What Works and What Doesn’t in Reducing Recidivism with Youthful Offenders

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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 Decision Making Requires

1. Assessment information
   - Valid and reliable offenders assessment process
   - Assessment of programs and practices

2. Relevant research
   - Consult research
   - Design and fund programs that are based on empirical evidence
   - Use existing resources (i.e., Crimesolutions.gov)

3. Available programming
   - To reduce risk
   - Improve existing programs
   - Develop new programs
Evidence-Based Decision Making Requires:

4. Evaluation
   - Youth
   - Quality assurance processes
   - Performance measures
   - Data

5. Professionalism and knowledge from staff
   - Understand EBP
   - Trained, coached, and skilled
   - Commitment
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.
Criminal Sanctions vs. Treatment for Youthful Offenders

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 youthful offenders, however, not all programs are equally effective

- The most effective programs 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.
Risk Principle

As a general rule treatment effects are stronger if we target higher risk youth, and harm can be done to low risk youth
Risk Level by Recidivism for the Community Supervision Sample

Percent with New Arrest

- Low Risk: 9.1%
- Medium Risk: 34.3%
- High Risk: 58.9%
- Very High Risk: 69.2%

Risk Levels:
- Low: 0 - 14
- Medium: 15 - 23
- High: 24 - 33
- Very High: 34+
There are Three Elements to the Risk Principle

1. Target those youth with higher probability of recidivism

2. Provide most intensive treatment to higher risk youth

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

- 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 Youthful Offenders

- If you have 100 High risk youth 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 youth about 10% will fail
- If you put them in same program failure rate will be 20%
Targeting Higher Risk Youth 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 Youth
The question is: What does more “intensive” treatment mean in practice?

• Most studies show that the longer someone is in treatment the greater the effects, however:

• Effects tend to diminish if treatment goes too long
Provide Most Intensive Interventions to Higher Risk Youth

• Higher risk youth will require much higher dosage of treatment
  – Rule of thumb: 100-150 hours for moderate risk
  – 200+ hours for high risk
  – 100 hours for high risk will have little effect
  – Does not include work/school and other activities that are not directly addressing criminogenic risk factors
#3: Intensive Treatment for Low Risk Youth will Often Increase Failure Rates

- Low risk Youth will learn anti social behavior from higher risk
- Disrupts pro-social networks
- Increased reporting/surveillance leads to more violations/revocations
The Risk Principle & Correctional Intervention Results from Meta Analysis

Dowden & Andrews, 1999
Risk Level by New Commitment or New Adjudication: Results from 2013 Ohio Study of over 10,000 Youth

- Low Risk: Community (7), Residential (20), Institution (24)
- Moderate Risk: Community (14), Residential (37), Institution (43)
- High Risk: Community (37), Residential (57), Institution (59)
Recidivism Rates by Total Months in Programs

- **Low**
  - 0-3 months: 5.1
  - 4-12 months: 8.6
  - 13+ months: 12.5

- **Moderate**
  - 0-3 months: 10.3
  - 4-12 months: 12.5
  - 13+ months: 19

- **High**
  - 0-3 months: 42.2
  - 4-12 months: 37.6
  - 13+ months: 34.5
Findings from Ohio Study

• Recidivism rates for low risk youth served in the community were 2 to 4 times lower than those served in Residential or Institutional facilities.

• We also found that placing low risk youth in Substance Abuse programs significantly increased their recidivism rates.

• High risk youth were more successful when they received a higher dosage of treatment (programming for 13 months or more).

• Lower and moderate risk youth did better with lower dosage programs.
To understand the Need Principle we need to review the body of knowledge related to risk factors.

What are the risk factors correlated with criminal and delinquent conduct?
Major Set of Risk/Need Factors

1. Antisocial/procriminal attitudes, values, beliefs and cognitive-emotional states
Cognitive Emotional States

- Rage
- Anger
- Defiance
- Criminal Identity
Identifying Procriminal Attitudes, Values & Beliefs

Procriminal sentiments are what people think, not how people think; they comprise the content of thought, not the skills of thinking.

What to listen for:

- Negative expression about the law
- Negative expression about conventional institutions, values, rules, & procedures; including authority
- Negative expressions about self-management of behavior; including problem solving ability
- Negative attitudes toward self and one’s ability to achieve through conventional means
- Lack of empathy and sensitivity toward others
Neutralization & Minimizations

Offenders often neutralize their behavior. Neutralizations are a set of verbalizations which function to say that in particular situations, it is “OK” to violate the law

**Neutralization Techniques include:**

- **Denial of Responsibility:** Criminal acts are due to factors beyond the control of the individual, thus, the individual is guilt free to act.
- **Denial of Injury:** Admits responsibility for the act, but minimizes the extent of harm or denies any harm.
- **Denial of the Victim:** Reverses the role of offender & victim & blames the victim.
- **“System Bashing”:** Those who disapprove of the offender’s acts are defined as immoral, hypocritical, or criminal themselves.
- **Appeal to Higher Loyalties:** “Live by a different code” – the demands of larger society are sacrificed for the demands of more immediate loyalties.

(Sykes and Maltz, 1957)
Major set Risk/needs continued:

2. Procriminal associates and isolation from prosocial others
Reducing Negative Peer Associations

✓ Restrict associates
✓ Set and enforce curfews
✓ Ban hangouts, etc.
✓ Teach offender to recognize & avoid negative influences (people, places, things)
✓ Practice new skills (like being assertive instead of passive)
✓ Teach how to maintain relationships w/o getting into trouble
✓ Identify or develop positive associations: mentors, family, friends, teachers, employer, etc.
✓ Train family and friends to assist offender
✓ Set goal of one new friend (positive association) per month
✓ Develop sober/prosocial leisure activities
Major set Risk/Needs continued:

3. Temperamental & anti social personality pattern conducive to criminal activity including:

– Weak Socialization
– Impulsivity
– Adventurous
– Pleasure seeking
– Restless Aggressive
– Egocentrism
– Below Average Verbal intelligence
– A Taste For Risk
– Weak Problem-Solving/lack of Coping & Self-Regulation Skills
Major set of Risk/Need factors continued:

4. **A history of antisocial behavior:**
   - Evident from a young age
   - In a variety of settings
   - Involving a number and variety of different acts
Major set of Risk/Needs Continued:

5. Family factors that include criminality and a variety of psychological problems in the family of origin including:
   – Low levels of affection, caring and cohesiveness
   – Poor parental supervision and discipline practices
   – Out right neglect and abuse
Major set of Risk/Needs continued:

6. Low levels of personal educational, vocational or financial achievement
Leisure and/or recreation

7. Low levels of involvement in prosocial leisure activities

– Allows for interaction with antisocial peers
– Allows for offenders to have idle time
– Offenders replace prosocial behavior with antisocial behavior
Substance Abuse

8. Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs

– It is illegal itself
– Engages with antisocial others
– Impacts social skills
### 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>
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</tbody>
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## Major Risk and/or Need Factor and Promising Intermediate Targets for Reduced Recidivism

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<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>Enhance 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, 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

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

### Need Principle

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criminogenic</th>
<th>Non-Criminogenic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Anti social attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anti social friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Substance abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impulsive behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Low self esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creative abilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Medical needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Physical conditioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Needs Targeted & Correlation with Effect Size for Youthful Offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Punishment</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond Anti Social Peers</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague Emotional Problems</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect Anti Social Thinking</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminogenic Needs</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targeting Criminogenic Need: Results from Meta-Analyses

Assessment is the engine that drives effective correctional programs

- Need to meet the risk and need principle
- Can help reduces bias
- Aids decision making
- Allows you to target dynamic risk factors and measure change
To Understand Assessment it is Important to Understand Types of Risk Factors
Dynamic and Static Factors

- Static Factors are those factors that are related to risk and do not change. Some examples might be number of prior offenses, whether an offender has ever had a drug/alcohol problem.

- Dynamic factors relate to risk and can change. Some examples are whether an offender is currently unemployed or currently has a drug/alcohol problem.
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
There are two types of dynamic risk factors

• Acute – Can change quickly

• Stable – Take longer to change
Examples of Assessment Tools for Youthful Offenders

- Youthful Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (MHS.com)
- Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument YASI
- Ohio Youth Assessment System
Youthful Level of Service/Case Management Inventory

- Examines 42 items across 8 domains
  - Offenses
  - Family
  - Peers
  - Substance abuse
  - School
  - Leisure
  - Personality
  - Attitudes
- Score and rating in each area and overall
One New Non-Proprietary System is the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS)

It consists of five instruments:

- Diversion Tool
- Detention Tool
- Disposition Tool (with Screener)
- Residential Tool
- Reentry Tool
Ohio Youth Assessment System
Full Report: Dispositional Tool

**Percentage of Recidivism**

- Low
- Moderate
- High

**Level of Risk**

- Low
- Moderate
- High

**Treatment Priorities**

- JJS
- Family
- Peers
- Education / Employment
- Pro-Social
- Substance, Mental Health
- Values
Treatment Principle (general responsivity)

The most effective interventions are behavioral:

• Focus on current factors that influence behavior

• Action oriented

• Staff follow “core correctional practices”
Type of Treatment and Effect Sizes for Youthful Offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reductions in Recidivism</th>
<th>Non-Behavioral</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect Size</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Core Correctional Practices

1. Effective Reinforcement
2. Effective Disapproval
3. Effective Use of Authority
4. Quality Interpersonal Relationships
5. Cognitive Restructuring
6. Anti-criminal Modeling
7. Structured Learning/Skill Building
8. Problem Solving Techniques
Core Correctional Practices and Recidivism

Most Effective Behavioral Models

• Structured social learning where new skills and behaviors are modeled

• Family based approaches that train family on appropriate techniques

• 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.
Some Family Based Interventions

- Designed to train family on behavioral approaches
  - Functional Family Therapy
  - Multi-Systemic Therapy
  - Teaching Family Model
  - Strengthening Families Program
  - Common Sense Parenting
  - Parenting Wisely
Effectiveness of Family Based Intervention: Results from Meta Analysis

• 38 primary studies with 53 effect tests

• Average reduction in recidivism = 21%

However, much variability was present (-0.17 - +0.83)

Dowden & Andrews, 2003
Mean Effect Sizes: Whether or not the family intervention adheres to the principles
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
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
Among the Factors Not significant:

- Juvenile versus adult
- Minorities or females
- Brand name of the 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
Applying Core Correctional Practices and Cognitive Behavioral Interventions in Supervision
We are currently training on a new model of PO and Case Manager interaction

Effective Practices in Correctional Supervision (EPICS)
Traditional Officer-Offender Interactions are often not Effective because:

- They are too brief to have an impact
- Conversations focus almost exclusively on monitoring compliance conditions (and therefore emphasize external controls on behavior rather than developing an internal rationale for pro-social behavior)
- Relationship is often more confrontational and authoritarian in nature than helpful
- What is targeted is not always based on assessment
- More areas discussed = less effective
SESSION OVERVIEW

• Each session should be structured in the following way:

  1. Check-In
  2. Review
  3. Intervention
  4. Homework
Rationale for EPICS

Preliminary Data from Canada:

- Trained officers had 12% higher retention rates in comparison with untrained officers at six months.

- Also found reductions in recidivism
Two year Recidivism Results from Canadian Study

Findings from Federal Probation Sample

Recidivism Results from Ohio Study looking at Fidelity and High Risk Offenders (adult and juvenile)

We are Currently Piloting a New Version: Effective Practices for Community Support (EPICS for Influencers)

• Designed to identify those people in the offender’s life that want to help them stay out of trouble and train them on some of the core skills taught in EPICS.

• Includes training of coaches to provide on-going support
Why EPICS for Influencers?

- Build a pro-social network with some actual skills to help offenders avoid risky situations
- Increase “dosage”
- Research shows that relapse prevention programs that trained significant others and family members in cognitive-behavioral approaches were three times as effective as programs that did not.
EPICS for Influencers is Designed for:

• Mentors
• Coaches
• Family Members
• Friends
• Faith Based Organizations
• Reentry Coalitions
• Law Enforcement
• School Officials
• Significant others
• Pilot Sites include:
  – LA County Jail Reentry Program
  – Hamilton County (Cincinnati) Reentry Coalition
  – Portsmouth, OH Juvenile Truancy and Mentoring Program
These approaches help us….

- Structure our interventions
- Teach and model new skills
- Allow offender to practice with graduated difficulty
- Reinforce the behavior
What Doesn’t Work with Youthful 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 with Youthful Offenders

- Programs that cannot maintain fidelity
- Programs that target non-criminogenic needs
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals
- Shaming offenders
- Drug education programs
- Non-directive, client centered approaches
- Bibliotherapy
- Talking cures
- Self-Help programs
- Vague unstructured rehabilitation programs
- “Punishing smarter” (boot camps, scared straight, etc.)
Fidelity Principle

Making sure the program is delivered as designed and with integrity:

- Ensure staff are modeling appropriate behavior, are qualified, well trained, well supervision, etc.
- Make sure barriers are addressed but target criminogenic needs
- Make sure appropriate dosage of treatment is provided
- Monitor delivery of programs & activities, etc.
- Reassess offenders in meeting target behaviors
Effects of Quality Programs Delivery for Evidenced Based Programs for Youth Offenders

Therapist Competency Ratings and Recidivism

Some 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
- Program Integrity makes a difference - Service delivery, training/supervision of staff, support for program, QA, evaluation, etc.