

# REVEALING RESEARCH & EVALUATION (RREV)

A Quarterly Publication of the Corrections Branch  
Performance, Research and Evaluation Unit

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## Corrections Branch Performance, Research and Evaluation Unit



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Research and evaluation capabilities help B.C. Corrections foster a strategic shift towards correctional planning and practice that is effective and based

on evidence. Managers and resource planners rely on this approach to make informed business decisions.

The Corrections Branch Performance, Research and Evaluation Unit works with policy analysts, researchers in the academic community, and other sectors of government to support evaluation and transform B.C. justice.

Examples of research and evaluation projects include:

- Prolific offender management;
- Downtown Community Court;
- Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver;

- Integrated offender management project;
- Guthrie House Therapeutic Community at Nanaimo Correctional Centre; and
- Mentally disordered offenders.

Many branch strategic initiatives and day-to-day data questions involve research staff. They evaluate offender programs and specialized projects. They also respond to requests from management and staff.

## Questions from the field

**Q:** What is a “statistically significant difference?”

**A:** This expression means there is statistical evidence of a reliable difference; it does not indicate that the difference is important. The standard in criminological studies is to only accept differences that are unlikely to occur by chance or error 95 times or more out of 100.

**Q:** What do we mean by “probability” in statistical analysis?

**A:** Probability is the likelihood that something will occur (e.g. the chance that the flip of a coin will come up heads).

The analysis for the RR/RVT impact study (see page 3) used a procedure known as significance-testing that is based on calculations of probability. These procedures:

- Evaluate differences between two or more groups on a particular measure (or measures); and
- Determine if differences are reliable enough that they are unlikely to occur by chance or error. If so, these results are statistically significant.

**Q:** How do you define “matched comparison group?”

**A:** This research term refers to a comparison group that is matched

with a study group according to factors such as age and criminal history. This enables researchers to analyze differences (e.g. recidivism rates) between these groups without the matched factors interfering with the results.

### Contact us!

If you have comments, questions, or ideas about this publication, contact:

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## Information is key!

The mandate of B.C. Corrections is to reduce reoffending and protect communities.

To contribute to this mandate, the Performance, Research and

Evaluation Unit analyzes operational data from CORNET.

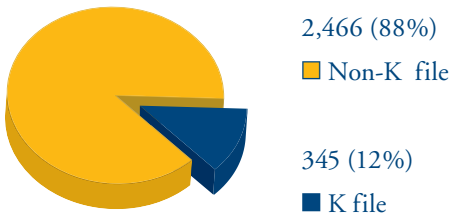
In this issue of RREV, we focus on individuals convicted of domestic violence. Corrections commonly refers to these cases as K files.

This is because the court system adds a 'K' to the file number for all cases of domestic violence.

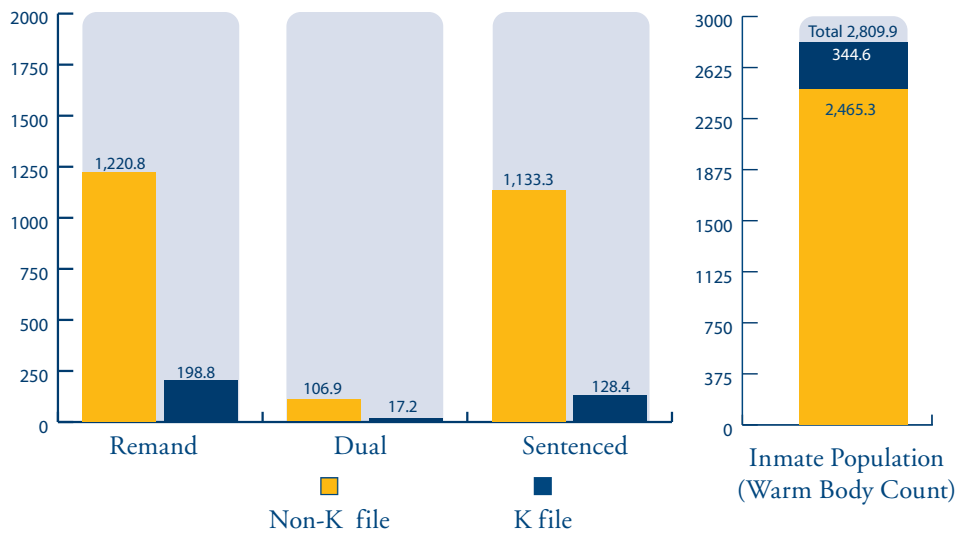
Here are examples of key information related to these offenders:



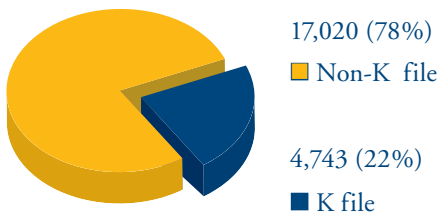
### Offenders (Sentenced and Remand) in Custody - FY 2008/09



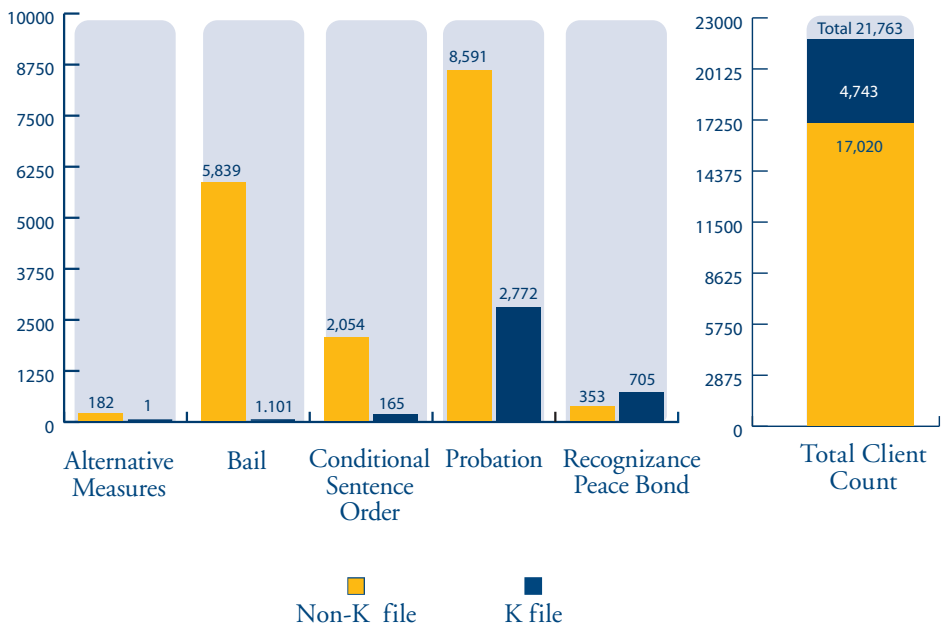
### Custody K files by Legal Hold Status - FY 2008/09



### Community K files - FY 2008/09



### Community K files by Order - FY 2008/09



# Program Highlight: RVPP – Relationship Violence Prevention Program

## Backgrounder

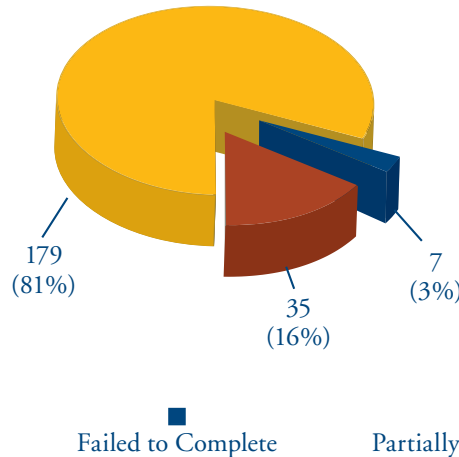
In 1996, B.C. Corrections used contractors to introduce spousal abuse treatment programs for men convicted of assaulting their female partners. Beginning in 2001, corrections staff facilitated the pre-treatment program known as Respectful Relationships (RR). In 2003, we introduced a spousal abuse treatment program, the Relationship Violence Treatment (RVT) program, which is delivered by contracted therapists. This initiative is now known as the Relationship Violence Program.

Corrections staff received general training and developed skills in facilitating spousal assault treatment programs. The RR curriculum was developed through consultation with experts. The RVT program is based on the Correctional Service of Canada’s (CSC) moderate intensity Family Violence Prevention Program. Modifications were made to the program length and exercises, and content was integrated with the RR program to maximize continuity.

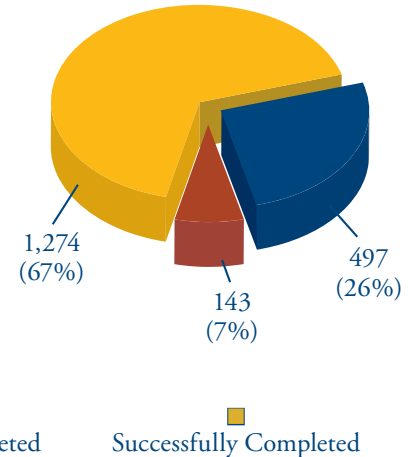
## Impact of treatment programs on spousal assault and recidivism

The Performance, Research and Evaluation Unit evaluated the Respectful Relationships (RR) and Relationship Violence Treatment Program (RVT) to determine whether individuals who completed these programs were less likely to reoffend than those who did not.

**Respectful Relationships Completion Status - Custody Setting FY 2008/09**



**Respectful Relationships Completion Status - Community Setting FY 2008/09**



The study examined recidivism rates for all participants who completed the programs within two time periods:

- July 30, 2003 to March 31, 2007; and
- July 30, 2003 to March 31, 2005.

Participants were also tracked for possible reconvictions up to March 31, 2007.

The second analysis provides a clear picture of reconvictions two or more years after completion of the program. This study comprised two comparative evaluations:

- RVT completion group (most participants completed the RR program prior to RVT) and a matched comparison group that did not participate in any program; and the

- RR completion group that did not participate in RVT and a matched comparison group that did not participate in any program.

These evaluations were conducted separately for offenders under community supervision and offenders in custody.

## Results

*In both evaluations, participants who completed RR and RVT in the community had significantly lower levels of reoffending for spousal assault and general reoffending.*

**Continued on page 4**

**Relationship Violence Prevention Program** *continued from page 3*

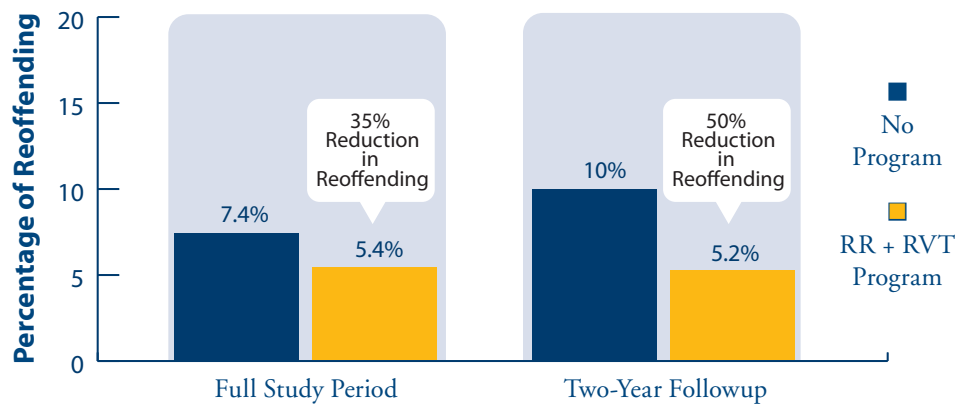
According to **Figure 1**, individuals who completed RR and RVT in the community reoffended for spousal assault at a significantly lower rate than those who did not take the program: 35 per cent during the full study period (four years) and 50 per cent for the two-year followup. The percentage seems larger for the shorter timeframe, because the sample size is smaller and changes in smaller numbers look larger.

**Figure 2** shows that individuals who completed RR and RVT in the community reoffended for general crimes at a significantly lower rate than those who did not take the program: 53 per cent for the full study period and 60 per cent for the two-year followup.

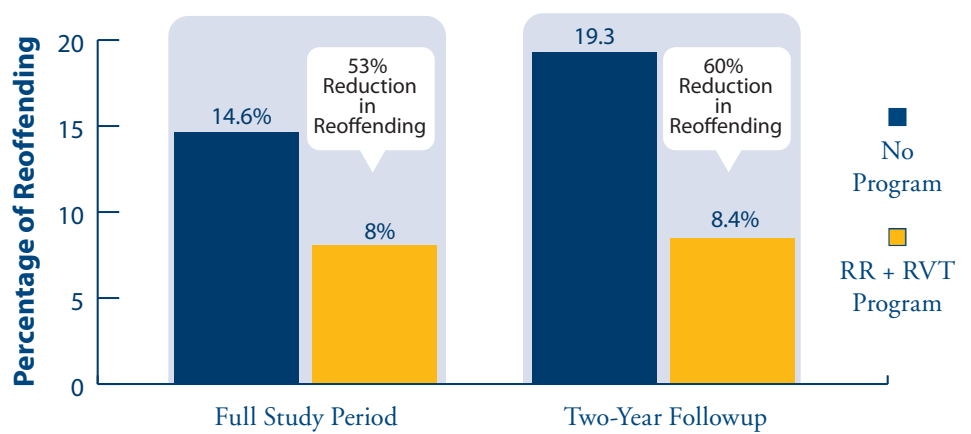
**Figure 3** shows that individuals who completed only RR in the community between January 2005 and March 2007 had significantly lower levels of reoffending for spousal assault and general reoffending: 42 per cent reduction in spousal assault and 47 per cent reduction in general reoffending. The study period for this particular analysis was reduced to account for program maturation; looking at the whole study period did not yield any significant results for RR alone.

Results were not as promising for individuals who took RR and RVT in custody. There were no significant differences in reoffending rates for individuals who took the RR and RVT programs in custody when compared to those who did not.

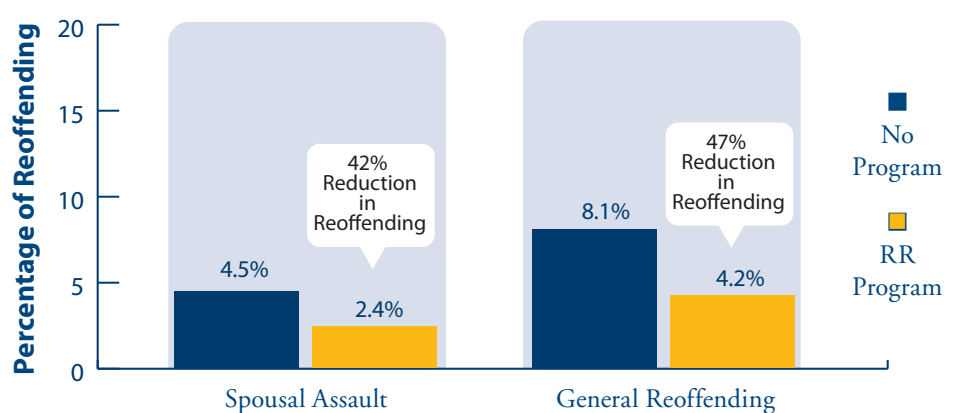
**Figure 1: Community Spousal Assault Reoffending Reductions**



**Figure 2: Community General Reoffending Reductions**



**Figure 3: Community Spousal and General Reoffending Reductions**



*In summary, completing RR and RVP programs in the community can reduce domestic violence reoffending by up to 50%.*