this research's employment and home. Therefore, the power and superiority of the interviewer and participants would not be void. That was because there was no connection outside of that moment; any data collected from the participants involved in this study was strictly based on their views and lived experiences without causing an issue that would threaten the data's reliability. An interviewer cannot guarantee that bias will not emerge during an interview more than another practitioner trying to show superiority/dominance over another practitioner's expertise or knowledge because of their years of experience. That is why it is pivotal to have an overall plan to allow an interviewer to manage the interview process with the participants. In an article published in Quirks Media (2015), author Rebecca Sarniak stated that research experts know that bias can find ways in any research program. It is naïve to think that any research could be 100% free from it. Sarniak noted that reducing bias is not to make everyone the same but to ensure that the questions are thoughtfully thought out and delivered to allow respondents to reveal their real feelings without distortions. The risk of bias exists in many areas of qualitative research. It can come from questions, respondents, and the moderator (Sarniak, 2015).

### **Setting**

Before conducting the interviews, I took the necessary steps to minimize biases and power imbalances by creating an outline of questions, guidelines, and best practices.

Through this approach, I aimed to ensure a fair and unbiased interview process, allowing me to gather information without preconceived notions or personal beliefs influencing the outcomes.

One key aspect of the preparation was to remain cognizant of religious one's differences, recognizing and respecting the diverse religious perspectives of the participants. This awareness would prevent any unintentional bias or insensitivity during the interviews.

Additionally, I focused on asking open-ended questions. Through this approach, I aimed to empower the participants and encourage them to provide detailed and thoughtful responses. I created a comfortable and noncoercive environment to elicit genuine and unbiased participant information by avoiding leading or suggestive questions.

Keep a cheerful outlook, never be influenced by biased opinions, and always follow the guidelines. Sarniak's (2015) news article in Quirks Media suggested that when researchers focus on the human elements of the research process and look at the nine core types of bias—driven by the respondent, the researcher, or both—they can minimize the potential impact that bias has on qualitative research. She noted that biases in a qualitative study can decrease if one knows what to look for and how to manage it. By asking quality questions at the right time and remaining aware and focused on sources of bias, researchers can enable genuine respondent perspectives and ensure that the resulting research lives up to the highest qualitative standards.

### **Sampling**

Research participants selected for this study are over twenty-one years of age, have worked with juvenile courts and offenders, and have experience with family counseling programs targeting juvenile offenders. One of the most critical tasks a qualitative researcher can undertake is the selection of participants and ensuring they meet the criteria.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The participants in this study were adults over the age of 21 with firsthand knowledge and experience in the field of study (juvenile corrections, juvenile courts, and family counseling) who could assess their experiences on whether counseling between the parent and juvenile offender had impacted recidivism. The participants were contingent on a homogeneous sampling that used the snowball technique. Homogeneous sampling is a purposive sampling technique in which the researcher aims to achieve homogeneous samples whose units share the same people, cases, or very similar traits or a group of people similar in age, gender, background, and occupation (Lund Research, 2012). Research participants selected for this study were over 21 years of age, had worked with juvenile courts and offenders, and had experience with family counseling programs targeting juvenile offenders. One of the most critical tasks a qualitative researcher can undertake is the selection of participants. Many researchers have difficulty with the design of this part of their study. Qualitative researchers must ensure that they can access their participants and that the participants have experience with the phenomenon under study. A researcher must find participants who are willing to speak

about their experiences. Thus, finding a potential participant with delinquency experience and willingness to share their thoughts was at the heart of this study. The best topic in the world cannot be explored without willing participants (Statistical Solution, 2021).

Establishing how participants are known to meet the criteria will depend on the research study's intent and the population that the researcher intends to target. Second, the researcher must determine the criteria relevant to who gets sampled. There are two kinds of criteria: inclusion and exclusion. Patino and Ferreira (2018) stated that establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria for study participants is a standard practice when designing high-quality research protocols. Inclusion criteria are essential features of the target population that investigators use to answer their research question. The Statistical Solutions (2021) website states that inclusion criteria refer to characteristics that potential participants must have to participate in a study.

In contrast, exclusion criteria are any characteristics potential participants might have that would disqualify them from participating in the study. The inclusion criteria for this study were that participants must be over 21 to work in certain areas and have experience with many programs; those under 21 must have worked in the field for at least one year. Interviews were conducted until the point of saturation. That is where the interviewer begins to see the same themes repeat and no new themes emerge. The intention was to interview 20 participants in one-time interviews. The goal was to make them feel comfortable and confident that their answers would be kept confidential by going over the consent form with them before the interview and explaining what I was doing and why. Then, I asked questions that made them comfortable with me initially.

The rationale for the sample size was based on the phenomenon studied because it was large enough to uncover the objective I was trying to obtain.

The participants were identified, emailed, and contacted. These were individuals whom I had networked with throughout my career who were willing to refer their colleagues who had knowledge and experience in the juvenile process and FFT and were willing to participate in the study and its interview process. Each participant referred by the recruiting officer was contacted via email to invite them to participate in the research study by phone, Zoom, recruitment letters, or emails. Ideally, the recruitment letter or email came from someone or some agency or clinic known to the prospective participant informing them (Purdue University, 2014). The relationship between saturation and sample size pertains to this study in that saturation determines that adequate data were collected from the interviews, and anything gathered after the goal was met did not change the perspective. Research indicates that saturation is a core principle used in qualitative research. It determines when there is adequate data from a study to develop a robust and valid understanding of the study phenomenon. It is an essential concept because it identifies data validity and is often included in criteria to evaluate the quality of qualitative research (Hennink & Kaiser, 2019).

### **Procedures for Recruitment and Participation**

The data were collected from the participants' one-on-one in-depth interview responses, field notes, and transcribed tape recordings. As I collected the data, the frequency of data collection events was counted and noted when the interview began and at the end of the session. The data collection took less than an hour to complete. Data was

recorded via Zoom or phone call once permission to proceed had been granted, and a list of interview questions was given to each participant via email on the interview day. Each participant had the same questions, comparable to a semi-structured interview format where the participant and interviewer can ask questions. It built a better rapport and a sense of comfort for both the participant and me. Doyle (2020) suggested that the semi-structured interview format encourages two-way communication. The interviewer and the candidate can ask questions, allowing for a comprehensive discussion of pertinent topics. Because of the conversational tone, the candidate may feel more comfortable expanding on techniques and experiences that will highlight the traits that make them a good fit for the position.

Interview Questions 1–7 were the following:

1. Can a disconnection in a relationship between parent and child contribute to juvenile delinquency?
2. What are the influential factors behind juvenile delinquency?
3. Based on your response to the question, can you elaborate more on why that contributes to juvenile delinquency?
4. To what degree has rehabilitation and reform impacted juvenile reentry recidivism?
5. To what extent would you hold a parent accountable for their child's delinquent behavior?
6. Who should determine the child's best interest when facing the juvenile justice system and its punishment?

7. Why do you feel that your above response was the more suitable approach to a child's best interest?

All these questions related to RQ1: What are the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency that occurred during the literature review in Chapter 2? The interview questions gave the participants a chance to express their experiences concerning what they felt were influential/contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency and how rehabilitation and reform had impacted juvenile reentry recidivism.

Questions 8–13 were as follows:

8. What is your perception of family counseling and its effectiveness in reducing juvenile reentry recidivism?
9. If family counseling is determined to be the most beneficial for both the parent and child when facing the juvenile justice system, how should lawmakers enact into law as the first measure of punishment dependent on the level of crime committed?
10. What method of family counseling would be beneficial for the parent and child that focuses on divorce or separation, death of a loved one, trauma, bullying, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, family or child relocation, substance abuse, or addiction in the family, mental illness, like depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder?
11. Based on your response, what is your rationale behind it?
12. If the environment is a cause behind delinquency, would changing it really matter if the child has already been traumatized or affected?

13. What impact will a parent make if they play a more vital role in a child's life?

All these questions related to RQ2: How significant is the parent's role in efforts to reduce juvenile recidivism that was formulated in Chapter 2? Each participant provided descriptive information on their perception of family counseling and its effectiveness in reducing juvenile reentry recidivism, parent accountability, the child's best interest, best method, and causation. Questions 1–13, with resources and questions, can be found in Appendix A-1 and A-2.

As the interviewer, the follow-up plan is to have some expectations or goals of intent. The intended sample size when recruiting participants from social network connections, knowing when and how to follow up. UIUX Trend (2016-2021) suggests that one week before the research, one should always verify your participants through email and phone. Therefore, an email was sent a week prior to confirm that they could still make the appointment and that the correct phone number was available. A discussion with the participants was appropriate before answering any questions when required. The day before the interview, send an email reminder to the participants with the interview date and time. Inform them that the researcher needs to schedule a 90-minute appointment with them but expects it will take 75 minutes or less to go over the interview process, fill out a form, and review the consent form before the interview starts. If they did not, it could be rescheduled, and if they did not reply, they were let go.

Each participant will get instructions; if they want to exit the research study, they could still reach out and say that they are no longer interested in participating in this study. They will have to contact the researcher if they no longer want to participate; this

is not optional. They will be aware of any expectations when exiting from the interviewer. The consent form was reviewed with them before the interview and ensured that they understood their rights and that any information given about their identity would not be divulged to anyone and assured confidentiality. Lastly, the participants will be informed of their rights before exiting and can review any results of their own free will.

As for a follow-up procedure, a follow-up email thanking the participant for their willingness to participate in this study. It will open communication further where questions can be asked or any inconsistency found when reviewing the data. Before the participant leaves the interview process, make sure that they are aware of the researcher's intent before exiting to keep in touch with them if there is a follow-up needed to their answers given. Lastly, share the results with them via email.

### **Data Analysis**

An inductive coding method will prompt the procedure for analyzing this collected data. That is because inductive research involves converting raw, qualitative data into more useful quantitative data. Unlike deductive analysis, the inductive study does not include testing preconceived hypotheses. Instead, it allows the theory to emerge from the content of the raw data. It is advantageous because it ensures no misconceptions are made before the analysis, clouding the truth within the content (Ross, 2013).

Therefore, to apply this method, the researcher followed the five-step process: prepare and organize the data (print out transcripts, gather notes, documents, or other materials. Mark the source, any demographics that may be collected, and information that will help analyze the data). Review and explore the data (this will require the researcher to read the

data, probably several times, to get a sense of what it contains. Keep notes about thoughts, ideas, or any questions that are a concern). Create initial codes (use highlighters, notes in the margins, sticky pads, concept maps, or anything else that helps connect with the data). Review those codes and revise or combine them into themes (Identify recurring themes, language, opinions, and beliefs).

According to the Business Research Methodology website, qualitative data analysis can be conducted through the following three steps: develop and apply codes. Coding is the categorization of data. A 'code' is a word or short phrase representing a theme or idea. All codes must be assigned meaningful titles—a wide range of nonquantifiable elements such as events, behaviors, activities, and meanings. There are three types of coding: open coding. The initial organization of raw data to try to make sense of it. Axial coding. Interconnecting and linking the categories of codes. Selective coding. Formulate the story by connecting the group and second, identifying themes, patterns, and relationships. Unlike quantitative methods in qualitative data analysis, no universally applicable techniques apply to generate findings. A researcher's analytical and critical thinking skills play a significant role in data analysis in qualitative studies.

Therefore, no qualitative research can be redone to generate the same results.

Specifically, the most popular and effective methods of qualitative data interpretation include the following: Word and phrase repetitions – scanning primary data for words and phrases most commonly used by respondents, as well as words and phrases used with unusual emotions; Primary and secondary data comparisons – comparing the findings of interview/focus group/observation/any other qualitative data collection method with

literature review and discussing differences between them; Search for missing information – discussions about which aspects of the issue was not mentioned by respondents, although you expected them to be mention; Metaphors and analogs – comparing primary research findings to phenomena from a different area and discussing similarities and differences.

Moreover, third, summarize the data. It is essential to link research findings to hypotheses, aims, and objectives at this last stage. When writing a data analysis chapter, one can use note-worthy quotations from the transcript to highlight themes within finding possible contradictions (Business Research Methodology, n.d.).

The software used for the analysis is MAXQDA. According to the website [maxqda.com](http://maxqda.com) (1995-2021), MAXQDA is a world-leading software package for qualitative and mixed methods research. Analyze all kinds of data – from texts to images and audio/video files, websites, tweets, focus group discussions, survey responses, and more. Developed by and for researchers, MAXQDA is powerful, easy-to-use, innovative, and user-friendly, and the only leading QDA software that is 100% identical on Windows and Mac. A harmful or deviant case analysis will be used to test the hypotheses. Negative case or deviant case analysis is a critical analytic strategy for ensuring validity in qualitative research. Negative cases are integral to the constant comparative method of data analysis used to establish points of comparison with normal cases. They are often seen as a study “control” in developing theoretical generalizations in a case study, which adds rigor to qualitative studies (Hanson, 2017).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Several methods were applied: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish trustworthiness in conducting this study and data collection. According to a website article by authors Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002) made mention of Guba and Lincoln's seminal work in the 1980s, Guba and Lincoln substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of “trustworthiness,” containing four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Within these were specific methodological strategies for demonstrating qualitative rigor, such as the audit trail, member checks when coding, categorizing, or confirming results with participants, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, structural corroboration, and referential material adequacy (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1982).

#### **Credibility**

The triangulation process using different methods, such as qualitative or mixed observation techniques versus a one-on-one in-depth interview, was emulated to establish credibility. It will help with research and ensure it is well-developed. Second, a member checks with the participant by having them take a second look at their responses to the questions and reconfirm that their reply is accurate. It will help eliminate any errors the participant may have due to not being honest, not understanding the questions, or unconsciously putting their response on the wrong question line because they were nervous.

Credibility is the first aspect or criterion that must be established because it is critical in establishing trustworthiness. That is because credibility essentially asks the researcher to link the research study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research study's findings. Credibility also has the most techniques available to establish it, compared to three aspects of trustworthiness. Here, we focus on the two most important techniques: triangulation and member checking. Triangulation involves using multiple methods, data sources, observers, or theories to gain a complete understanding of the phenomenon studied. It assures that the research findings are robust, rich, comprehensive, and well-developed. Member-checking: This is a technique in which the data, interpretations, and conclusions are shown to the participants. It allows participants to clarify their intentions, correct errors, and provide additional information if necessary (Statistical Solutions, 2021).

Fourth, reflexivity is an attitude that a qualitative researcher adopts when collecting and analyzing data. A qualitative researcher must look at his or her background and position to see how this influences the research process (i.e., selecting the topic, choosing the methodology, analyzing the data, interpreting the results, and presenting the conclusions). To achieve reflexivity, a qualitative researcher can keep and maintain a reflexive journal (Statistical Solution, 2021).

### **Transferability**

To establish transferability, like an interview, the researcher analyzed research as evidence to support the goal I am trying to reach and provide readers with what is currently being discovered. Transferability in qualitative research is synonymous with

generalizability, or external validity, in a quantitative study. Transferability is confirmed when providing readers with evidence that the research study's findings could apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations (Statistical Solutions, 2021). To establish the Dependability, a fellow researcher outside the scope will analyze the validity of the data. Research suggests that an outside researcher conduct an inquiry audit on the research study. This technique is also called external audit. An inquiry audit involves having a researcher outside of the data collection and analysis, which examines the data collection process, data analysis, and study results. Also, to confirm the accuracy of the findings and guarantee that they will support the data collected. Whereas, authors Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014) suggest that triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods data sources in qualitative research and to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Patton, 2002). Triangulation is viewed as a qualitative research strategy to evaluate validity by converging information from various sources (Statistical Solutions, 2021).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability verifies that the findings are shaped more by participants than by a qualitative researcher. A couple of techniques are used to confirm the research study's findings. Reflexivity is a technique that is useful in qualitative research, especially in phenomenological study. An Audit Trail is the most popular technique to establish confirmability because it is useful when writing the results chapter. An audit trail is qualitative research that details the process of data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the data. One could record what topics were unique and exciting during

the data collection, write down one's thoughts about coding, explain why codes were merged, and explain what the themes mean. Reflexivity is an attitude that a qualitative researcher adopts when collecting and analyzing data. A qualitative researcher must look at his or her background and position to see how this influences the research process (i.e., selecting the topic, choosing the methodology, analyzing the data, interpreting the results, and presenting the conclusions). To attain Reflexivity, the qualitative researcher can retain and maintain a reflexive journal (Statistical Solution, 2021).

To build on intra-rater reliability, examine the chosen instruments (recordings, transcripts, field notes) and then compare each sample because it will provide enough evidence to prove the data's reliability. Cohen's kappa statistic measures interrater reliability (sometimes called interobserver agreement). Interrater reliability, or precision, happens when the data raters (or collectors) give the same score to the same data item. This statistic should only be calculated when Two raters each rate one trial on each sample or one rater rates two trials on each sample (Glen, S., 2020).

### **Ethical Procedure**

The protection of human participants is significantly crucial in any research. The participants in this research study will complete a consent form, and confidentiality will be protected. Concerning the treatment of human participants and any ethical concerns related to recruitment materials and processes, the researcher, the rules and guidelines that Walden University and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) require were followed. The IRB's ethics review and approval are required before participant recruitment, data collection, or dataset access. According to the IRB, research involving human subjects

requires that specific formal steps be taken to protect the participant's rights to privacy and protection from harm. The researcher ensured that the IRB guidelines were instituted when involving human subjects. Why? According to the FDA (1998), the fundamental purpose of IRB review of informed consent is to protect subjects' rights and welfare. A signed informed consent document is evidence that the document has been provided to a prospective subject (explained) and that the subject has agreed to participate in the research. IRB review of informed consent documents also ensures that the institution has complied with applicable regulations. It further noted that the consent document is a written summary of the information that should be provided to the subject. Many clinical investigators use the consent document as a guide for verbally explaining the study. The subject's signature provides documentation of agreement to participate in a study but is only one part of the consent process. The entire informed consent process involves giving a subject adequate information concerning the study, providing adequate opportunity for the subject to consider all options, responding to the subject's questions, ensuring that the subject has comprehended this information, obtaining the subject's voluntary agreement to participate and, continuing to provide information as the subject or situation requires. The process should provide many opportunities for the investigator and the subject to exchange information and ask questions (1998) to be effective.

If there are any ethical concerns related to the recruitment materials and processes, as the researcher, it will be addressed in several ways: find other alternatives or resources that are still within the guidelines and not because of any unwanted ethical issues; concerns that cannot be addressed, then alert the chair or school for advice on how

to address any concerns that are beyond the researchers control or schools current policies, whatever issue that may be of concern, respect the participant's confidentiality and privacy, never allow personal decisions threaten the validity of the research or stray one away from the best alternative verses the worse and never base ethical concerns of own bias opinions, stick to the facts as it pertains to the process and never retract from the given material. The ethical concerns related to data collection intervention activities would be due to refusing to participate after discussing the process, early withdrawal during the interview process, or intentionally falsifying answers or responses to the questions asked that will threaten the validity of the process. If there is a cause for concern, it would be addressed by picking participants that are suited to answer, making sure that the participant is aware of the importance of this study and that his/her answers can help complete the research and have a backup plan in case the location of chose to become unavailable where privacy is affected, or lousy weather comes about. However, before this process can commence, approval from IRB must be obtained to gain access to participants or data, a signed informed consent form from the participants and parents if under legal age, and the participants must be made aware of what the research is intended for and what will be expected if involved in the study.

Data treatment, including archival data and issues, is to protect its confidentiality; it should be stored in a locked file or kept on a thumb drive that only the researcher can access. CBS Boston noted their many ways to keep files safe, such as encrypting one's hard drive and controlling access to files by investing in a fireproof and waterproof safe or filing cabinet. It will prevent physical damage, store files in the cloud, and use an

external hard drive. Furthermore, it allows storage of its portables (2014). Data dissemination is sharing the data with another party and better communicating to facilitate the research. Who will access the data depends on the researcher and the participant's approval. Not everyone will have the privilege to invade one's privacy. Lastly, the data should be destroyed three years after the research is completed and the study closed with the IRB.

If the treatment of data is anonymous, the participant's identity gets disclosed and is nontraceable if the data given is to be checked for any discrepancies - this would make it more complicated because there is no truth in its validity. Ethics can play a big part in the researchers' ability to be truthful when determining whether that data is dependable and not falsified. However, there are many similarities yet indifference. Confidentiality makes the information and identity unavailable to the public and does not necessarily apply to the researcher. Confidentiality: The data can be stored, whereas anonymity cannot. If a file is ever corrupted or traced, the participant's identity is viewable by others. Therefore, the researcher wanted to have valid data without discrepancies. Each is a concern; with confidentiality, the research can come under investigation if questioned.

An ethical issue that could apply to the study is the interaction between the researcher and the chosen participant because a relationship can accumulate during the process, potentially threatening the data. Authors Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F. K., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M. A. (2014) suggest that the interaction between researchers and participants can be ethically challenging for the former, as they are personally involved in dissimilar stages of the study. They further noted that researchers

face ethical challenges in all stages, from design to reporting. These include anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, researchers' potential impact on the participants, and vice versa.

The treatment of data as it pertains to applicable ethical issues, which could include doing a study within one's work environment, conflict of interest or power differentials, and justification for use incentives, there could be several issues: the appropriation of the data and how it is handled during the process, the legality of the research making sure it complies with the laws and regulations, assuring that bias does not get in the way of decision making or threaten the process of the research, making sure that the data has credibility, respecting the rights of the participants and their confidentiality and make sure that the work is not plagiarized.

### **Protection of Participants' Rights**

Participants were provided with a comprehensive explanation of their rights as voluntary participants, including the option to decline participation if they so choose. It was explicitly stated that their responses would be used exclusively for the study and that there would be no negative consequences resulting from their participation. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, and no rights of the participants were violated during the research process.

Following Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, prior permission was obtained to collect, transmit, and store the participants' data and responses. Participants provided informed consent by signing a consent form confirming their voluntary and noncoerced participation in the study.

## **Participants**

The participants in this study are adults 21 years or older and possess direct knowledge and experience in the field of study, specifically in areas such as juvenile corrections, juvenile courts, and family counseling. These participants have the necessary expertise to assess their experiences and provide insights on the impact of counseling between parents and juvenile offenders on recidivism. The sampling approach for participant selection will employ a homogeneous sampling method, utilizing the snowball technique.

## **Summary**

This qualitative study examines counseling outcomes between the juvenile offender and guardian and its impact on recidivism in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). Counseling can be effective, yet debatable, depending on the individual's need. Reasoning: not every circumstance will adhere to counseling due to either lack of participation, trust, or financial deficiency. Though many counseling options are available, each case must reflect within its practice standards. Its primary focus is the Bowens FFT module for both child and guardian.

In contrast, the first three chapters iterate on the problem of issues with juvenile reentry back into the care of their parents or guardians that often result in incarceration. The purpose is to determine if FFT is an effective measure and how we find the answer to the question of making social change. As we transition to Chapter 4, there will be a brief review of the purpose and research questions, pilot study, participant demographics and

characteristics relevant to the study, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The scope of this qualitative study was to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of FFT in reducing recidivism in the DMV region. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted virtually through Zoom, reducing participant engagement. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to capture the phenomenon's essence and emphasize shared lived experiences. The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency?
2. How significant is the parent's role in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism?

This approach allowed the participants to share their experiences and thoughts about the study from their perspective, providing valuable insights into the phenomenon being studied. Before conducting interviews for this research study, I obtained the necessary IRB approval to ensure the study met ethical standards. Participants were recruited through social networking and were contacted by phone to explain the nature and intent of the study. Those who agreed to participate were sent a participation letter via email, which provided detailed information about the nature and scope of the study.

In addition to the participation letter, participants were sent a consent form to sign and return. This form explained their rights as participants, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and assured them of confidentiality. Before the

interview, the consent form was carefully explained to participants to ensure they understood their rights and the measures taken to protect their identity and any information they provided.

The discussions were conducted via Zoom and lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. During the interviews, notes and recordings were taken to help analyze the data gathered. Each participant was given instructions on exiting the research study if they were no longer interested in participating. They were asked to contact me and inform me of their decision—this was not optional. Participants were made aware of any expectations when exiting and could review any results at their discretion. They were also informed of their rights before exiting and could review any results of their free will.

After the interviews, a follow-up email was sent thanking each participant for their participation. Before leaving the interview process, participants were reminded of the intent and informed that I would keep in touch if any follow-up was needed. The results were shared with them via email. The only adjustment made from previous plans was the location due to COVID-19. Despite the pandemic, participants still participated, and the interviews proceeded as planned.

The research study was conducted successfully via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. Participants were given clear instructions on how to exit the study if they chose to do so and were made aware of their rights and expectations when exiting. Follow-up emails were sent thanking participants for their participation, and results were shared with them via email.

### **Demographics**

The study was conducted on a small population of ten participants, all over 21 years of age. Each participant had prior work experience and firsthand knowledge of family counseling programs targeting juvenile offenders. The participants were diverse in age, race, ethnic background, and work experience (see Table 1). The group consisted of three African American females, two Caucasian-American females, four African American males, and one Caucasian-American male. All participants were full-time employees and had children between the ages of 5 and 21. Three were married, while the other six were divorced. All participants had college-level education.

**Table 1***Demographics: Participant Table*

Participant	Gender	Age	Race Status
1	M	47	African Employed
2	M	67	African Retired
3	F	35	African Employed
4	F	49	Caucasian Employed
5	M	50	Caucasian Employed
6	F	66	African Retired
7	F	53	Caucasian Employed
8	F	35	African Employed
9	M	51	African Employed
10	M	49	African Employed

Each participant is assigned a number. I aimed to gather information on the effectiveness of family counseling programs for juvenile offenders to maintain confidentiality. The participants were asked to share their experiences and insights on the subject. The data collected were analyzed to determine the impact of these programs on reducing juvenile delinquency.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected through in-depth one-on-one interviews with each participant. The interviews were transcribed, and the frequency of data collection events was noted at the beginning and end of each session. The data collection process took less than an hour to complete. Interviews were conducted via Zoom or phone call once the IRB granted permission.

A list of interview questions was prepared and emailed to each participant on the interview day. The questions followed a semi-structured format, allowing the participant and interviewer to ask questions—this helped to build rapport and establish a sense of comfort between the participant and me. During the interviews, notes were taken to help with data analysis and ensure that all relevant information was captured.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this study was conducted using an inductive coding method. This approach allowed the theory to emerge from the content of the raw data, ensuring that no preconceived notions clouded the truth within the actual content (Ross, 2013). I followed a five-step process to analyze the data:

1. *Preparation and organization*: I prepared and organized by printing transcripts and gathering notes, documents, and other relevant materials. Each item was carefully marked with its source, any collected demographics, and any additional information that would aid in data analysis. This meticulous step ensured that all pertinent data were accounted for and organized effectively, facilitating the analysis process.
2. *Review and exploration*: I read the data multiple times to understand their contents comprehensively. Throughout this process, notes were taken to capture thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns that arose. This step allowed me to become familiar with the data and identify emerging patterns or themes that could be further explored.
3. *Initial coding*: Various tools such as highlighters, margin notes, sticky pads, and concept maps were employed to establish initial codes and connect with the data, breaking the data into smaller units and assigning codes or labels representing their underlying meaning. These codes served as the initial framework for organizing and analyzing the data.
4. *Code review and revision*: I conducted a comprehensive review of the codes, seeking recurring themes, language patterns, opinions, and beliefs within the data. During this process, codes were carefully examined to ensure accuracy and relevance. Codes were revised or combined as necessary to refine and enhance their data representation.

5. *Presentation of themes*: Considering the intended audience and purpose of the study, I focused on presenting the themes in a cohesive and meaningful manner in a logical order that effectively conveyed the story embedded within the data. Special attention was given to presenting the themes clearly and concisely, ensuring the audience could easily comprehend and engage with the findings.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

To establish trustworthiness in conducting the study and data collection, I applied several methods, including (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

#### **Credibility**

Credibility in research signifies the trustworthiness and believability of the reported findings. In this study, ensuring credibility was a priority. To achieve this, the online survey platform SurveyMonkey was utilized.

Credibility was enhanced through thematic analysis involving identifying and analyzing themes derived from the data collected from the respondents. Using data from 10 different sources helped minimize individual biases, reducing the possibility of unintentional contamination of the findings.

#### **Transferability**

Transferability plays a crucial role in research as it enables the application of findings from one study to different contexts and populations. According to Ryon et al. (2017), transferability is limited when a study has a small sample size that cannot be

generalized to other individuals and settings. However, qualitative studies often have small sample sizes as a norm. To improve transferability, I addressed this limitation by describing the study's organizational setting and the criteria for selecting participants in the purposeful sample, allowing the readers to evaluate the transferability of the findings when engaging with the study. Furthermore, I enhanced transferability by providing detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the data and utilizing multiple sources of evidence. These strategies helped to strengthen the transferability of the study's findings.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the reliability and replicability of collected data.

Dependability is achieved when the same research can be replicated using the same settings but simultaneously. For this study, I collected data using the same research data collection instrument to ensure consistent and accurate results for each participant—coding enhanced dependability, enabling future studies to achieve similar or identical outcomes. The study's dependability was reinforced by analyzing previous research on the subject matter and incorporating the findings into the coding process (Ryon et al., 2017).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is achieved when the participants' perspectives align with the collected data rather than being influenced by the researcher's viewpoint (Ryon et al., 2017). Only the participants' views and opinions were documented to avoid biases during data collection. This documentation served as a record to ensure that the participants' perspectives were accurately recorded and used as a reference point.

Direct quotations were used to present the comments and statements shared by the respondents to achieve confirmability. By presenting the findings based on the provided data, I aimed to maintain transparency and integrity in representing the participants' viewpoints. After completing the study, I provided readers with the necessary information to compare with the initial data on the subject matter to assess the study's confirmability and independence by examining the alignment between the participants' perspectives and the findings presented.

Following these rigorous practices, I aimed to enhance the confirmability of the study and ensure that the participants' voices and experiences were accurately reflected in the research findings.

### **Results**

The only theme that emerged from the data was social factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. The codes that were generated were (a) influences, (b) peer pressure, (c) bullying, (d) lack of structure, and (e) family influences. The themes were associated with the following research questions:

1. What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency?
2. How significant is the parent's role in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism?

All the interview participants unanimously expressed that disconnection in the parent-child relationship is or can be a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency. In addition, Participant 1 stated, "They think so." Participant 2 shared, "I think it can be."

Participant 3 affirmed, "Sure it can." Participants 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 agreed that a disconnection in the parent-child relationship can contribute to juvenile delinquency.

When asked about the influential factors behind juvenile delinquency, the participants were given options. They were allowed to select the factors that contributed to juvenile delinquency. The options provided were as follows:

- violence in the home
- social and economic factors
- peer pressure
- poor education standards
- substance abuse
- mental health
- lack of moral guidance or violence in their social circle

In these options, the participants identified and prioritized the factors they considered to have the most significant impact on juvenile delinquency based on their perspectives and experiences. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the various factors that can contribute to delinquent behaviors among young individuals.

Among the interview participants, six individuals identified peer pressure as one of the most influential factors behind juvenile delinquency. For instance, Participant 7 mentioned that the impact of peer pressure can vary, but nowadays, children tend to imitate their friends' behavior to fit in or be perceived as cool. Participant 2 expressed that juveniles are often influenced to engage in delinquent activities by someone they know. Participant 6 attributed it to mental disorders, suggesting that these conditions can

contribute to delinquent behavior. On the other hand, Participants 1 and 5 stated that social disorder plays a significant role in contributing to juvenile delinquency.

After the initial responses, participants were encouraged to elaborate on why they believed the factors they mentioned contributed to juvenile delinquency. Some participants highlighted that children lack attention and have unmet needs within their homes. Consequently, they may seek alternative ways to fulfill those needs and may lack positive role models, leading them to rely on their peers for guidance and support.

Moreover, participants emphasized that untreated trauma experienced by children often goes unnoticed. They pointed out that children are highly impressionable and learn by observing their environment. When traumatic experiences are not addressed, they can significantly impact their emotional well-being and behavior, increasing the likelihood of engaging in delinquent activities. Also, a participant (Participant B) provided an insightful perspective. They highlighted that children who lack specific forms of rationalization or attention may seek attention through self-harm or engaging in destructive behaviors. This behavior serves to gain attention, creating a ripple effect where their actions may escalate, potentially leading to more severe delinquent acts.

Providing these elaborations, the participants provided a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which the mentioned factors contribute to juvenile delinquency. Their insights emphasized the importance of addressing children's unmet needs, providing positive role models, and recognizing and addressing trauma to prevent the development of delinquent behaviors. The participant's perspective on attention-seeking behaviors shed light on how unaddressed needs can manifest in destructive ways,

underscoring the urgency of providing appropriate support and intervention to minimize the risk of delinquency.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study aimed to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the perceptions and experiences of participants regarding juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of FFT in reducing recidivism in the DMV (District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia) region. The primary focus was to explore the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency and to examine the significance of the parental role in efforts to mitigate and prevent juvenile recidivism.

The study employed a qualitative approach involving engaging with participants and collecting their narratives and perspectives to achieve the research objectives. The participants' responses were transcribed verbatim and subjected to rigorous analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. The research questions that guided this study were twofold. Firstly, the study aimed to uncover the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency involving exploring the various individual, social, and environmental factors that play a role in the initiation and perpetuation of delinquent behavior among juveniles. Secondly, the study sought to assess the significance of the parent's role in addressing juvenile recidivism. It encompassed an understanding of the extent to which parental involvement, guidance, and support can contribute to reducing the likelihood of juveniles engaging in repeat offenders.

Upon analyzing the participants' responses, six distinct themes emerged. The first theme revolved around the contributing factors to juvenile delinquency, shedding light on

the internal and external elements that influence a young person's involvement in delinquent activities. The second theme, "Influences," explored the impact of various social and environmental factors on juveniles' behavior, such as peer influence, neighborhood conditions, and community resources. The third theme, "Peer Pressure," delved into the significant role peers play in shaping the choices and actions of juveniles, particularly criminal behavior. The fourth theme, "Family," emphasized the influence of family dynamics on juvenile delinquency, including parental involvement, discipline strategies, and the quality of familial relationships.

The fifth theme, "Lack of structure," highlighted the importance of providing structure, routine, and positive opportunities for young individuals as a preventive measure against delinquent behavior. Finally, the sixth theme, "Bullying," focused on understanding the impact of bullying experiences on juveniles' involvement in criminal activities.

By examining these themes, the study aimed to generate insights into the complexities of juvenile delinquency and the potential effectiveness of FFT as an intervention to reduce recidivism. The findings from this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on juvenile justice and inform policymakers, practitioners, and researchers about the factors that need to be considered in designing effective strategies to prevent and address juvenile recidivism in the DMV region. Intake regarding question (1) I found that most participants believed that influence and peer pressure were causes behind juvenile delinquency recidivism. The researcher thought counselors who believed in causation had more patience in dealing with adolescents due to their field. The attorney

or correctional officer was not as lenient due to the family affected by juvenile delinquency.

In response to question (2), several participants expressed a sense of remorse when discussing adolescents who lack family structure or experience bullying. These participants acknowledged the vulnerability of these young individuals and recognized the potential negative impacts on their behavior.

Participants who recognized a lack of family structure as a factor contributing to juvenile delinquency demonstrated empathy towards the affected adolescents. They acknowledged the profound impact that growing up in an unstable or dysfunctional family environment can have on a young person's development and decision-making. Within such circumstances, the absence of adequate guidance, support, and nurturing can leave adolescents feeling unsupported, disconnected, and more prone to engaging in delinquent behaviors.

Similarly, participants who discussed the issue of bullying recognized the detrimental effects it can have on adolescents. They understood that being subjected to bullying, whether physical, verbal, or cyberbullying, can have severe emotional and psychological consequences for young individuals. This mistreatment can lead to lowered self-esteem, increased vulnerability, and a heightened risk of engaging in delinquent activities as a coping mechanism or a desire for validation.

The sense of remorse expressed by these participants stemmed from their understanding of the vulnerability of adolescents who lack family structure or are victims of bullying. They recognized that these young individuals often face significant

challenges and may resort to negative behaviors to respond to their circumstances. The participants' empathy and remorse reflected a genuine concern for the well-being of these vulnerable adolescents and a desire to find effective ways to support and address their needs.

The findings from this study shed light on the importance of recognizing the impact of family structure and bullying on juvenile delinquency. They highlight the need for comprehensive interventions that address these contributing factors and provide support systems for vulnerable adolescents. By acknowledging the vulnerability of these young individuals and fostering a sense of empathy and understanding, stakeholders can work towards implementing targeted strategies that promote resilience, positive development, and a reduction in juvenile recidivism.

### **Conclusion**

Based on a qualitative perspective, the study aimed to examine the outcomes of FFT between the juvenile offender and its guardian and its impact on recidivism in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). The results behind this study were intuitive to those who had lived experience and knowledge of the phenomenon that this study sought to uncover. Despite the minor population differences in ethnic backgrounds, age, time on the job, and career, each participant shared similarities in how the juvenile process works. They conveyed how influential structural family therapy for both the child and guardian regarding juvenile reentry recidivism can be. Also, when interviewing each participant, they were exact in their thought process on answering each question before responding without retracting and

showed no inconsistencies when asking follow-up questions. Here are a few participants' similar consistencies that were noted: (a) lack of funding, (b) overcrowded juvenile facilities with kids that need alternatives other than jail, and (c) ineffective rehabilitation programs.

When transitioning into chapter five, several key areas were discussed. First, the purpose of the study and the nature in which it was intended. Secondly, why is studying necessary, and if the study is to be explored, how would the study be done? Third, a summary of the findings, such as the interpretation behind each question. Also, discuss if there were limitations and list any recommendations and any implications for social change. Lastly, discuss reflections that came to mind during the process and any conclusions that validate this study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Purpose and Nature of Study**

Through this qualitative study, I aimed to gain knowledge and an understanding of the participant's perceptions and experiences concerning juvenile recidivism and whether FFT is an effective measure for recidivism reduction in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV). The problem I sought to address in this research study was the need to examine the outcomes of FFT between juvenile offenders and their guardians and its impact on recidivism in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV).

The study was approached from a qualitative phenomenological perspective, with a specific focus on the lived experiences of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system relating to FFT between the juvenile offender and their guardian. Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand the shared experiences within a particular group or phenomenon. As described by Creswell (2013), the primary objective of phenomenology is to provide a comprehensive description of the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, phenomenology was employed to gain valuable insights into the experiences of juvenile offenders and their guardians about FFT and its impact on reducing recidivism.

Adopting a phenomenological approach, I aimed to delve into the participants' subjective experiences, perceptions, and perspectives. This approach allowed for a deep exploration of the lived reality of juvenile offenders and their guardians within the context of the juvenile justice system and the implementation of FFT. I sought to

understand the unique challenges, successes, and obstacles encountered by the participants in their journey toward reducing recidivism.

The use of phenomenology in this study was instrumental in capturing the essence of the participants' experiences and shedding light on the specific impact of FFT on recidivism rates. By focusing on the experiences of the individuals involved, I aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This qualitative study employed a phenomenological perspective to gain insights into the experiences of juvenile offenders and their guardians regarding FFT and its impact on reducing recidivism. By adopting this approach, I aimed to describe and understand the nature of the phenomenon, providing valuable information for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in the field of juvenile justice.

In the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV), juvenile delinquency continues to be a problem. Many children under the age of 18 enter juvenile facilities before the age of 21. Once released, many juveniles re-offend due to a lack of parental support and difficulty adjusting to society's judgmental outlook and criticism.

This research study took a qualitative perspective, employing phenomenology as the chosen methodology to address the issue. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that emphasizes understanding the lived experiences of individuals and the objects they encounter directly (Smith, 2018). By delving into the subjective experiences and perspectives of the participants, I aimed to gain comprehensive insights into the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency and its underlying causes.

In terms of research design, the study followed a qualitative approach that allowed for in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences. Open-ended interviews, focus groups, or observations could have been utilized to collect rich and detailed data. These methods would have allowed participants to share their thoughts, emotions, and perceptions related to juvenile delinquency, offering valuable insights into the complexities of this issue. The study focused specifically on the experiences of juvenile offenders and their guardians in the DMV area to ensure the relevancy and applicability of the research findings. By narrowing the scope of a study, a researcher can gather contextually specific information representative of the local circumstances. In this study, this approach served to acknowledge the unique social, cultural, and environmental factors that may influence juvenile delinquency in the DMV area.

The data analysis procedures employed in the study involved systematic and rigorous examination of the collected information. Thematic analysis, for example, was used to identify recurring patterns, themes, and concepts within the data. This approach allowed me to uncover the participants' underlying meanings and shared experiences, leading to a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. By gaining insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of both juvenile offenders and their guardians, I aimed to identify potential solutions to reduce juvenile delinquency and recidivism. The research findings may provide valuable information for policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders in developing targeted interventions, programs, and policies to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency in the DMV area.

### **Summary/Interpretation of the Findings**

The primary focus of the study was acquiring knowledge and understanding regarding the perceptions and experiences of participants regarding juvenile recidivism in the National Capital Region of the Washington Metropolitan Area, commonly known as the DMV. Furthermore, I aimed to examine the effectiveness of FFT in reducing juvenile reentry and recidivism rates in the same geographical area. Drawing on the participants' knowledge and experiences, I sought to provide insights into the phenomenon underlying their perspectives.

A comprehensive review of existing peer-reviewed literature was presented in Chapter 2 to establish a foundation for the research. This literature review involved an analysis of prior studies that focused on addressing juvenile delinquency and reducing recidivism. By comparing the findings of these studies with the current research, I aimed to identify interventions and approaches that exhibited varying levels of success in addressing juvenile delinquency.

Exploring the experiences and perspectives of the participants, I aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on juvenile recidivism and the potential effectiveness of FFT. This research approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' perceptions, providing valuable insights into the complexities of reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders in the DMV area. Investigating the effectiveness of FFT, I intended to shed light on the impact of this therapeutic intervention in reducing juvenile reentry and recidivism rates. FFT is a structured family-based intervention that targets the dynamics and functioning of the family system to address and prevent

delinquent behavior in juveniles. By examining the outcomes of FFT implementation, I aimed to identify whether this approach had successfully reduced recidivism rates among juvenile offenders in the National Capital Region of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

It is important to note that the study was conducted to build upon prior research and provide insights into FFT's perceptions, experiences, and potential effectiveness in reducing juvenile recidivism rates in the DMV area. I sought to contribute to developing evidence-based strategies and interventions to address juvenile delinquency and promote successful reentry into society, examining both participant perspectives and the existing literature. Therefore, this study objective was not newly founded, but the information obtained can add to what has already been touched on from previous reviews.

### **Conclusion Regarding Research Question 1**

Research Question 1: What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency?

While the juvenile justice system has made efforts to address juvenile delinquency through sanctions, treatments, and rehabilitation, there is an ongoing discussion regarding the need to focus on improving access to mental health services for all juveniles and developing effective alternatives to traditional residential placement facilities (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011). Participants in the study, drawing on their perspectives and years of experience, highlighted the potential for improvement in current approaches.

Many existing programs aimed at addressing juvenile delinquency are not as effective as desired despite genuine efforts. Moreover, there is a concern that these young

individuals often return to the same social and environmental circumstances that initially contributed to their delinquent behavior. Research has consistently demonstrated that various individual and socioenvironmental factors beyond legal considerations influence a youth's entry, exit, and prolonged involvement in the juvenile justice system (Maschi et al., 2008).

It is crucial to prioritize access to mental health services for all juveniles involved in the justice system to address these challenges. Professionals can better understand and address the underlying issues contributing to delinquent behavior by focusing on juveniles' mental well-being. Additionally, effective alternatives to traditional residential placement facilities should be explored. These alternatives can provide a more rehabilitative and therapeutic environment, allowing for the development of necessary skills while avoiding the negative influences often associated with confinement. For instance, attention should be given to the reentry process for juveniles exiting the justice system. High rates of recidivism suggest that many young individuals struggle to reintegrate into society successfully, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support and resources during the transition period. By addressing the individual, social, and environmental factors that contribute to recidivism, policymakers can work towards reducing reoffending rates and improving long-term outcomes for these juveniles.

While the juvenile justice system has implemented various measures to address juvenile delinquency, there is room for improvement. Prioritizing access to mental health services, developing effective alternatives to residential placement facilities, and providing comprehensive support during the reentry process can contribute to better

outcomes for juveniles. By considering a holistic approach that recognizes the multifaceted factors influencing delinquent behavior, policymakers can work towards developing a more effective and rehabilitative juvenile justice system (Maschi et al., 2008, p. 1376). Also, it would help to consider that most juveniles are immune to incarceration, which is why reentry recidivism rates are high.

### **Conclusion Regarding Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 was as follows: How significant is the parent's role in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism?

Extensive research has consistently highlighted the crucial role of parental involvement within the context of the juvenile justice system. Scholars and experts have widely recognized that parents exert a significant influence on their children's development, behavior, and overall outcomes (Burke et al., 2014; Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019; Van As & Janssens, 2002; Walker et al., 2015).

Parents serve as primary role models in the lives of their children. Through observation and imitation, children internalize their parents' behaviors, values, and moral lessons, thereby understanding right and wrong and the consequences of their actions (Mwangangi, 2019). This social learning process is instrumental in shaping their attitudes, decision-making processes, and behavioral patterns. For instance, as children grow older and become more independent, they may develop the ability to conceal their delinquent behaviors from their parents due to a variety of factors, such as a breakdown in communication, decreased parental supervision, or strained relationships (Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019). Consequently, the quality of the parent-child relationship and

parental involvement and supervision are critical in deterring and mitigating juvenile delinquency.

It is essential to recognize that the responsibility for children's actions and behaviors rests with the child and their parents. Holding parents accountable for their children's actions can serve as a powerful incentive for them to actively engage in their children's lives actively, provide appropriate guidance, and create a supportive and structured environment that promotes positive development and discourages delinquent behavior. Addressing issues within the family system becomes crucial in reducing juvenile delinquency rates. Strengthening the family dynamic involves enhancing communication, promoting healthy relationships, and fostering a sense of belonging and support. By providing parents with the necessary resources, support networks, and education, they can better fulfill their role as positive influences in their children's lives.

Parental involvement shapes children's behavior, values, and outcomes within the juvenile justice system. Recognizing the influence of parents and holding them responsible for their children's actions can help foster a more supportive and accountable environment, ultimately reducing juvenile delinquency rates and promoting positive development among young individuals (Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019).

One participant expressed their belief that parental influence would likely have an 80% impact. They argued that peers also exert influence, but ultimately, children will always return to their parents regardless of who they are or where they are located. This viewpoint was informed by their experience of removing children from their homes, reintegrating them into the same environment, or placing them in a different setting, only

to observe that they consistently gravitated back to their parents. Consequently, the participants advocated for strengthening the family system.

### **Limitations**

The only potential limitation in this study was the lack of information supporting my theory or the questions that needed answering. Secondly, I did not feel the participants were untruthful and stayed consistent when sharing their stories. They were eager enough to participate so that I could accumulate sufficient data. Research indicates that there may be unknown conditions or factors involving where the participants reside, work, or study that may bias participants' responses when a researcher is collecting data from older adults; some of their recollections of events, situations, and feelings are questionable. Moreover, the number of participants or subjects was enough to conclude adequately. It is further noted that in qualitative methods, the number of participants should reach a level where saturation is accomplished and no new data or meaning units are being discovered (Wargo, 2015).

### **Recommendations**

Juvenile delinquency has emerged as a significant problem in the United States, as evident from the high number of arrests and crimes committed by young individuals. Despite the implementation of various sanctions, treatments, and rehabilitation programs within the juvenile justice system, the issue persists. Disturbingly, the country currently detains approximately 60,000 teenagers in juvenile detention facilities on any given day (Rizor, 2017).

Considering this study's findings, it is strongly recommended that lawmakers consistently reassess existing policies concerning juvenile offenders within the juvenile justice system. Regular evaluations will ensure that juveniles who engage in offending or reoffending receive the necessary support, mainly through the implementation of structural family therapy both before and after incarceration. Previous research has already indicated that family structure and the parent-child relationship significantly influence juvenile delinquency (Boccio & Beaver, 2019).

By prioritizing the provision of structural family therapy, lawmakers can address the underlying issues that contribute to juvenile delinquency. This therapeutic approach reflects the importance of familial dynamics, strengthens family relationships, promotes healthy communication, and provides guidance and support to the juvenile and their parents or guardians. Implementing such interventions can reduce recidivism rates and foster positive outcomes for juvenile offenders.

Policymakers should consider the significance of ongoing research in juvenile delinquency and family dynamics. By staying informed about the latest findings and advancements, they can effectively make evidence-based decisions and develop comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency. The alarming prevalence of juvenile delinquency in the United States necessitates a continuous evaluation of existing policies within the juvenile justice system. By prioritizing structural family therapy as an integral part of the intervention framework, lawmakers can address the underlying issues contributing to delinquent behavior. It is crucial to recognize the impact of family structure and the parent-child relationship on

juvenile delinquency. By integrating evidence-based interventions and staying informed about the latest research, policymakers can work towards reducing recidivism rates and improving the overall well-being of juvenile offenders and society (Boccio & Beaver, 2019; Cicerali & Cicerali, 2018; Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2020; Mwangangi, 2019).

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study has the potential to highlight to lawmakers the significance of integrating FFT into the preliminary stages of processing juvenile defendants as they enter a juvenile corrections facility and when they transition back into the care of their guardians. The implementation of such therapy at these critical junctures is crucial, considering the persistent issue of juvenile delinquency that continues to evoke public outrage and inundate the juvenile court system. For instance, by demonstrating the effectiveness of FFT in reducing recidivism rates among juveniles, this study can provide compelling evidence to lawmakers regarding the importance of adopting this intervention as a standard practice. Implementing FFT at the outset of a juvenile's involvement with the corrections system can address underlying familial issues contributing to delinquent behavior, promoting rehabilitation and reducing the likelihood of future offenses.

Furthermore, reintegrating FFT during the transition back to the care of guardians reinforces the therapeutic gains made during the juvenile's time in the corrections facility. This continuity of care ensures that the positive changes and insights gained through therapy are sustained and further reinforced within the family unit, leading to more sustainable outcomes for the juvenile. Juvenile delinquency has long been a societal concern, and the overwhelming caseloads in juvenile courts underscore the urgent need

for effective interventions. By implementing FFT, lawmakers can address the root causes of delinquent behavior, providing juveniles with the support and guidance they need to break the cycle of offending. Moreover, by focusing on the family unit, this therapy recognizes the essential role of familial relationships in shaping a juvenile's behavior and offers an opportunity for meaningful and lasting change.

The primary objective of this study is to provide education and diverse perspectives on reducing juvenile reentry recidivism rates and associated financial costs through implementing FFT. Additionally, the study aims to promote the implementation of improved mental health awareness programs for both juveniles and their guardians, specifically targeting mental frustration as a contributing factor to delinquent behavior.

Recognizing that family counseling can be a valuable tool for understanding the origins of aggression in juvenile offenders and their parents, the study seeks to explore this alternative approach. The study aspires to enhance outcomes for juvenile offenders and alleviate the burden on the juvenile justice system by addressing these critical issues. Ultimately, these efforts have the potential to yield positive outcomes for both juveniles and society by reducing recidivism rates and improving the overall well-being of those affected by juvenile delinquency.

### **Reflection of the Researcher**

As an African American male growing up in the National Capital Region portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area (DMV), I can relate to how hard it can be not to become a juvenile statistic. I was one of those teens who came from a broken home and lived in a criminal-infested environment. Moreover, because of all the things I had to

endure, I became rebellious towards my parents because I was not receiving the necessary stability needed to be mentally sound. Despite my parents' efforts as a single parent, I found more love in the streets than in the home. However, my principle prevented me from going down the wrong path. He saw me as a troubled teen who needed a robust support system. So, he sent me to Second Mile for troubled teens. This program helped me and gave me the counseling I needed to get on the right track. It also built a better relationship with my mom and I with who I was with. All this to say is that incarceration is not always the best answer to juvenile delinquency. I found that counseling made a more significant impact, so lawmakers must make it mandatory.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the smaller number of participants than previously projected, the willing participants in this study provided valuable data that can be used to inform lawmakers and policymakers about the effectiveness of structural family therapy as a measure to address juvenile delinquency. The findings of this study support the implementation of FFT as an intervention for reducing recidivism rates among juveniles in the DMV region.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated virtual interviews conducted through Zoom. This remote approach to data collection may have reduced the level of participant involvement compared to in-person interviews. However, despite this limitation, the participants still contributed meaningful insights, suggesting that FFT holds promise in addressing juvenile recidivism. While the present study provides evidence for the effectiveness of FFT, it is crucial to recognize that the sample size was restricted. Therefore, it is

recommended that further research be conducted on a broader scale to validate and expand upon these findings. A more extensive investigation involving a larger and more diverse participant pool would enhance the generalizability and applicability of the results.

Also, it is worth noting that one author has emphasized the need for additional research on family therapy and its impact on juvenile delinquency and recidivism rates, underscoring the importance of continued inquiry into the effectiveness of interventions such as FFT. By conducting further research, researchers can deepen their understanding of the specific mechanisms through which family therapy contributes to reducing juvenile recidivism, thereby strengthening the evidence base for its implementation. This study can potentially inform policy and practice in juvenile justice to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. By highlighting the effectiveness of FFT in reducing juvenile recidivism, policymakers can make informed decisions regarding the allocation of resources and the development of programs aimed at addressing this pressing issue. Implementing evidence-based interventions, such as FFT, can have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of both juveniles and their families.

Finally, it is vital to consider the role of mental health in the context of juvenile delinquency. This study suggests the need to implement a comprehensive mental health awareness program for both juveniles and their guardians. By addressing mental frustration and providing appropriate support and resources, it is possible to mitigate the risk factors associated with delinquent behavior. Integrating mental health components

into interventions like FFT can enhance their effectiveness and contribute to long-term positive outcomes for juveniles.

Despite the limitations of participant numbers and the remote data collection method, this study strengthens the evidence supporting the effectiveness of FFT in reducing juvenile recidivism rates. Further research on a larger scale is recommended to validate and expand upon these findings. These findings can inform policy decisions and underscore the importance of implementing evidence-based interventions and mental health support programs within the juvenile justice system.

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## Appendix A: Letter to Participant

Dear (Name of Participant),

To conduct my research, I will need individuals with experience and knowledge in the field of study who have encountered daily challenges when interacting with the juvenile justice system. What is unknown is their perceptions and experiences when facing the ups and downs of juvenile delinquency and how they are processed throughout the juvenile justice system process that reflects on reentry recidivism rates. This research will provide a descriptive understanding of their experiences and insight into whether family counseling can help reduce juvenile reentry recidivism rates.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this research study and value your time and importance. To gain an understanding of your perceptions and experiences, I will need to set up an interview with you that is estimated to be approximately no more than 45 minutes to an hour. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the interview process will take place over the phone or via Zoom and will be recorded. The interview is designed to learn about your experiences with and perceptions of the juvenile justice system and its juvenile reentry recidivism rates. All information gathered during the interview process will remain confidential. Each participant will be assigned a number code to help ensure that personal identifiers are not received during the analysis and write-up of findings.

For participating in this study, you will receive a \$10 gift card.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule a date and time that we can conduct the interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

Robert Johnson  
Doctoral Candidate  
Walden University

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Hello, welcome, and thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this research study today. My name is Robert Johnson, and I will be your interviewer today.

Today's interview topic will be whether family counseling is an effective measure in reducing juvenile reentry recidivism rates. We will discuss the juvenile process from arrest to courtroom, incarceration, release, rehabilitation programs, family counseling, and reentry recidivism rates. During this process, you must be as honest and open as possible. Remember that the interview consent form you just signed guarantees that everything you discuss today will be kept completely confidential.

Now, please introduce yourself and tell me your initial thoughts and experiences with the juvenile justice system and its reentry recidivism rates.

- (1) Can a disconnection in a relationship between parent and child be a contributing factor towards juvenile delinquency? \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) Violence in the home
  - (b) Socioeconomic factors
  - (c) Peer pressure
  - (d) Poor education standards
  - (e) Substance abuse
  - (f) Lack of moral guidance
  - (g) Violence in their social circles
- (3) Based on your response to the question, can you elaborate more on why that is the contributing factor behind juvenile delinquency? \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) To what degree has rehabilitation and reform impacted juvenile reentry recidivism? \_\_\_\_\_.
- (5) To what extent would you hold a parent accountable for their child's delinquent behavior? \_\_\_\_\_,
  - (a) Fully accountable
  - (b) Not accountable
  - (c) Somewhat accountable
- (6) Who should determine the child's best interest when facing the juvenile justice system and its punishment? \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) Juvenile court judges/jury
- (b) Parents
- (c) License psychiatrist/counselors

(7) Why do you feel that your above response was the more suitable approach to a child's best interest? \_\_\_\_\_.

(8) What is your perception of family counseling and its effectiveness in reducing juvenile reentry recidivism? \_\_\_\_\_.

(9) If family counseling is determined to be the most beneficial for both the parent and child when facing the juvenile justice system, how should lawmakers enact into law as the 1<sup>st</sup> measure of punishment dependent on the level of crime committed?  
\_\_\_\_\_

(10) What method of family counseling would be beneficial for the parent and child that focuses on divorce or separation, death of a loved one, trauma, bullying, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, family or child relocation, substance abuse or addiction in the family, mental illness, like depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder?  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (a) Parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT)
- (b) Cognitional Therapy
- (c) Structural Family therapy (SFT)

(11) Based on your response, what is your rationale behind it? \_\_\_\_\_.

(12) If the environment is a causation behind delinquency, would changing it really matter if the child has already been traumatized or affected? \_\_\_\_\_

(13) What impact will a parent make if they play a more vital role in a child's life?  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix C: Literature Behind Interview Questions

<b>Research Questions</b>	
<b>What are the contributing factors behind juvenile delinquency?</b>	<b>RQ1</b>
<b>How significant is the parent's role in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism?</b>	<b>RQ2</b>
<b>Interview Questions</b>	
Question 1	
<b>1. Can a disconnection in a relationship between parent and child be a contributing factor towards juvenile delinquency?</b>	RQ1
Research has indicated that family structure and the relationship between a parent and child have an impact on juvenile delinquency (Boccio & Beaver, 2019; Cicerali & Cicerali, 2018; Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2020; Mwangangi, 2019).	LR Notes
Question 2	
<b>2. What are the influential factors behind juvenile delinquency?</b>	RQ1
The core principles highlight the fact that there is a relational pattern that influences the problematic behavior of the juvenile (Sexton, 2019)	LR Notes
Question 3	
<b>3. Based on your response to the question, can you elaborate more on why that is the contributing factor behind juvenile delinquency?</b>	RQ1
Juveniles respond to the unspoken relational patterns that they observe around them; relational patterns develop and define the juvenile's problematic behavior by obtaining an understanding of what causes the pain and struggle in the family unit, how the family experiences and interacts with the problematic behavior; and of how family's function and are connected to each other through their experiences (Sexton, 2019).	LR Notes
Question 4	
<b>4. To what degree has rehabilitation and reform impacted juvenile reentry recidivism?</b>	RQ1
They found that the recidivism rates of juveniles who successfully graduated from Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) were reduced. They also found that juveniles who were assigned to PLL had fewer police contacts and that juveniles who had "more severe offenses were more likely to complete PLL than those with lesser offenses" (Karam et al., p. 343, 2017).	LR Notes
Question 5	
<b>5. To what extent would you hold a parent accountable for their child's delinquent behavior?</b>	RQ1
It has been assumed that parents play a critical role in the development of their children, and because of this, they should be held responsible and accountable for the actions and behaviors of their children (Burke et al., 2014; Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019; Van As & Janssens, 2002; Walker et al., 2015).	LR Notes

Question 6	
<b>6. Who should determine the child's best interest when facing the juvenile justice system and its punishment?</b>	RQ1
In the juvenile justice system, it is the belief that parental involvement should be a part of the process mainly because the parents are an integral part of shaping the behavior, norms, values, and morals of their children (Mwangangi, 2019; Walker et al., 2015).	LR Notes
Question 7	
<b>7. Why do you feel that your above response was the more suitable approach to a child's best interest?</b>	RQ1
Ultimately, it is the relationship that they have with their parents and the lack of parental supervision that will eventually determine the juvenile's delinquent behavior (Moitra et al., 2018; Mwangangi, 2019).	LR Notes
Question 8	
<b>8. What is your perception of family counseling and its effectiveness in reducing juvenile reentry recidivism?</b>	RQ2
By following defined goals and skills that are guided by core principles, the client, family, and therapist can be as creative as they like to match the client and their family's unique structure, functioning, and interaction style that reduces the recidivism rates of the juvenile (Sexton, 2019; Turner et al., 2019).	LR Notes
Question 9	
<b>9. If family counseling is determined to be the most beneficial for both the parent and child when facing the juvenile justice system, how should lawmakers enact into law as the 1<sup>st</sup> measure of punishment dependent on the level of crime committed?</b>	RQ2
Due to the rising cost of aftercare services for formerly incarcerated juveniles and juvenile delinquents, many states have begun seeking alternatives to community-based interventions (Anthony et al., 2010; Karam et al., 2017; Ryon et al., 2017).	LR Notes
Question 10	
<b>10. What method of family counseling would be beneficial for the parent and child that focuses on divorce or separation, death of a loved one, trauma, bullying, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, family or child relocation, substance abuse, or addiction in the family, mental illness, like depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorder?</b>	RQ2
Functional family therapy (FFT) is a treatment model that has been used for at-risk adolescent youth and their families that focuses on the youth's behavioral problems, mental health concerns, violence, and drug use (Darnell & Schuler, 2015; Gottfredson et al., 2018; Robbins et al., 2016; Sexton, 2019; Sexton & Turner, 2010; Turner et al., 2019; Weisman & Montgomery, 2018).	LR Notes
Question 11	
<b>11. Based on your response, what is your rationale behind it?</b>	RQ2
It has been highly recognized as an evidence-based intervention program that has evolved from a theory to a treatment model that is "a comprehensive family-based and relationally focused intervention model" that relies on the "collaborative and relational nature of the interactions among client, family, and therapist as the mechanism of change" (Sexton, 2019, p. 171).	LR Notes
Question 12	

<b>12. If the environment is a causation behind delinquency, would changing it really matter if the child has already been traumatized or affected?</b>	RQ2
Research has indicated that “youth’s entry, exit, and prolonged involvement in the juvenile justice system are influenced by a host of individual and social/environmental factors” that are beyond the legal factor (Maschi et al., 2008, p. 1376).	LR Notes
Question 13	
<b>What impact will a parent make if they play a more vital role in a child’s life?</b>	RQ2
They argue that youths who have a strong relationship with their parents are less likely to engage in delinquency mainly because they have a fear of losing or jeopardizing that family bond.	LR Notes