

## What is Moral Reconciliation Therapy

## Definition of MRT

- MRT- Moral Reconciliation Therapy- is a systematic, cognitive-behavioral, step-by-step treatment strategy designed to enhance self – image, promote growth of a positive, productive identity, and facilitate the development of higher stages of moral reasoning. All of these goals are ultimately demonstrated by more appropriate behavior on the part of the program participants.

## Definition of MRT continued

- Over 120 outcome studies have demonstrated that MRT significantly increases moral reasoning levels, enhances life purpose, facilitates increased social support, and gives participants more perceived control over their lives. Consistent research outcomes from a host of MRT implementations shows that MRT participants have significantly lower levels of rearrests and reincarcerations in comparison to other programs.

## Definition of MRT continued

- These results have been confirmed even in participants who have been released from MRT programs for a full 10 years.
- MRT is widely recognized as an “Evidence Based Practice” as well as a “Best Practice” by numerous official governmental agencies and treatment authorities.

### Definition of Reconciliation

- Prior to common usage of the term "ego" in psychology in the 1930's the term "conation" was employed to describe the conscious process of decision making and purposeful behavior.
- The term moral reconciliation was chosen due to the underlying goal to change conscious decision making to higher levels of moral reasoning.

### What is the purpose

- Briefly, MRT seeks to move clients from hedonistic (pleasure vs. pain) reasoning levels to levels where concern for social rules and others becomes important. MRT research has shown that as clients complete steps moral reasoning increases in both adult and juvenile offenders.

### What MRT focus's on

- MRT systematically focuses on seven basic treatment issues:
- confrontation of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors
- assessment of current relationships
- reinforcement of positive behavior and habits
- positive identity formation
- enhancement of self-concept
- decrease in hedonism and development of frustration tolerance
- development of higher stages of moral reasoning

### Who Does MRT Work For?

- Drs. Little and Robinson initially developed MRT as the cognitive-behavioral component in a prison-based therapeutic community. Because of its remarkable success, corrections officials then tested and widely implemented the program in general inmate populations, with juvenile offenders, in parole and probation settings, in community corrections, in hospital and outpatient programs, in educational settings, and in drug courts. MRT is found to be effective with both genders and in adult and juvenile populations. MRT is used with a variety of populations and measured objective outcomes are consistent in all settings.

### Benefits of MRT-based Programming

- MRT is easy to implement.
- MRT is designed and developed to target issues specific to an offender population.
- MRT is designed to address issues of a treatment resistant population.
- MRT has shown to reduce the recidivism rate of offenders by between 30% and 50% for periods up to 20 years after release.
- The program has been used effectively in different programs at many sites.
- MRT improves offender compliance to rules in an institution or while under supervision in the community.

### Benefits of MRT continued

- MRT is delivered in open-ended groups, which allows for maximizing resources.
- MRT easily meshes and blends with other types of programming including self-help groups, education, counseling and behaviorally oriented programs.
- MRT will increase offenders' moral reasoning, decrease dropout rates, increase sense of purpose and reduce antisocial thinking and behavior.
- When implemented in a variety of criminal justice settings, MRT provides a continuum of care.
- The cost of implementing MRT is highly competitive.

### How MRT is conducted

- The MRT-based substance abuse program includes 16 steps, with 12 of these typically completed in 30 group sessions. MRT is conducted twice a week Monday's and Friday's with a maximum of 12 participants. Participants complete homework from the workbook for each group prior to coming to a session. In the group, each participant presents his or her homework and the facilitator passes the client to the next step or has the client redo the homework based on objective criteria. All substance abuse groups are open-ended, meaning that new clients can enter an ongoing group at any time. Each group session will usually have new clients as well as some finishing the program.

### Step 1

- Step 1 is all about honesty. If a person is unable to do Step 1 it means they are not ready for change.
- Participants are asked to complete a pyramid that covers the present, 1 year ago, 5 years ago, 10 years ago, and 20 years ago. They are asked on one side to do what really happened and on the other side what they could have done differently.
- They are then asked to complete a 5 to 15 minute testimony of how their behavior has affected ten areas of their life, these areas are in the workbook they receive.

### Step 2

- Step 2 is about developing trust.
- Participants are asked to complete a shield and life mask as well as a testimony presented in front of the group.
- The shield assists participants in exposing parts of themselves to the group and in so doing demonstrates trust in the group. The life wheel is similar but looks at the biggest problem area as well as important events from the past.

### Step 3

- Step 3 is about developing acceptance.
- Participants are asked to start seeing the world as it is and begin recognizing that their problems are not the fault of the world. That their belief's, attitudes, and behaviors are the problem.
- Step 3 participants complete 3 worries and then discuss what they want to have happen with these worries and why they need this to happen in order to be happy in their life.

### Step 4

- Step 4 is all about developing awareness. The concept is as participants become more honest, trustworthy, and acceptant of reality, they begin becoming more aware of the many things in their life.
- Participants are asked to account for their time for an entire week and share this in group.
- They are then asked to break their life into six categories of their choosing and detail how what they do in life fits into these categories.

### Step 5

- Step 5 is designed to help participants recognize that as they become more honest, trusting, acceptant, and aware of the many things in their life, they will become very aware of the many people that they have hurt. It is also designed to help people begin the process of healing the injuries that they have inflicted on their relationships. In so doing, they are able to start to repair the injury that they have caused themselves.
- Participants are asked to document and share the 5 best and worst times in their life and discuss any patterns or themes they see in these 2 areas. They are also asked to complete a circle of relationships and document 8 important relationships and discuss the injury that has occurred, how they will repair it and how these relationships have been impacted.

### Step 6

- Step 6 is about realizing that there are many people and situations that can't be fixed, repaired, or paid back. Participants begin the process of helping others to give back to society some of the good things that they have taken. Step 6 is all about becoming a positive force in the world rather than a negative force.
- Participants must document ten hours of helping others with no benefit for themselves, interview other participants in the program and complete a trading places exercise using someone real or fictional and discuss four things that they value in the person they have traded places with.

### Step 7

- Step 7 is designed to assist participants in developing and staying on a positive track in life they must form a long term path that they can follow. In order to do this they must set goals for themselves.
- Participants are asked to think about what they would do if they had one year, five years, and ten years to live. From this they develop a master goal plan.

### Step 8

- Step 8 is all about making short term goals line up with long term goals. In order for participants to be able to stay on a long term goal path in life they must develop and complete short term goals in order to keep moving in a positive direction.
- Participants are asked to develop an action plan that consists of short term goals that will allow them to reach their long term goals.

### Step 9

- Step 9 is all about keeping the commitment to change. Because peoples personality characteristics are very resistant to change, there is a constant tendency to get lazy about our goals and go back to the way we were.
- Participants must document ten additional hours of how they helped others without any benefit or gain to themselves, interview any one new to the program since they completed step 6 and update the action plan that they completed in step 8.

### Step 10

- Step 10 is all about achieving a new level of awareness so that participants can maintain positive changes they have made.
- Participants are asked to go back using the life categories they chose in step 4 and ask themselves a series of questions about each of those categories and determine their five biggest problem areas and complete another trading places with someone real or fictional.

### Step 11

- Step 11 is about keeping participants moral and ethical commitments firm. Step 11 explores that we sometimes have unreasonable expectations and because we simply can't control everything that happens, we sometimes try to cut corners and do things in ways that are less than right.
- Participants are asked to identify 8 important relationships and what they are doing to work on repairing them, develop a summary of things learned in the program, complete another best of times/ worst of times, circle of relationships and a testimony discussing what they learned from each step.

### Step 12

- Step 12 is all about analyzing our life's direction from a moral standpoint. Because happiness in life depends upon the goals we have chosen and the way we go about achieving these goals, it is necessary that our goals be updated constantly.
- Participants are asked to go back and revise their master goal plan and have then successfully completed the program.