

**Predictors of Participation in Victim-Offender Mediation after Sexual Offenses: The
Opposing Roles of Pre-existing Relationship for Victims and Offenders.**

Master thesis

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Abstract

Sexual offenses remain a pervasive global issue, with heightened societal awareness driven by movements such as #MeToo and the Dutch documentary by BOOS. These events have amplified discussions and led to a notable increase in police reports in the Netherlands, though many incidents remain unreported. Traditional approaches to addressing sexual violence, such as retributive justice, focus on determining criminal liability punishment for offenders. However, restorative justice programs, particularly victim-offender mediation (VOM), offer a complementary approach by facilitating structured dialogue between victims and offenders to promote healing and accountability.

This study explores predictors of willingness to participate in VOM among victims and offenders of sexual violence, utilizing secondary data from Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling (PHB), a Dutch VOM agency. It was expected that having a pre-existing relationship would increase the willingness of victims and offenders to participate in VOM. Furthermore, it was predicted that the willingness of both victims and offenders to participate in mediation increased with the age of the victims and offenders. Additional analyses were done with only victims and offenders that were willing to participate in VOM. It was predicted that offenders who participate in VOM are more likely to experience reintegrative shame, rather than stigmatizing shame. Exploratory analyses were done to investigate the prevalence of agency and communion related motivations in victims and offenders that were willing to participate in VOM.

The sample in this study was selected from PHB's registration database (Bemiddelings Informatie Systeem – BIS). A coding scheme was developed to be able to quantify the qualitative data registered in contact journals in BIS. Logistic regression was used to test the predictors of willingness. Findings reveal that having a pre-existing relationship with the other party predicted participation willingness positively for victims (which supports the hypothesis), but negatively for offenders (which contradicts the hypothesis). Contrary to expectations, age did not positively influence willingness, with older victims predicting decreased offender participation. No significant results were found regarding age and victim willingness. Moreover, the hypothesis that offenders who participate in VOM are more likely to experience reintegrative shame than stigmatizing shame is not supported by the data. Exploratory analyses highlighted agency-related needs most prevalent in victims and communion-related needs in offenders.

This research contributes to understanding the nuanced dynamics of VOM in sexual violence cases, offering insights for enhancing restorative justice practices. Practical recommendations include tailoring mediation processes to relational contexts, addressing emotional barriers for participation in VOM, and improving data collection frameworks. By addressing these factors, VOM can better meet the needs of both victims and offenders, fostering a more inclusive and effective restorative justice system.

Introduction

Sexual violence has been a persistent global issue for many years, and it remains a significant problem today (Dworkin et al., 2021). The definition of sexual violence can vary across disciplines. In the Netherlands, sexual offenses are legally defined as acts related to sexual conduct that violate a person's sexual integrity, as outlined in the Dutch Penal Code (Wetboek van Strafrecht, Articles 239–254a). However, a psychological definition is often broader, centering on the subjective experience of the victim and emphasizing the emotional, psychological, and social consequences of sexual violence. According to Gavey (2014), sexual violence includes a wide range of sexual acts imposed, coerced, or forced on an individual, with the common factor being the non-consensual nature of the act, which violates the victim's dignity, respect, and bodily autonomy.

In recent years, societal discussions about sexual violence have increased, particularly with movements like #MeToo in 2017, which prompted open discussions about these issues. In the Netherlands, a major driving force for these conversations was the BOOS documentary, released five years later. This documentary exposed numerous allegations of sexual harassment, assault, and rape against prominent figures linked to the popular talent show, *The Voice of Holland* (“The Voice: Dutch TV suspends show over sexual misconduct claims”, 2022). The revelations stirred significant public outrage and inspired many others to come forward with their stories of sexual violence. This led to a surge in the number of sexual violence reports to the Dutch police, with a 15% increase in reported cases in 2022 (CBS, n.d.).

However, not all instances of sexual violence are reported to the police, making these reports merely the “tip of the iceberg” (Ceelen et al., 2019). Victims face numerous obstacles in deciding whether to report the crime, such as fear of disbelief, worries about retaliation, feelings of shame and embarrassment, and/or a lack of confidence or mistrust in the legal system and the police (Taylor & Gassner, 2010). In addition, most sexual violence offenders are known to the victims (Mulder et al., 2021). Research by Larsen et al. (2015) indicates that women who do not know their offender are more likely to report the crime to the police, suggesting that familiarity with the perpetrator may hinder reporting. Given these considerations, it can be argued that unreported sexual crimes and challenges in prosecuting reported offenses causes victims to not receive justice after a sexual offense (Lonsway & Archambault, 2012).

There are two primary approaches that could help a victim get justice after an offense: retributive justice and restorative justice (Herman, 2005). Retributive justice focusses on determining criminal liability and punishment for offenders, proportionally to the seriousness of the crime (Wenzel et al., 2008; Twardawski et al., 2020). Restorative justice seeks to involve offenders, victims, and their communities in addressing harm and finding solutions to repair it (Bazemore, 1998). Daly (2017) emphasized that the experience of justice is essential for the recovery of sexual violence victims. While traditional criminal justice systems sometimes are unable to meet victims' needs, restorative justice offers a more victim-centered approach, addressing needs for participation, validation, and accountability (Daly, 2017). Restorative justice has gained traction as an alternative or complement to the criminal justice system, offering healing and justice to both victims and offenders (Hansen & Umbreit, 2018). In sexual violence cases, Jülich and Landon (2017) found that restorative justice can provide victims with a sense of justice, although concerns remain about power imbalances and the risk of re-traumatization (Daly & Stubbs, 2006; Herman, 1997).

One prominent restorative justice program is victim-offender mediation (VOM), where victims and offenders engage in a structured dialogue facilitated by a trained mediator (Jonas-van Dijk et al., 2020). VOM offers the opportunity for victims to ask questions and for offenders to express remorse and offer restitution, with the goal of resolving the crime collaboratively. VOM can be a useful tool in addressing the justice gap left by the traditional criminal justice system. This gap arises from the traditional system's focus on punishment rather than healing, often leaving victims feeling unheard and offenders without opportunities for meaningful accountability. VOM opens the space for dialogue, addressing the needs of both victims and offenders in a cooperative manner. In the Netherlands, it is offered by organizations such as Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling (PHB), where mediation outcomes do not influence the criminal justice system, or through Mediation in Strafzaken (MIS), which occurs during ongoing criminal proceedings and which may impact court decisions (Jonas-van Dijk et al., 2020). VOM offers a controlled and confidential process where victims and offenders can address harm without fear of public exposure or legal consequences (Van Camp & Wemmers, 2013).

Participation in VOM is voluntary for both victims and offenders, meaning that both parties must be willing to participate in the mediation for a dialogue to occur. Many victims who participate in mediation seek answers, apologies, and opportunities for healing, and VOM can also

empower them, reducing fear and fostering accountability (Choi et al., 2010; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018). It is essential that participation is voluntary to keep the process victim-centered and prevent revictimization (Nascimento et al., 2023). Offenders also participate in VOM for various reasons, such as seeking reconciliation, offering explanations, or making amends to victims (Jonas et al., 2022). However, their involvement can be hindered by concerns about power imbalances, pressure, and lack of clarity about the process (Gerkin, 2009; Jacobsson et al., 2012). Proper preparation and mediation techniques are essential to ensuring a fair process for both victims and offenders. However, research into VOM in cases of sexual violence remains scarce, and even less is known about the factors that make victims and offenders willing to participate in such mediation.

Goal of the Research

Given the importance of providing justice beyond the traditional system, this research aims to explore predictors of willingness to participate in VOM for sexual violence victims and offenders. Understanding these predictors is crucial for enhancing restorative justice practices. This study will examine variables such as pre-existing relationships, age, offender shame, and psychological needs related to agency and communion. By focusing on these factors, the research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates or hinders individuals from engaging in VOM. The insights from this study could inform the development of tailored VOM guidelines that better address the psychological and emotional needs of both victims and offenders. The main research question is therefore: How do factors such as pre-existing relationships and age influence the willingness to participate in VOM for victims and offenders of sexual violence, and what role do offender shame and psychological needs related to agency and communion play in victims and offenders that are willing to participate?

Proposed Predictors of Victims' and Offenders' Willingness

The willingness to participate in VOM following a sexual offense is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors, which may differ significantly between victims and offenders. Given the complexity of justice in sexual violence cases, it is essential to understand the factors that shape this willingness. However, research in this area is limited due to the scarcity of available data, compounded by the sensitive nature of sexual violence cases. Additionally, measuring psychological constructs within the context of VOM is particularly challenging, as much of the data comes from second-hand accounts rather than direct assessments of the individuals involved. Therefore, based on existing literature and available data, we have chosen to

focus on the variables: pre-existing relationships, age, offender shame, and psychological needs related to agency and communion. Previous research suggests that these factors can significantly influence individuals' willingness to engage in restorative justice processes. Exploring these variables remains essential for better understanding how to tailor VOM practices to meet the needs of both victims and offenders in sexual violence cases.

Relationship Between Victim and Offender

First of all, previous studies suggest that pre-existing relationships between the victim and offender may influence the willingness to participate in VOM. For example, Keenan (2014) found that when sexual violence is pursued by a stranger, victims tend to seek a retributive form of justice like imprisonment, while those assaulted by a family member or acquaintance have mixed feelings about this form of justice. When victims and offenders have a close relationship, such as family members or friends, there is often a greater desire to maintain or repair that relationship. This inclination can make both parties more open to mediation as a means of reconciliation (Donovan & Priester, 2017). De Haas (2012) points out that offenders are often acquaintances of the victims, adding layers of complexity to the willingness to mediate. The familiarity between the victim and the offender can create a conflicting emotional landscape, where the desire for justice and the need for relationship maintenance coexist. In such scenarios, victims might be torn between seeking punitive measures and wanting to resolve the conflict in a way that normalizes some form of relationship with the offender.

Klar-Chalamish and Peleg-Koriat (2021) state that victims of interfamilial sexual offenses fear breaking up the family. Ahrens (2006) and Elliott et al. (2022) emphasize that victims often encounter negative reactions from their families, such as disbelief, blame, or pressure to reconcile. These familial reactions can heavily influence a victim's willingness to participate in mediation. For instance, a victim might feel compelled to engage in mediation due to family pressure, despite personal reservations or the desire for stricter punitive measures. Conflicts of loyalty and the stigma associated with offenses involving close relationships can significantly affect both victims' and offenders' willingness to mediate. Victims might struggle with feelings of betrayal and the pressure to forgive and reconcile for the sake of family or community harmony. On the other hand, offenders might seek mediation to mitigate the social stigma and restore their standing within the family or community (Lohmann, 2024). The internal conflict between personal justice and communal harmony can thus play a critical role in the decision-making process regarding

mediation. Based on the idea that people want to maintain and normalize close relationships, and possible concerns or pressure from the environment to resolve what happened, it is expected that both victims and offenders with a pre-existing relationship will be more willing to participate in VOM. Figure 1 visualizes this expected relationship.

H1: Victims and offenders who have a pre-existing relationship, such as being family members or friends, are more willing to participate in mediation than victims and offenders who do not know each other prior to the incident.

Figure 1

Visualization of Hypothesis 1



Age

A demographic factor that might affect the willingness to participate in mediation is the age of the victim and offender. Studies have shown that people tend to get more forgiving with age, meaning that the older someone gets the more likely they will be to forgive someone for their mistakes (Steiner et al., 2011). This might be explained by the Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (Carstensen et al., 2003) which highlights how aging influences the prioritizing of goals. As people grow older, they often see their future as limited, leading them to prioritize emotionally meaningful goals over knowledge and expanding their horizon. Because of this, older adults may be more likely to engage in VOM to achieve their emotionally meaningful goals by resolving conflict, repairing relationships, and sustaining their emotional well-being. Therefore, age, through its connection to the prioritization of emotional meaningful goals and forgiveness, is expected to predict willingness to participate in VOM. Figure 2 illustrates this anticipated relationship.

H2: The willingness of both victims and offenders to participate in mediation increases with the age of the victims and offenders involved.

Figure 2

Visualization of Hypothesis 2



Shame

Furthermore, feelings of shame are thought to be of impact on the willingness to participate in mediation for offenders. Gausel et al. (2016) have shown that there are two ways people can react to shame, namely in a self-defensive (e.g. avoiding) or pro-social manner (e.g. apologizing or helping). Some individuals prioritize their self-image and social standing more than others, which can lead them to feel threatened by the perceived damage to their social reputation. This threat often results in self-defensive behaviors, such as hiding, avoiding others, or denying responsibility, as a way to protect themselves from further judgment or social condemnation (Gausel & Leach, 2011). In contrast, others may focus less on external judgment and more on their internal moral standards. When people feel guilt or shame without the fear of social rejection, they are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors like apologizing or making amends (Gausel & Leach, 2011). This happens because they appraise their moral failure as an opportunity to repair their personal flaws and damaged relationships, rather than seeing it as a threat to their social image. The remorse that people feel with shame promotes pro-social ways to repair the self and the social relationships of those who are affected by the self-defect. One way to act in such a pro-social way is to participate in VOM, offering the offender a way to repair the harm caused to the victim and addressing this self-defect.

Moreover, the theory of reintegrative shaming emphasizes the possibility of social reintegration and rehabilitation, motivating offenders toward pro-social behaviour. According to Braithwaite (1989), shaming is reintegrative when it disapproves of the offense but maintains respect and acceptance of the person, preserving their bonds with the community. This approach prevents the shamed individual from assuming a 'deviant master status' (McAlinden, 2005). This form of shaming encourages offenders to take responsibility for their actions and engage in reparative acts, such as participating in VOM. It offers a pathway to forgiveness and acceptance, which can make offenders feel supported and provide a chance for redemption and restoration of their social identity. When shaming is framed as an opportunity to repair relationships and reintegrate into society, offenders are more likely to choose pro-social paths like apologizing, making amends, or participating in VOM. This reintegrative approach helps reduce the fear of social rejection and promotes constructive ways to address the harm caused, both to the victim and the community. Based on the theories of Gausel and Leach (2011) and Braithwaite (1989) it is

expected that offenders that are willing to participate in VOM experience reintegrative shame more often than stigmatizing shame.

H3: Offenders who choose to engage in victim-offender mediation more often experience reintegrative shame during the mediation process than stigmatizing shame.

Psychological Needs

Next to demographic and relational aspects like age and pre-existing relationships, the psychological needs of both parties may also play a role. In the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation, Shnabel and Nadler (2008) emphasize that the needs for agency and communion are crucial to the reconciliation process of conflicting parties. Therefore, agency and communion seem critical psychological needs that may influence mediation willingness. Shnabel and Nadler (2008) proposed that victims often experience a loss of agency (a sense of power and control), while offenders often experience a loss of communion (a sense of belonging and social acceptance) after an offense. They state that effective reconciliation efforts must address these needs by restoring victims' sense of agency and offenders' sense of communion. Victims may need an apology or recognition to regain a sense of control and power, while offenders may seek acceptance and the restoration of their social image.

Shnabel and Nadler (2008) describe the need for agency as a trait of the victim, however this need might also be significant for the offender. Participating in VOM provides an opportunity for self-empowerment and addressing the offender's need for agency (O'Mahony & Doak, 2017). This can be done by giving the offender a chance to acknowledge their actions and actively engage in efforts to make amends. Through open dialogue with the victim, offenders can gain a sense of empowerment by sharing their perspective and redefine their self-image. Likewise, the need for communion is proposed as a characteristic of an offender (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Nevertheless, as relatedness is a basic need for all people, communion is expected to be important for the victim as well (Zebel, 2023). Especially, with victims of sexual offenses the need for communion might be extra relevant. Sexual violence often happens in familiar circles, meaning in families or friend groups (Mulder et al., 2021). Unfortunately, this is commonly paired with victim blaming (Kennedy & Prock, 2018). Victims of sexual violence might long for restoration of a sense of belonging and social acceptance (communion), especially within families or friendships. Based on the provided literature, it is expected that agency-related motivations and communion-related motivations to participate in VOM are prevalent for victims and offenders of sexual violence.

Due to the complexity and anticipated overlap of agency and communion related motivations between victims and offenders, particularly in cases of sexual violence, an exploratory approach is adopted. This approach aims to investigate how both agency- and communion-related motivations are distributed amongst victims and offenders that were willing to participate in VOM. By doing so, it seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how these psychological needs manifest in both parties, potentially challenging the more rigid role distinctions suggested by previous models.

Method

Sample

The data in this study is secondary data from the Dutch VOM agency *Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling* (PHB). PHB facilitates VOM between crime victims and offenders, helping them to address harm and work toward resolution (*Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling*, n.d.). Their services cover a range of cases, including violent crimes, sexual offenses, and traffic violations, using various mediation methods like face-to-face meetings, written correspondence, and shuttle mediation. PHB operates on principles of voluntariness, multi-sided partisanship, and confidentiality, ensuring that participation is free and voluntary. Mediators remain multi-partisan, and discussions are kept private unless both parties consent to disclosure. The choice to disclose typically weighs individual needs, legal obligations, and the wider impact of sharing the mediation results.

The sample in this study was selected from PHB's registration database (*Bemiddelings Informatie Systeem – BIS*). This system is employed by PHB for case registration and information storage, which can be updated at different stages of the mediation process. Information in BIS is partially entered by PHB's registration point and partially by the mediator handling a specific case. BIS comprises various fields and each case consists of an administrative section (quantitative data) and a contact journal (qualitative data), as demonstrated in Appendix A. The administrative section contains details such as the type of offense, who initiated the case, the parties involved, demographic information about both the victim and offender, whether mediation occurred, and if so, the method used. The contact journal, written by the mediator, provides information from meetings held between the mediator and one or both of the parties involved, including a detailed description of the mediated contacts between both parties (when these took place).

The sample included all mediation cases related to sexual offenses at PHB in 2022, registered by either the victim or the offender. This year was selected because, at the start of this research, it represented the most recent year for which mediation cases had been completed. To create this sample, all completed sexual offense cases from 2022 were extracted from BIS using an Excel pivot table ($n = 333$). This initial dataset included not only mediation cases involving the victim and offender but also cases involving other parties, such as mediation between family members of the victim and the offender (but not the victim itself). To refine the sample, additional criteria were applied, requiring that the initiating party and the other party were either the victim or the offender. This criterion was necessary because the dynamics of cases involving other parties differ significantly from individual VOM cases, potentially influencing motivations, behaviors, and outcomes in ways that are not directly comparable to one-on-one mediations (Cooney et al., 2020). As a result, cases not meeting these criteria were excluded, leading to a more focused and refined sample ($n = 263$).

Of the remaining cases, 5 were unusable because the actual involvement of the parties differed from the initial classification, such as mediation occurring between the parents of the victim or offender. Group recovery cases ($n = 4$), which involved mediation with multiple victims and an offender, were also excluded due to their distinct dynamics, which may influence motivations, behaviors, and outcomes in ways that are not directly comparable to individual VOM cases (Conney et al., 2020). Additionally, cases that were incomplete, incorrectly classified (e.g. not a sexual offense), or duplicates were excluded ($n = 20$). Lastly, the decision was made to exclude cases that were not (yet) refused by either of the involved parties, but in an initial phase by PHB ($n = 23$) or by the offender's treatment provider ($n = 3$). These exclusions were necessary because such 'no mediated contact' cases do not speak directly to the willingness to participate of victims or offenders themselves, which is a key focus of this research. Including these cases could introduce confounding effects, potentially skewing the outcomes of the analyses. The final sample used for analysis thus comprised 208 cases. This sample included all registered cases, meaning that not all cases led to mediated contact, as one or both parties might have rejected the (request for) participation in VOM.

Design

The study had a correlational design with quantitative data based on secondary data from VOM cases registered at Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling. Qualitative data present in these cases

was coded and thus quantified. The central dependent variables in this study were victim's willingness to participate in VOM and offender's willingness to participate in VOM. The most important predictor variables were the pre-existing relationship between victim and offender and age of the victim and the offender at the time of registration at PHB. Furthermore, offender shame was an important variable in this study, it was tested to see what type of shame (reintegrative or stigmatizing) was most prevalent amongst offenders that indicated to be willing to participate in VOM. Furthermore, exploration was done of the agency and communion related motivations for victims and offenders and how these manifests in both parties when they had indicated to be willing to participate in VOM.

In addition to the primary data collection, exploratory input was gathered from employees of PHB, predominantly mediators, to gain insights into factors influencing victims' and offenders' willingness to participate in VOM that are perceived by the mediators. These insights were collected through a small survey focusing on employee experiences with mediation participants. Employees of PHB were asked what they thought impacted the willingness of both victims and offenders of sexual offenses to participate in mediation. This was done without any further explanation and without details about this study. This qualitative input was analyzed to identify recurring themes and contextual factors and compare this to the findings from the primary data.

Ethical Considerations

This study involved sensitive data, including detailed descriptions of sexual offenses and intense emotions such as fear, shame, anger, and guilt. To address and mitigate potential ethical concerns, this study adhered to four fundamental ethical principles: informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the prevention of harm to participants (Flick, 2009). Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling ensured informed consent and voluntary participation of victims and offenders. Participants signed a declaration of consent which detailed the privacy regulations explaining the purposes of data processing and the methods used to protect their information. In this declaration it is also stated that their data may be used for research purposes. Additionally, the organization provides a dedicated privacy policy page on its website and established a formal process for addressing complaints related to data handling.

To maintain confidentiality of the data collected for this study, identifying information was fully anonymized. This process ensured that no data could be traced back to individual participants, safeguarding their privacy and emotional well-being throughout the research process. These

measures align with ethical guidelines to protect participants while conducting research on sensitive topics. Furthermore, this study was conducted with the approval of the Ethical Review Board of the University of Twente, Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (application number 240826). Moreover, this study was registered to strengthen its ethical integrity and transparency. Pre-registration involved publicly documenting the research design, hypotheses, and data analysis plan beforehand, reducing potential biases and promoting accountability. This approach enhanced confidence in the research process while respecting the sensitivity of the data and the individuals involved.

Variables and Coding Procedure

To address the research question, a dataset was constructed. Initially, this dataset only included pre-registered data from BIS fields; additional data had to be coded from the BIS contact journal. The variables extracted directly from BIS fill-in fields included:

- *BP Nummer*: A unique, anonymized case number used to locate the specific case in BIS.
- *ID-SO, ID-DA*: Numbers assigned to victims (ID-SO) and offenders (ID-DA) to identify if they appear multiple times in the dataset, also known as "Relatienummer" in BIS.
- *Type of Case*: Specified the type of sexual offense involved; sexual assault, rape, transgressive sexual behavior, sexual abuse of minors or exhibitionism.
- *Initiated By*: Indicated which party initiated the process at PHB, either the victim or the offender.
- *Type of Mediation*: Detailed the type of contact between the mediator and the parties involved, which could be contact with one party only, contact with two parties, face-to-face mediation, shuttle mediation, letter contact, online mediation, or video messages.
- *Refused By*: This stated which party refused the mediation (if it was refused), either victim, offender, the mediator of PHB or the treatment provider of the offender.

Other variables had to be constructed and coded from the contact journal. A coding scheme was created for each variable that was not a preexisting one in BIS (see Appendix B for the full coding scheme).

Constructed Variables

Time elapsed between Offense and Registration. The time elapsed (in months) between the offense and the registration at PHB was calculated using existing BIS data. This was

determined by subtracting the offense date registered in BIS from the registration date using an Excel formula.

Age of Victim and Offender. Although age might appear to be a straightforward variable that required minimal processing, in the system utilized by PHB, age was not consistently recorded. Therefore, a system had to be thought off to determine the age of victims and offenders at the time of registration at PHB. When the field for age was filled in, then this was taken over from this field. In other cases, the contact journal had to be employed. Sometimes it was written down how old the person was or how old they were at the time of the offense, this together with the offense date could be used to calculate the age at the time of registration at PHB. The formula that was employed to calculate this was: *(date of registration – date of the offense; in years) + age at time of the offense.*

Determining Willingness to Participate in VOM. Whether the victim and offender were willing to participate in VOM was derived from the registration data from BIS. The party that registered the case at PHB, either victim or offender, was coded as willing to participate (unless they later retracted). From the type of mediated contact that was registered in BIS it was inferred if the other party (the one that did not register the case) was willing to participate in VOM. Contact with one party meant that the other party was not contacted because the initiating party retracted, therefore this was coded as unknown if the other party was willing to participate. In these cases, the initiating party was coded as unwilling to participate, because they retracted. Contact with two parties indicated that both parties were contacted, but it did not come to mediated contact. In these cases, it was then inferred from the variable “rejected by” which party rejected the mediation; this party was then coded as not willing to participate. For the remaining party it was inferred from reading the contact journal whether this party was willing to participate. If this party was the initiating party and they did not wish to retract, they were coded as willing to participate. It could also occur that the initiating party also wanted to retract, in these cases both parties were coded as unwilling to participate. When mediated contact (any form) occurred between victim and offender, this was coded as both were willing to participate.

Coded Variables

Assessing Pre-existing relationship between Victim and Offender. To assess whether victim and offender had a pre-existing relationship with each other prior to the offense, a distinction was made between stranger, family, friend, familiar, or romantic. In other words, there

is a differentiation made between knowing someone before the offense or the other person being a stranger. The category family was self-evident, it entailed an inherent relationship often long-lasting, though the emotional closeness within these relationships could vary. A friend was a voluntary relationship formed through shared interests, trust, and support, where both people put effort into maintaining the connection. Familiar entailed a person someone knew but stood further away from the person, e.g. acquaintances, neighbors or colleagues (that are not friends). Lastly, a romantic relationship was characterized by a strong emotional bond, often paired with physical closeness, affection, and a shared commitment to building a future together, e.g. a romantic partner, husband, wife, or date. The contact journal was read to assess if there was a pre-existing relationship between the victim and the offender and to identify the nature of that relationship.

Examining Shame among Offenders Willing to Participate in VOM. For offenders that indicated to be willing to participate in VOM, it was examined whether they experienced shame, and if so whether that concerned reintegrative or stigmatizing shame. This was inferred from the contact journal in which the mediator described the offender's emotional state. Reintegrative shame was operationalized as feelings of shame related to the behaviour of the offender. The behaviour was seen as bad, but the person could redeem this by taking responsibility for their actions. On the other hand, stigmatizing shame was conceptualized as feelings of shame connected to the person, e.g. being labeled as a bad person or feelings of social rejection/isolation. For each offender it was coded whether the offender experienced either no shame, reintegrative or stigmatizing shame. When more than one type of shame was inferred, the most dominant form of shame was coded.

Exploring Agency- and Communion-related motivations for Victims and Offenders to Participate in VOM. Agency and Communion related motivations were explored for victims and offenders that indicated that they were willing to participate in VOM. This was done by looking at four factors, namely victim agency, victim communion, offender agency and offender communion. All four of these variables were coded by reading the contact journal and assessing whether agency or communion related motivations to participate in VOM were present for victim and offender (yes or no). Victim agency related motivations were operationalized as motivations to regain the victim's sense of power (agency), e.g. getting an apology or acknowledgement by the offender (Shnabel & Nadler, 2015). Communion related motivations to participate in VOM may have also been present for the victim, these were conceptualized as motivations aimed to restore

the felt connection and social appreciation of the victim to the offender and/or their social environment.

For the offender agency and communion related motivations were also explored. Motivations related to the need for agency on the offender side are also connected to regaining a sense of power. However, this is different from the victim's agency related motivations. Agency for the offender was operationalized as getting closure, helping the recovery process of the offender, asking questions to the victim and telling the perspective of the offender. Communion on the offender side entailed restoring their moral image after the offense, which could be done by getting acceptance by the victim (Shnabel & Nadler, 2015). Motivations expressed by the offender in the contact journal that were related to this were e.g. getting forgiveness, the victim understanding the offender's perspective, or relationship recovery.

Interrater Reliability

In total 208 cases of mediation concerning sexual offense registered at Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling were coded by the author of this master thesis, and 65 cases were coded by a second coder. The second assessor of the cases was a lecturer and researcher (external PhD student) at the University of Twente, that was also planning to do research at PHB but on a different topic. The coding scheme employed in this study was first discussed collaboratively by both raters, and one case was coded together to explain and test the variables. In the first iteration, eight cases were independently coded by both raters and then compared. This comparison highlighted the need for adjustments to the coding scheme, particularly for the variables: offender shame, victim agency, offender agency, victim communion and offender communion, to improve clarity and make a clear distinction between the categories. In the second iteration, five additional cases were independently coded using the revised coding scheme. During this process, the updated coding scheme seemed sufficient, and an additional category, Romantic, was added to the variable relationship. Once the coding scheme was finalized, all 208 cases were coded by the first author. A random selection of 50 cases was independently coded by the second rater to assess reliability, without any further deliberation between the coders on how to code the variables.

The selection of the cases coded by the second assessor was based on specific criteria to ensure a complete and balanced assessment of reliability. Only cases involving contact between two parties or mediated contact were included. This was done because, only in these cases could the variables shame, agency and communion be coded, as this meant that one (or both) of the

parties was willing to participate. The cases were evenly distributed across the different types of sexual offenses, ensuring that the reliability assessment covered the full range of case types. For sexual assault, every third case was selected, with two additional cases chosen at random ($n = 13$ out of 33). For rape ($n = 13$ out of 44), every third case was selected, excluding one at random. For sexual transgressive behavior ($n = 12$ out of 24), every second case was included. Lastly, for sexual abuse of minors ($n = 12$ out of 31), every third case was selected, with two added at random. It must be noted that the sample also contained cases that had previously been coded during the testing of the coding scheme, because of the limited sample size.

To calculate interrater reliability, Cohen's Kappa was employed, as it is a widely accepted statistical measure for assessing agreement between coders while accounting for chance agreement (McHugh, 2012). However, the initial calculation of Cohen's Kappa revealed low values, indicating insufficient reliability for robust analysis. Further examination suggested that the low Kappa scores were primarily driven by a high number of missing values for certain variables. These missing values limited the number of cases that could be directly compared between the two raters, reducing the stability and interpretability of the reliability estimates.

To address this issue and ensure that each variable had an adequate sample size for reliable comparison, an additional 15 cases were coded by the second rater. These cases were selected based on the criteria that all these cases resulted in mediated contact to ensure an observation on each variable to be coded. Again the 15 cases were evenly distributed across the different types of sexual offenses, with 4 additional cases for rape, 4 for sexual transgressive behaviour, 4 concerning sexual assault and 3 involving sexual assault of minors. This brought the total number of cases coded by the second rater to 65, ensuring that all variables had at least 50 cases that were coded by both raters. With the new data set, Cohen's Kappa was calculated again and showed that the interrater reliability was still not sufficient for all variables.

Despite efforts to improve the reliability, the newly calculated Cohen's Kappa varied in levels of agreement across variables. For the variable pre-existing relationship a strong agreement was found, with a Kappa value of 0.815 ($z = 11.9$, $p < .001$, $n = 65$) and a percentage agreement of 86.2%. The high level of agreement highlights the success of the coding revisions for this variable and ensures the reliability of its data for future analysis. For "Victim Agency", although the percentage agreement was notably high at 94.6%, Cohen's Kappa could not be reliably calculated due to minimal variability in the data, as almost all cases were coded with the same

value (1). Meaning that agency-related motivations to participate were present for victims in almost every case, which caused limited variability. This lack of variation limited the ability to assess the reliability of this variable accurately. The “Shame” variable showed moderate agreement (Kappa = 0.443, $z = 4.49$, $p < .001$, $n = 50$) with a percentage agreement of 66.0%. This suggests that while there was some consistency between the coders, it was not particularly strong. The moderate Kappa value points to potential issues with ambiguity or insufficient clarity in the definitions or criteria applied in the coding scheme. The variables "Victim Communion" (Kappa = 0.557, $z = 4.14$, $p < .001$, $n = 54$, percentage agreement = 83.3%), "Offender Agency" (Kappa = 0.465, $z = 3.31$, $p < .001$, $n = 50$, percentage agreement = 74.0%) and "Offender Communion" (Kappa = 0.406, $z = 3.29$, $p < .001$, $n = 50$, percentage agreement = 78.0%), showed moderate agreement as well.

The high percentage of agreement for all variables is a positive indicator. However, the moderate Kappa values highlight areas for improvement, but also that some agreement may be due to chance rather than true consistency in the coding procedure. It indicates that with some refinements, such as clearer definitions and more thorough training, consistency in the coding process could be further enhanced.

Results

Descriptives

Descriptive analysis revealed the distribution of relevant variables within the dataset. Table 1 gives an overview of these descriptives. Regarding the initiating party, most cases, 77.9%, were registered by victims, with offenders initiating 22.1% of the cases. The sample contained five types of sexual offenses. Rape was the most prevalent sexual offense in this sample ($n = 73$, 35.1%), and exhibitionism the least common ($n = 3$, 1.4%). In 56 cases the offender was accused of sexual abuse of minors (26.9%), and in 43 cases of sexual assault (20.7%). An example of sexual assault in this sample was, touching someone's vulnerable parts without permission. Lastly, sexual transgressive behaviour was mentioned in 33 cases (15.9%), this could for example entail sexual harassment or sending unsolicited sexual messages.

Throughout the sample, in 75% of the cases ($n = 156$) it did not come to mediated contact between the victim and the offender (36.1 % contact with 1 party and 38.9% contact with two parties). The remaining 25% of the cases ($n = 52$) did come to mediated contact, with 40 cases resulting in face-to-face conversations between the victim and offender (19.2%). In 7 cases (3.4%)

shuttle mediation occurred, letters were exchanged in 3 cases (1.4%) and a video or audio message was sent in 2 cases (1.0%).

Out of the total cases, victims were willing to participate in the mediation process in 94 cases, while in 105 cases they were not. In 9 cases, the willingness of the victims could not be determined, resulting in an overall willingness percentage of 47.2% among the total victim sample. Offenders were willing to participate in 90 cases and not willing in 55 cases, for 63 cases it was unknown if the offender would have been willing to participate. The percentage willingness for offenders among the total offender sample was therefore 62.1%. Thus, in this sample offenders seemed more willing to participate in VOM compared to victims. However, the larger number of unknown cases for offenders (63 versus 9 for victims) highlights challenges in fully assessing offender willingness, which might influence the observed percentages.

Table 1

Overview of Descriptives

		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Initiating party	Victim	162	77.9
	Offender	46	22.1
Type of offense	Exhibitionism	3	1.4
	Rape	73	35.1
	Sexual abuse of minors	56	26.9
	Sexual assault	43	20.7
	Sexual transgressive behaviour	33	15.9
Type of mediated contact	Contact with 1 party (no mediation)	75	36.1
	Contact with 2 parties (no mediation)	81	38.9
	Face-to-Face	40	19.2
	Shuttle mediation	7	3.4
	Letter exchange	3	1.4
	Video/audio message	2	1.0
Refused by	Victim	104	66.7
	Offender	51	32.7
	Both parties	1	0.6
Victim willingness	Yes	94	47.2
	No	105	52.8
Offender willingness	Yes	90	62.1
	No	55	37.9

Pre-existing relationship	Stranger	27	13.7
	Family	44	22.3
	Friend	25	12.7
	Familiar	67	34.0
	Romantic	34	17.3
Cases in which parties indicated to be willing to participate:		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Offender shame	No shame	24	27.9
	Reintegrative	34	39.5
	Stigmatizing	28	32.6
Victim agency	Yes	92	97.9
	No	2	2.1
Victim communion	Yes	24	25.5
	No	70	74.5
Offender agency	Yes	53	60.2
	No	35	39.8
Offender communion	Yes	76	86.4
	No	12	13.6

Of 197 cases (11 of the total of 208 cases were excluded due to missing values), in 83.3% ($n = 170$) of the cases the victim and offender were observed to have a pre-existing relationship. In 44 cases (22.3%) the victim and offender were family, in 25 cases (12.7%) they were friends before the offense, in 67 cases (34%) it concerned a familiar person and in 34 cases (17.3%) a romantic relationship was present.

The average age of victims in this sample was 30 years ($M = 29.9$; $SD = 13.95$; 9.1% missing). For offenders the average age was 42 years ($M = 41.7$; $SD = 20.07$). However, for 45.2% of the offenders in this sample it was unknown what the age of the offender was at the time of registration at PHB. The average time elapsed (in months) between the offense and registration at PHB was 91 months, between 7 and 8 years ($M = 91.0$; $SD = 138.3$; 8.2% missing). Table 2 gives an overview of the distribution of time between the offense and registration. Many cases are registered at PHB within the first year after the offense took place ($n = 82$, 42.9%). On the other hand, there are a substantial number of cases that are registered after 10 years ($n = 54$, 28.3%).

Table 2*Overview of the Time Between the Offense and Registration at PHB*

		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Time between offense and registration	Within the first month	45	23.6
	Between the first and third month	14	7.3
	Between the third month and 1 year	23	12.0
	Between 1 and 3 years	27	14.1
	Between 3 and 6 years	14	7.3
	Between 6 and 10 years	14	7.3
	More than 10 years	54	28.3

Hypotheses Testing*Pre-existing Relationship and Willingness*

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to examine whether victims and offenders with a pre-existing relationship were more likely to participate in VOM compared to those without such a relationship. The model revealed significant effects for several relationship categories with victim willingness (0 = no; 1 = yes) as the dependent variable. Victims with a family relationship to the offender had significantly higher odds of willingness to participate in mediation compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 4.89$, $b = 1.59$, $SE = 0.59$, $z = 2.68$, $p = .007$, $n = 191$). Similarly, those with a friendship relationship showed even greater odds of willingness compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 8.49$, $b = 2.14$, $SE = 0.66$, $z = 3.25$, $p = .001$, $n = 191$). Familiar relationships also increased the likelihood of participation compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 4.13$, $b = 1.42$, $SE = 0.56$, $z = 2.54$, $p = .011$, $n = 191$). Romantic relationships displayed a positive trend compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 3.16$, $b = 1.15$, $SE = 0.61$, $z = 1.89$, $p = .058$, $n = 191$), though this result was not statistically significant at the conventional $p < .05$ threshold. Overall, the findings support the hypothesis that a pre-existing relationship significantly influences victims' willingness to engage in mediation.

For offenders an unexpected trend occurred. The model revealed that offenders with a familiar relationship to the victim were significantly less likely to participate in mediation compared to those with no prior relationship ($\text{Exp}(b) = 0.09$, $b = -2.45$, $SE = 0.81$, $z = -3.04$, $p = .002$, $n = 140$). Similarly, offenders in a romantic relationship with the victim showed significantly lower willingness compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 0.14$, $b = -1.94$, $SE = 0.87$, $z = -2.22$, $p = .026$, $n = 140$). Offenders with a family relationship displayed a negative trend in willingness compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 0.23$, $b = -1.45$, $SE = 0.83$, $z = -1.74$, $p = .083$, $n =$

140), though this effect was not significant. Moreover, offenders with a friendship relationship did not show a significant difference in willingness compared to strangers ($\text{Exp}(b) = 0.56$, $b = -0.58$, $SE = 0.93$, $z = -0.63$, $p = .531$, $n = 140$). These findings do not support the hypothesis that offenders who have a pre-existing relationship, such as being family members or friends with the victim, are more willing to participate in mediation than victims and offenders who do not know each other prior to the incident. Instead, the findings point in the opposite direction, namely that offenders with a prior relationship to the victim seem less likely to engage in VOM compared to when the victim and offender were strangers.

Age and Willingness

The second hypothesis proposed that the willingness of both victims and offenders to participate in mediation would increase with the age of the individuals involved. A series of logistic regression analyses were conducted to evaluate the relationship between age and willingness to participate in VOM for both victims and offenders. The results indicated a positive trend in the relationship between the victim's age and their willingness to participate in mediation ($\text{Exp}(b) = 1.02$, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $z = 1.78$, $p = .075$, $n = 184$). Although the effect was not statistically significant at the conventional $p < .05$ threshold, the trend suggests that older victims might be slightly more inclined to engage in mediation. No significant relationship was observed between the offender's age and the victim's willingness to participate in mediation ($\text{Exp}(b) = 1.01$, $b = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, $z = 1.00$, $p = .318$, $n = 105$). The analysis revealed no significant relationship between the offender's age and their willingness to participate in mediation ($\text{Exp}(b) = 0.98$, $b = -0.02$, $SE = 0.01$, $z = -1.49$, $p = .135$, $n = 92$). However, the victim's age was negatively associated with the offender's willingness to participate in mediation ($\text{Exp}(b) = 0.96$, $b = -0.05$, $SE = 0.01$, $z = -3.37$, $p < .001$, $n = 127$). This significant finding suggests that offenders were less willing to engage in mediation as the victim's age increased. The results did not consistently support the hypothesis that age positively influences willingness to participate in mediation.

Combined Model

Next to the separate logistic regressions for the hypothesized predictors (pre-existing relationship and age) of willingness to participate in VOM combined models were tested with the hypothesized variables included simultaneously, as well as other case characteristics available (type of sexual offense and time elapsed between offense and registration). These models allowed for a comparison of the relative strength of each of the hypothesized predictors, while accounting

for variations in case characteristics. In the combined model for victim willingness, pre-existing relationship, age of the victim, age of the offender, type of sexual offense (excluding exhibitionism), initiating party and time elapsed between the offense at registration at PHB were included as predictors of willingness to participate. Exhibitionism was excluded since there was too little variability in this category of sexual offense, making it impossible to reliably predict its influence on victim willingness. The multivariate logistic regression for victim willingness revealed that the presence of a pre-existing relationship between victim and offender continued to be significantly associated with an increased willingness of the victim to participate in VOM.

However, no other significant predictors of victim willingness were found in this model. The previously mentioned positive trend in the relationship between the victim's age and their willingness to participate in mediation disappeared. Moreover, no effect was found of the type of sexual offense and the willingness to participate in VOM, or who initiated the process at PHB. Additionally, in this model there was no significant effect of the time elapsed between the offense and registration at PHB. Table 3 summarizes the combined model with victim willingness as the dependent variable.

Table 3

Summary of Combined Model Victim Willingness (n = 85)

	Exp(b)	b	SE	z	p
Relationship - Family	13.60	2.61	1.24	2.11	.035*
Relationship - Friend	36.10	3.59	1.53	2.35	.019*
Relationship - Familiar	15.37	2.73	1.26	2.17	.030*
Relationship - Romantic	27.06	3.30	1.41	2.34	.019*
Age Victim	1.01	0.01	0.03	0.46	.645
Age Offender	1.01	0.01	0.02	0.73	.469
Sexual Offense - Sexual transgressive behaviour	1.06	0.06	0.96	0.06	.949
Sexual Offense - Sexual abuse of minors	0.94	-0.06	0.91	-0.07	.946
Sexual Offense - Rape	1.20	0.18	0.82	0.22	.823
Initiator Victim	1.46	0.38	0.80	0.47	.638
Time elapsed between offense and registration	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.27	.786

*Note. p < 0.05 indicates statistical significance**

The combined model for offender willingness included, pre-existing relationship, age of the victim, type of sexual offense (excluding exhibitionism), initiating party and time elapsed between the offense at registration at PHB. The age of the offender was excluded from this model because this variable had a lot of missing values causing the remaining data in a combined model to have limited variability when this variable was included. Furthermore, in the separate logistic

regression no effect was found of offender age and willingness to participate in VOM. Because of these reasons the choice was made to exclude the age of the offender from the combined model for offender willingness, to ensure sufficient variability in, and reliability of the model. Furthermore, exhibitionism was removed due to insufficient variability in this type of sexual offense, which hindered the reliable prediction of its impact on victim willingness. When the other predictors were added to the model with offender willingness as the dependent variable, the negative effect of a familiar relationship between the victim and offender on the offenders' willingness remained significant.

The other effects found in the separate logistic regressions disappeared or remained insignificant. The age of the victim was no longer significantly associated with the offender's willingness to participate in VOM in this combined model. Furthermore, no significant relationship was observed between the type of sexual offense and the willingness to participate in VOM, nor was there any effect of the process initiator at PHB. Additionally, the time elapsed between the offense and registration at PHB had no significant impact on the offender's willingness to participate in VOM in this model. Table 4 gives an overview of this model.

Table 4

Summary of Combined Model Offender Willingness (n = 116)

	Exp(b)	b	SE	z	p
Relationship - Family	0.13	-2.06	1.32	-1.56	.119
Relationship - Friend	0.47	-0.76	1.32	-0.57	.566
Relationship - Familiar	0.05	-2.95	1.26	-2.34	.019*
Relationship - Romantic	0.12	-2.10	1.29	-1.62	.105
Age Victim	0.98	-0.02	0.02	-1.12	.263
Sexual Offense - Sexual transgressive behaviour	1.42	0.35	0.79	0.44	.660
Sexual Offense - Sexual abuse of minors	2.16	0.77	0.91	0.85	.396
Sexual Offense - Rape	0.44	-0.83	0.69	-1.20	.229
Initiator victim	0.45	-0.79	0.84	-0.94	.349
Time elapsed between offense and registration	1.00	-0.00	0.00	-1.39	.165

*Note. p < 0.05 indicates statistical significance**

Offender Shame and Willingness

The third and last hypothesis proposed that offenders who choose to participate in VOM are more likely to experience reintegrative shame than stigmatizing shame during the mediation process. It is important to interpret the results of these analyses with caution, as the reliability of the coding for the variable offender shame was not particularly high. The limited reliability may

affect the validity of the findings, and further validation of the coding is recommended to improve the accuracy of the conclusions.

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed to evaluate this hypothesis, comparing the observed frequencies of reintegrative shame ($n = 34$) and stigmatizing shame ($n = 28$) with the expected frequencies of 31 (50%) reintegrative shame and 31 (50%) stigmatizing shame. These expected frequencies reflect chance level. Table 5 gives an overview of the expected frequencies and percentages. The results of the chi-square test yielded a non-significant result, $\chi^2(1, N = 62) = 0.58, p = .446$, indicating that there is no difference between the observed and expected frequencies. Therefore, the hypothesis that offenders who participate in VOM are more likely to experience reintegrative shame than stigmatizing shame is not supported by the data.

Table 5

Overview of Observed and Expected Frequencies and Percentages of Offender Shame

	Observed		Expected	
	Frequencies	Percentages	Frequencies	Percentages
Reintegrative	34	54.8%	31	50.0%
Stigmatizing	28	45.2%	31	50.0%

Furthermore, exploration was conducted to examine the influence of the nature of the pre-existing relationship on the kind of shame experienced in offenders. This is particularly relevant because previous findings suggested that offenders with certain pre-existing relationships between the victim and the offender were less willing to participate in VOM. The analysis aimed to explore whether the type of shame felt in these relationships could explain the offenders' reluctance to participate in VOM. Fisher's Exact Test for Count Data was conducted to examine the relationship between the relationship (stranger, family, friend, familiar or romantic) and shame (no shame, reintegrative, stigmatizing) variable ($n = 87$). The results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the type of relationship and the type of shame experienced, $p = .021$.

Further analysis was conducted to explore the odds ratios for the comparisons of different shame categories across relationship types (Table 6). The odds ratios provide insights into the relative likelihood of experiencing one type of shame compared to another, depending on the relationship category. For instance, in the romantic relationship category, individuals are significantly more likely to experience no shame as compared to reintegrative shame (odds ratio of 7.00), while in the stranger category, the odds of experiencing no shame as opposed to stigmatizing shame are quite low (odds ratio of 0.10). These findings suggest notable variations in

how offenders experience shame across different relationship contexts. To visualize these results, Figure 3 presents a mosaic plot illustrating the distribution of shame categories across relationship types, providing a clear representation of how the data in this sample was structured and supporting the statistical findings.

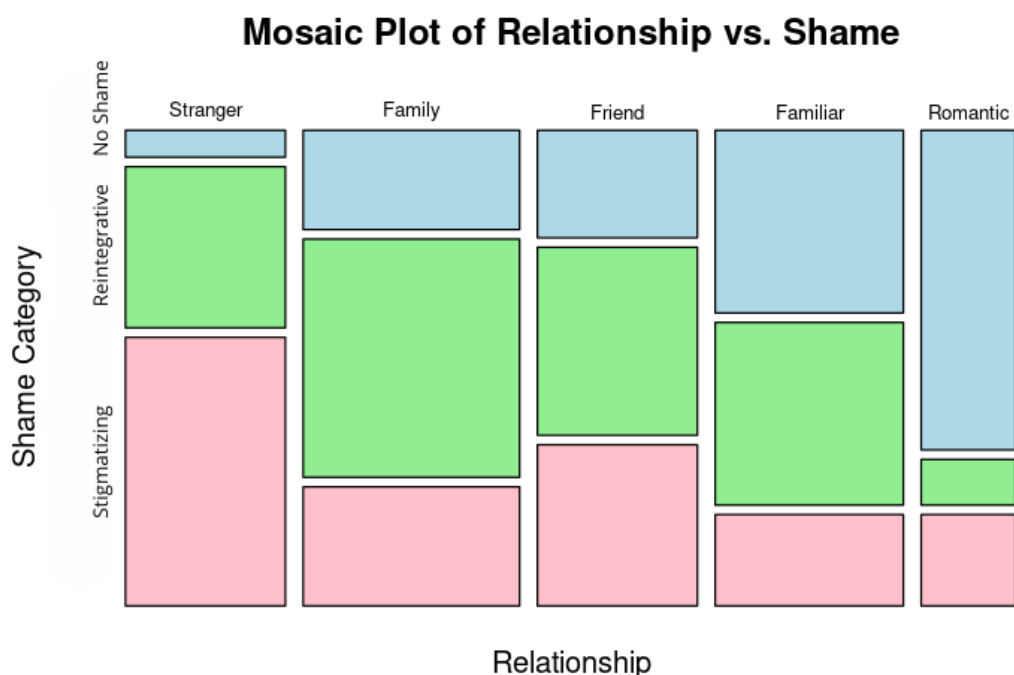
Table 6

Odds Ratios for Comparison of Shame Across Relationship Categories

Comparison	Stranger	Family	Friend	Familiar	Romantic
Reintegrative (0) vs No Shame (1)	0.17	0.42	0.57	1.00	7.00
Stigmatizing (0) vs No Shame (1)	0.10	0.83	0.67	2.00	3.50
Reintegrative (0) vs Stigmatizing (1)	0.60	2.00	1.17	2.00	0.50

Figure 3

Mosaic Plot of Comparison of Shame Across Relationship Categories



These findings suggest that the type of shame experienced by offenders may be influenced by the presence or absence of a pre-existing relationship, as well as the type of relationship with the victim, and that this type of shame could be a factor influencing the offender's willingness to participate in VOM.

Exploration of Psychological Needs in Parties Willing to Participate

The results of these analyses should be viewed with caution due to the relatively low reliability of the coding for the variables related to agency and communion. This limited reliability could impact the validity of the findings, so additional validation of the coding is recommended to enhance the accuracy of the conclusions. The distribution of agency- and communion-related motivations across victims and offenders who were willing to participate in VOM is presented in Table 7. In a majority of the cases (96.8%) victim agency related motivations were found, suggesting that restoring a sense of power and control is an important factor for victims who were willing to participate in VOM. In contrast, agency-related motivations were identified in 60.7% of offenders, suggesting that while this need remains relevant, it is less prevalent among offenders who were willing to participate in VOM. Conversely, communion-related motivations were more prominent among offenders, with 86.5% expressing a desire for restoring their moral image after the offense, compared to only 26.3% of victims.

Table 7

Distribution Agency and Communion across Victims and Offenders

	Victim (<i>n</i> =95)		Offender (<i>n</i> =89)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Agency	92	96.8%	54	60.7%
Communion	25	26.3%	77	86.5%

A Chi-Square Test of Independence was conducted to examine the association between group (victim or offender) and type of motivation (agency or communion). The results revealed a significant relationship between these variables, $\chi^2(1, N = 184) = 34.20, p < .001$. As shown in the contingency table, 96.8% of victims reported agency-related motivations, compared to 60.7% of offenders. Conversely, 86.5% of offenders reported communion-related motivations, compared to only 26.3% of victims. These results indicate that for victims the motivations mentioned are often agency-related motivations and less often communion related. While offenders are more likely to have mentioned communion-related motivations, compared to agency related motivations. However, the data also highlight notable overlap in motivational tendencies, with a substantial proportion of offenders (60.7%) identifying agency-related motivations and a smaller but meaningful proportion of victims (26.3%) expressing communion-related motivations.

Input from PHB Employees

Exploratory input from PHB employees revealed several factors perceived to influence participation in mediation. Figure 4 shows the factors mentioned by employees that they think influence the willingness to participate in mediation for victims. The bigger the words the more often they were mentioned. For victims, key factors included clear information about the mediation process, feelings of safety, and having influence and control over the process and its outcomes. For offenders, commonly mentioned factors included feelings of regret, perceptions of safety or neutrality, clear information, and support from social networks. Figure 5 shows the factors mentioned for the willingness to participate in mediation for offenders.

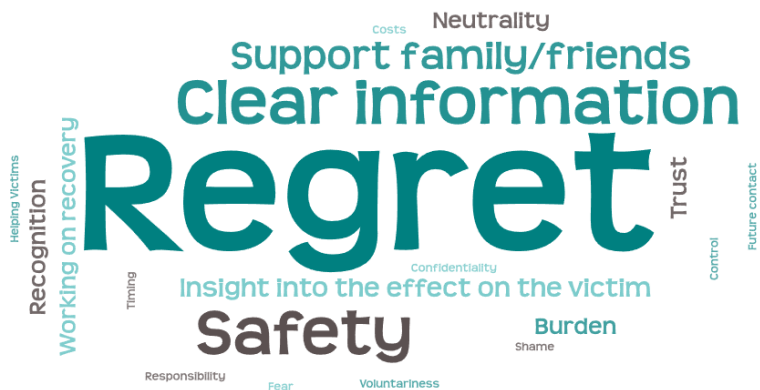
Figure 4

Input from PHB: factors that influence willingness of victims



Figure 5

Input from PHB: factors that influence willingness of offenders



Discussion

The current study addressed a gap in the literature on VOM. While previous research has highlighted VOM's potential to empower victims, reduce fear, and foster emotional recovery, as well as its ability to provide offenders with opportunities for remorse and reconciliation, much of this work has focused on VOM in general rather than cases of sexual offenses (Choi et al., 2010; Hansen & Umbreit, 2018; Jonas et al., 2022). Little is known about the motivations and barriers experienced by victims and offenders in sexual offense cases. This study has examined predictors of the willingness to participate in VOM, of victims and offenders in sexual offense cases from 2022 in the Netherlands. It examined pre-existing relationships and age as predictors of this willingness. Additionally, offender shame was assessed to see if reintegrative shame was more prevalent than stigmatizing shame among offenders willing to participate in VOM. Furthermore, exploration of the psychological needs for agency and communion was done to see how relevant these needs were for victims and offenders that were willing to engage in mediation with the other party. The findings contribute to the broader understanding of restorative justice processes, especially in the case of sexual violence, and suggest practical improvements for the implementation of VOM.

The results provide partial support for the first hypothesis, which indicates that there is a nuanced role of pre-existing relationships between victims and offenders in influencing the willingness to participate in VOM. Consistent with previous research (Donovan & Priester, 2017; De Haas, 2012), victims were generally more willing to participate if they knew the offender before the offense, particularly in cases involving family, friends and familiar persons. This suggests that existing relationships might encourage victims to seek resolution and reconciliation after a conflict through mediation. As highlighted by Klar-Chalamish and Peleg-Koriat (2021) and Lohmann (2024), situations involving close relationships may be influenced by complex dynamics such as loyalty, familial pressures, and concerns about social cohesion. The results demonstrate that pre-existing relationships act as a significant factor encouraging victims to seek resolution through VOM. These findings align with previous research indicating that victims often prefer restorative justice over retributive justice when the offender is someone with whom they share a pre-existing relationship (Keenan, 2014).

On the other hand, offenders that had pre-existing relationships with their victims seemed less willing to participate in VOM, particularly in cases where the victim was a familiar person or

concerning romantic relationships. This might be explained by the different types of shame experienced in each category of relationship, as exploratory analyses indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between the type of relationship and the type of shame experienced. This reluctance to participate in VOM may stem from the shame, or absence of shame, experienced by the offender. Especially when the victim and offender had a romantic relationship prior to the offense, the odds of experiencing no shame were higher than the odds of experiencing reintegrative or stigmatizing shame. Research into marital rape (Ferro et al., 2008) indicates that within the context of marriage offenders may not recognize their actions as rape, potentially causing the offender not to experience shame. The absence of shame might cause the offender not to be willing to participate in VOM, as in their perspective there is nothing to reconcile. Therefore, the (absence of) shame experienced tied to pre-existing relationships may thus act as barriers to their willingness to engage in restorative processes like VOM, calling for additional research.

Furthermore, the exploration revealed that among strangers, both reintegrative and stigmatizing shame occurred more frequently than no shame, with stigmatizing shame being more dominant. This predominance may reflect offenders' heightened sensitivity to social judgment and fear of rejection when there is no prior relationship with the victim. As previously mentioned, in pre-existing relationships, there might be differences in the experience of the severity or presence of a sexual offense, which could lead to a lack of shame in the offender. However, this may not be the case when the victim and offender do not have a prior relationship. Experiences of (stigmatizing) shame might drive offenders to seek opportunities to rebuild their personal and social identity, potentially increasing their willingness to engage in VOM. Restorative justice practices like VOM can provide a pathway for reconciliation, reduced social judgment, and the fostering of a more positive self-image (Jonas et al., 2022). Through mediation, offenders may experience reduced feelings of rejection and mitigate threats to their social moral identity. Apology further serves as a mechanism for offenders to address guilt and re-establish themselves as valued members of the community (Moran, 2017). Thus, the experience of stigmatizing shame, particularly when there is no prior relationship between the victim and offender, may motivate offenders to engage in VOM as a way to alleviate the stigma they face.

The hypothesis that age positively influences the willingness of both victims and offenders to participate in VOM was not supported. Instead, a significant negative association emerged between the victim's age and the offender's willingness to participate, suggesting that offenders

may be less inclined to engage in mediation when the victim is older. This may be due to the offender's perception of the victim's higher social status or authority based on age, influencing the power dynamic (Koski et al., 2015). Older individuals are often seen as more vulnerable and deserving of respect, evoking feelings of guilt or discomfort in offenders. As a result, offenders may hesitate to confront older victims, fearing greater societal judgment or stigma. Social norms theory (Cialdini et al., 1990) suggests that offenders anticipate harsher moral or social judgement when the victim is older, as society places a high value on the protection of older individuals (Fineman, 2012). This perception could deter offenders from participating, as they may feel their actions will be more intensely judged. The cultural expectation to respect and protect elders could make the mediation process feel more challenging for the offender. This finding highlights the complex interplay between age, societal expectations, and decision-making in restorative justice, emphasizing the need for further investigation into how these factors shape offenders' willingness to engage in VOM.

In addition to separate logistic regressions for the hypothesized predictors (pre-existing relationship and age), combined models were tested, including case characteristics (type of sexual offense, initiating party, and time elapsed). These models allowed for a comparison of the relative strength of each predictor while controlling for case variations. The results provide important insights into the factors influencing participation in VOM. For victims, having a pre-existing relationship with the offender significantly increased their willingness to engage in the process. This highlights the crucial role of relational context in shaping victims' willingness, possibly due to a stronger need or desire to repair relational harm (Donovan & Priester, 2017). In contrast, factors such as the age of the victim and offender, the nature of the offense, and the time elapsed since the incident showed no significant impact on victim willingness, suggesting that relational factors may take precedence over these variables.

While relational factors strongly influenced victims' willingness, the effects for offenders were more complex. The combined model identified a negative effect of a familiar relationship between the victim and offender on the offender's willingness to participate in VOM. Other previously observed effects from separate analyses were no longer evident, and age, the nature of the offense, and the time since the incident had no significant impact, indicating that relational factors may outweigh these variables. Moreover, the effect of having a romantic relationship with the victim was no longer significant in influencing the offender's willingness to participate. This

may point to the complex nature of offenders' decision-making, influenced by external factors or obstacles not accounted for in the model. Additionally, the reduction in sample size in the combined model, due to missing values on the control variables, could explain why some significant results disappeared.

In conclusion, the combined models revealed that pre-existing relationships play an essential role in influencing both victims' and offenders' willingness to participate in VOM, but in opposing ways. For victims, a prior relationship with the offender significantly increased their willingness to engage in the process, emphasizing the importance of relational context in restorative justice. However, for offenders, familiarity with the victim had a negative effect on their willingness to participate, suggesting that relational dynamics can be a barrier to engagement.

The results did not support the hypothesis that offenders participating in VOM are more likely to experience reintegrative shame than stigmatizing shame. This suggests that the assumption that participation in VOM is predominantly associated with reintegrative shame may not hold true. Exploratory analyses revealed differences in agency and communion related needs between victims and offenders when it comes to participating in VOM. Agency related motivations are primarily present for victims, and communion related motivations are most common in offenders. This aligns with Schnabel and Nadler's theory (2008), which states that victims seek empowerment to address perceived loss of control, whereas offenders long for social reintegration to restore moral belonging. However, the data also revealed a significant overlap, with offenders reporting agency-related motivations and victims indicating communion-related motivations. This overlap indicates that, despite differing primary psychological needs, both agency and communion are relevant for victims as well as offenders, highlighting the complexity and diversity of their motivations within the context of VOM. It is important to consider that the interrater reliability for this variable was moderate, which may have affected the consistency and accuracy of the data. Additionally, the sample size for this analysis was small, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, further research with a larger sample and improved reliability measures is needed to investigate this more thoroughly.

In addition to the primary findings of this study, exploratory input from PHB employees, mostly mediators, offers valuable insights into the perceived factors influencing the willingness of victims and offenders to participate in mediation. For victims, commonly mentioned factors include clear information about the process of VOM, feelings of safety, and influence and control

on the process and its outcomes. Especially, influence and control align with the findings of this study, as the need for agency was found in the majority of the victims. While for offenders, regret, safety/neutrality, clear information and support from social networks are frequently cited. Notably, support from social networks aligns with the findings of this study, as most offenders demonstrated a need for communion. These perspectives align with broader themes in restorative justice literature, emphasizing the importance of psychological and relational dynamics in shaping participation. While these observations are not a direct focus of this study, they highlight areas for further exploration and underscore the value of practitioner insights in refining mediation practices.

Strengths and Limitations

One of the main strengths of this study is its focus on real-life sexual offense cases, covering a broad range of offenses rather than concentrating on a single type of sexual violence, e.g. rape. This extensive approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in VOM across different types of sexual offenses. By analyzing both victims and offenders, the study offers a balanced perspective on the factors influencing their willingness to participate in VOM. This focus on both parties contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of VOM. Additionally, the inclusion of diverse case types enhances the study's ecological validity, ensuring that the findings more accurately reflect real-world situations.

Despite the insights the study has given, the study has noteworthy limitations. The analyses for offender shame, victim agency, victim communion, offender agency, and offender communion only included data about the people who were willing to participate in mediation. This is a limitation because it narrows the scope of the findings to only those individuals who were willing to participate in VOM. Including data from individuals who were unwilling to participate in mediation, or investigating their reasons for refusal, would provide a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of how shame, agency, and communion operate in this context. Furthermore, a notable limitation of this study is that the data reflects mediators' interpretations of what victims and offenders might have meant, rather than direct input from the parties themselves. While mediators provide valuable insights, their perspectives may be influenced by subjective assumptions or communication nuances. To better capture the actual psychological needs of participants, it would be beneficial to gather data directly from victims and offenders during the preparation phase of VOM. This approach would likely yield a more accurate and authentic understanding of their motivations and concerns.

Another limitation lies in the variability of data recording across contact journals. The absence of a standardized script for mediators may have introduced inconsistencies in documenting motivations and contextual factors. Furthermore, a limitation of this study is the moderate interrater reliability observed for several variables, despite efforts to refine the coding scheme and improve consistency between raters. Although there was a high percentage of agreement across most variables, the moderate Kappa values indicate that there were still areas where ambiguity or insufficient clarity in the coding definitions may have influenced the consistency of the results. The sample size for the second rater was relatively small, as only 65 cases were independently coded, and the sample included some cases previously used during the testing phase of the coding scheme. This may have introduced bias or affected the generalizability of the reliability findings. Additionally, missing data for certain variables further reduced the number of valid comparisons between the coders, which limited the accuracy of the reliability estimates. Finally, while the coding scheme was collaboratively refined, the complexity of the psychological constructs being assessed—such as shame, agency, and communion—may have contributed to the variability in coding.

A specific challenge encountered in coding motivations related to agency and communion was the difficulty in distinguishing whether certain desires stemmed from a need for agency or communion, or from a combination of both. In some cases, the motivations expressed in the data were not clearly attributable to either need. The type of data collected may not have allowed for a clear separation of these motivations, unless statements were explicitly framed, such as "wants to feel stronger or regain control" (agency) versus "wants to feel connected and seen by others" (communion). This ambiguity in the data further complicated the coding process, making it challenging to accurately categorize motivations related to agency and communion.

Another limitation of this study lies in the coding of offender shame, which was categorized into three types: no shame, reintegrative shame, and stigmatizing shame. However, the coding process required the selection of only one category for each offender, which may not have fully captured the complexity of their emotional responses. In some cases, offenders displayed behaviours or emotions that could have aligned with more than one type of shame, but due to the categorical nature of the coding scheme, only one could be chosen. This may have led to the oversimplification of offenders' experiences, as some may have experienced a combination of reintegrative and stigmatizing shame or fluctuated between different types depending on the

context. The complexity of offender shame, especially in the sensitive context of sexual offenses, might have required a more nuanced approach to better capture the emotional states at play. This limitation likely affected the accuracy and depth of the analysis regarding offender shame.

Recommendations

Future Research

To build on the strengths and limitations of this study and explore this topic further, future research is desirable. First, future research should seek to include the perspectives of individuals who decline participation in VOM. Understanding their reasons for refusal could provide critical insights into barriers that hinder engagement and offer a more balanced view of the psychological dynamics surrounding VOM, including the roles of shame, agency, and communion. Expanding the sample to include both participants and non-participants would offer a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing engagement in mediation. Furthermore, to overcome the limitations of relying solely on mediators' interpretations, future studies should prioritize gathering direct input from victims and offenders. Structured interviews or surveys during the preparation phase of VOM would provide more authentic and accurate insights into the participants' motivations, concerns, and psychological needs.

Additionally, the coding process could be improved by providing more detailed training for the coders and clearer definitions in the coding scheme to improve the overall reliability in future studies. Given the complexity of psychological constructs like shame, agency, and communion, future research would benefit from more nuanced coding schemes. Moreover, offering the opportunity to code more categories for the same offender on the shame variable would offer a more accurate understanding of offender shame, which may not fit neatly into static categories. A more refined approach to measuring the types of shame experienced could help clarify whether reintegrative shame is indeed less prevalent than previously assumed. On top of that, a recommendation is to further explore the potentially mediating role of shame and its absence in the interaction between pre-existing relationships between victims and offenders and their willingness to participate in VOM. Future studies could explore how various relationship types affect offenders' emotional experiences and motivations, with a particular focus on the absence of shame and its potential to hinder reconciliation. Moreover, the influence of age on both victims' and offenders' willingness to engage in VOM should be further investigated. Research could explore how societal norms and expectations, especially concerning older victims, affect offenders'

decisions to participate in restorative justice processes. Future research should focus on addressing the limitations of this study by using a larger sample size and improving interrater reliability to enhance the consistency and accuracy of the findings.

Practical Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of VOM at PHB, several steps are recommended. First, PHB is advised to establish protocols to investigate reasons for refusal to participate in mediation. This could be done with structured follow-up inquiries with non-participants to explore participation barriers, which will provide data to address these barriers and expand opportunities for VOM and research. Moreover, it would be valuable to incorporate a structured process for gathering direct input from victims and offenders during the preparation phase of VOM. This could involve guided conversations or questionnaires aimed at identifying their psychological needs, concerns, and motivations for participation. By prioritizing first-hand insights, PHB can gain a clearer understanding of the factors that influence willingness to participate, allowing for more tailored and effective mediation practices. Furthermore, developing a consistent framework for documenting information in the contact journal would enhance the readability of the contact journal. The advantage of this being that the quality of the data gathered for this contact journal would be improved and so will the analyses and outcomes of research and policy recommendations that can be made accordingly.

Moreover, a key recommendation based on the findings of this study is to tailor VOM to the specific dynamics of pre-existing relationships between victims and offenders. Victims with pre-existing relationships are generally more willing to participate in VOM, while offenders may be less inclined. To address this, VOM programs should provide targeted support for both parties, considering the unique challenges each may face. For offenders, particularly those who may not recognize the harm caused, pre-mediation interventions should focus on addressing emotional barriers such as shame or denial. Strategies like self-affirmation interventions, which help offenders maintain a positive self-image while accepting responsibility, and perspective-taking exercises, which encourage offenders to reflect on the victim's experience, can be integrated into the preparation phase to reduce defensiveness and foster accountability (Schumann, 2014). These techniques can promote reintegrative shame (Prelog et al., 2009), where offenders acknowledge their actions without fear of social exclusion, ultimately enhancing their willingness to participate in the mediation process.

For victims, particularly those who do not have a pre-existing relationship with the offender, participation may be more challenging due to a perceived lack of personal relevance or uncertainty about the benefits of mediation. To support these victims, PHB could implement pre-mediation interventions that provide clear and detailed information about the potential advantages of VOM, such as obtaining closure, gaining answers, or validating their experience. Structured preparatory sessions could empower victims to identify their own goals, concerns, and expectations, helping them feel more confident and prepared for the process. Emphasizing the safety measures in place and the neutrality of the mediators would further contribute to creating a sense of trust and security. Tailoring the mediation process to the specific needs of victims who lack a personal connection with the offender could encourage greater engagement, ensuring that the process is both relevant and accessible.

Conclusion

This study highlights the complex and opposing factors that influence the willingness to participate in VOM in sexual offense cases. It underscores the robust and strong role of pre-existing relationships in shaping the willingness of victims to participate, with those having a prior connection to the offender being more open to mediation. In contrast, offenders, particularly in familiar or romantic relationships, are often less inclined to engage in the process. These findings point to a nuanced dynamic in which the same relationship context can have opposing effects on the willingness of each party to engage in VOM. This contradiction may help explain why the percentage of mediated contact between victims and offenders in sexual offense cases is relatively low, about 25%, as both victims and offenders seem to face unique emotional and relational barriers that influence their willingness to engage.

Given this contradiction, the importance of understanding and addressing these dynamics is crucial for improving VOM practices in sexual offense cases. A deeper exploration of the reasons behind victims' and offenders' differing willingness to participate could provide valuable insights into the psychological and relational factors at play. Identifying these factors more clearly in future research can help refine VOM programs, offering tailored interventions that consider the unique needs and concerns of each party involved.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Example of the Layout of BIS

Algemeen (BP informatie)		
Medewerker AP	Officier van Justitie	Verantwoordelijke BP
Delict	Zittingsdatum	Bijzonderheden
Delict datum	Wanneer aanmelding?	SHN Casuscode
Delict plaats	Bemiddelaar	Meervoudige BP
PV- of parketnr. / MVP		Andere bem. dan mv
Parket		Urgentie
<hr/>		
^ Verwijzer	^ Aanmeldende partij	^ Andere partij
Verwijzer	Aanm. Client	Andere Client
Locatie	Postcode	Leeftijd bij aanmelding
Naam	Plaats	Aantal aanmeldingen
Telefoonnr.	Telefoonnummer	Betrokkenheid
E-mail	E-mail	Gedetineerd / TBS
Contactmoment	Leeftijd bij aanmelding	Contactmoment
	Aantal aanmeldingen	Is er een begeleider? <input type="checkbox"/>
	Betrokkenheid	Contact ouders
	Gedetineerd / TBS <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Contactmoment	
	Is er een begeleider? <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Contact ouders	
<hr/>		
^ Contactjournaal		
<hr/>		
^ Resultaat bemiddeling	^ Afronding	Controle
Datum intake	Deelname medlapool	
Wanneer bemiddeling?	Terugk. form.	
Actiedatum bem. 15-03-2023	Terugk. form. get.	
Actie bemiddeling afwachten reactie politie	Afsluitbrief aanm. partij	
Type bemiddeling	Afsluitbrief andere partij	
	Excusbrief	

Appendix B. Coding scheme employed during this study

Coded by one person (author of this thesis):

Willingness to participate in VOM

- Victim Willing: Yes (1), No (0), or Unknown (NA)
- Offender Willing: Yes (1), No (0), or Unknown (NA)
- Both Willing: Yes (1), No (0), or Unknown (NA)

The Willingness to participate was derived from the variables: Initiated By, Type of Mediation, and Refused By.

- Step 1: who was the initiating party? This party was willing to participate, unless they later rejected.
- Step 2: what kind of contact occurred?
 - o Contact with one party only: In this case the initiating party withdrew from the mediation process and was not willing to participate any more. For the other party it is unknown if they were willing to participate.
 - o Contact with both parties: look at who refused the mediation, this party was not willing to participate. For the other party it must be read in the contact journal (if they were not the initiating party)
 - o Mediated contact of any kind: Both parties were willing to participate

Age of Victim and Offender

- Step 1: Is the age filled in in the field “age”? If yes, then that is filled in.
 - o If not? Continue to step 2
- Step 2: Is there a mention of age (at the time of registration) in the contact journal? If yes, then that is taken over.
 - o If not? Continue to step 3
- Step 3: Is there a mention of age at the time of the offense in the contact journal? If yes, is there an offense date filled in? This date and the age at the time of the offense can be used to calculate the age at time of registration.
 - o Date of registration(datum intake) – date of the offense + age at time of the offense.
 - o If not? Missing value

Coded by two coders (author and 2nd coder):

Pre-existing relationship between victim and offender

If the victim and offender had a pre-existing relationship is coded from the contact journal. The whole journal is read and search for words like family, friend, partner, acquaintance.

- (0) **Stranger:** if it states that there is no pre-existing relationship or there is no mention of pre-existing relationship.
- (1) **Family:** if there is a mention that the other party is a family member, e.g. parent, sibling, cousin etc.
- (2) **Friend:** if there is a mention that the other party used to be a friend, e.g. best friend, or family friend.
- (3) **Familiar:** someone one knows but stands further away from the person.
 - o A separate column next to the column relationship is added, in case of familiar indicate what kind of familiar applies, e.g. acquaintances, neighbors, colleagues (that are not friends).
- (4) **Romantic:** if there is a romantic relationship mentioned, e.g. partner, marriage etc.
- (NA) Unknown (missing value): if there is not enough information to know if there is a pre-existing relationship.

Offender Shame

Offender shame can be coded by looking at words and phrases in the contact journal.

- (0) **No shame:** no indications of shame.
 - o Offender does not acknowledge the offense.
- (1) **Reintegrative shame:** Offenders who report feelings of remorse and accountability and a sense of social support for reintegration. They feel ashamed for their actions, but they feel they are not seen as a bad person. Their act or behaviour is what is bad, not the person.
 - o Words like: Regret, Guilt, Accountability, second chance, Supported, Encouraged, Improvement, Responsibility, Redemption, Restoration, Rebuild, Repair
- (2) **Stigmatizing shame:** Offenders who report feelings of embarrassment, social rejection, labeled as a bad person or isolation.
 - o Words like: Failure, Bad person, Outcast, Labeled, Judged, Rejected, Isolated, Irredeemable, Worthless, Stigmatized, Shunned.
- (NA) Missing.

Next to the 0,1 or 2, in the column to the right of the column for shame a phrase has to be copied from the contact journal into the sheet, from which the type of shame was derived.

Agency and Communion

Agency and communion related motivations to participate in VOM can be coded by reading the contact journal. If the party was willing to participate in the process of mediation, then the variable for that party (either victim or offender) can be coded.

Victim Agency:

- (0) No mention of agency related motivations, but the party was willing to participate
- (1) Agency related motivations to participate in VOM
- (NA) Missing values, if the party was not willing to participate

Agency related motivations for the victim: motivations aimed to restore the **victim's sense of control, assertiveness and/or power**. Getting an apology from the offender, getting acknowledgment from the offender (to regain a sense of power), getting closure, asking questions to the offender. Telling about the impact of the offense.

Next to the 0,1 or 2, in the column to the right of the column for victim agency a phrase has to be copied from the contact journal into the sheet, from the decision was derived.

Victim Communion:

- (0) No mention of communion related motivations, but the party was willing to participate
- (1) Communion related motivations to participate in VOM
- (NA) Missing values, if the party was not willing to participate

Communion related motivations: motivations aimed to **restore the felt connection and social appreciation of the victim to the offender and/or their social environment**. Relationship recovery with the offender. Getting acknowledgement of the offense (to restore the moral image of the victim, e.g. when there is no support from the family of the victim or victim blaming)

Next to the 0,1 or 2, in the column to the right of the column for victim communion a phrase has to be copied from the contact journal into the sheet, from the decision was derived.

Offender Agency:

- (0) No mention of agency related motivations, but the party was willing to participate
- (1) Agency related motivations to participate in VOM
- (NA) Missing values, if the party was not willing to participate

Agency related motivations for the offender: motivations aimed at **regaining a sense of control over how to respond to the offense for the offender**. Getting closure, helping the recovery process of the offender, asking questions to the victim, sharing the perspective of the offender. (This is motivated for the offender himself)

Next to the 0,1 or 2, in the column to the right of the column for offender agency a phrase has to be copied from the contact journal into the sheet, from the decision was derived.

Offender Communion:

- (0) No mention of communion related motivations, but the party was willing to participate
- (1) Communion related motivations to participate in VOM
- (NA) Missing values, if the party was not willing to participate

Communion related motivations for the offender: motivations aimed at **restoring the connection to others and social appreciation/moral image of the offender**. Getting acceptance of the victim, getting forgiveness, the victim understanding the offender's perspective, helping the recovery of the victim, giving recognition/acknowledgement for the offense, and relationship recovery. (This is motivated for the victim, or relationship recovery with the victim)

Next to the 0,1 or 2, in the column to the right of the column for offender communion a phrase has to be copied from the contact journal into the sheet, from the decision was derived.