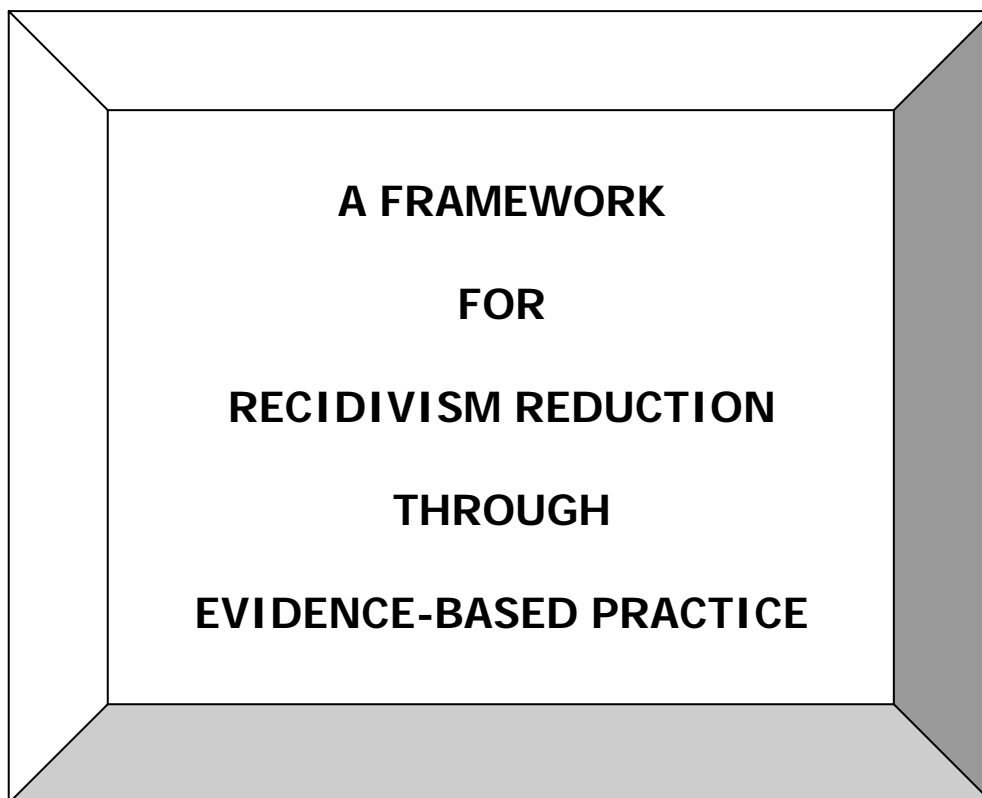


RE-ENGINEERING PROBATION TOWARDS GREATER PUBLIC SAFETY



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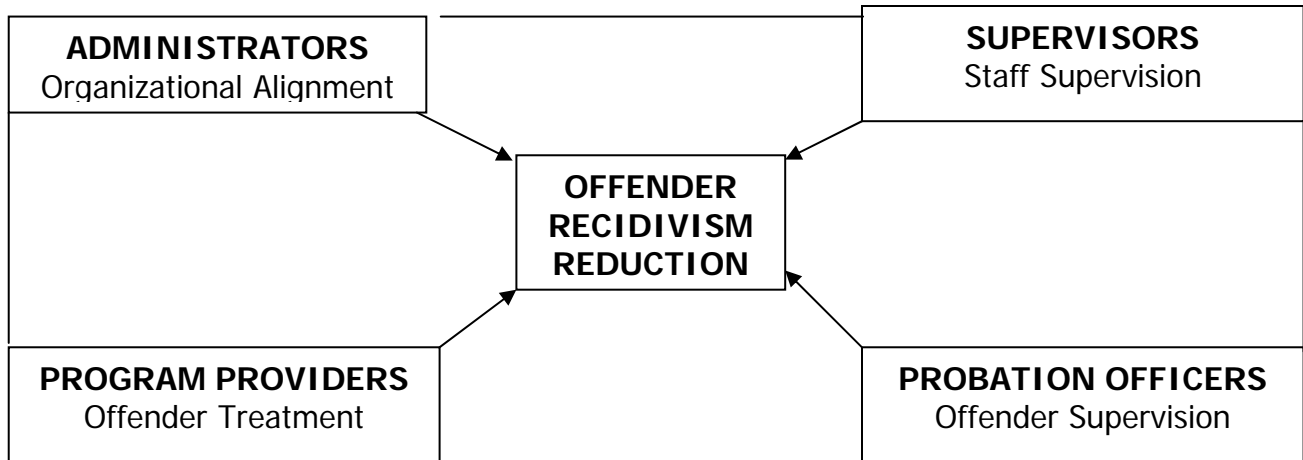
INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades correctional practitioners have been confronted with “new” and sometimes conflicting approaches for managing correctional agencies and programs. We have seen punishment, restraint, rehabilitation, and reintegration approaches fall in and out of favor. We have been faced more recently with restorative justice, broken windows, community justice, and the “what works” or evidence-based correctional principles. Notwithstanding the efficacy of these strategies for correctional management and public safety, correctional administrators are at the end of the day confronted with the same questions, “How do we translate these models operationally in our agencies?” “What do we and our staff need to do within our specific agency roles and responsibilities to implement and sustain these strategies?” How many times have we all found ourselves saying it sounds good, but show me what I need to do in a practical way to implement it? Organizational change is always a difficult and daunting task, and it becomes nearly impossible when the principles and concepts to be followed do not provide a framework for implementation. The development of an integrated model that embraces multiple correctional theories and strategies should over time, be the ultimate goal of probation and community corrections. However, the development of such a model, and more importantly its implementation operationally, needs to be both developmental and sequential. The overarching foundation of such an integrated model upon which the other strategies should be blended and operationalized, can be found in the “evidence-based” research and principles. We cannot continue to have offender supervision practices that are not supported by either the existing evidence of the causes of crime or the existing knowledge of which correctional programs and practices have been proven to positively change offender behavior. Therefore, to improve probation and community corrections effectiveness and enhance the safety of our communities, agencies must adopt evidence-based principles of offender supervision and treatment – principles that have been scientifically proven to reduce offender recidivism. Our budgets can no longer support programs and supervision practices that have not proven to be effective.

In order to develop an effective framework for implementing evidence-based practices in probation and community corrections, it is necessary to focus on the responsibilities and activities of probation officers, supervisors, administrators, and program providers.

**A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE
IN PROBATION AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS**

FOUR INTERDEPENDENT FUNCTIONS



To achieve the goal of increasing public safety by reducing offender recidivism, the following questions must be answered:

- ◆ What do we know from “evidence-based practices” and “what works” in Probation supervision practices?
- ◆ What will Program Providers need to do?
- ◆ What will Probation Officers need to do?
- ◆ What will Supervisors need to do?
- ◆ What will Administrators need to do?
- ◆ What knowledge and skills will Supervisors, Probation Officers and Program Providers need to have?

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT RECIDIVISM

In the late 1970s, the proclamation that “nothing works” in correctional treatment programming set the stage for and ushered in the “get tough on criminals” ideology of the 1980s and early ‘90s. Over this period of time, the nation experienced the growth of numerous punishment programs and increased sanctions for criminal offenders. Whether out of frustration or convenience, many criminologists and correctional practitioners quickly jumped on the “*rehabilitation doesn’t work*” bandwagon. They said that correctional treatment was ineffective, recidivism could not be reduced, and crime could not be prevented by correctional interventions that focused on treating individual offenders. They were wrong.

More recently there has been a significant amount of empirically sound research that has established the effectiveness of some treatment programs and correctional interventions for both juveniles and adults. As a result, the following evidence-based conclusions can be made concerning crime causation and treatment.

RECIDIVISM CAN BE PREDICTED

Offender recidivism is predictable, and can be reduced by using validated risk assessments to identify and address “*criminogenic needs*” – those needs or risk factors that we now know can lead to criminal behavior.

RECIDIVISM CAN BE REDUCED

If an offender’s “*criminogenic needs*” are addressed and positively changed, there is substantial empirical research that indicates that these same offenders will be significantly less likely to recidivate.

APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE TREATMENT SERVICES CAN BE IDENTIFIED

The International Community Corrections Association through its monograph series project has provided a summary of the research on the effects of correctional practices and treatment services. At this point in the development of correctional interventions, we can conclude the following with a degree of confidence:

- Punitive correctional practices do not appear to have much overall deterrent effect on either the offenders to whom they are applied, or to potential offenders, who might be motivated to avoid risking them.
- The research evidence does not indicate that routine probation or parole supervision practices or intensive supervision models have significant effects on subsequent offense rates.
- Despite their intuitive appeal, self-discipline and challenge programs have not been found to be very effective for reducing future criminal behavior.
- Restorative Justice Programs such as community service, restitution, and victim-offender mediation, have had very little positive effects on recidivism.
- Educational, vocational, and employment programs have produced positive but only modest reductions in recidivism.
- Cognitive-behavioral treatment that addresses the deviant thinking patterns (characteristic of many offenders) has consistently been found to be an effective rehabilitative strategy for both juveniles and adults.
- Behavior modification programs that are designed to shape and maintain appropriate behaviors until they are incorporated into the habit pattern of the offender, have been effective in reducing recidivism.
- Multi-modal programs that target a variety of offender criminogenic and other risk factors have shown that they are amongst the most effective at reducing recidivism.

- The more effective correctional programs involve relatively structured treatment and skill training regimens as their primary component, rather than centering on offender-provider relationships.
- Well implemented programs that deliver a relatively high dose of treatment tend to be more effective with high-risk offenders.
- Despite the evidence that many programs in principle can be effective, actually configuring, implementing, and maintaining these programs is difficult.

In short, the research on correctional effectiveness has established that program interventions that are targeted to an offender's "*criminogenic needs*" can substantially reduce recidivism. The research has also determined that with most offenders (especially high-risk offenders), supervision alone, or punishment sanctions alone, does not reduce recidivism. Probation services must target "*criminogenic needs*" in the risk and need assessment process, translate those risk factors into treatment objectives, and ultimately into relevant offender interventions and supervision practices.

WHAT PROGRAM PROVIDERS WILL NEED TO DO

There is a growing body of research that has identified what does not work, as well as what does work, or works better in offender treatment programs and recidivism reduction. Therefore, the first thing that we need to do is to ensure that program providers avoid implementing treatment program models and approaches that have not been supported by research.

TREATMENT MODELS AND APPROACHES THAT ARE NOT RESEARCH SUPPORTED

- Ø Targeting low risk offenders
- Ø Targeting non-criminogenic needs
- Ø Punishment sanctions only
- Ø Shock probation
- Ø Boot camps
- Ø Scared Straight
- Ø Drug testing only
- Ø Home detention with electronic monitoring only
- Ø Encounter type program models
- Ø Insight-oriented psychotherapy

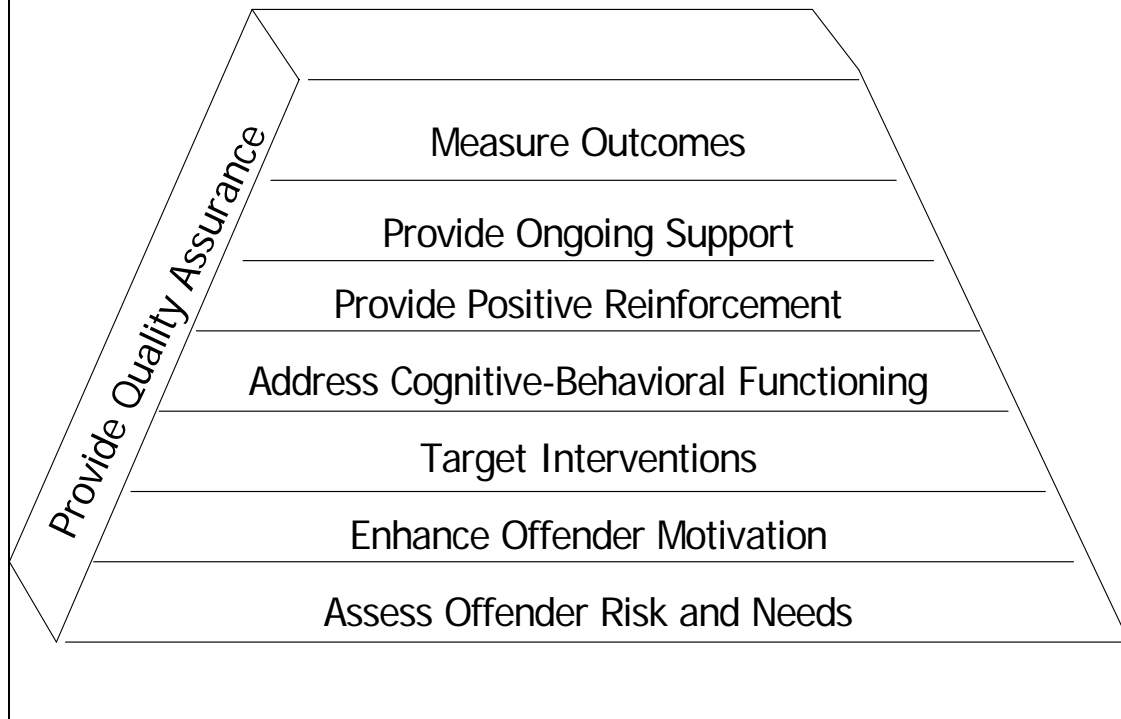
I am not suggesting that all of the above strategies are without merit and should not be a component of probation supervision. However, if our goal is recidivism reduction, we need to make sure that program providers implement program models and strategies that are evidence-based, and have proven more effective in changing offender behavior.

TREATMENT MODELS AND APPROACHES THAT ARE RESEARCH SUPPORTED

- ◆ Treatment That Targets Criminogenic Needs
- ◆ Targeting High Risk Offenders
- ◆ Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies
- ◆ Aggression Replacement Training
- ◆ Reasoning And Rehabilitation Program
- ◆ Moral Reconciliation Therapy
- ◆ Thinking For A Change Program
- ◆ Cognitive Self-Change Program
- ◆ Controlling Anger And Learning To Manage It (CALM Program)
- ◆ Motivational Enhancement Therapy
- ◆ Treating Alcohol Dependence Program
- ◆ Pathways to Change Program
- ◆ Interpersonal Communication Skills Training
- ◆ Functional Family Therapy (juvenile offenders)
- ◆ Multi-Systemic Therapy (juvenile offenders)
- ◆ Brief Strategic Family Therapy (juvenile offenders)
- ◆ Multi-dimensional Family Therapy (juvenile offenders)
- ◆ Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT)

Placing an offender in a program that uses an evidence-based treatment model is only the first step toward achieving positive outcomes that lead to recidivism reduction. What has emerged from the research is not a single program that clearly stands out as the most effective for reducing recidivism, but rather a set of principles that characterize the most effective correctional interventions. There is reason to believe that the more these principles are incorporated into probation and community corrections services, the greater the reduction in recidivism will be.

EIGHT PRINCIPLES
FOR REDUCING OFFENDER RECIDIVISM



Assess Offender Risk and Needs

There exists today validated offender risk and need assessment tools that can predict the actuarial risk of each offender to recidivate, as well as identify the offender's criminogenic need levels that lead to or cause crime. The six primary criminogenic need areas or dynamic risk factors are as follows:

- ◆ Dysfunctional family relations
- ◆ Anti-social peers
- ◆ Substance abuse
- ◆ Low self-control
- ◆ Anti-social attitudes and values
- ◆ Callous personality

Completion of a risk and needs assessment helps identify who should receive treatment (risk principle), what should be treated (need principle), and how treatment should be delivered (responsivity principle). Risk and need assessment enables us to develop differential offender supervision standards so that we know which offenders require little supervision and no treatment intervention; significant supervision with significant treatment intervention; or close surveillance with no treatment intervention.

A valid risk and needs assessment also provides the information to develop an offender case plan that should serve as a roadmap to direct the offender and guide the probation officer and treatment provider toward targeted activities and outcomes. At a minimum, an offender supervision case plan should include the following components:

CASE PLAN COMPONENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Assessment profile identifying primary and secondary criminogenic needs and offender supervision level.◆ Identified offender protective factors to reinforce and strengthen.◆ Assessment of the offender's motivation to change.◆ Suggested programmatic interventions to address identified offender criminogenic needs and other problem areas.◆ Offender long-term behavior change goals for each identified problem area.◆ Responsibilities and activities the offender needs to carry out to achieve behavior change.

Enhance Offender Motivation

Sustained change in an offender's behavior is more likely to occur when the offender is motivated to change. Strategies to enhance offender motivation include the following:

- ◆ Conducting pre-programming activities designed to assess offender responsivity to treatment, and that focus on building offender motivation and advancing their readiness for change.
- ◆ Interacting with the offender using skills that help them to explore and resolve ambivalence toward changing their criminogenic behaviors and attitudes.
- ◆ Developing and delivering programming in a way that accounts for offender learning styles, developmental level, and ability.

Target Interventions

Based upon the information obtained from the risk and needs assessment and case plan, the offender depending upon his/her level of risk and needs, should be placed in targeted interventions that provide the appropriate type of evidence-based treatment which focuses on the identified criminogenic needs. The interventions should also be administered to provide the proper length of each individual treatment session, the right frequency or number of treatment sessions each week, and the correct duration or length of the treatment service.

Address Cognitive-Behavioral Functioning

Focusing on an offender's cognitive-behavioral functioning, in relationship to their assessed criminogenic needs, and placing offenders in treatment interventions that utilize a cognitive-behavioral therapy, is clearly supported by research. There are two main types of cognitive programs; cognitive restructuring and cognitive skills training.

Cognitive restructuring is based on the premise that offenders have learned destructive attitudes and thinking habits that reinforce criminal behavior. These counter-productive ways of thinking when recognized, can be replaced with pro-social thinking and attitudes.

Cognitive skills training, which usually follows cognitive restructuring, provides offenders with opportunities to learn and practice ways to improve their problem-solving, emotional regulation, and other self-management and coping skills. Treatment interventions that provide offenders with an opportunity to try out new skills through role-plays and other cognitive-behavioral exercises are preferable over didactic processes.

Provide Positive Reinforcement

Applying principles of positive reinforcement through a structured offender behavior management system that encourages program participation and reinforces positive change, is an essential component of effective probation supervision. New behaviors and acquired skills that are not adequately reinforced are often not retained. This reinforcement can be incorporated in a formal contingency management protocol, as well as through offender verbal affirmations from staff by recognizing and supporting offender self-efficacy.

Provide Ongoing Support

Offenders need to be provided ongoing support after completing a treatment program. Relapse prevention training should be part of the program design and include the following:

- ◆ Development of an individualized plan and rehearsal of alternative pro-social responses that are specific to the behaviors or circumstances that increase the risk of re-offending for the offender in question;
- ◆ Development of self-monitoring skills and the ability to anticipate problem situations; and
- ◆ Training of significant others, such as family, friends, and employers, to reinforce pro-social behavior and to recognize triggers and risk situations.

In addition, it is often important to provide booster sessions to offenders after they leave formal treatment.

Measure Outcomes

Accurate and detailed documentation of case information, along with a formal and valid mechanism to measure supervision and treatment outcomes, is the foundation of evidence-based practice. Probation agencies need to assess offender change in cognitive and skill development, and evaluate offender recidivism if supervision practices are to remain effective.

Quality Assurance

Finally, an overarching quality assurance system must exist to monitor probation practices, and the ongoing delivery of offender treatment programs to maintain and enhance program fidelity and integrity.

PROGRAM FIDELITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE ELEMENTS

- ◆ Select staff with high level functioning on the relationship, structuring, and social support dimension of effective correctional practice.
- ◆ Ensure that staff receive pre-service and in-service training that supports high levels of interpersonal skills and principles of recidivism reduction.
- ◆ Ensure that staff receive on-the-job clinical supervision and coaching.
- ◆ Ensure that staff adhere to the evidence-based principles and model the techniques that they teach, and expect from the offender.
- ◆ Maintain curriculum manuals that outline treatment objectives, content, activities and competency testing, and update them based upon evidence-based practice.
- ◆ Develop written policies and procedures that support evidence-based findings.

In summary, it appears that in order for probation to significantly reduce offender recidivism, it must employ the very best targeted intervention treatment models and supervision practices, implement them with fidelity, and maintain an optimal overall configuration of treatment and supervision, dosage, frequency, duration and quality assurance.

WHAT PROBATION OFFICERS WILL NEED TO DO

There are six (6) elements or processes to an evidence-based model for probation services. When operationalized with fidelity, this model should maximize recidivism reduction for offenders placed on probation, enhance public safety, and reduce prison overcrowding.

AN EVIDENCE-BASED MODEL OF PROBATION		
Elements	Responsible Individuals	Objectives
Offender Risk and Needs Assessment	Probation Officer	To conduct an accurate Risk and Needs Assessment
Probation Conditions	Court Personnel	To match the term of probation supervision, and probation conditions to the levels of offender risk, and to require treatment interventions congruent with criminogenic needs.
Offender Case Plan	Probation Officer	To develop a Case Plan that delineates the offender's criminogenic needs, appropriate programmatic interventions, offender's motivation to address identified needs, offender responsibilities, and probation officer case activities. To make appropriate program referrals.
Offender Supervision Activities	Probation Officer	To monitor compliance with probation conditions and to facilitate the implementation of the Case Plan. To decrease the offender's ambivalence, defensiveness, and resistance to stopping his/her pro-criminal and anti-social behavior.
Offender Treatment	Program Provider	To provide the appropriate type of evidence-based treatment which focuses on the offender's criminogenic needs, enhance offender motivation, and provide positive reinforcement and relapse prevention.
Quality Assurance	Supervisors and Administrators	To model and facilitate organizational alignment with the principles of evidence-based supervision. To provide staff training that increases their knowledge and skills in evidence-based practice, and support and reinforce knowledge and skill application.

Although there is a significant body of research and numerous articles on the importance of assessing an offender's risk and needs as well as the prerequisite components for effective correctional treatment, research on the probation supervision activities that are most closely related to reductions in offender recidivism is almost non-existent. However, by drawing from the numerous research studies that have been conducted in other disciplines of human services, we can make some logical inferences on the offender supervision activities of an evidence-based model of probation.

Initial Supervision Contact

The initial supervision contact is a critical meeting to assess and engage the offender toward behavior change. During this meeting, the officer needs to conduct and review the results of the assessment process with the offender. Research on motivating offenders to change has established that giving offenders personal results from an assessment of risk and needs, especially if the results are carefully interpreted, is a powerful way to begin to develop a sense of discrepancy in the offender's self-perception that can begin to motivate change. The level of offender motivation is important in forecasting the success or failure of an offender placed on probation supervision. That being the case, it is important to elicit statements from the offender that articulate the benefits of making pro-social changes in their lives. This insight is consistent with current research stating that through the use of "Motivational Interviewing" techniques, officers can prompt many offenders to make the commitment to change. During the first supervision contact, the following activities need to take place:

- Explain that the goal of supervision is to assist the offender in successfully completing probation supervision.
- Explain the role of the officer which includes, but is not limited to facilitating behavior change and responding to non-compliance.
- Conduct a risk and needs assessment and review the results with the offender.

- Focus on the assessed criminogenic need areas as identified during the assessment process.
- Set a tone of collaboration and support.
- Collaborate with the offender on an appropriate treatment referral if needed.
- Review the conditions of community supervision.
- Develop with the offender a case plan that includes any needed services along with the responsibilities and activities that the offender is expected to carry out.

While it is necessary to review the conditions of probation, offender contacts should also focus on the criminogenic needs and treatment services. When the focus is narrowly targeted toward conditions only, the main purpose of effecting offender change can be lost.

Front End Loading

By creating standards of supervision that require more contacts early on in supervision (front-end loading), the officer will have a greater ability to understand the offender, build rapport (atmosphere of trust and collaboration), stabilize the offender through appropriate referrals, communicate with collateral contacts to create a network of supervision, and further explore the offender's needs and progress toward addressing their needs. Minimally, based upon the offender's assess risk, the initial four-month period of supervision should be the targeted timeframe to provide more frequent face to face contacts.

As part of the concept of front-end loading officers need to be provided the time and flexibility to treat offenders differently based on the offender's varying degree of risk, compliance, and motivation to change. An offender who is compliant in the beginning phase of their supervision and then becomes non-compliant should be seen more frequently. Because more stable offenders should have a reduced reporting schedule after a minimum of four months of supervision, officers should have the time to more frequently see their higher risk, more needy, and less compliant offenders. By spending

more time providing assistance to non-compliant or unstable offenders, the officer is more likely to stabilize them or bring them back into compliance. Officers need to have the training and autonomy to supervise their cases on a risk/needs basis, thus implementing the evidence-based risk and need principle.

Ongoing Supervision Contacts

As stated earlier, there presently is limited empirical research on the supervision activities of probation officers that is more likely to lead to a reduction in offender recidivism. Supervision services have been largely based on the belief that contacts between the officer and the offender are the cornerstone to managing and/or changing offender behavior. However, a number of sound research studies have established that the quantitative nature or frequency of officer and offender contacts did not impact offender outcomes such as rearrest rates. A review of studies in the fields of corrections and addiction suggests that probation supervision is more likely to reduce recidivism if officer contacts with offenders have a function and purpose that involve more than monitoring and the mere gathering of information. Research on the use of “Motivational Interviewing” has established that these skills and strategies can be effective in facilitating offender behavior change.

1. Ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions cannot be answered with a single word or phrase.
2. Listen reflectively. Demonstrate that you have heard and understood the offender by reflecting what the offender said.
3. Summarize. It is useful to summarize periodically what has transpired up to that point in a supervision meeting.
4. Affirm. Support and comment on the offender's strengths, motivation, intentions, and progress.
5. Elicit self-motivational statements. Have the offender voice personal concerns and intentions, rather than try to persuade the offender that change is necessary.

Therefore probation supervision needs to focus on the purpose, activities, and quality of the interactions or contacts between the officer and the offender. With this purpose in mind, the following activities should serve as the cornerstone of an officer's supervision contacts:

- Review the offender's progress on previously established Case Plan responsibilities and if necessary, help the offender make revisions.
- Discuss the offender's progress and involvement in any required programs or services.
- Explore any problems or concerns that the offender is having.
- Reinforce any offender strengths or protective factors that were identified during the assessment process.
- Identify and address any offender thinking errors or discrepancies.
- Reinforce through verbal encouragement, pro-social behavior and statements on the part of the offender.
- When necessary, set appropriate limits and provide clear direction to the offender.
- Explore the offender's ambivalence to positively change.
- Elicit self-motivational statements from the offender.
- Use evidence-based communication skills to include open-ended questions, reflections, affirmations, and summarizations.
- Conclude by summarizing and reinforcing any positive progress and behavior, and summarize any offender responsibilities that need to be completed before the next contact.

Risk and Need Reassessment

Offender assessment is a recurring aspect of good supervision and treatment. Case information should be gathered through routine interactions and observations with

offenders and collateral contacts. Supervision contacts should always address the need elements of the assessment. Ongoing supervision contacts should naturally culminate in better formal reassessments, case decisions, and working relations between the officer and the offender.

When the supervision of an offender is based upon the results of a valid risk and needs assessment, the opportunity for obtaining improvement in behavior is significantly enhanced.

Formal periodic reassessment will also facilitate an officer's ability to triage cases and spend time with offenders presenting the greatest immediate risk and needs. Formal reassessment also provides a way to measure changes in an offender's risk and needs.

Pro-active Treatment Referral Process

Efficient and expedient referral to treatment has been determined to be associated with less attrition, greater treatment adherence, and better outcomes. A passive referral process where officers instruct offenders to contact a particular agency before the next office visit with no follow-up can lead to delays in treatment and create conflicts in supervision.

Based upon the cumulative findings of the research on correctional treatment programs, there is no longer any doubt that offender behavior change is achievable. For most offenders, the programs that have proven to be the most effective, use structured cognitive-behavioral interventions that focus on the identified risk factors for criminal recidivism, or an offender's criminogenic needs. Reductions in an offender's risk factors and subsequent recidivism will occur to the degree that treatment referral and completion is accomplished. By implementing the following measures, officers should be able to further contribute to timely and effective treatment.

- Schedule the referral during the first month of probation supervision;
- Have the offender contact the officer twenty-four (24) hours after acceptance into the program;
- Increase the frequency of contacts with the offender and the treatment provider as necessary to facilitate the onset of services;
- Collaborate with treatment providers to ensure that high-risk offenders receive priority service delivery;
- Coordinate with treatment providers to receive immediate notifications of "no-shows";
- Obtain frequent verbal or written reports on the offender's treatment progress.

Treatment providers must also receive a summary of any risk and needs assessment in an effort to provide the best and most appropriate service to the offender.

Response to Supervision Non-Compliance

Although there is no evidence that punishment works in reducing future crime, there is evidence that short periods of sanctioning can help the offender to engage or re-engage in a programming effort. The positive effect of these sanctions wears off in a fairly short period of time. Officers can play an important role in using their authority to help offenders to return to interventions designed to help them adopt a pro-social lifestyle over the long-term.

In addition, research has been conducted on how to best address technical violations. The following have been determined to be important principles to ensure that the response to non-compliance produces the desired affect:

- Responses should be graduated and based on the violation severity and the offender's risk level;

- Increased certainty of a response deters future deviance;
- Future violations are prevented when there is little time delay between behavior and response;
- When continued violations receive an increased sanction response, future violations are reduced;
- Compliance increases when responses are viewed as impartial and logical by the offender.

One caveat worth noting. Most offenders are capable of handling only a limited number of demands and changes at any given time. Trying to deal with too many issues simultaneously can result in a sense of being overwhelmed and poor compliance. Change is difficult for all of us, particularly if negative habits and lifestyles have been formed over a long period of time.

WHAT PROBATION SUPERVISORS WILL NEED TO DO

Implementing the evidence-based model of probation supervision must be supported and reinforced by field office supervisors if it is going to be successful. Field supervisors remain the most significant force in shaping the behavior of the officers they manage. Without the support of field supervisors no organizational change effort will be successfully implemented and sustained. The following responsibilities must be the primary focus of field office supervisors within the evidence-based probationer supervision model:

PROBATION SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Learn the principles of Recidivism Reduction and Evidence-Based Practice.
- Ensure that staff are well-trained in and understand agency policy and procedures, as well as the skills and principles of Evidence-Based Practice.
- Help staff adapt to change by doing the following:
 - ✓ When possible, seek staff input and promote collaboration.
 - ✓ Clearly communicate expectations and allow for discussion and feedback.
 - ✓ Provide training and coaching as needed.
 - ✓ Demonstrate supportive modeling.
 - ✓ Give timely performance feedback.
 - ✓ Provide positive reinforcement.
 - ✓ Recognize individual contributions and celebrate team accomplishments.
- Model the skills and principles of Evidence-Based Practice and the behaviors that you want staff to exhibit.
- Create an office culture that values honesty and ensures fair, equitable and respectful treatment of staff, probationers and community members.
- Provide staff with feedback and positive reinforcement for behavior that supports Evidence-Based Practice.
- Periodically observe staff when interacting with a probationer during an office visit, and provide them with feedback, reinforcement and instruction.
- Meet with staff at least monthly and respond to staff questions, provide performance feedback, and assist them in developing strategies for handling difficult cases.
- Conduct periodic random reviews of each probation officer's completed Risk / Needs Assessments and Case Plans and give feedback to the officer.
- Review staff responses to probationer non-compliance to assure that the actions taken are appropriate.
- Periodically visit referral programs and talk to program providers.

WHAT AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS WILL NEED TO DO

Implementing evidence-based supervision is something administrators must do with their staff, not to their staff. Therefore probation administrators, if they are going to implement Evidence-Based Practices in their own agency, need to make sure that there is alignment throughout the agency with these practices and principles, and they need to understand and carry out their related responsibilities.

ADMINISTRATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide leadership that will facilitate the successful implementation of Evidence-Based Practice by doing the following:
 - ✓ Create and articulate the vision, mission, and goals.
 - ✓ Identify external and internal stakeholders.
 - ✓ Collaborate with stakeholders to develop strategies and initiatives for achieving the vision.
 - ✓ Determine intermediate process measures and outcome measures to evaluate goal achievement.
 - ✓ Monitor the implementation of the strategies and initiatives, and make modifications or changes as indicated.
 - ✓ Evaluate mission and goal achievement.
- Enhance staff support and facilitate the management of change through staff involvement, open and honest communication, positive role modeling, performance feedback, and positive reinforcement.
- Create an office culture that fosters and values honesty and ensures fair, equitable, and respectful treatment of staff, probationers, and community members.
- Model the skills and principles of Evidence-Based Practice and the behaviors that you want staff to exhibit.

- Practice the principles of collaborative leadership:
 - ✓ Focus less on roles and more on functions.
 - ✓ Promote the importance of process as well as goal and task accomplishment.
 - ✓ Create opportunities for shared power and responsibility.
 - ✓ Foster participative decision-making.
 - ✓ Utilize conflict resolution strategies based on problem-solving models, rather than authoritarian or political models.
- Ensure operational alignment with the principles of Evidence-Based Practice by modifying and developing supportive policy, procedures and performance standards.
- Provide agency staff with the tools, knowledge and skills needed to implement and support Evidence-Based Practices.
- Create an agency culture of continuous learning and improvement that supports the growth and development of staff.
- Ensure that all quality control data elements collected, measured, and reported, are congruent with and support Evidence-Based Practice.
- Establish a system of quality assurance and assistance for agency staff and program providers that maintains the fidelity and integrity of probationer supervision and evidence-based treatment services.
- Communicate the mission and goals of the agency to a broad range of stakeholders, and foster collaborative partnerships.
- Ensure human resource policies are administered fairly and equitably.
- Reward achievement and celebrate accomplishments.

As administrators we must realize that if the agency's vision, goals, policies, standards and performance measures, along with the corresponding systems of audits and performance reviews are not managed with flexibility and compassion, no matter what the intent, the agency can become a blind bureaucracy that operates as a punishing enforcer, rather than a supportive enabling facilitator of Evidence-Based Practice.

**WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS PROBATION STAFF
AND PROGRAM PROVIDERS WILL NEED TO HAVE**

Knowing what agency staff and program providers need to do is a major step toward implementing Evidence-Based Practice. However, moving from knowing to doing, will require a major commitment to staff training and development. The successful implementation of any organizational change initiative requires effective policy and procedures, staff training, and staff supervision. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide extensive detail on the content of each subject area in which staff will need to receive training. However, at a minimum, staff should have the following knowledge and skills:

**SUPERVISORS, PROBATION OFFICERS, AND PROGRAM PROVIDERS
REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- Knowledge of criminogenic needs and risk factors.
- Knowledge of evidence-based supervision and treatment interventions.
- Knowledge of the process of criminal thinking.
- Knowledge of the stages of individual change.
- Knowledge of social learning theory and behavior management principles.
- Knowledge of graduated responses to non-compliance.
- Knowledge of relapse prevention strategies.
- Skills in conducting risk and needs assessments.
- Skills in developing probationer case plans and behavioral contracts.
- Skills in motivational enhancement techniques and motivational interviewing.
- Skills in cognitive-behavioral therapy.
- Skills in staff supervision and leading change (Supervisors).

Training in the areas cited above, represents a significant commitment and investment that at a minimum, will translate to approximately three to four weeks of staff training with ongoing reinforcement for each employee long after the formal training if skill

acquisition is going to be maintained. While this may seem a luxury, the investment in training can pay off in reduced recidivism and greater public protection.

A word of caution is needed when it comes to the development and delivery of the above training. Training can serve as a foundation or first step towards learning and using new skills, but it is not sufficient. For learning and skill acquisition to last, it must be practiced, supported and reinforced within the work environment. Without this support there is ample research which indicates that staff quickly revert to the way it has always been done soon after they finish a training program.

SUMMARY

We have attempted to describe a framework for reducing offender recidivism through improving probation and community corrections effectiveness. It is not intended to be a detailed blueprint, but hopefully it can serve as a starting point and guide for operationalizing these principles and concepts.

The implementation of these principles in probation should not be viewed as the end, but rather the beginning. Although this seems to be a step in the right direction, at the present time when it comes to changing criminal and delinquent behavior, there is no silver bullet. If however we can operationalize (with fidelity and integrity) the principles and activities presented in this "Framework", the evidence suggests that we can reduce probationer recidivism by thirty percent (30%) or more for high-risk probationers. Even modest reductions in recidivism, when translated into economic impact and a decrease in crime and victim suffering, leave us no ethical option other than to move our agencies in this direction.

The cumulative results of decades of research on offender rehabilitation programs reveals quite clearly that effective programs can be developed and implemented and, if

done well, a significant reduction in offender recidivism can be expected. However, despite the evidence that many correctional programs can be effective, actually configuring and implementing such a program is difficult.

There seems to be no question that we have the knowledge, tools, and program models needed to increase our effectiveness and enhance public safety. However, few probation agencies have been willing or able to change the way they have historically operated. The adage, "if you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten", is well ingrained in probation practice. We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are. Attempts to change how we operate and what we do will be met with resistance within and without our agencies. It will require a well-crafted collaborative implementation strategy; a strategy that fosters the development of a core set of shared values and beliefs that support recidivism reduction and increased public safety.

The implementation of Evidence-Based Practice in probation will be a paradigm shift for probation services, a shift that undoubtedly will require agency self-reflection and self-adjustment. It will also require a change in organizational cultures that for some staff has supported a "them versus us" approach to their work. This change will not occur overnight, and will require persistence, patience, and leadership.

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