JUVENILE BOOT CAMP PROGRAMS
Myths vs. Facts
(Updated: August 2013)

Myth: Juvenile boot camps are highly effective at rehabilitating offenders and reducing recidivism
Fact: Juvenile boot camp programs are less than or equally as effective at rehabilitation and recidivism reduction compared with residential or community-based programs

Numerous studies of juvenile and adult boot camps have demonstrated that they are no more effective at reducing recidivism than other forms of intervention. Some studies have even found the rates of reoffending to be higher for boot camp participants. The aggressive interactions between staff and youth observed in boot camps fail to model the pro-social behavior and development of empathy that at-risk youth need to learn.

Meta-analyses have found Boot Camp and Discipline-oriented programs for juvenile offenders to have between a zero effect (no change in re-offending) to a 8% increase in the rate of re-offending for participating youth. This is in contrast to therapeutic services, such as Restorative, Skill building, and Counseling, which average between a 10% and 12% reduction in re-offending for participating youth.

The Department of Juvenile Justice does not support and is prohibited from funding any boot camp style program.

REFERENCES


