

CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FINDINGS

Peer-Reviewed Pilot Evaluation · Arizona State University · Submitted 2025

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An independent study by **Arizona State University**, funded by a **National Science Foundation Career Grant**, evaluated Journey.do with **330 justice-involved youth** in detention and community supervision over ~16 months (March 2024–July 2025). The **Life Inventory Tool (LIT)** – a validated self-report measure – assessed growth across 8 life areas at program entry, certificate completion, and program exit using linear mixed-effects models.

7/8

Life Areas

Significant gains from program entry to completion

0.35

Avg Effect Size

Small-to-medium Cohen's *d* at program completion

0.54

Peak Effect Size

Making Good Choices — highest gain

330

Youth

Detention + community supervision, ~16 months

LEARNING GAINS AT PROGRAM COMPLETION (Effect Size)



7 of 8 life areas significant ($p < .05$). Generalized Cohen's *d* with Hedges' correction. *Substance use reflects all-youth program completion figure; nuanced patterns exist for certificate completers specifically.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Growth transfers across life areas.** Youth completing work in one area showed gains in areas they hadn't specifically worked on – evidence of generalizable prosocial skill building.
- **Youth choice drives engagement.** Self-selecting personally meaningful life areas – a core FORGE principle – was associated with stronger outcomes than compliance-based approaches.
- **Gains hold at program exit.** Improvements were maintained from certificate completion through program end, indicating durable rather than momentary change.
- **AI feedback rated highly.** Youth and staff rated AI-generated feedback significantly higher than trained human reviewers on accuracy, tone, and usefulness.
- **Making Good Choices led all gains** ($d = 0.54$), alongside Owning My Past Actions and Positive Attitude – the areas most directly linked to recidivism reduction.
- **Outcomes held across settings.** Significant gains were observed for both detention and community supervision youth, demonstrating platform flexibility.

GROUNDED IN THE FORGE FRAMEWORK (FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESILIENCY, GROWTH & EMPOWERMENT)

✓ Youth-Directed Choice

✓ Strength-Based Feedback

✓ Peer Story Community

✓ Trauma-Informed Design

✓ Harm-Reduction Framework

✓ Criminogenic Needs

✓ Responsive Life Skills

Citation: Richardson, J.T. & Fine, A.D. (submitted for peer review). Promoting Youth Growth in Juvenile Justice through Digital Innovation: A Pilot Evaluation of Journey.do. Arizona State University. NSF Career Grant Award No. 2238991. IRB Study #00021319. Open trial design — findings reflect within-person change; causal claims cannot be made.