What Works and What Doesn’t in Reducing Recidivism: Applying the Principles of Effective

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How To Digest This Information

1. Think in terms of own agency
2. Think in terms of outside agencies
3. Think in terms of a system perspective
Evidence Based – What does it mean?

There are different forms of evidence:

– The lowest form is anecdotal evidence; stories, opinions, testimonials, case studies, etc. - but it often makes us feel good

– The highest form is empirical evidence – research, data, results from controlled studies, etc. - but sometimes it doesn’t make us feel good
Evidence Based Practice is:

1. Easier to think of as Evidence Based Decision Making

2. Involves several steps and encourages the use of validated tools and treatments.

3. Not just about the tools you have but also how you use them
Evidence Based Sentencing will require:

1. Assessment information

2. Relevant research

3. Available programming and alternatives

4. Evaluation

5. Professionalism and knowledge from staff
What does the Research tell us?

There is often a Misapplication of Research: “XXX Study Says”

- the problem is if you believe every study we wouldn’t eat anything (but we would drink a lot of red wine!)

• Looking at one study can be a mistake

• Need to examine a body of research

• So, what does the body of knowledge about correctional interventions tell us?
FROM THE EARLIEST REVIEWS:

• Not a single reviewer of studies of the effects of official punishment alone (custody, mandatory arrests, increased surveillance, etc.) has found consistent evidence of reduced recidivism.

• At least 40% and up to 60% of the studies of correctional treatment services reported reduced recidivism rates relative to various comparison conditions, in every published review.
People Who Appear to be Resistant to Punishment

- Psychopathic risk takers
- Those under the influence of a substance
- Those with a history of being punished
A Large Body of Research Has Indicated….

….that correctional services and interventions can be effective in reducing recidivism for offenders, however, not all programs and interventions are equally effective.

- The most effective approaches are based on some principles of effective interventions:
  - Risk (Who)
  - Need (What)
  - Treatment (How)
  - Program Integrity (How Well)
Let’s Start with the Risk Principle

Risk refers to risk of reoffending and not the seriousness of the offense.

You can be a low risk felon or a high risk felon, a low risk misdemeanor or a high risk misdemeanor.
There are Three Elements to the Risk Principle

1. Target those offenders with higher probability of recidivism

2. Provide most intensive treatment to higher risk offenders

3. Intensive treatment for lower risk offender can increase recidivism
#1: Targeting Higher Risk Offenders

- It is important to understand that even with EBP there will be failures.

- Even if you reduce recidivism rates you will still have high percentage of failures
Example of Targeting Higher Risk Offenders

- If you have 100 High risk offenders about 60% will fail
- If you put them in well designed EBP for sufficient duration you may reduce failure rate to 40%
- If you have 100 low risk offenders about 10% will fail
- If you put them in same program failure rate will be 20%
Targeting Higher Risk Offenders continued:

• In the end, who had the lower recidivism rate?

• Mistake we make is comparing high risk to low risk rather than look for treatment effects
#2: Provide Most Intensive Interventions to Higher Risk Offenders

- Higher risk offenders will require much higher dosage of treatment
  - Rule of thumb: 100 hours for moderate risk
  - 200+ hours for higher risk
  - 100 hours for high risk will have little if any effect
  - Does not include work/school and other activities that are not directly addressing criminogenic risk factors
#3: Intensive Treatment for Low Risk Offenders will Often Increase Failure Rates

- Low risk offenders will learn anti social behavior from higher risk
- Disrupts prosocial networks
The Risk Principle & Correctional Intervention Results from Meta Analysis

Dowden & Andrews, 1999

Change in Recidivism Rates

Reduced Recidivism

Increased Recidivism

High Risk

Low Risk

Dowden & Andrews, 1999
Recent Study of Intensive Rehabilitation Supervision in Canada

2002 STUDY OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS IN OHIO

• Largest study of community based correctional treatment facilities ever done

• Total of 13,221 offenders – 37 Halfway Houses and 15 Community Based Correctional Facilities (CBCFs) were included in the study.

• Two-year follow-up conducted on all offenders

• Recidivism measures included new arrests & incarceration in a state penal institution

• We also examined program characteristics
Determination of Risk

• Each offender was given a risk score based on 14 items that predicted outcome.

• This allowed us to compare low risk offenders who were placed in a program to low risk offenders that were not, high risk to high risk, and so forth.
Increased Recidivism

Reduced Recidivism

Treatment Effects for Low Risk Offenders
Treatment Effects for Moderate Risk Offenders

probability of reincarceration
Treatment Effects For High Risk Offenders

Probability of Reincarceration

-34 -18 -15 -14 -6 -5 -2 -2 2 3 3 3 5 6 7 8 8 9 10 10 12 12 12 13 13 13 15 21 22 24 25 27 30 32 34

River City
Fresh Start
Alternative Agency
Talbert House
Cornerstone
Community Assessment Program (Men's)

Monday
WORTH
Cincinnati
EOCC

0 10 20 30 40

-10 -20 -30 -40

Probability of Reincarceration

0 10 20 30 40

-10 -20 -30 -40

-34 -18 -14 -6 -5 -2 -2

-30 -40
Preliminary results from 2009 Replication Study

• 21,000+ offenders

• 63 Facilities

• Included samples of probationers and parolees
Average Difference in Recidivism by Risk

Low risk  \(\uparrow\)  recidivism by 6%

Moderate risk  \(\downarrow\)  recidivism by 4%

High risk  \(\downarrow\)  recidivism by 10%
Felony Reconviction for LOW Risk
Felony Reconviction for MODERATE Risk
Felony Reconviction for HIGH Risk
Recidivism Rates by Risk Levels for Females: New Arrest (Felony or Misd).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low/Moderate</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ohio ½ and CBCF House Study all treatment cases. N=1,340
Recidivism Rates by Risk Levels for Sex Offenders: New Arrest (Felony or Misd).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low/Moderate</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ohio ½ and CBCF House Study: Successful terminations only. N=390
The Risk Principle and Drug Court Effectiveness:

Relationship Between Treatment Effects and Risk Level of Participants

Need Principle
By assessing and targeting criminogenic needs for change, agencies can reduce the probability of recidivism

Criminogenic
- Anti social attitudes
- Anti social friends
- Substance abuse
- Lack of empathy
- Impulsive behavior

Non-Criminogenic
- Anxiety
- Low self esteem
- Creative abilities
- Medical needs
- Physical conditioning
## Major Risk and/or Need Factor and Promising Intermediate Targets for Reduced Recidivism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Dynamic Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of Antisocial Behavior</td>
<td>Early &amp; continued involvement in a number antisocial acts</td>
<td>Build noncriminal alternative behaviors in risky situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial personality</td>
<td>Adventurous, pleasure seeking, weak self control, restlessly aggressive</td>
<td>Build problem-solving, self-management, anger mgt &amp; coping skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial cognition</td>
<td>Attitudes, values, beliefs &amp; rationalizations supportive of crime, cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment, &amp; defiance</td>
<td>Reduce antisocial cognition, recognize risky thinking &amp; feelings, build up alternative less risky thinking &amp; feelings Adopt a reform and/or anticriminal identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial associates</td>
<td>Close association with criminals &amp; relative isolation from prosocial people</td>
<td>Reduce association w/ criminals, enhance association w/ prosocial people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Major Risk and/or Need Factor and Promising Intermediate Targets for Reduced Recidivism

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Dynamic Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and/or marital</td>
<td>Two key elements are nurturance and/or caring</td>
<td>Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, communication, enhance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>better monitoring and/or supervision</td>
<td>monitoring &amp; supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and/or work</td>
<td>Low levels of performance &amp; satisfaction</td>
<td>Enhance performance, rewards, &amp; satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and/or recreation</td>
<td>Low levels of involvement &amp; satisfaction in anti-criminal leisure activities</td>
<td>Enhancement involvement &amp; satisfaction in prosocial activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs</td>
<td>Reduce SA, reduce the personal &amp; interpersonal supports for SA behavior,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>enhance alternatives to SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NATIONAL STUDY OF NCAA DIVISION I FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL PLAYERS BY CULLEN & LATESSA FOUND:

**Infractions were higher among student-athletes:**

- Who were highly recruited
- Who associated with fellow athletes that broke rules or saw nothing wrong with cheating
- Who personally embraced values defining rule violations as acceptable
- Who did not have close relationships with their parents or coaches
- Who reported prior delinquent behavior

STUDY OF NCAA DIVISION I FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL PLAYERS FOUND

Violations were unrelated to:

- **ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION**: coming from an impoverished background and having a lack of money while in college do not appear to be major sources of rule infractions.

- **ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**: how strongly winning was emphasized, success or failure of the program, league, region of the country, etc. were not factors.

- **THREATS OF SANCTIONS**: certainty and severity of punishment for violating rules were not related to infractions.

Targeting Criminogenic Need: Results from Meta-Analyses

Reduction in Recidivism

Increase in Recidivism

Target 1-3 more non-criminogenic needs

Target at least 4-6 more criminogenic needs

The Christopher Columbus Style of Program Design

WHEN HE SET OUT...
He didn’t know where he was going.

WHEN HE GOT THERE...
He didn’t know where he was.

WHEN HE GOT BACK...
He didn’t know where he had been.
Definitely *NOT* Criminogenic Needs
Assessment is the engine that drives effective correctional programs

- Need to meet the risk and need principle
- Reduces bias
- Aids decision making
- Allows you to target dynamic risk factors and measure change
According to the American Heart Association, there are a number of risk factors that increase your chances of a first heart attack:

- Family history of heart attacks
- Gender (males)
- Age (over 50)
- Inactive lifestyle
- Over weight
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- High Cholesterol level
Which instrument you use is less important than how it is used

• Example of an old tool used in a new way
Example of Using Assessment for Case Strategies

• Travis County (Austin, TX)
• Use Wisconsin Risk and Strategies for Case Supervision (SCS)
SCS Categories & Strategies

- Selective Intervention: Primarily prosocial
  - SI-S leave alone:
  - SI-T Intervene selectively

- Environmental Structure: Impulsive, lack skills, easily led
  - ES provide structured environment and hands on assistance

- Case Control: Destructive thinking, anti-social behavior
  - CC provide intensive supervision, zero tolerance, behavioral contracting

- Limit Setting: Criminal thinking, seeking power and thrills
  - LS provide surveillance, challenging behavior and criminal thinking, use all leverage
Supervision Strategies

Diagnosis Process
Diagnosis process is oriented at classifying offenders along a matrix based on risk and SCS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Risk</th>
<th>SCS Score - Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>SIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>SIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colors
Represent three different supervision strategies that will apply to offenders in the different grids in the diagnosis matrix
## Supervision/Sanction Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lowest reporting requirements</th>
<th>Increased reporting requirements</th>
<th>Highest reporting requirements of all supervision levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of certain offenders reporting only to the Supplemental Reporting System</td>
<td>Mix supplemental reporting with visits to PO/home visits as needed</td>
<td>Field visits by probation officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need for intensive discretionary programs</td>
<td>Need for discretionary programs, mainly drug treatment, anger management, cognitive programs</td>
<td>Use of surveillance type of programs and some cognitive interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of low to moderate responses to administrative violations using violation grid</td>
<td>Application of more restrictive responses to administrative violations</td>
<td>Most restrictive and swift responses to administrative violations of all supervision levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives for early discharge</td>
<td>Incentives to move to “Yellow” level</td>
<td>Incentive to move to “Blue” level but cannot move to “Yellow” level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example from a new Assessment Tool Developed in Ohio
Males: Risk Level by Recidivism for the Community Supervision Sample

ORAS-CST Risk Level Correlation with Recidivism: $r = .373$
Identifies Priorities in Case Management

Criminal History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Percent Arrested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-3)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med (4-6)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (7-8)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education and Finances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Level</th>
<th>Percent Arrested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-1)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med (2-4)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (5-6)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priorities in Case Management

Family and Social Support

Percent Arrested by Priority Level
Low (0-1)  41  32
Med (2-3)  48
High (4-5)

Neighborhood Problems

Percent Arrested by Priority Level
Low (0)  17
Med (1)  35
High (2-3)  45
Priorities in Case Management

Substance Abuse

Percent Arrested by Priority Level
- Low (0-2)
- Med (3-4)
- High (5-6)

Peers

Percent Arrested by Priority Level
- Low (0-1)
- Med (2-4)
- High (5-8)
Priorities in Case Management

Criminal Attitudes and Behavior Patterns

Percent Arrested by Priority Level
Low (0-3)
Med (4-8)
High (9-13)
• List three speeches that have changed your life
• List three people who have changed your life
Treatment Principle

The most effective interventions are behavioral:

- Focus on current factors that influence behavior
- Action oriented
- Offender behavior is appropriately reinforced
Results from Meta Analysis: Behavioral vs. NonBehavioral

Most Effective Behavioral Models

• Structured social learning where new skills and behavioral are modeled

• Cognitive behavioral approaches that target criminogenic risk factors
Social Learning

Refers to several processes through which individuals acquire attitudes, behavior, or knowledge from the persons around them. Both modeling and instrumental conditioning appear to play a role in such learning.
The Four Principles of Cognitive Intervention

1. Thinking affects behavior

2. Antisocial, distorted, unproductive irrational thinking can lead to antisocial and unproductive behavior

3. Thinking can be influenced

4. We can change how we feel and behave by changing what we think
Reasons that CBT is Popular in Corrections

- Can be done in any setting
- Existing staff can be trained on CBT
- Relatively cheap to deliver
- Wide range of curriculums are available
Recent Meta-Analysis of Cognitive Behavioral Treatment for Offenders by Landenberger & Lipsey (2005)*

• Reviewed 58 studies:
  19 random samples
  23 matched samples
  16 convenience samples

• Found that on average CBT reduced recidivism by 25%, but the most effective configurations found more than 50% reductions
Factors Not significant:

- Juvenile versus adult
- Minorities or females
- Brand name of curriculum
Significant Findings (effects were stronger if):

- Sessions per week (2 or more) - **RISK**
- Implementation monitored - **FIDELITY**
- Staff trained on CBT - **FIDELITY**
- Higher proportion of treatment completers - **RESPONSIVITY**
- Higher risk offenders - **RISK**
- Higher if CBT is combined with other services - **NEED**
Evaluation of a CBT Program: Thinking for a Change
Lowenkamp and Latessa (2006)

- Tippecanoe County Indiana
- Probation +T4C vs. Probation
- 136 Treatment cases
- 97 Comparison cases
- Variable follow up (range 6 to 64 months; average 26)
- Outcome—arrest for new criminal behavior
Multivariate Model

• Controlled for
  – Risk (prior arrests, prior prison, prior community supervision violations, history of drug use, history of alcohol problems, highest grade completed, employment status at arrest)
  – Age
  – Sex
  – Race
  – Time at risk or length of follow up time
Adjusted Recidivism Rates Comparing T4C Participants to Comparison Group

![Bar chart showing adjusted recidivism rates for different groups.]

- Probation + T4C Successful Participants Only (90): 18
- Probation + T4C (121) All Participants: 23
- Probation (96): 35

Group Membership
Recent Study of Non-Residential Community Correctional Programs in Ohio involving over 13,000 Offenders

- Included both misdemeanants and felons under community supervision

- Programs included day reporting centers, work release, ISP, and electronic monitoring programs
TYPE OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION PROGRAM DID NOT MATTER: FOUR FACTORS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO OUTCOME

• Proportion of higher risk offenders in program (at least 75% of offenders in programs were moderate or high risk)

• Level of supervision for higher risk offenders (high risk offenders averaged longer periods of supervision than low risk)

• More treatment for higher risk offenders (at least 50% more time spent in treatment)

• More referrals for services for higher risk offenders (at least 3 referrals for every 1 received by low risk)
Changes in Recidivism by Program Factors for Probation Programs

![Bar chart showing changes in recidivism for different program factors.]

- **Reductions in Recidivism**
  - High Risk Sample: 0.05
  - High Risk Longer Supervision: 0.04
  - High Risk More Ttx: 0.07
  - High Risk More Referrals: 0.11

- **Increased Recidivism**
  - High Risk Sample: -0.02
  - High Risk Longer Supervision: 0
  - High Risk More Ttx: 0.01
  - High Risk More Referrals: -0.03
Change in Recidivism by 4 Point Factor Score for Probation Programs

- Reduced Recidivism
- Increased Recidivism
What Doesn’t Work with Offenders?
Lakota tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. However, in corrections, and in other affairs, we often try other strategies, including the following:

- Buy a stronger whip.
- Change riders.
- Say things like —This is the way we always have ridden this horse.”
- Appoint a committee to study the horse.
- Arrange to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
- Create a training session to increase our riding ability.
- Harness several dead horses together for increased speed.
- Declare that —No horse is too dead to beat.”
- Provide additional funding to increase the horse’s performance.
- Declare the horse is —better, faster, and cheaper” dead.
- Study alternative uses for dead horses.
- Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.
Ineffective Approaches

- Programs that cannot maintain fidelity
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals
- Shaming offenders
- Drug education programs
- Non-directive, client centered approaches
- Bibliotherapy
- Freudian approaches
- Talking cures
- Self-Help programs
- Vague unstructured rehabilitation programs
- Medical model
- Fostering self-regard (self-esteem)
- "Punishing smarter" (boot camps, scared straight, etc.)
The Fidelity Principle: Make Sure Programs Are Delivered With Fidelity and Integrity
Program Integrity and Recidivism

• Every major study we have done has found a strong relationship between program integrity and recidivism
• Higher integrity score – greater the reductions in recidivism
Program Integrity—Relationship Between Program Integrity Score And Treatment Effect for Community Supervision Programs

- Reduced Recidivism
- Increased Recidivism

r-value

0.16
0.12
0.02
-0.15
-0.1
-0.05
0
0.05
0.1
0.15
0.2

0-19%
20-39%
40-59%
60+%
Program Integrity—Relationship Between Program Integrity Score And Treatment Effect for Residential Programs

Reduced Recidivism

Increased Recidivism

Change in Recidivism Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Reduced Recidivism</th>
<th>Increased Recidivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned from the Research

- Who you put in a program is important – pay attention to risk

- What you target is important – pay attention to criminogenic needs

- How you target offender for change is important – use behavioral approaches
Important Considerations

- Offender assessment is the engine that drives effective programs
  helps you know who & what to target
- Design programs around empirical research
  helps you know how to target offenders
- Program Integrity make a difference
  Service delivery, disruption of criminal networks, training/supervision of staff, support for program, QA, evaluation