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Evidence Based Practices
Overview –an
Introduction

Probation plays a clear and significant role in reducing the risk of re-offending and can do so through a systemic application of research-based practices.

Juvenile justice organizations around the world are moving to align their programs and services with what has become known as evidence-based practice (EBP). Starting in the medical profession two decades ago, EBP asserts that public policy and practice should be based on the best available scientific evidence in order to effectively achieve stated goals and efficiently use taxpayers’ dollars. Failure to match services to rigorous, evidentiary standards not only makes poor use of limited public funds but can even lead to an exacerbation of the problems and issues that government seeks to resolve. In the juvenile justice context, research has demonstrated that the proper implementation of EBP can lead to significant reductions in juvenile delinquency and recidivism.

Juvenile justice interventions and programs are considered effective when they reduce a juvenile’s risk to reoffend. In this context, the application of evidence-based practices translates directly into enhanced public safety. The research over the last two decades is both clear and compelling regarding those interventions that result in reduced recidivism. Juvenile probation departments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must adopt the principles of EBP in order to achieve their stated mission of repairing harm to victims, restoring the health and welfare of communities, and enabling juveniles to become productive and law-abiding members of society.

The two paragraphs above are an extract from the monograph entitled Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy: Achieve our Balanced and Restorative Justice Mission Through Evidence-Based Policy.
and Practice, April 2012. The Monograph was the result of a collaborative approach toward improving juvenile justice throughout Pennsylvania. Part of the JJSES initiative includes the development of aids (documents and tools) for county departments to use in advancing their local JJSES efforts. This curriculum is one of those aids. The following curriculum is an introduction to evidence based practices. The six hour course is designed to impart information on the key principles of risk, need, responsivity, and treatment. While it is not skill based training, it is considered to be foundational for those skill-based trainings that would follow. As such, it is strongly recommended that all probation staff be exposed to this curriculum.
Welcome participants to the course.

Explain the JJSES background and rationale for the course. The Juvenile Justice System Enhancement effort began in juvenile justice through the application of research evidence.

The JJSES Statement of Purpose was designed to reflect the underlying goals of the initiative:

- enhancing the capacity of our juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission through the implementation of evidence-based practices
- demonstrating an ongoing commitment to data collection, analysis, and research
- demonstrating a commitment to continuous quality improvement in every aspect of the system.

List the objectives of the course.
By the end of the course participants will be able to

- Identify the individual traits in juveniles that influence illegal behavior (criminogenic needs)
- Describe the risk, need, and responsivity principles and why they are important to know
- Identify the interventions that increase or decrease the likelihood of future illegal behavior

Introduce yourself to the participants. Describe your background sufficiently to indicate that you are a credible faculty member and can assist in issues that may come up in the training. You may not know the answers to all of the questions. If so, tell the person that you will get back to them with a response after you have had an opportunity to find the answer.
Administer the pre-course knowledge test. Explain that the knowledge test (see appendix) is designed to determine the participant’s knowledge before the course. This baseline data can then be compared with the knowledge after the course when the same test is administered. It will tell you how much knowledge was gained as a result of the course, whether the course needs to be modified (such as when the answers do not improve on some questions), and when a group has sufficiently mastered the information.

Unless you are able to conduct the knowledge test before the course begins (such as through survey monkey) you will be handing out two separate tests (identical in its questions), one at the beginning of the class and one at the end. Make it clear that the test is anonymous and that it is only being used to measure knowledge improvement. It is not important that they know all the right answers. It is important that by the end of the course they have improved their knowledge levels. When distributing the test make sure you remind participants to circle pre-test for the first time they take it before the course and post-test for the second time, at the end of the course.

Explain that there are four major modules, each following the key EBP principles. At either end of the four modules will be an introduction module and a conclusion module. Telling them what to expect during the course will help them follow along and to determine if they should wait to ask certain questions.

Summarize the key learning objectives in the introduction module, namely to understand:

- The definition of evidence based practices
- How research reaches the point where it can be considered “evidence”
- Why the juvenile justice field often falls short of its risk reduction potential
- How EBP can improve public safety
- How JJSES aligns with EBP
Provide a definition of evidence based practices. Explain that it is not a new concept. The term EBP has been around since the 1800’s (e.g., see information on French physician Pierre Louis, and his work on one of the first clinical medical trials in 1836 on the subject of bloodletting). It is not complicated: it simply means that we will use research evidence to guide our decision making. Most every field that calls itself a profession uses research evidence (e.g., medicine, nutrition, plumbing, etc.).

Explain that while the literature varies considerably on the measurable effect results, the research on appropriate treatment consistently yields positive results, ranging from mild (7-10%) to significant (30+%).

Meta-analysis (i.e., the review of numerous studies on the same subject) tends to focus on specific interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy or incarceration as opposed to system wide efforts. As a result, there are no known (at the time of the writing of this curriculum) methodological sound studies on system wide reductions. To get a 30% reduction across a system (a figure often reported in Dr. Don Andrews research), it requires trained staff, system collaboration, quality assurance, and adherence to the core EBP principles. Note: the question on the slide is not meant for group discussion but to get the participants to think

Describe the table by examining a hypothetical situation. If 1,000 juveniles entered the court system and the system provided no risk reduction services, 900 of the very high risk juveniles would reoffend (assuming for purposes of this discussion that 90% of this group would likely reoffend). If you applied EBP and achieved a 30% reduction in reoffenses, only 630 would reoffend, resulting in 270 fewer reoffenses. As the risk level goes down, the likelihood of committing new offenses also go down and the potential positive impact would therefore go down. The purpose of this table is to
Significance of 30%

Significance of Thirty Percent
- Compare to medical profession
- How much money and treatment are we willing to expend for similar effect sizes?

Compare to Heart Attack

Risk Reduction for a Heart Attack
- How willing are you to use an intervention that produces a 3% risk reduction of a heart attack?
- What if it produced a 10% reduction of future heart attack?

Plus Costs

Risk Reduction Plus Cost
- How willing are you to use an intervention that produces a 3% risk reduction of a heart attack if the cost was less than $7 per year?
- What if it produced a 15% risk reduction of heart attack and the cost was $63,648?

Illustrate the impact of a 30% reduction on a juvenile justice system and community over the course of time.

Explain that a 100% reduction in rearrest rates is not feasible. A 30% is highly significant. To illustrate the magnitude of 30% it may be useful to compare risk reduction potential with medical treatments.

Ask participants to raise their hand if they take a baby aspirin to help prevent a heart attack. Did they hesitate when their doctor advised them to take one? Do they know what the benefits are likely to be and the potential negative side effects? According to Archives of Internal Medicine (January 9, 2012) low-dose daily aspirin therapy does not significantly reduce the risk of dying from cardiovascular disease and can actually be harmful. The analysis conducted by researchers in nine studies with more than 102,000 participants who were followed for about six years showed that daily low-dose aspirin resulted in a 10 percent reduction in heart attack or stroke, mainly driven by a reduction in nonfatal heart attacks. There was no reduction in death from heart disease, stroke or cancer seen among people taking low-dose aspirin. And the review confirmed aspirin's risk for serious bleeding events. The percent decrease in damaging effects of heart attacks is quite small. However, it may be that the small costs made it an easy investment even if the percent decrease in risk is negligible.

Ask participants to now add in the cost factor. Would they be willing to accept a small percent of risk reduction if the price to them was small? What if it was large? The 15% figure on the slide is the risk reduction for a cardiac event by having bypass surgery.

The analogy is intended to help draw two conclusions: first, that 30% reduction in recidivism is a significant outcome and should be recognized as such, even lauded much in the same way aspirin treatment has been eagerly endorsed by the public. Secondly, risk reduction costs money and while we are willing to spend significant funds to save lives in the medical field with modest returns we should consider risk reduction funding to be a worthwhile effort given its results.

Show participants the correlation table that demonstrates the significance of the correlation rates of EBP compared to medical procedures. This table is designed to show in a different way the significance of risk reduction results as compared to medical procedures. Be aware that these comparisons are for illustration purposes only. The field of medicine is very different than juvenile justice and the range and control of variables also differ dramatically. It was meant only as an illustration of EBP’s impact on outcomes.

Explain that many professionals are skeptical about research and that this skepticism is healthy. There is a great deal of research that is contradictory, some is methodologically flawed, and yet others were written by authors with a vested interest in its outcome. That skepticism should not, however, be taken to the extreme of resistance to its possible accuracy and dismissal of its importance to the field.

Explain that the research field thinks of research in terms of gradients, with some research having achieved greater credence than others. This credibility comes from research principles such as methodological soundness, use of experimental and control groups, multiple site replications, and unbiased authorship. To help define these standards research gradients have been established with gold studies having the greatest scientific rigor. Few studies in juvenile and criminal justice are gold standard because of
difficulty in creating control groups due to equal protection rights and other factors preventing a pure experimental-control design. However, many juvenile justice studies fall in the silver standard gradient. Most of the research used in this curriculum consists of silver standard research. Programs that fall in the promising research gradient may have been crafted using research based principles and/or have not had sufficient research to support their efficacy. They may achieve high effect sizes but more research is needed to verify their veracity. Finally, studies that fall in the inconclusive gradient are those that have contradictory findings.


Show the video clip of a SNL skit called Theodoric of York. This clip takes the medical analogy one step further making fun of a medieval doctor who relied on intuition instead of science despite poor results. In the field of probation we are often guilty of correctional quackery. According to Dr. Ed Latessa, who coined the phrase in 2002, “CQ is the use of treatment interventions that are based on neither existing knowledge of the causes of crime nor of what programs have been shown to change offender behavior.” To become true “professionals” our practices must be based on research knowledge, training and expertise.
Explain that a lot of terms have been used to describe what is now known as evidence based practices. Review the definitions of each of the four terms on the slide (Bumbarger, 2009), illustrating that as we move toward the right our confidence level in the evidence grows. Often used interchangeably, these buzz words refer to similar notions, pointing out subtle distinctions between them helps clarify the distinct meaning of EBP. EBP is not a program or an intervention, but a body of knowledge.

Show the results of a review of the literature on the effectiveness of probation as an intervention (Bonta, et al., 2008). In this study the researchers noted that 8 studies involving 28,523 offenders indicated that probation had no impact on recidivism for violent offenses and 26 studies with 53,930 offenders indicated that probation had a negligible positive effect on rearrest for any crime.

**Side Note:** the researchers point out that there were 26 effect sizes for general supervision and 8 for violent recidivism. The symbol for this is k; k stands for the number of effect sizes or comparisons and not the number of studies, although it is close to the number of studies. For example, you can have one study that has three groups (regular probation, fine only and imprisonment). In this case it is one study but you could have two comparisons thereby calculating two effect sizes (probation vs. fine only and probation vs. imprisonment; k = 2).

Ask the participants to speculate why probation has not had a more positive impact on rearrest rates.

Show the list of most commonly reported reasons why probation has not been effective. This list comes from informal accounts by managers and consultants and some published studies on technology transfer. They include: 1. Probation will not be effective if it devotes its limited resources on the low risk juvenile. Not only are
low risk juveniles likely self-correcting (and don’t need supervision or programming) but requiring them to participate in juvenile justice activities tends to pull them away from the very supports and activities that make them low risk (e.g., time with family and prosocial friends, recreational outlets, employment). 2. When probation and its service provider community have not applied what is known about effective risk reduction practices they do not get the results they aim to achieve. For example, mixing risk levels, not using a cognitive behavioral approach, not using rewards and sanctions effectively, and not having a continuous quality improvement mechanism will likely result in the programs not having a positive impact. 3. To generate maximum outcomes, the entire juvenile justice system should be using research evidence in similar ways. If one or more of the key juvenile justice system players conduct their activities and decision making without regard to the evidence on risk, need, and responsivity, probation’s efforts will be diminished (as, for example, when a plea results in the placement of a low risk juvenile in a program with high risk others or fails to address criminogenic needs). 4. When probation officers have workloads too high it is difficult for them to focus their limited time on the influences of delinquency. Instead, they are doing everything they can simply to monitor conditions. Furthermore, when the courts impose many conditions on the juvenile, the juvenile can be overwhelmed and not feel confident that he/she can successfully complete supervision. Many violations are set off by the sheer number of conditions. 5. When staff or administrators are more concerned about self (or agency) protection, good decisions can be sacrificed. For example, many agencies refuse to supervise certain offenders at a low level even when the assessment indicates this to be appropriate in the event the “case goes bad.” This decision results in over-supervision leaving less time available for the higher risk offender. 6. When the courts and/or staff focus on the “wrong” issues with juveniles reductions in rearrest rates are mitigated. That is,
**Criminogenic Need Exercise**

Set up the criminogenic need exercise by defining criminogenic. A criminogenic need is defined as a dynamic trait or attribute of an individual that contributes to delinquent behavior. It is called a “dynamic” factor because it can be changed during the process of supervision and/or treatment. Explain to the participants that there are thirteen traits listed on the slide. They are to break into groups of 3-5 and insert four of these traits in the first column: those traits that are most influential in future delinquent behavior, and, if treated, would result in the greatest drop in rearrest rates. Then they are to put four of the traits in the middle column. These traits are also criminogenic but do not have the same strength of influence in impacting future delinquency as the items in the first column. The final column would then consist of five traits that are non-criminogenic. Programming for the items in the last column will not, by themselves, likely result in reduction in rearrest rates. Make sure that participants do not look ahead in the course materials to find the answers. The goal is for the participants to discuss and justify their responses, drawing on their personal beliefs and experiences. After everyone is done, ask people to offer what should be in the first column first. Have fun with this exercise as it tends to be highly engaging and provokes many questions. The two subsequent slides should be shown after you have processed each column to show them the right answers so they can write it in their handout. The research reference is Andrews, et al. (2006)

Ask participants what surprised them about the list. Most often, you can expect participants to say things like “substance abuse was not in the top four” and “mental health is not criminogenic.” Be prepared for these and other questions that may arise. Some may push back on the conclusions of this exercise as it does not fit their worldview. Do not get into a debate with participants about this.
Comparing to Heart Attack

9 Heart Attack Factors

Share with them that many are surprised (if you were, say so). They don’t need to just accept it but to think about it. Read the literature. Be observant of their work and see if their perceptions may need to be adjusted. In addition, you might point out that it is likely that they are working with someone whose situation is different than this list implies. That is, they might have someone with a self-esteem issue that is, in fact, criminogenic. Or, that mental health is driving their antisocial behavior. This is uncommon but could be true on a case by case basis. Note that these studies examine large groups of offenders and this is an average effect. If they want to be right more often they want to be guided by this list.

Explain that the Inter-Heart Study (Yusuf, et al., 2004) revealed that there are a number of risk factors related to heart attacks.

Explain that the study revealed that the risk factors for heart attack, in order, are: high bad-to-good cholesterol ratios, smoking, diabetes, hypertension, abdominal obesity, stress/anxiety, failure to exercise daily, failure to eat fruits and vegetables daily, and failure to consume alcohol. The risk of heart attack for individuals who had all 9 of these factors, amazingly, was almost 130 times higher than for somebody with none of them. However, the factors are not all equal in impact. If you had all nine of these risk factors a doctor would not simply instruct you to drink more alcohol as it is a minor risk factor. Instead, he/she would focus on the major factors. Point out that the first two of these risk factors (bad lipid readings and smoking) predicted 2/3 of all heart attacks and are much more influential than the other factors.
**Show** the table that illustrates how, much like with heart attacks, some risk factors associated with illegal behavior have more influence which is why we need to focus on cognitions, coping skills, peer associations, and family, when present (Lowenkamp, et al., 2012).

**Briefly remind** participants of JJSES statement of purpose, illustrating how it seeks to advance the BARJ mission by employing research at all stages of the process.

**Emphasize** that evidence based practices is for all parts of the system and engages all parts of the BARJ objectives. Whether the activity is to achieve risk reduction or victim restoration it should be guided by research. The system needs to collect data and conduct research where data and research does not currently exist. While JJSES emphasizes the competency development portion of the BARJ mission, the same concept of integrating research into practice applies to the other parts as well.

**Remind or show** for the first time the JJSES Framework to illustrate the four stages and the kinds of activities departments are encouraged to engage in during JJSES. It is not important to cover this in detail. It is being shown here to help participants understand the big picture and how JJSES has laid out a framework from beginning to end. This gives staff a sense of where the state is going and what they can expect. Encourage them to read the Monograph if they have not yet already done so.
The Risk Principle: Who

"Who"

1st Principle is the RISK principle or the Who to target
- Do not over-supervise or treat low risk offenders
- Provide programming for medium and high risk offenders
- Don’t mix low and high risk offenders

Summarize what you are about to do in the next module by introducing the four key risk reduction principles, each of which is guided by research evidence. Briefly explain that the risk principle targets the “who” or who will be focused on for services; the need principle targets the “what” or what kind of issues will be focused on; the responsivity principle targets the “how” or how we will match services to the individual; and the treatment principle targets the “which” or which programs tend to work best.

Summarize the main points on the risk principle, namely that risk tells us who to target for supervision and services. Explain that risk, as used here, refers to those offenders with a higher probability of recidivating (as opposed to committing violent or non-violent acts, misdemeanor or felony, etc.). The research provides a caution to juvenile justice professionals against over-supervising or treating low risk youth (who are likely self-correcting) as this is a waste of resources and can actually slightly increase rearrest rates, the need to preserve our resources for the medium and high risk offenders, and a warning about the iatrogenic effects when we mix low and high risk offenders in programs, waiting rooms, and other spaces where they can intermix without significant oversight and control.

The Need Principle: What

“What”

2nd Principle is the NEED principle or the What to target
- Are eight criminogenic needs that become the target for programming
- Want to avoid over-applying conditions as they reduce effectiveness of criminogenic need programming

Summarize the main points on the need principle, namely that “need” tells us what to target for programming. Remind participants that the YLS identifies the criminogenic needs that should become part of the case plan. Non-criminogenic needs should only be added to the youth’s responsibilities when absolutely necessary (such as when addressing a BARJ outcome such as restitution or participation in a victim restoration process) as research indicates that rearrest rates get worse for every non-criminogenic condition added (to be reviewed later in course).
The Responsivity Principle: How

“How”

• 3rd Principle is the RESPONSIVITY principle or the How we target supervision and programming
  - No two people are exactly alike: we need to customize our approach; avoid a one size fits all
  - What are the unique traits of the juvenile that need to be taken into account in order to reduce risk of reoffense?
  - Those traits can be barriers if not taken into account.

The Treatment Principle: Which

“How”

• 4th Principle is the TREATMENT principle or Which programs should be used for the individual’s risk, need, and responsivity
  - Some programs work most of the time; some don’t; some work some of the time depending on the individual; some work better than others
  - The most effective programs are cognitive and behavioral
  - To be effective the program must also adhere to identity.

NOTE: End of Module One

Summarize the main points on the responsivity principle, namely that responsivity tells us how to respond in a uniquely individualistic way to ensure that the supervision or programming experience achieves the intended outcomes. Because we are dealing with individuals we must customize our approach and not treat everyone the same. Responsivity factors, then, tend to be traits that could become barriers in that, if not addressed, will interfere with the intervention effectiveness.

Summarize the main points on the treatment principle, namely that some programs tend to work (i.e., achieve their intended results) and some do not. Some work only under special conditions (e.g., intensive supervision only when coupled with programming). While any one of a diverse set of programs can work depending on the youth’s responsivity factors and criminogenic needs, the most impactful programs tend to be cognitive behavioral. These programs target thinking and problem solving skills. They are behavioral in that they are centered on the present circumstances and risk factors that influence offender behavior and are action oriented rather than talk centered. They teach offenders new, prosocial skills to replace the antisocial ones like stealing, cheating and lying, through modeling, practice, and reinforcement.

References


Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in Community Corrections: The Principles of Effective Intervention. National Institute of Corrections.

Exercise
Pre and Post Knowledge Test

Instructions: The EBP knowledge test is designed to be given prior to the Intro to EBP training and immediately after the training. The same test is administered both times in order to compare the number of questions answered correctly to those answered incorrectly. Participants should be told to not put their names on the test as it is anonymous. It is more important that participants answer to the best of their ability and give a true picture of their knowledge than for them to feel any pressure to “get it right.” The testing is designed to identify

- Whether the training had its intended impact (increased knowledge); and
- Knowledge areas where insufficient understanding exists and for which booster sessions may be necessary

Participants should be given the pretest before the trainer starts teaching. The facilitator or trainer should explain the purpose for the testing and that it is anonymous. Test results should be collected before the training begins. After the training ends, participants should be re-administered the same test. The facilitator or trainer should remind participants to check the “post-test” box on the test to distinguish given answers from the pretest. These post tests should then be collected and the number of questions answered correctly compared to those answered correctly on the pretest. As a group, scores should improve after the training for each question that was answered correctly by less than 90% of the pretest participants. The goal is to achieve an 80% or higher correct response rate for each test question. If, after the pre and post test results are analyzed, the scores do not meet the 80% threshold the department should determine the best method of improving results. Some possible responses include

- Conduct a short EBP booster session(s) (e.g., 30 minutes)
- Have staff read articles on the topic in need of improved knowledge
- Have supervisors conduct coaching sessions individually or in staff meetings

Note: the pre and post-test should be administered as written. However, under Part I: General, question B it asks the participant to indicate their job category. This is provided to give the department an understanding of which job functions might need additional assistance. You will need to fill in the categories of job functions that match your department’s position titles.
EBP Knowledge Pre/Post Test

This survey is anonymous; please do not include your name on the materials. Please select only one response per question.

Part I: General

1. Please indicate the point in time you are taking this survey:
   - [ ] a) Before the training (pre-training survey)
   - [ ] b) After the training (post-training survey)

2. Your Job Category:
   - [ ] a) To be filled in: _______________________
   - [ ] b) To be filled in: _______________________
   - [ ] c) To be filled in: _______________________
   - [ ] d) To be filled in: _______________________

3. How long have you been employed by your current employer?
   - [ ] a) Up to one 1 year
   - [ ] b) 1-3 years
   - [ ] c) 4-10 years
   - [ ] d) Over 10 years
Part II: Evidence-Based Practices

For each of the questions below, please select one response only.

1. Which of the following interventions best reduces recidivism in the long term?
   - Boot camps
   - Wilderness programs
   - Escalating sanctions
   - Cognitive behavioral programs

2. Which is not a criminogenic need?
   - a) Depression
   - b) Anti-social peers
   - c) Low victim empathy
   - d) Unemployment

3. The lack of education is among the top four criminogenic needs.
   - a) True
   - b) False

4. Responsivity means:
   - a) Being responsive to the needs of juveniles
   - b) Using actuarial risk/need assessment tools
   - c) Focusing on juvenile strengths
   - d) Matching interventions to the individual traits of the juvenile

5. It is generally true that treatment can be effective, and therefore, it is more important to provide a lot of treatment than to be concerned with the type of treatment.
   - a) True
   - b) False
6. Placing juveniles with low self-esteem in programs that increase their confidence is an effective way to reduce recidivism.

☐ a) True
☐ b) False

7. It is generally true that most treatment does not work in reducing recidivism. Therefore, dispositions and case plans should focus on holding the juvenile accountable and restoring the crime victim rather than treatment.

☐ a) True
☐ b) False

8. Which of the following programs works in reducing recidivism over the long term?

☐ a) Gardening and horticulture
☐ b) Yoga
☐ c) Lectures designed to give insight
☐ d) AA
☐ e) None of the above

9. Which of the following program components contribute the least to reducing recidivism?

☐ a) Juveniles rehearsing skills learned in programs
☐ b) Staff role modeling
☐ c) Positive reinforcement
☐ d) Programs designed to provide insight

10. Which is most important in lowering recidivism?

☐ a) Lower workload for staff
☐ b) Providing staff with training and skills
☐ c) Getting more resources
☐ d) Use of external control
11. Mixed gender treatment groups:

☐ a) Are effective for role modeling and controlled exposure to mixed gender issues
☐ b) Tend to produce more harmful than positive results
☐ c) Tend to produce neither harmful nor positive results
☐ d) None of the above

12. Evidence-based practices are not used in the fields of:

☐ a) Medicine
☐ b) Nursing
☐ c) Corrections
☐ d) Plumbing
☐ e) None of the above

13. It is important to give juveniles positive reinforcement and feedback when they are pro-social if your goal is risk reduction.

☐ a) True
☐ b) False

14. Swift and certain responses to acts of noncompliance are important if your goal is risk reduction.

☐ a) True
☐ b) False

15. What is the number of positive reinforcing statements that must be given before an individual will take in a corrective comment?

☐ a) 1-2
☐ b) 2-4
☐ c) 4-6
☐ d) 7 or more
16. The use of a correctional institution for higher risk juveniles is effective in changing future illegal behavior after release if the confinement conditions are severe enough so that the juvenile doesn’t want to return.

☐ a) True
☐ b) False

17. Placing a juvenile who has used or been involved with drugs in drug education classes is an effective method of reducing drug use in the future.

☐ a) True
☐ b) False

18. Putting lower risk offenders in a cognitive behavioral class will most likely:

☐ a) Help settle the class down by providing positive role models for the higher risk offenders
☐ b) Increase the lower risk offenders' recidivism rates
EBP Knowledge Pre/Post Test
Answer Key

1. D
2. A
3. False
4. D
5. False
6. False
7. False
8. E
9. D
10. B
11. B or C
12. E
13. True
14. True
15. C
16. False
17. False
18. B
The Risk Principle

Risk to reoffend is one of the most important considerations when determining how best to respond to a juvenile justice system referral and supervision.

Risk reduction efforts require a careful calculation of youth risk levels to ensure that the proper supervision intensity and programming dosage levels are achieved. For low risk youth programming or case management services are more likely to succeed with less intense supervision and/or programming. Medium and high-risk offenders are most likely to benefit from behavioral change programming and case management services, with risk reduction as the primary goal. Risk levels are most accurately identified using actuarial instruments such as the YLS/CMI.
Provide an overview by describing the objectives of the Risk Principle Module. They are

- Defining “risk” of re-offense
- Learning what features are included in the risk principle
- How research on risk is informing the practice of structured decision making
- What other jurisdictions have done to apply the risk principle

Explain that the word “risk” usually conjures up different perceptions depending on who you are talking to. It is important that the use of the term be viewed similarly to avoid misunderstanding. While researchers might use the word “risk” to mean different things at different times, for the purpose of this course, it means risk of committing a future delinquent or criminal act.

Point out that researchers use different measures of risk when studying effectiveness of interventions. For example, measurements might include arrest, adjudication, residential placement, successful completion of supervision, or violations. The length of time after intervention also varies ranging from months to many years. Readers of research should be cognizant of these issues and read the studies carefully. Participants should know that the studies described in this class usually look at rearrest rates over an extended period of time (12 months or more).

Describe what is meant by the term “low risk” by explaining that low risk youth already have a number of protective factors and prosocial supports. They made a mistake by doing something that resulted in an arrest but the very act of getting caught is usually enough for them to make adjustments and not repeat the mistake. The justice system should be careful not to impose conditions that pull them away from the very things that make them low risk.
Explain that the question of what to do with low risk is not new. In fact, it has been studied dozens and dozens of times and these studies have repeatedly shown similar results. Refer to the graph when explaining that at least since 1971 researchers have found that when we apply intensive treatment to low risk offenders their recidivism rate does not go down, rather it slightly increases. Whereas, the same intervention when applied to high risk offenders show reductions in recidivism. This graph stops at 1987. Dozens of additional studies have been conducted since 1987 and the results are similar. Ask participants why low risk might get worse when they receive intensive treatment. Reinforce answers such as: it mixes them with high risk youth, it takes them away from those parts of their life that support a prosocial lifestyle, and it may influence their association with a delinquent identity.

Explain that the field has moved toward the use of actuarial assessments to help identify risk. Actuarial assessments provide an estimate of risk to reoffend based on group data. It will therefore predict the individual’s likelihood of displaying certain behaviors as derived from the behavior of others in similar circumstances and profiles. It will express it in these terms: x% of those with a similar profile will exhibit this behavior within y amount of time.

Point out that study after study has found that “clinical judgment” (i.e., judgment by a professional in the field of study) does not outperform an actuarial assessment tool. One’s own biases based on experience and perception can lead to more false positives/false negatives than an assessment that has been validated and administered properly. This does not mean that professional judgment is without value. There will be times when the assessment will not be accurate and an override should occur.

Describe a U.S. Federal Probation study whereby over 1,000 probation officers viewed a pre-sentence assessment and were asked to identify the risk level of the offender. They were not told the actual results (through the new risk assessment instrument entitled PCRA put in place by US Probation) until after they were subsequently trained on the tool and asked to reassess the individual. The next three slides show the progression between their professional judgment, the
actual risk level, and the probation officers’ assessment of risk after conducting the new risk instrument.

Show the results of the PO’s view of offender risk based on their view of the taped presentence assessment interview. The PO’s were fairly diverse in their view of the offender’s risk with over half indicating that they thought the offender was moderate risk.

Show the actual risk level of the offender (based on the PCRA). This means that only 3 out of 10 PO’s correctly assessed the offender risk level.

Explain that the officers were once again asked to assess the risk level of the offender on the tape. They were asked to do after they were trained on the PCRA. They still did not know what the offender’s actual risk level was. This time, 90 percent of the officers correctly identified the risk level of the offender on tape. Explain that this is one of the reasons why the field of probation is increasingly using an actuarial assessment to help identify risk: it is more accurate than professional judgment, produces greater consistency, and reduces subjectivity/bias.

Point out that Pennsylvania has selected the YLS/CMI assessment for the state. A significant vetting process was used to select this tool, with the assistance of the National Youth Screening and Assessment Project and the MacArthur Foundation. The instrument creates four levels of risk. While this assessment has been widely validated in dozens and dozens of jurisdictions in the United States it has not been validated locally. Small differences are often found based on geographical and other factors. While users should feel confident in the assessment given its consistent validity outcomes, local jurisdictions may want to validate it on their local population.
**Structured Decision Making**

Introduce the concept of structured decision making. Explain that there are many discretion points in the juvenile justice system and that the use of this discretion can make the difference between whether a youth is placed in a facility or not, charged with a minor or major offense, put on supervision or not, etc. Refer to the flow chart and explain that there are at least ten key decision points where decisions about how to process a youth accused of committing a delinquent act could be guided and structured with a set of criteria. Increasingly, systems are using criteria to make these important decisions. This process, properly administered, should result in increased fairness and consistency, assurance that youth are treated according to risk to themselves or the public, and that resources are preserved.

**Contribution to Fairness**

Explain that one of the benefits of structured decision making is that it can reduce biases in decisions and increased fairness while seeking to achieve mission outcomes, one of the key cornerstones to an effective justice system. Some examples of JJSES recommended assessments that provide such guidance include:

1. The MAYSJ-2 (for mental health screening purposes)
2. YLS/CIMI (for intensity of supervision, intervention selection, and case planning)
3. DRAI (for determination of need for secure detention)

**Increasing the Odds**

Explain that it is important to manage our expectations. Promising more than what is reasonable to deliver will result in disenchantment and eroding support for the EBP efforts. Using assessments, then, should be recognized for what it contributes: a greater likelihood that professionals will accurately project the risk level of an individual. However, no actuarial tool is perfect. There will always be false negatives and false positives. It simply increases the odds that professionals will be correct for a given person. It is likely that a low risk youth will someday commit a violent crime. That does not invalidate the assessment any more than a surgeon should stop dispensing medication because one out of a thousand patients has an unexpected allergic reaction.
Balance
A Balanced, Reasoned Approach
- Risk Management (low risk)
  - Least restrictive, most appropriate
- Risk Reduction (moderate-high risk)
  - Address criminogenic needs
- Risk Control (extreme high risk)
  - Control risk of reoffending while under correctional authority

Examples
Application Implications: What Other Jurisdictions Have Done
- Reduce length of reports for low risk juveniles
- Divert low risk juveniles or discharge early
- Increase frequency of supervision contacts with high risk juveniles
- Avoid mixing low and high risk juveniles in programs and reporting days
- Consider different reporting days/locations
- Match staff style to juvenile risk

Exercise
Small Group Exercise on Risk
- In what ways does your department policy and practice SUPPORT the risk principle?
- In what ways does your department policy and practice CONTRADICT the risk principle?

Report Out

NOTE: End of Module Two

Explain that juvenile justice professionals need to vary their response based on youth risk. This requires professionals to be flexible and balanced. Low risk youth do not need much supervision or services. Some of these individuals may be “needy.” These needs can be addressed through other channels (family counseling, school and social services, etc.) to avoid overusing the juvenile justice system to address all service needs and run the risk of pulling too many kids into the system. Moderate to high risk youth should receive the bulk of behavioral change services as they are most likely to benefit from them. The extreme high risk youth will need to be externally controlled (through electronic monitoring, curfew, drug testing, residential placement) until programming outcomes are internalized.

Show participant examples of what other jurisdictions have done in their attempts to integrate the risk principle into day to day practices. There are six examples listed on the slide. Add some of your own. Explain that they will now get a chance to describe ways that their department is integrating the risk principle to local policy decisions and where they might need to make some changes.

Ask participants to break up into groups of 3-5 to answer the questions on the slide. Tell them that they will each be asked to report out by giving one answer for each of the two questions.

Have each small group give one answer to each question. You should spend no more than 15 minutes on report out. If there are too many small groups to do this in 15 minutes then select a few to report out.
References


The Need Principle

Medium and high-risk youth are most likely to benefit from behavioral-change strategies. Furthermore, the research indicates that interventions should be specifically targeted based on assessed criminogenic needs (i.e., an attribute of an individual or an individual’s environment that contributes to delinquent or criminal behavior and that can be changed). These higher risk youth are likely to have multiple risk/need factors that can be changed with programming, such as antisocial thinking, emotional regulation/antisocial personality, family stressors, and antisocial peers. It is important to note that not all criminogenic needs have equal influence on recidivism. While the literature has slightly different ways of expressing criminogenic needs, generally they fall into the “central eight” (see curriculum description of these needs below). Of these eight, the “Big Four” (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2006) consist of antisocial behavior, attitudes, peers, and personality and have the most significant impact on future recidivism. They should therefore be considered the primary intervention targets. Antisocial behavior or history is included in the “Big Four,” even though it is technically a static risk factor. One cannot change past history. However, a number of responses to this risk factor is possible for the probation officer and can influence offender recidivism, such as external control techniques such as curfew, electronic monitoring, intensive supervision, and drug testing. The “other four” (family stressors, substance abuse, lack of employment and education stability/achievement, and poor use of leisure time) are also important, but they should generally be considered the secondary targets for intervention unless one of these four, such as substance abuse, is driving the antisocial behavior. A higher-risk youth typically has a cluster of criminogenic needs that require attention. Often, probation officers attend to the lesser four criminogenic needs and the youth continues to manifest attitudes and behaviors that support crime due to, for example, uncontrolled anger, impulsivity, and poor problem-solving skills. In these cases, interventions tend to be less effective or, in some cases, ineffective. For example, providing a job for youth when they have significant problems with anger and impulsivity could just lead to them walking off the job or being fired.
Provide an overview by listing the objectives of the Need Principle Module. They are

- Defining what is a “criminogenic risk”
- Describing the eight criminogenic needs
- Describing how the criminogenic needs should shape how the probation officer develops the case plan
- Describing how the criminogenic needs should shape the one-on-one probation officer interaction

Explain that the wording on the upcoming slides of the eight criminogenic needs comes from the work of Don Andrews et al. (see Andrews, Bonta, Wormith, 2006 and Andrews, Bonta, 2006). The wording on the YLS/CMI is slightly different and you will notice a text box with the precise assessment related wording.

Explain that many if not most high risk offenders have antisocial thinking as a primary criminogenic need. Offenders are more likely to recidivate if their attitudes and beliefs justify harmful behaviors that lead to illegal activities. This trait allows them to rationalize their behavior and not take responsibility. It includes a tendency to minimize their actions, blame others, feel entitled, attempt to exert power and control over others, and think/act in an egocentric manner. Since they often view the world as unfair they rationalize stealing or hurting others. Many with this trait have the view that they live in a “dog eat dog world”, where only the strong survive. They may not view people in power as a legitimate source of authority and will resist help from others in an authority position. Often, their peers, neighborhood associates, and even family members exhibit similar attitudes which reinforce their own. The juvenile justice professional must be able to recognize antisocial expressions and redirect them. Cognitive behavioral programming is usually the best intervention to address this need as it helps the offender identify how holding those attitudes and beliefs leads them to interpretations and responses that result in negative consequences. By changing one’s thoughts one can change the feelings and then the behavior/outcomes.

Acknowledge that the peer and associate need area is not a surprise to hardly anyone in the business. It is only natural to hang out with people who think like you and have similar values. Offenders may break the law in order to be accepted or fit in. Pro social companions discourage illegal behavior and reward pro social conduct, while antisocial peers can both encourage and reward delinquent behavior. Having meaningful relationships with
pro social peers reduces the likelihood that individuals will commit illegal acts.

**Ask** participants: “How easy is it to deal with this criminogenic need? What do we typically do?” Most will say that it is very difficult and we normally restrict associates and enforce curfews. Ask: “How effective is this technique?” Most will admit that it is not effective. Ask: “What do you think is effective?” The group may have many ideas. Expect to hear: “expose them to more positive, peer relations.” While this is a good suggestion we want to work on helping the youth develop ways to resist negative peer influence. It is not realistic to expect them to break off friendships (at least not right away) but they can learn to avoid high risk situations and assert themselves so they do not give in to negative behavior.

**Explain** that the researchers use the words “personality,” “antisocial personality,” or “temperament” to describe this criminogenic need. That terminology sometimes misleads people to think that this is unchangeable. A criminogenic need is changeable by its definition. Many practitioners prefer to describe this need as coping skills or self-regulation skills as it is more descriptive of the need and infers that it can be impacted with programming. Whatever word is used, this trait consists of a wide assortment of skill deficits including but not limited to risk taking, impulsivity, poor problem solving, poor emotional regulation/anger, weak socialization, restless aggressive energy, lack of empathy, and egocentrism. Programming should focus on skill building. Probation officers can use their one-on-one sessions to work on these issues by teaching them skills and/or refer them to an effective intervention such as a cognitive behavioral class.

**Explain** that family issues include circumstances that add stress such as constant fighting, severe parental absence, lack of warmth/caring, disregard of prosocial success, and lack of accountability. It also includes conditions whereby parents provide little supervision or are harsh or inconsistent in their discipline as well as being abusive or neglectful. These stressors in the home are often triggers to negative behavior. In addition, when family members don’t support prosocial actions the youth fails to learn or embrace prosocial values. This is especially problematic when one or more family members are incarcerated and the justice system is blamed for their individual or family problems. The probation officer should work to improve parent child dynamics in the home, parenting practices, accountability, prosocial reinforcement, and effective conflict resolution.
**Substance Abuse**

- Drug/alcohol abuse
- History of drug/alcohol abuse in home
- Lack of support to acquire or maintain sobriety

**Education**

- Poor academic achievement
- Inability to focus
- Poor attendance
- Conflict with school authorities
- Lack of support for concept of achievement through education

**Employment**

- Poor work history
- Inability to keep a job
- Conflict on the job
- Poor attendance
- Lack of support for concept of achievement by working from bottom up

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**Explain** that substance abuse is a common criminogenic need found in the juvenile probation population. Most practitioners and the general public don’t dispute its influence on delinquent acts. Users are at higher risk to recidivate that non-users. Using illegal substances puts youth in a position of increased contact with antisocial people, and makes it difficult to succeed within education and employment pursuits. Users can become impulsive and erratic and do things under the influence they might not do if they were straight or sober. And, the need for money to support their habit can lead juveniles to commit illegal acts.

However, many professionals over-emphasize substance abuse’s influence in rearrest. While substance abuse CLEARLY is a criminogenic need and should receive proper attention it is not one of the top four most influence needs. It is possible that it could be a top need for a particular individual but when looking at groups of individuals involved in the justice system it tends to be a “lesser” criminogenic need. Typically, a high risk juvenile with a substance abuse issue will have a number of other criminogenic needs that need attending such as peers, antisocial attitudes, and education. However, addressing drug/alcohol usage may require immediate attention in some cases in order to gain control over one’s usage before any of the other programming in the top four need areas can take hold.

**Explain** that juveniles who are not in school or working are more likely to recidivate. The lack of structure in one’s day (i.e., the lack of participation in prosocial activities) often results in idle time which is then spent with antisocial peers. This may lead to harmful behavior such as use of drugs, criminal damage to property, or planning to access quick and easy money illegally. Problems with school usually involve a number of behaviors including relationship conflict, poor academic achievement, low commitment to school, and resistance toward authority. The goal of the probation officer should be to improve academic performance and reduce school behavior problems. However, some of the other criminogenic needs may need to be attended to first before this need can be addressed such as conflict resolution, avoiding high risk situations, prosocial thinking, problem solving, anger management, and the like.

**Explain** that problems with work often involve similar behaviors as those exhibited in school such as relationship conflict, poor performance, low commitment to work, and resistance toward authority. The goal of the probation officer should be to improve commitment to work ideals and work performance. Again, like with education, some of the other criminogenic needs may need to be attended to first before this need can be addressed such as
conflict resolution, avoiding high risk situations, prosocial thinking, problem solving, anger management, and the like. Then, attention can be shifted to the development of vocational skills and employment.

Explain that leisure is the least influential of the eight criminogenic needs and often one that should be addressed last. That does not make it unimportant. Youth who are involved in structured prosocial activities are more likely to stay out of trouble. The probation officer should help the youth locate and participate in activities such as hobbies, sports, clubs, or other types of organized activities. It is through these activities that the youth is also more likely to develop positive peer relations, improve pro-social skills, and strengthen social and community supports.

Show the research study that demonstrates that we achieve greater decreases in recidivism for each criminogenic need that is addressed. Only addressing one criminogenic need before youth are discharged will achieve a modest reduction in rearrest rates whereas addressing five or six will have significant impact. That is because we can achieve a greater reduction in rearrest rates as the risk level rises. For example, you can have a greater impact on a group of youth who will likely recidivate at an 80% rate (very high risk) than a group that will likely recidivate at 10% (very low risk). Reducing rearrest rates lower than 10% is just too difficult; it is already very low. As the risk level increases the individuals will have more needs which means more needs should be addressed.

Remember that it is important to note that this research also examines the ratio of addressing more criminogenic needs than non-criminogenic. This seems to suggest that when we focus too much on non-criminogenic needs we dilute the attention and skills taught around criminogenic needs. These needs are not equal and more emphasis should be placed on criminogenic programming.

Tell the participants that you are going to show a slide that describes a youth named James. Ask them to read the narrative and then, in groups of 3-5, select James’ criminogenic needs. Ask them to get as specific as possible so if they, for example, select personality (or coping skills) as a criminogenic need have them identify the specific issue within that need James needs to work on.

NOTE: When making copies of this curriculum for participants do not include the slide entitled Actual Assessment. You will show this slide when it is time to process the exercise.
**Process** the exercise with the group. Show the actual assessment to demonstrate the key areas for James.

**Show** participants what Travis County, Texas did to simplify the risk and need principle. Travis County, Texas (County seat, Austin, population of approximately 800,000) color coded their cases for the courts. Blue offenders are low risk, gold offenders are medium-high risk, and red offenders are very high risk. Supervision strategies are to be customized to the risk level (i.e., greater intensity of supervision and programming as the risk level increases).

**Show** participants the different objectives for each risk level. Blue offenders, because they are low risk, should be diverted from the system if possible. Too much attention to the low risk offender is a waste of resources and may even do harm. Probation officers should focus their programming on the gold level offenders. The extreme high risk offender should be monitored closely until they are motivated to change and then placed in programming.

**NOTE:** This is an ADULT example. Research implies that there is a subset of adult offenders who do not respond well to treatment (i.e., the extreme high risk) which is why Travis created this category. At the time of this curriculum, research is unclear whether this applies to juvenile offenders due to their age and the fact that they are still in a developmental stage.

**Show** participants the grid that is provided to judges in the presentence report. This grid allows the judge to see at one quick glance the risk level of the individual which leads the judge to operationalize the differential responses noted in the previous slide.
Show participants the table that is also inserted into the presentence report. This table lists the criminogenic needs (left column). If the individual has the particular criminogenic need the probation officer shades it in and explains how that need applies to the individual in question. Again, at one quick glance the judge can see the dominant issues that are in need of attention in terms of conditions of sentencing. The purpose of these Travis County slides is to show how one jurisdiction has integrated the risk/need information into the court reports to help the external stakeholders make informed decisions leading to reductions in recidivism.

Show participants the final Travis County slide. This table illustrates the results of their EBP effort. They examined rearrest rates of offenders before implementing EBP in 2006 (a sample of 1,287 cases). They then looked at rearrest rates of offenders after they implemented EBP in 2007 (a sample of 614 cases). The results show a dramatic drop in rearrest rates for low risk cases.

Ask participants to anticipate the reason this dropped. The answer you are looking for is that they stopped giving them intensive probation services. Prior to EBP it was common practice in Travis County to provide similar supervision for low risk and high risk probationers. The rearrest rate for medium risk offenders also dropped dramatically as treatment resources were re-directed towards the higher risk offenders. The high risk rearrest rates dropped modestly.

References


The Responsivity Principle

In addition to matching the youth’s risk level to the appropriate interventions, it is important to address certain factors that influence the likelihood of a successful treatment experience. Although programming around these factors is not likely to reduce repeat offense rates by itself, they often require special consideration in order to ensure that the criminogenic intervention achieves its objectives. Some of these individual traits that need consideration, when matching the program with criminogenic needs, include the offender’s mental health condition, gender, learning style, cultural and ethnic background, level of motivation, language, learning capacity, and intelligence level. Programs capable of dealing with these factors can achieve intended outcomes, while program interventions that fail to address these traits can hinder success (Andrews & Bonta, 2007; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000).
Provide an overview by listing the objectives of the Responsivity Principle Module. They are

- Defining what is responsivity
- Describing the primary responsivity factors
- Describing how adhering to responsivity positively affects risk reduction outcomes
- Describing how responsivity should inform program referrals, one-on-one interactions, and responses to violations
- Describing how other jurisdictions have been applying the responsivity principle

Define responsivity by explaining that it means aligning the probation response (supervision approach and programming selection) based on the youth traits, characteristics of the program, and traits of individuals working with offenders. By matching the youth traits with the intervention features the youth has the greatest likelihood of success. Everyone has their own learning style and cognitive ability. Disabilities, gender, culture, and mental health also need to be taken into account. Taking into account individual traits in shaping our response is not unlike how we, as parents, treat our children differently. Some kids need a firm but caring approach; others a warm, nurturing, and encouraging approach and an effective parent will adjust accordingly.

Explain that responsivity can have a profound impact on outcomes.
For example, appropriate treatment (where the intervention matches the needs and youth characteristics) can achieve a 30% reduction in recidivism on average. However, inappropriate treatment (where this matching does not occur) can actually increase rearrest rates. This is a sharp swing in outcomes depending on how well we match the service to the youth.

Explain that in the Vieira, et al. 2009 study the researchers examined 122 youthful offenders receiving the YLS by a clinician/social worker to see if the case manager who referred the youth to services matched the service to their identified risk/need factors and responsivity factors (e.g., psychological functioning, medication needs, cognitive capacity, cultural-language issues, youth – staff fit). They found that when the officer made a “good match” the reoffense rate was 25%; when there was a poor match 75% reoffended.
Explain that there are eight common responsivity factors that need to be considered when deciding on the most appropriate supervision approach and intervention(s).

1. Motivation: if a person is not motivated the probation officer may need to utilize motivational enhancement techniques or refer to a service provider who has built in such techniques in the program.

2. Developmental age: seek to place youth of similar developmental age (as opposed to chronological) together.

3. Learning disability: make sure the service provider is aware of the disability and can make accommodations.

4. Intelligence: youth with low intelligence may need a program with special accommodations or individualized approaches.

5. Learning style: youth have different preferred ways to learn such as auditory, visual, and experiential. Explore the extent to which these styles are significant and communicate this information to the provider.

6. Mental health: make sure the youth is stabilized and in control of mental health symptoms before placing in programs; some specialization may be necessary.

7. Culture: if the cultural issues are significant (ethnicity and language) seek a service provider and program that is responsive.

8. Gender: if possible, avoid mixing male and females in the same groups; if not, utilize a program that has gender responsive facilitation. Seek programming that addresses past trauma and symptom management.

Introduce the responsivity exercise. Explain that you are going to ask the participants, in groups of 3-5, to identify the responsivity factors in the case of Lydia and to tailor the interventions according to these factors.

Process this exercise as a large group. Answers you should be looking for include (for example):

- Intervention: co-occurring disorder treatment to deal with the sexual assault/depression/PTSD and the substance abuse at the same time. It probably should be a female specific group (gender responsive).

- Intervention: education. Provide her with a tutor to deal with a severe learning disability.

Because the participants have limited information on Lydia, you are looking for understanding of the concept of responsivity.

Disagreements around what she should receive might not be useful given the likelihood that many will “read between the lines” given the limitations of the case scenario. Reinforce comments that reflect an understanding of responsivity adjustment.
Show participants why, according to this research study, comporting to all three principles (risk, need, and responsivity) is important. When a department only follows one principle (e.g., the risk principle by conducting a risk assessment and applying its implications) but does not adjust practices around the other two principles, the impact on recidivism is negligible. When, two principles are adhered to, a significant reduction in recidivism occurs. Maximum impact on recidivism occurs when all three principles are adhered to.

NOTE: End of Module Four

References


The Treatment Principle

Given the diversity of the offender needs, probation needs to provide a wide assortment of treatment services. The most effective form of programming for most medium- and high-risk youth is cognitive-behavioral. Cognitive-behavioral programs address antisocial thinking patterns, build problem-solving skills, and teach behavioral techniques that equip the offender with new thinking and other skills. This is done through repetitive skill practice increasing in difficulty as the offender masters each skill level. These types of programs tend to most successfully address the criminogenic needs that are more likely to influence future illegal activity. However, programs that address the other criminogenic are also important especially those that deal with family stressors and conflict. A local probation department should have a full continuum of services to address the multitude of needs and to be able to customize the approach based on responsivity factors.
Provide an overview by listing the objectives of the Treatment Principle Module. They are

- Describing which interventions work and why they work
- Describing which interventions tend to do harm (i.e., increase risk of recidivism)
- Describing how probation can work with the local service providers to ensure that programming is effective at reducing risk of re-offense

Explain that many programs can be effective but that they differ in the degree to which they are. Some programs tend to work with medium to high risk youth and others tend not to work. Probation departments should know which programs are not achieving the intended outcomes and stop making referrals to them or help them make modifications. Even the most effective programs will not work if they are not implemented properly, in the same way that buying a table saw does not automatically mean that the user can cut a piece of wood with precision. It requires skill and practice and adherence to proper technique. Even if a program is effective most of the time, it will not mean that it works for all youth all of the time. Probation departments must manage their expectations and collect data to understand the benefit and limitations of programs.

Tell the participants that you are going to show the results of a meta-analysis (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007) by listing a number of programs in table form. Ask them to work in small group (3-5 participants) to identify whether the listed programs tend to not reduce recidivism (or actually increase rearrest rates), modestly reduce recidivism, or greatly reduce recidivism. The researcher provides a range of effect sizes from lowest to highest. The reader should understand that this range includes programs that were poorly administered and those that were administered properly.

After about ten minutes, reconvene the group and ask participants if the program had a positive effect on rearrest rates. Go through each subsequent slide and see if there are questions about the research or why these programs tend to work or not work. Note that the best effect sizes occur when the intervention addresses one of the top four criminogenic needs. The modest effect sizes address the lesser needs. And, those that do not address a criminogenic need tend to have no effect.
Show the research results that summarizes the link between three intervention categories and recidivism. This shows that sanctions by themselves do not reduce rearrest rates and, in fact, result in slightly increased rates. Treatment that does not match up with the traits of the offender (e.g., placing a youth with a low IQ in a program that requires verbal acuity or a highly anxious youth in a confrontational setting) actually results in higher rearrest rates than if no program referral was made. Only appropriate treatment (i.e., where the treatment matches the youth needs and responsivity factors) do we see a sharp reduction in rearrest rates.

Ask participants to name examples of treatment that would qualify as inappropriate.

Introduce the Gatti et al., 2009 study on incarceration effect on reoffense. Researchers in this 20-year study followed 779 low-income youth in Montreal, conducted annual interviews from age 10 to age 17, and then tracked their arrest records in adulthood. Researchers also interviewed the teenagers' parents, schoolmates and teachers. The study accounted for variables such as family income, single-parent-home status and earlier behavior problems (such as hyperactivity) that are known to affect delinquency risk. Kids who entered the juvenile-justice system even briefly - for example, being sent to community service, with limited exposure to other troubled kids - were twice as likely to be arrested as adults, compared with kids with the same behavior problems who remained outside the system. Being put on probation, which involves more contact with misbehaving peers, in counseling groups or even in waiting rooms at probation offices, raised teens' odds of adult arrest by a factor of 14.

Summarize this research by indicating that it suggests justice agencies will have more success if they apply the Risk-Needs-Responsivity Principle to case management and that merely piling services onto youth is unlikely to have a positive impact, could be detrimental, and is not cost effective.

Explain that many juvenile justice officials (and the general public) are of the view that sanctioning offenders has a positive, long term effect. While it is true that sanctioning is important to express disapproval when non-compliant behavior is demonstrated it has limited value. In fact, sanctioning by itself does not impact long term behavioral change by itself. Part of the reason it tends to be ineffective is that the higher risk youth must possess certain characteristics (see slide) in order to learn from the sanction. Most lower risk individuals (like you and I) will learn from such negative consequences because we weigh the costs and benefits, assess the risk, and make a rational choice.
**Chronic Offenders**

Yet Many Chronic Juvenile Offenders are...

- Impulsive
- Short term perspective
- Disorganized
- Failed in school, jobs, etc.
- Distorted thinking
- Hang around with others like themselves
- Drugs and alcohol use clouds their thinking, or only concern is with getting the next high
- Don’t perceive incarceration as unpleasant
- Expected that this is their lot in life...
- Don’t think they will get caught

**What Doesn’t Work?**

What Tends to not Work in Reducing Recidivism

- Punishment, sanctions, or incarceration
- Specific deterrence, or fear-based programs, e.g., rosined Straight
- Military models of discipline and physical fitness - Boot Camps without treatment
- Training programs
- Intensive supervision without treatment
- Drug education programs
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear or emotional appeal
- Non-action/parent group counseling

**What Works?**

What Does Work to Reduce Recidivism?

Programs that:
- Focus on criminogenic needs (especially top four)
- Match right offender to right program
- Use a cognitive behavioral approach
- Use family-based approaches that treat family as appropriate technique
- Use positive reinforcements
- Set realistic levels of dosage/intensity

**Explain** that chronic youthful offenders tend to possess a set of traits that make them more resistant, even immune, from effects of sanctioning. Go through the list on the slide and see if this resonates with most of the participants’ experience. You might want to use a personal story to illustrate this (an individual you had in probation, yourself when you were younger, or experience with your own child).

**Show** the list of programs that tend to not work with youthful offenders. Explain that it is possible for an individual to benefit from one or more of these programs but that on the whole, when looking at groups of individuals, these tend to be ineffective. A jurisdiction may still want to retain one of these programs (such as a drug education program) because it is less expensive and iatrogenic than its alternative but officials should not be optimistic about its likelihood of risk reduction.

**Point out** that it is possible that some programs on this list might work if they integrate programming related to risk, need, and responsivity. For example, boot camps became widely popular in the 80’s with the belief that disciplined military experience can change youth for the better. Despite enormous popularity, the research has shown that they have no effect on recidivism. However, it might be possible for boot camps to achieve risk reduction. Such success would not likely be due to the structure of the military model (such as marching, discipline, shaved heads, and exercise). Rather the success is more likely attributed to program services (e.g., cognitive behavioral, family services, and aftercare).

Scared Straight programs have been shown to lead to increased offending: they not only fail to deter crime, but have been shown to increase juvenile offending when compared with no intervention (by 1% to 28%). Research by the Washington State Institute on Public Policy (Drake, 2007) found that for every $58 spent on scared straight programs, taxpayers and crime victims pay an additional $14,667 associated with youths’ recurring contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

**Explain** that there is positive news about effective programs. Per the same WSIPP study (Drake, 2007) family/community-connected delinquency prevention strategies have been show to save the public between $5,000 and $78,000 per youth and averted costs for court services, policing and care of victims. Review the program traits on the slide as features that must be present for maximum effect.
Prepare participants for the final group exercise. This exercise is designed to help participants apply the course learnings to a case example, Shawn. Explain that you are going to read the key details of Shawn’s case and participants in teams of 3-5 will fill out a worksheet. This worksheet helps the group think through the case management implications from a risk, need, responsivity, and treatment point of view.

Read out loud the case features of Shawn.

Ask each small group to fill in the worksheet. Answer items a through f using what they learned in the class. Examples of what you are looking for include:

a. High supervision (weekly) given his risk level
b. Antisocial attitudes/belief as they permeate most of his trouble. Family would be a second key criminogenic need (due to lack of accountability and mother’s drinking)
c. Cognitive behavioral program
d. Learning disability
e. Make frequent but SHORT office visits. See him more often in the field where he is in his comfort zone to begin with
f. Either conduct the cog class in the office one-on-one or meet with the cog facilitator to see if accommodations can be provided. If placed in group, make sure it is highly stimulating

References


JSES represents a significant enhancement effort for the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System. It is hoped that system practices will increasingly be based on sound research evidence and that they will be implemented with high levels of fidelity. A key fact of evidence-based practices and programs is that, when they are at their best, they continually evolve as new practices are researched and more broadly implemented. Our goal is to see our entire juvenile justice service system demonstrating high levels of fidelity to cost-effective practices, including community-based, locally developed program models.

JJSES will be driven by its three key strategies for enhancing the juvenile justice system: employing evidence-based practices, collecting and analyzing data to measure these efforts, and using the data to continuously improve the quality and cost effectiveness of the juvenile justice system. As such, JJSES anticipates and plans for continuous improvement and change.
Provide an overview by listing the objectives of the Summary Module. They are

- Describing the do’s and don’ts of evidence based practices
- Identifying what resources are available
- Conducting the post knowledge test

Review the list of probation officer do’s and don’ts as it relates to risk, need, and the use of rewards/sanctions. Explain that the items under risk and need are not new (as they were previously discussed in the course). However, some of the items under rewards and sanction may be new as they were not covered in any detail throughout the course. Explain that you are just going to touch on these do’s and don’ts today because they are important and that they will be reviewed in more detail at a future training entitled four core competencies. They include

- Don’t overlook violation behavior; respond to every violation. To impact behavior change it is important that the youth know that there are swift and certain responses to non-compliance. Ignoring these behaviors implies that compliance is not important.

- Sanctioning for violation behavior should be tied to criminogenic needs. Most violation behavior is influenced by the same eight criminogenic needs discussed earlier. A missed appointment might occur because the youth does not think he should have to be burdened by a probation appointment (antisocial thinking), he wants to hang with his buddies (peers), or because he thought skateboarding would be fun (impulsivity). Violation responses should coincide with the factor that these criminogenic needs are influencing the non-compliant behavior.

- Don’t withhold affirmation and positive reinforcement. Behavior is more likely to be repeated when the probation officer uses positive reinforcement. Some of the most effective techniques do not cost money or resources (e.g., verbal affirmation or reduced reporting requirement).
Ask each individual to silently write down three things they learned today that has implications to their day to day job. It might be that they are over-supervising low risk offenders, under-supervising high risk, not addressing the top criminogenic needs, or using programs that tend to be ineffective. Then ask them to name three things that they need to be successful in applying the principles. Those things may be external (e.g., more training or access to community resources) or internal (e.g., change in attitude about the research findings, time to think about what was discussed).

When everyone has had time to finish their answers ask for a few people to share an item off their list.

Remind participants that there is a post knowledge test that will now be administered in order to determine how much knowledge was gained as a result of the course, whether the course needs to be modified (such as when the answers do not improve on some questions), and if the group has sufficiently mastered the information. Make it clear that the test is anonymous and that it is only being used to measure knowledge increase. When distributing the test make sure you remind participants to circle post-test on the form.

Remind participants of the JJSES Framework and of the various activities that are planned for departments as it unfolds over time. Ask if there are any questions about this. If you don’t know the answer take their name and question and get back to them.

Explain to participants that JJSES has developed a number of resources that are available to them. If they have a need for more resources or information they should contact one of the four JJSES Stage leaders.
**Additional Resources**

**Sources for Research on the Web**

- The Campbell Collaboration: [www.campbellcollaboration.org](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org)
- The Center for the Study of the Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado: [www.ucdenver.edu/violence](http://www.ucdenver.edu/violence)
- George Mason University’s Center for Evidence-Based Criminology: [www.gmu.edu/crime](http://www.gmu.edu/crime)
- SAMHSA’s (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) National Treatment Improvement Exchange Programs and Practices (NTIEP): [www.ntiep.samhsa.gov](http://www.ntiep.samhsa.gov)
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs’ Crime Solutions.gov: [www.crimesolutions.gov](http://www.crimesolutions.gov)
- University of Cincinnati, The Corrections Institute: [www.uc.edu/corrections.html](http://www.uc.edu/corrections.html)
- University of Maryland, Institute of Government Research: [www.legis.maryland.gov](http://www.legis.maryland.gov)
- Temple University, University Institute of Behavioral Research: [www.uibrue.org](http://www.uibrue.org)

**Reminder**

Thank You!

**JISES Purpose Statement**

We dedicate ourselves to working in partnership to enhance the capacity of professionals serving the juvenile justice system to honor and rethink strategies to support youth and families:

- Choosing evidence-based practices, with fidelity, at every stage of the juvenile justice process;
- Collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of those efforts, and, with this knowledge,
- Working to continuously improve the quality of our decisions, services and programs.

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**NOTE:** End of Module Six and Course

**Explain** that there is a lot of research information on the web. This slide is provided for those who want to review this web-based information and need a place to start for research articles that have been vetted as having met sufficient scientific rigor.

**Remind** the participants about the JISES mission or purpose statement and thank them for their participation in the training.