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| **Retributive Teen Court** | **Restorative Teen Court** |
| Focus is on law-breaking; crime is an act against the state, a violation of a law | Focus is on the harm done to self, parents, victim and community; crime is an act against another person and the community |
| Offender accountability is defined as taking punishment; the focus is on sanctions, treatment, and acknowledgement of the crime committed | Accountability is defined as assuming responsibility and taking action to repair the harm; the focus is on acknowledgement of the harm caused, addressing the issues, and repairing the harm done |
| Accountability is to the system (Teen Court) | Accountability is to the victims and community |
| Emphasis in hearings is focused on testimony, procedure and evidence | Emphasis includes an increased focus on dialogue, understanding, and empathy |
| Punishment is effective, and:   1. Threat of punishment deters crime 2. Punishment changes behavior | Punishment is not effective in changing behavior and may be disruptive to community harmony and good relationships; repairs are effective |
| Youthful offender is the main client to be tracked, punished, treated and restrained | Youth, victim and community receive balanced attention as client/customers of the system who are each targets of intervention and partners in the response to crime |
| Options for victims involvement are limited and constrained; victims are peripheral to the process | Options for victim involvement are varied and respect the victims’ choice; victims are central to the process of resolving a crime |
| Service options for offenders are prescribed by the program and focus on completion of tasks assigned by Teen Court | Service options for youth are varied and related to their strengths, benefit the community, and address the concerns of the victim and community whenever possible |
| Outcomes work towards offenders completing assignments | Outcomes work to strengthen the relationship between the youth who caused harm and the community |
| Program is based on procedure and policy | Program is based on principles and flexibility |
| Teen court officials play an active role; the role is passive for victims, offenders, and community | Everyone plays an active role; youth, victims, community, and juvenile justice professionals |
| Training of youth teen court participants is focused on teen court operations and courtroom procedure | Training of adult facilitators includes broader issues related to conflict resolution, community involvement, and problem solving skills |
| Offenders recognize their crime | Youth recognizes the harm they caused to the victim and the community; gain empathy for the victim and the community |
| Offenders are ordered to behave appropriately so as to make the community safer | Victims and communities directly confront the youth’s actions to address safety issues in the process of a “meeting of the minds” and relationship building; public safety increases when youth develop internal controls, community members resolve conflict, community justice is solution-focused and community justice partnerships are developed |
| Offenders move past the offense through punishment and community service | Youth, victims and communities move past the offense through a process of dialog, commitment to repair the harm, competency development, and commitment to future behavior |
| Goal is to reduce recidivism of offenders through peer pressure from pro-social peers, adherence to sentence, completion of tasks, influencing their perceived fairness of the system, and bonding with the jury they serve on | Goal is to reduce recidivism of youth through them exiting the system being more capable of being responsible and productive in the community; needs and strengths of the youth are addressed |
| Competency development leaves youth stronger in character and develops transferable skills | Competency development leaves youth stronger in character, more connected to community, remorseful, empathetic, recognizes one’s potential and builds on it, and develop transferable skills |
| **Goal of the Message to the Offender**: You chose to commit an offense and we will sanction you to deter you from future offending. We will do this through approved processes and programs, peer accountability, and supervision. | **Goal of the Message to the Youth:** Your actions have consequences; you have wronged someone or the community through your offense. You are responsible for your crime and capable of restoring the victim or repaying the damages |
| **Goal of the Message to the Victim**: Our first concern is to make offenders face the consequences of their crime. You will benefit because the offender will be punished. | **Goal of the Message to the Victim:** The juvenile justice system believes you are important and will do its best to ensure that to the degree possible the offender repays the debt incurred to you from the crime. |
| **Goal of the Message to the Community:** We will do our best to protect you by identifying offenders and sending a message through punishment to would-be offenders that crime will not be tolerated. | **Goal of the Message to the Community:** Requiring youth to repay victims and the public for their crimes receives highest priority in the juvenile justice system. We need the help of the community. The community is a key player in holding youth accountable. |