

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DV Solutions (hereafter the “DVS”) is a State certified batterer’s intervention program provided by Spectrum Youth & Family Services. Serving the Burlington, Middlebury, Newport, Rutland, St. Albans, and St. Johnsbury areas, DVS works with men who have been controlling, abusive, or violent toward a female partner.

Participants meet in groups of up to ten men for discussion and situational exercises. Participants are expected to be accountable for their actions and to participate throughout the program. Utilizing a curriculum called “Power and Control: The Tactics of Men Who Batter”, each group is led by facilitators trained in a philosophy that teaches equality between men and women, that there is no excuse for violence or abuse, and that violent behavior is the batterer’s responsibility.

An analysis of the criminal history records of the 430 subjects who were referred to and accepted into DVS, from January 1, 2007 to December 27, 2013, was conducted using the Vermont criminal history record of participants as provided by the Department of Public Safety – Vermont Criminal Information Center (VCIC). The Vermont criminal history record on which the recidivism analysis was based included all charges and convictions prosecuted in a Vermont Superior Court – Criminal Division that were available as of July 27, 2014. The criminal records on which the study was based do not contain Federal prosecutions, out-of-state prosecutions, or traffic tickets.

The outcome evaluation of DVS appears to show potential for reducing recidivism among domestic violence offenders:

- Of the 430 participants, 279 finished the program for a completion rate of 65%
- Participants who successfully completed the program had a recidivism rate of 31.2%
- Participants who were terminated from the program had a recidivism rate of 43.0%
- This recidivism rate also represents a significant improvement in comparison to the recidivism rate of 53.5% reported in a 2011 domestic violence study done by the Vermont Center for Justice Research

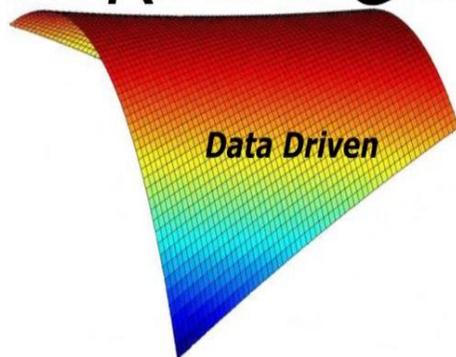
Recidivism rates with respect to post-DVS elapsed time and how long a subject is eligible to recidivate, revealed that most post-DVS convictions occurred within one to two years of leaving the program:

- Significantly fewer participants who completed DVS recidivated (16.1%) within one year of leaving the program compared to those who were terminated from DVS (25.2%).
- As post-DVS elapsed time increased, recidivism rates dropped significantly for both study segments, and beyond two years, the research indicates that there is a high probability that DVS participants will remain conviction free.

The post-DVS convictions of recidivists showed that:

- Subjects who completed DVS were convicted of significantly fewer felony crimes than the participants terminated from the program (14.5% versus 22.5%, respectively).
- They also had a total conviction rate (72 convictions per 100 subjects) that was 51% less than the subjects terminated from DVS (141 convictions per 100).

Crime Research Group



SPECTRUM YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

DV Solutions Outcome Evaluation Report

Submitted to:

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PURPOSE

September 2014: The objective of this outcome evaluation was to determine the extent to which DV Solutions, a State certified batterer's intervention program, reduces recidivism among program participants.

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Spectrum Youth & Family Services

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Vermont Criminal Information Center (VCIC)

Bruce Parizo, Deputy Director, for his technical assistance and commitment to data quality, which resulted in highly accurate criminal history extracts from the files of VCIC.

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The post-DVS convictions of recidivists showed that:

- Subjects who completed DVS were convicted of significantly fewer felony crimes than the participants terminated from the program (14.5% versus 22.5%, respectively).
- They also had a total conviction rate (72 convictions per 100 subjects) that was 51% less than the subjects terminated from DVS (141 convictions per 100).

One area of concern that was revealed in the research was that the DVS recidivists who completed the program were convicted of significantly more assault crimes – primarily domestic assault charges – than the subjects that were terminated from the program.

INTRODUCTION

This outcome evaluation of DVS managed by Spectrum Youth and Family Services was designed to answer three questions associated with the post-program behavior of subjects who participated in the program from January 1, 2007 to December 27, 2013.

1. Which subjects were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in DVS?
2. When were subjects convicted of additional crimes after participating in DVS?
3. What crimes were the subjects convicted of after participating in DVS?

In this evaluation, participant behavior was divided into two study groups – those who completed DVS and those who were terminated before completing DVS.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

An outcome evaluation attempts to determine the effects that a program has on participants. In the case of the DVS, the objective of this interim outcome evaluation was to determine the extent to which the program reduced recidivism among participants.

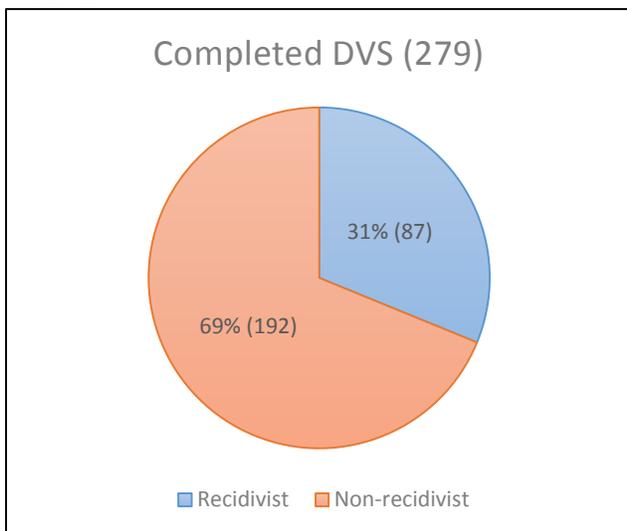
An indicator of post-program criminal behavior that is commonly used in outcome evaluations of criminal justice programs is the number of participants who recidivate -- that is, are convicted of a crime after they complete the program. In the case of this study, participants were considered to be recidivist if they were convicted for crimes committed after successful completion or termination from DVS.

An analysis of the criminal history records of the 430 subjects who were referred to and accepted into DVS, from January 1, 2007 to December 27, 2013, was conducted using the Vermont criminal history record of participants as provided by the Department of Public Safety – Vermont Criminal Information Center (VCIC). The Vermont criminal history record on which the recidivism analysis was based included all charges and convictions prosecuted in a Vermont Superior Court – Criminal Division that were available as of July 27, 2014. The criminal records on which the study was based do not contain Federal prosecutions, out-of-state prosecutions, or traffic tickets.

It should be noted that of the 430 participants of DVS in this study, VCIC criminal records were not found for 56 subjects – 41 who completed DVS, and 15 who were terminated from DVS. Since these subjects did not show any contacts with the criminal justice system after they either completed or were terminated from DVS, they were included in the analysis as a non-recidivist.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Which subjects were convicted of additional crimes after their participation in DVS?

Chart 1



Findings

Chart 1 shows that the examination of the criminal records of the 279 participants who completed the DVS revealed that 31% (87) were convicted of some type of crime after leaving DVS. Sixty-nine percent (192) remained crime free.

Chart 2

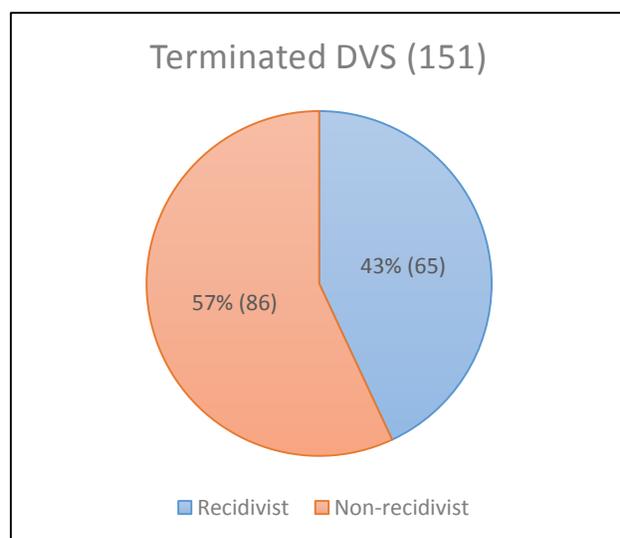


Chart 2 indicates that for subjects who were terminated from DVS there is a higher rate of recidivism at 43.0% (65 out of 151 subjects).

The data show that the subjects who completed the DVS recidivated at a significantly lower rate than those subjects who were terminated from DVS (31.2% versus 43.0%, respectively).

It is important to note that, although a statistically significant difference was observed between the two study groups, the “Terminated” group is not a true control or comparison group as would be found in experimental or quasi-experimental

research designs. The key difference is that unlike an experimental design, the “Terminated” group did participate at some level in DVS and possibly were affected by that experience. The recidivism pattern of the “Terminated” group is likely to be different from a true control group whose members would not be exposed to the services provided by DVS.

This recidivism analysis represents a “point-in-time” calculation and does not take into account the large variability in elapsed time from program completion or termination exhibited by the study cohort.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: When were subjects convicted of additional crimes after participating in DVS?

The calculation summarized in the previous section represents the recidivism rate at the time this study was conducted. In addition to this recidivism measure, program effectiveness can be also measured in terms of how long a participant remains conviction free in the community. Even if a participant is convicted of another offense after program completion, the longer the subject remains crime free is important in evaluating the crime prevention potential for a program. This section takes a closer look at recidivism rates with respect to how long a subject was away from DVS and eligible to recidivate.

Findings

As post-DVS elapsed time increased, recidivism rates dropped significantly for both study segments – 16.1% to 7.7% for subjects who completed DVS and 25.2% to 8.8% for those terminated from DVS. The analysis shows that there is a high probability that subjects will remain conviction free as their elapsed time from the DVS increases.

Table 1 presents recidivism data for the 279 participants who completed the DVS – focusing on the number of subjects who were eligible to recidivate during a certain time period and the number who were convicted of a post-DVS crime during that same time period. Looking at the column under “< 1 Year”, the data show that all 279 subjects who completed the DVS were eligible to recidivate for less than one year. The table also shows that 45 subjects were convicted of crimes during that time period (recidivism rate of 16.1%). The subsequent columns show a steep decline in recidivism as the subjects' post-DVS time and eligibility to recidivate increases.

Table 1
Time to Recidivate by Years of Eligibility to Re-offend
Completed DVS

	Post-DVS Elapsed Time						
	< 1 Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6+
Number of Participants Who Recidivated During the Time Period	45	18	13	6	2	3	0
Total # of Participants Who Were Eligible to Recidivate During the Time Period*	279	258	244	198	151	102	57
% Recidivism	16.1%	7.0%	5.3%	3.0%	1.3%	2.9%	.0%

*The data in this row represents all participants who had completed DVS for certain time periods. Participants may appear in more than one column based on the longevity of their post-DVS elapsed time. For example each of the 244 participants who completed the DVS and appear in the “Year 2” column also appear in the “< 1 Year”, and “Year 1” columns because having completed two years of post-DVS elapsed time, they necessarily have also completed less than one year and one year.

Table 2 presents the same recidivism analysis for the 151 subjects who were terminated from DVS.

Table 2
Time to Recidivate by Years of Eligibility to Re-offend
Terminated from DVS

	Post-DVS Elapsed Time						
	< 1 Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6+
Number of Participants Who Recidivated During the Time Period	38	12	8	3	3	0	1
Total # of Participants Who Were Eligible to Recidivate During the Time Period	151	137	120	95	68	51	13
% Recidivism	25.2%	8.8%	6.7%	3.2%	4.4%	.0%	7.7%

RESEARCH QUESTION #3: What crimes were the subjects convicted of after participating in DVS?

Findings

The participants of DVS who completed the program and recidivated had significantly fewer post-DVS felony convictions than did the terminated subjects. They also showed a total conviction rate (convictions per 100 subjects) that was one-half that of the subjects who were terminated from DVS (72 per 100 vs. 141 per 100, respectively).

Table 3 shows that the combined DVS recidivists were convicted of a total of 413 crimes during the follow-up period. The participants who completed DVS, were convicted of 200 post-DVS crimes – 29 felonies (14.5%) and 171 misdemeanors (85.5%) – for a conviction rate of 72 per 100 participants. DVS participants who were terminated from the program were convicted of a total of 213 crimes. They committed significantly more felonies (48, 22.5%) and had a total conviction rate that was double (141 per 100) that of the subjects that completed DVS.

Table 3
Offense Levels for All Post-DVS Crimes for Which Subjects Were Reconvicted

	Completed		Terminated		Total	
	# of Convictions	%	# of Convictions	%	# of Convictions	%
Felony	29	14.5%	48	22.5%	77	18.6%
Misdemeanor	171	85.5%	165	77.5%	336	81.4%
Total	200	100.0%	213	100.0%	413	100.0%

Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions. Tests assume equal variances.

Table 4 shows the types of post-program crimes for which the subjects were convicted. A primary concern that was revealed in this research, was that the DVS recidivists who completed the program were convicted of significantly more assault crimes (38 or 19% of total convictions) than the subjects that were terminated from the program (25 or 11.7% of total convictions). In addition to the assault crimes, the recidivists who completed DVS were convicted of significantly more DUI, Drug, and Unlawful Mischief offenses. The recidivists who were terminated from DVS were convicted of significantly more Theft, Escape, and Fraud charges.

DVS participants who completed the program (279) were convicted of 200 crimes, averaging 2.3 crimes with a median of two convictions and a maximum of nine. Participants who were terminated from the program (151) were convicted of a total of 213 crimes, with a median of two and a maximum of 18 convictions and averaging 3.3 crimes – significantly more than the average for the subjects who completed DVS.

Table 4
All Post-DVS Crimes for Which Subjects Were Reconvicted

	Completed		Terminated		Total	
	# of Convictions	%	# of Convictions	%	# of Convictions	%
Total DMV	48	24.0%	55	25.8%	103	24.9%
Total Assault	38	19.0%	25	11.7%	63	15.3%
Total Theft	8	4.0%	33	15.5%	41	9.9%
Failure to Appear	13	6.5%	15	7.0%	28	6.8%
Total DUI	17	8.5%	8	3.8%	25	6.1%
Disorderly Conduct	15	7.5%	9	4.2%	24	5.8%
TRO Violation	12	6.0%	10	4.7%	22	5.3%
Vs Justice*	7	3.5%	13	6.1%	20	4.8%
Drug Offense	13	6.5%	3	1.4%	16	3.9%
Unlawful Mischief	12	6.0%	3	1.4%	15	3.6%
Escape	1	0.5%	11	5.2%	12	2.9%
Total Fraud	1	0.5%	9	4.2%	10	2.4%
Violation of Probation	2	1.0%	8	3.8%	10	2.4%
Unlawful Trespass	2	1.0%	8	3.8%	10	2.4%
Disturbing the Peace	4	2.0%	2	0.9%	6	1.5%
Acts Prohib/Prostitution	2	1.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%
Fish & Game Violation	2	1.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%
Other Convictions	3	1.5%	1	0.5%	4	1.0%
Total Convictions	200	100.0%	213	100.0%	413	100.0%
Total Recidivists	87		65		152	
Ave # of Convictions	2.30		3.28		2.72	
Median # of Convictions	2.00		2.00		2.00	
Max # of Convictions	9.00		18.00		18.00	

* Contempt, false alarms, resisting arrest, etc.
Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.05$ in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions and means. Tests assume equal variances.

Because of the aforementioned concern regarding the post-program assault crimes, Table 5 was created to show a breakdown of the **total post-program assault crimes** for which the subjects were convicted. Included in the assault crimes, there was a total of 41 (65%) domestic assault convictions, 26 (68%) for those who completed DVS (13 felonies), and 15 (60%) for the terminated subjects (9 felonies).

The table also shows the **number of recidivists** that were convicted of post-DVS assault offenses. For the subjects who completed the program, 27 recidivists were convicted of post-DVS assault offenses with 20 of those being convicted of domestic violence charges. For the subjects who were terminated from the program, 22 recidivists received post-DVS assault convictions with 13 of those committing domestic violence offenses. If we look at this result from the standpoint of the total study cohort, 20 subjects that completed the program, or 7.2% (20/279), and 13 of those terminated from the program, or 8.6% (13/151) were convicted of post-DVS domestic assault offenses.

Table 5
All Post-DVS Assault Crimes for Which Subjects Were Convicted

	Completed			Terminated			Total	
	# of Convictions	%	# of Recidivists	# of Convictions	%	# of Recidivists	# of Convictions	%
Domestic Assault	26	68.4%	20	15	60.0%	13	41	65.1%
Simple Assault	9	23.7%	8	5	20.0%	5	14	22.2%
Assault Law Enforcement	0	0.0%	0	3	12.0%	3	3	4.8%
Stalking	1	2.6%	1	1	4.0%	1	2	3.2%
Sexual Assault on a Minor	1	2.6%	1	0	0.0%	0	1	1.6%
Kidnapping	1	2.6%	1	0	0.0%	0	1	1.6%
Aggravated Assault	0	0.0%	0	1	4.0%	1	1	1.6%
Total Assault Convictions	38	100.0%	27	25	100.0%	22	63	100.0%
Note: Shaded values in the same row are significantly different at p< 0.05 in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions and means. Tests assume equal variances.								

CONCLUSION

The outcome evaluation of DVS appears to show potential for reducing recidivism among domestic violence offenders. Participants who successfully completed the program had a recidivism rate of 31.2%, as compared to participants who were terminated from the program, these participants had a recidivism rate of 43.0%. The post-DVS convictions of recidivists showed that participants who completed DVS were convicted of significantly fewer felony crimes than the participants terminated from the program (14.5% versus 22.5%, respectively). They also had a total conviction rate (72 convictions per 100 subjects) that was 51% less than the subjects terminated from DVS (141 convictions per 100).

It is important to note that, although a statistically significant difference was observed between the two study groups, the “Terminated” group is not a true control or comparison group as would be found in experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. The key difference is that unlike an experimental design, the “Terminated” group did participate at some level in DVS and possibly were affected by that experience. The recidivism pattern of the “Terminated” group is likely to be different from a true control group whose members would not be exposed to the services provided by DVS. A control group study would help determine the rate of recidivism for participants in the program versus those who had no contact with the program.

Though the overall recidivism rate for those completing the program was lower than those terminated, it still remains a concern that for the recidivists completing the program the post-program domestic assault crimes are higher than for those terminated. A more in-depth analysis of this cohort could result in a better understanding of the people who completed the program and committed post-program domestic assaults. An analysis of client demographics, risk scores, and other socio-psychological factors could identify individuals who are not appropriate for the program or lead to changes in the program to better meet their needs.