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

Presented by:

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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 youth 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?
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 Level by Recidivism for the Community Supervision Sample

Low 0-14: 9.1%
Medium = 15-23: 34.3%
High = 24-33: 58.9%
Very High 34+: 69.2%
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 when dealing with higher risk youth.
Example of Targeting Higher Risk Youth

• 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
Another important 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
#2: Provide Most Intensive Interventions to Higher Risk Youth

Higher risk youth will require much higher dosage of treatment
- Rule of thumb: 100 hours for moderate risk
- 200+ hours for high risk
- 100 hours for high risk will have little if any effect
- Does not include work/school and other activities that are not directly addressing criminogenic risk factors
#3: Intensive Treatment for Low Risk 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
The Risk Principle & Correctional Intervention Results from Meta Analysis

Dowden & Andrews, 1999
Risk Level by New Commitment or New Adjudication: Results from 20013 Ohio Study of over 10,000 Youth
Recidivism Rates by Total Months in Programs
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, as did placement in Day Reporting, however the N was extremely small.

• 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.
Another important body of knowledge to understand is the research on risk factors. What are the risk factors correlated with delinquent criminal conduct?
Major Set of Risk/Need Factors

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

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

Pro-criminal 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. Pro-criminal associates and isolation from pro-social others
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/Needs 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
Major set Risk/Needs continued:

7. Low levels of involvement in pro-social leisure activities

– Allows for interaction with antisocial peers
– Allows for youth to have idle time
– Youth replace pro-social behavior with antisocial behavior
Major set Risk/Needs continued:

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 pro-social people</td>
<td>Reduce association w/ criminals, enhance association w/ pro-social people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 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, better monitoring and/or supervision</td>
<td>Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, communication, enhance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>monitoring &amp; supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and/or work</td>
<td>Low levels of performance &amp; satisfaction</td>
<td>Enhance performance, rewards, &amp; satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and/or recreation</td>
<td>Low levels of involvement &amp; satisfaction in anti-criminal leisure activities</td>
<td>Enhancement involvement &amp; satisfaction in pro-social activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs</td>
<td>Reduce SA, reduce the personal &amp; interpersonal supports for SA behavior,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>enhance alternatives to SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# 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>• Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anti social friends</td>
<td>• Low self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Substance abuse</td>
<td>• Creative abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of empathy</td>
<td>• Medical needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impulsive behavior</td>
<td>• Physical conditioning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Targeting Criminogenic Need: Results from Meta-Analyses

Reduction in Recidivism

Increase in Recidivism

Target 1-3 more non-criminogenic needs

Target at least 4-6 more criminogenic needs

Needs Targeted & Correlation with Effect Size for Youthful Offenders

Assessment is the engine that drives effective correctional programs

- Need to meet the risk and need principle
- Reduces bias
- Aids decision making
- Allows you to target dynamic risk factors and measure change
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
The YASI Profile
"Wheel"

Overall Scores
Overall Risk Level
- H
- L

Overall Protective Factors
- L

Static/Dynamic Summary
Static Risk
- H
- VH

Static Protective Factors
- 0

Dynamic Risk
- VH

Dynamic Protective Factors
- L

Risk Factors
1. Legal History
2. Family/Environment
3. School
4. Community/Peer
5. Alcohol/Drugs
6. Mental Health
7. Attitudes/Behavior
8. Skills
9. Employment
10. Use of Free Time

Protective Factors

Risk Factors
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

Level of Risk

Treatment Priorities
To Understand Assessment you need to Understand the Different 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 the youth has ever had a drug/alcohol problem.

- Dynamic factors relate to risk and can change. Some examples are whether a youth is currently out of school 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
Treatment Principle

The most effective interventions are behavioral:

• Focus on current factors that influence behavior

• Action oriented

• Offender behavior is appropriately reinforced
Type of Treatment and Effect Sizes for Youthful Offenders


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Treatment</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
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<td>Non-Behavioral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>0.24</td>
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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**
Juvenile Drug Court Effectiveness

Shaffer, 2006
• 5% recidivism reduction in JDC’s compared to 10% for ADC’s

Wilson et al., 2006
• No difference in recidivism for JDC participants compared to probationers

Mitchell et al., 2012
• 40% smaller average effect size compared to ADC’s
OJJDP Study

9 JDC’s from the Across the US

• Localities varied in location type, size, and court model

Outcome Evaluation

• Quasi-experimental design with matched comparison groups; N=1372
• Official recidivism data

Process Evaluation

• Courts assessed with the Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist – Drug Court (CPC-DC)
• Drug Courts and Referral Agencies were assessed separately
OJJDP Study Results

• Two sites produced results in favor of (NS) drug courts for youth

• Overall, significantly greater rates of recidivism in drug court youth compared to youth on probation across three recidivism time points

• Drug courts and treatment agencies were overwhelmingly not adhering to principles of effective intervention, namely RNR and Fidelity
Recidivism

Overall Recidivism Outcomes: Comparison and Drug Court Youth

- Referral (Supervised): 30% Comparison, 43% Drug Court
- Adjudication (Supervised): 21% Comparison, 30% Drug Court
- Referral (Follow Up): 28% Comparison, 38% Drug Court
- Adjudication (Follow Up): 17% Comparison, 25% Drug Court
- (Any): 60% Comparison, 49% Drug Court
- Adjudication (Any): 33% Comparison, 45% Drug Court

*Note: The stars indicate statistically significant differences.
Results from the Program Assessments: Drug Courts

CPC - DC Scores

- Highly Effective = 65% or higher
- Effective = 55-64%
- Needs Improvement = 46-54%
- Ineffective = 45% or less

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>Dev., Coord., Staff &amp; Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offender Asmt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Content</td>
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<td>Overall Score</td>
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All Drug Courts
Results from the Program Assessments: Referral Agencies

CPC - DC: RA Scores

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### Overall Scores

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program, Staff, &amp; Support</td>
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<td>Offender Asmt.</td>
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<td>TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Content</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
<td>50.5</td>
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All Referral Agencies
Conclusions

• Results are in line with other studies which question the use of drug courts with juvenile offenders (e.g., Mitchell et al., 2012; Belenko, 1998, 2001; Wright and Clymer, 2001; and Hartmann and Rhineberger, 2003).

• Why are we seeing these results?
Why Aren’t JDC’s More Effective?

- **Drug Court Structure**
  - More status reviews, case hearings, drug tests and technical violations related to non-delinquent behavior

- **Drug Courts and treatment agencies not adhering to RNR**
  - *Risk*
    - Low risk youth are still placed in drug court
  - *Need*
    - Mostly focus on SA and ignore other criminogenic targets
    - Youth tend to use alcohol and marijuana only
    - Youth averaged only three years of mostly light use
  - *Responsivity*
    - Not using evidence-based treatment: Drug courts and Referral agencies were not consistently using evidence-based practices
    - Specific responsivity factors not addressed
What Doesn’t Work with Offenders?
Lakota tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. However, in corrections, and in other affairs, we often try other strategies, including the following:

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

- Programs that cannot maintain fidelity
- Programs that target non-criminogenic needs
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals
- Shaming youth
- Drug education programs
- Non-directive, client centered approaches
- Bibliotherapy
- Talking cures
- Self-Help programs
- Vague unstructured rehabilitation programs
- Fostering self-regard (self-esteem)
- “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.
- Use curriculum driven behavioral programs
- Reassess youth in meeting target behaviors
So how do we Translate this into Practice in Supervision?

A new model of PO and Offender 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)
- What is targeted is not always based on assessment
- Relationship is often more confrontational and authoritarian in nature than helpful
- More areas discussed = less effective
Rationale for the EPICS Model

Strongest theory of human behavior is social learning, so.....

Important to teach POs and caseworkers how to use structured social learning and CBT in one-on-one interactions with youth
Rationale for the EPICS Model

IMPORTANCE OF THE TRAINING

The most current research is suggesting that the relationship with officer and what is discussed is important.
Structure of EPICS Meeting

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
Rationale for EPICS

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Two year Recidivism Results from Canadian Study

Findings from Federal Probation Sample

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

These approaches help us....

• Structure our interventions

• Teach and model new skills

• Allow offender to practice with graduated difficulty

• Reinforce the behavior
Some Lessons Learned from the Research

- Who you put in a program is important – pay attention to risk and make sure dosage is adequate

- What you target is important – Remover barriers but focus on criminogenic risk factors

- How you target youth for change is important – use behavioral approaches

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