

Highlights of Evidence-Based Correctional Practices

Prepared by:
Judith Sachwald, Best Practices Advisor to the Secretary
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
February 2016

Goals of Evidence-Based Correctional Practices

- Protect public safety;
- Hold offenders accountable to victims and the community.
- Motivate/support offenders through the process of becoming law-abiding, productive members of their families and communities.

Why Do Policymakers Embrace Evidence-Based Practice?

- Improves outcomes.
- Reduces victimization.
- Enhances collaboration.
- Nourishes appetite for data-driven decision making.
- Targets funding toward the interventions that yield the greatest returns.

Sources of Evidence

GOLD

- Experimental/control research design with controls for attrition
- Significant sustained reductions in recidivism obtained
- Multiple site replications
- Preponderance of all evidence supports effectiveness

SILVER

- Quasi-experimental control research with appropriate statistical controls for comparison group
- Significant sustained reductions in recidivism obtained
- Multiple site replications
- Preponderance of all evidence supports effectiveness

BRONZE

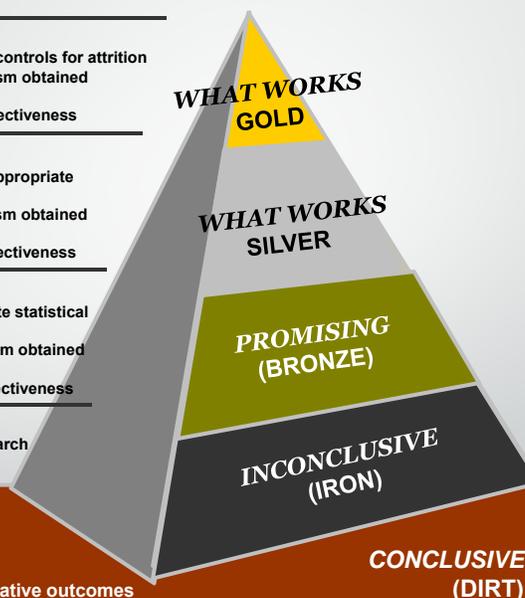
- Matched comparison group without complete statistical controls
- Significant sustained reductions in recidivism obtained
- Multiple site replications
- Preponderance of all evidence supports effectiveness

IRON

- Conflicting findings and/or inadequate research designs

DIRT (DOES NOT WORK)

- Silver and Gold research showing negative outcomes



“When different experiments give you the same results, it is no longer subject to your opinion. That’s the good thing about science. It’s true whether or not you believe in it. That’s why it works.”



Neil DeGrasse Tyson,
Astrophysicist, Author

5

Eight Principles of EBP

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Assess Actuarial Risk

- Risk refers to risk of re-offending
- We can predict future criminal behavior by assessing risk factors
- The best way to assess offenders' risk factors is by using an actuarial assessment (e.g., LSI-R)
- We want to *match* levels of treatment to the risk level of the offender

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Goals of Assessment

- To ensure thorough and careful exploration of critical variables for each offender including risk to offend
- To promote individualized case management
 - Initial case planning
 - Ongoing case management
- To inform decision making
 - Structure
 - Consistency
 - Objectivity
 - Effectiveness
- Maximize investment in correctional resources

Enhance Intrinsic Motivation

True or False

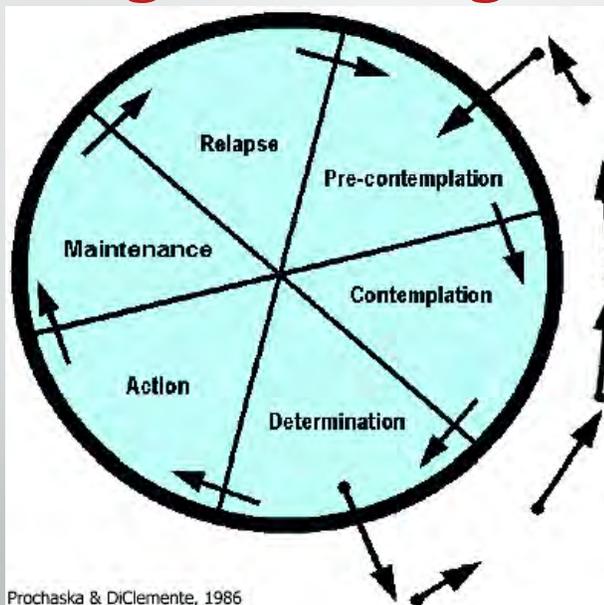
People don't change unless they want to change.

True or False

There are things we can do to move people through the stages of change.

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Stages of Change



Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986

OARS

Open-ended questions – seek a better understanding of what motivates a person and to build rapport and trust

Affirmations – compliment or demonstrate and appreciation to increase future positive behaviors

Reflections – indicate you have been listening and understand what is being said (not agreement)

Summarizations – link information together and reinforce what has been discussed

11

Target Interventions

- **Risk Principle:** Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders.
- **Need Principle:** Target interventions to criminogenic needs.
- **Responsivity Principle:** Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs.
- **Dosage:** Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months.
- **Treatment Principle:** Integrate treatment into the full sentence/sanction.

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

The Risk Principle

The risk principle tells us *who* to target

- *High risk* offenders are more likely to recidivate and are more active when they do recidivate.
- *High risk* offenders require the most intensive intervention (supervision and treatment) for the longest period of time.
- *Low risk* offenders are not as likely to recidivate.
- Too much intervention with *low risk* offenders can increase the likelihood of recidivism.

The Need Principle

To *what* should we be paying attention?

- Certain factors are tied to criminal behavior.
- Targeting these factors will result in a reduction in recidivism.

Responsivity Principle

- The responsivity principle tells us **how** to target offender issues.
- General
 - Programs that are based on cognitive-behavior/social learning theories are generally responsive to offenders.
- Specific
 - Individuals learn differently and have specific barriers that should be removed before programming or addressed during programming.

Major Criminogenic Risk/Need Factors

- "Big Four":
 - Antisocial attitudes
 - Antisocial peers
 - Antisocial personality
 - History of antisocial behavior
- Other criminogenic risk factors:
 - Substance abuse
 - Employment/education
 - Low family affection/poor supervision/poor communication
 - Leisure/Recreation

Source: Andrews & Bonta, 1994

Examples of non-criminogenic needs are: self-esteem, anxiety, creative abilities, history of trauma/victimization, medical needs, physical conditioning.

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

Factor	Risk	Dynamic Need
History of antisocial behavior	Early and continued involvement in a number of antisocial acts	Build noncriminal alternative behaviors in risky situations
Antisocial personality	Adventurous, pleasure seeking, weak self control, restlessly aggressive	Build problem solving, self management, anger management, and coping skills
Antisocial cognition	Attitudes, values, beliefs and rationalizations supportive of crime, cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment and defiance	Reduce antisocial cognition, recognize risky thinking and feelings, build up alternative less risky thinking and feelings. Adopt a reform and/or anti-criminal identity
Antisocial peers	Close association with criminals and relative isolation from prosocial people	Reduce association with criminals, enhance association with prosocial people

Adopted from Andrews, D.A. et al, (2006). The Recent Past and Near Future of Risk and/or Need Assessment. *Crime and Delinquency*, 52 (1).

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

Factor	Risk	Dynamic Need
Family and/or marital	Two key elements are nurturance and/or caring, better monitoring and/or supervision	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, communication, enhance monitoring and supervision
School and/or work	Low levels of performance and satisfaction	Enhance performance, rewards, and satisfaction
Leisure and/or recreation	Low levels of involvement and satisfaction in anticriminal leisure activities	Enhance involvement and satisfaction in prosocial activities
Substance Abuse	Abuse or alcohol and/or drugs	Reduce substance abuse, reduce the personal and interpersonal supports for substance abusing behavior, enhance alternatives to substance abuse

Adopted from Andrews, D.A. et al, (2006). The Recent Past and Near Future of Risk and/or Need Assessment. *Crime and Delinquency*, 52 (1).

Fidelity/Integrity Principle

Adherence to the three principles for treatment

- Focusing on the risk principle → those with the highest risk to recidivate receive the most intensive of services and those with lower risk received limited correctional intervention.
- Focusing on the needs principle → identifying the dynamic criminogenic needs to target for change. These needs are the same factors that precipitate criminal behavior; therefore, they are to be targeted for change.
- Focusing on the responsivity principle → identifying and resolving the barriers to treatment and service delivery.

Fidelity/Integrity Principle

Proper assessment administration, interpretation, classification and reassessment

- Staff must be formally trained and provided with updated (maintenance) training on validated and normed risk/needs assessment tools.
- Assessments should also be supervised and reviewed to check for inter-rater reliability.
- Proper classification is necessary to determine treatment dosages (as well as targeted areas).
- Reassessment gauges what risk factors were targeted for change and whether there has been a change in the overall risk level of the offender as a result of services .

Fidelity/Integrity Principle

Also, this principle suggests that:

- There should be a disruption of criminal networks.
- Program development should be guided by theory and a review of empirical research regarding the elements of successful treatment interventions (e.g., cognitive behavioral approaches).
- Programs should undergo rigorous process and outcome evaluations to determine whether or not their programming is effectively reducing recidivism for their targeted population.
 - CPAI-2000 and CPC Program and Group Forms
 - RNR Simulation Tool

What is the RNR Simulation Tool?

Assess an Individual/ Estimate Recidivism Reduction



Coming Soon: Assess offenders or estimate the reduction in recidivism your offenders can expect by matching individuals to treatment programs.

- Assess/case plan for individuals
 - Translate assessment findings into programming and control recommendations
 - Estimated recidivism reduction

Rate Your Jurisdiction's Program



Coming Soon: Assess your current programs based on treatment offered, control, quality, and other factors.

- Rate programs
 - Assesses current programming
 - Based on program content, quality, etc.

Assess Jurisdiction's Capacity/ Estimate Recidivism Reduction



Coming Soon: Use client population data and current programming to identify programs that meet your population's needs.

- Assess system capacity
 - Is programming available to achieve responsiveness?

Skill Train with Directed Practice

- It's easy to go back to old ways, it's hard to learn new skills (takes time and much practice)
- Cognitive Behavioral Techniques
 - Think, act and respond differently

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Provide Positive Reinforcement

- It's all about carrots and sticks.
- More positive reinforcement than negative (4:1).
- Consistent with procedural justice, it is essential to explain ground rules for positive and negative reinforces throughout case planning and case management processes.

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Tips for Behavior Reinforcement

Effective Reinforcement:

- Focus on the behavior being reinforced and offer sincere verbal praise with a statement linked to the behavior.
- Ask the individual to identify short and long term benefits for continuing this prosocial behavior.
 - Example: arriving on time for appointments.

Effective Disapproval:

- Focus on the behavior being disapproved.
- Be firm and clear in stating that the behavior was unacceptable.
- Ask the individual to identify short and long term consequences for continuing this antisocial behavior.
 - Example: Offender lied to the probation officer.

Build Support in Communities

- Keeps offenders from coming back into the criminal justice system.
- Improve bonds and ties to pro-social community members.
- Prosocial ties can actively reinforce preferred behaviors.

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Measure Processes & Practices

- Accurate and detailed documentation of assessments, case plans and case management are fundamental to evidence-based supervision.
- Identifying and measuring outcomes is the foundation of evidence-based practice.
- Assess offender change in cognitive and skill development, and evaluate offender recidivism.

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Measure Processes & Practices

- Routinely measure and document employee performance.
- Employees that are periodically evaluated for performance achieve greater fidelity to program design, service delivery principles, and outcomes.
- Employees whose performance is not consistently monitored, measured, and subsequently reinforced:
 - Work less cohesively
 - Provide less support to the organization's mission.

Provide Measurement Feedback

Once a method for measuring relevant processes/practices is in place, the information must be utilized by various parties to monitor process and change.

Principles of Evidence-Based Practices
Assess Actuarial Risk
Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
Target Interventions
Skill Train with Directed Practice
Provide Positive Reinforcement
Build Support in Natural Communities
Measure Relevant Processes and Practices
Provide Measurement Feedback

Measure Processes & Practices

- Advising offenders about their progress builds accountability and is associated with enhanced motivation for change, lower treatment attrition, and improved outcomes (e.g., reduced drink/drug days; treatment engagement; goal achievement).
- The same is true at the organizational level.
 - Monitoring and evaluating delivery of services and fidelity to procedures helps build accountability and maintain integrity to the organization's mission.
 - Regular performance audits and instructional case reviews with an eye on improved outcomes, keep employees focused on the ultimate goal of reduced recidivism through the use of evidence-based principles.

Evidence-Based Organizations

In an evidence-based correctional organization:

- Everyone shares a common mission and vision.
- Resources are used effectively and efficiently.
- Offenders are held accountable.
- Data drives decisions.
- Learning and innovations are welcome.
- System players communicate and collaborate.

Workforce Development

- Ultimately, it's the employees that determine whether system reform and culture change are successful.
- Expectations of the workforce change with reform, and the competencies needed to do the job need to be well defined.
- To avoid mixed messages, new competencies should be infused throughout workforce processes.
 - Recruitment and selection -- Training
 - Performance appraisals -- Promotions

Why Are Recidivism Rates Higher Than Desired?

Some of the most commonly cited reasons:

- We focus on the wrong issues.
- We give too much attention to the low risk and too little to the high risk.
- Programs have not applied research knowledge nor are these practices applied with fidelity.
- The system is not in alignment; sends mixed messages to employees.

The Top Five Reasons Why EBPs Fail

- Organizational development (ineffective technology transfer strategies).
- System that is unable or unwilling to practice true collaboration.
- Failure to measure, reinforce, and hold everyone accountable for EBP.
- Ineffective leadership.
- Fidelity, fidelity, fidelity.

EBP Potencies

- No longer one size fits all.
- No longer guided by “gut feelings”.
- Avoids correctional quackery.
- Scientific/actuarial based risk assessments.
- Case plan around criminogenic needs.
- Employ evidence-based programming whenever possible.
- Develop innovations that are inspired by research; measure and evaluate new programs.

*Gonna change my way of thinking,
Make myself a different set of rules.
Gonna put my good foot forward,
And stop being influenced by fools.*

--Bob Dylan--