

THE CRIME AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE AT COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR JUSTICE
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WEDNESDAY SERIES VI: August 11, 2010

EFFECTIVE CLINICAL PRACTICES IN TREATING CLIENTS IN THE CRIMINAL
JUSTICE SYSTEM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We were unable to respond to all audience questions during the webinar due to time constraint. The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) at Community Resources for Justice (CRJ) is pleased to post responses to those questions in this document. These responses have been provided by the Wednesday Series VI panelists.

Please visit <http://cjinstitute.org/projects/webinars/seriesVI> for the audio and visual recording of the webinar, including answers to questions asked during the webinar.

Q. The area that I work in the probation officers have difficulty getting information from treatment providers, but I also understand that our role at TASC is being the bridge and providing probation with treatment status. Why are treatment providers apprehensive about giving information to probation?

A. Faye Taxman, Ph. D., University Professor, Criminology, Law and Society, George Mason University

Maybe the organization has not developed procedures for sharing information. This is critical since it will alleviate a lot of concerns that proper procedures are being used to share information. There are federal regulations that require clients/offenders to give permission to share confidential health information. A probation agency needs to have in place the protocols for doing this.

Q. What are some suggestions regarding treatment for drug dealers? I know they could benefit from CBI but what if those classes are not available? I am asking because a client was referred to treatment provider and they stated client was not appropriate for treatment at their facility because he was a drug dealer and not a user but recommended him to DART, a residential facility? Does this make sense?

A. Faye Taxman, Ph. D., University Professor, Criminology, Law and Society, George Mason University

Drug dealers need help with criminal thinking and with employment skills. They need to be referred to programs that will teach pro-social attitudes and values. Employment or vocational skills are important because they help the person learn to be accountable and responsible.

Q. What should be the first priorities of a reentrant? What should a reentry support group be about?

A. Ginger Martin, Assistant Director, Oregon Department of Corrections

The Governor’s Reentry Council in Oregon has adopted a “housing first” approach to reentry. Stable housing makes overall life stability much more achievable. With housing, it is easier to find a job and to get to or receive needed treatment programs and other social services.

A reentry support group should provide support for pro-social thinking and behavior. The group can help members to think through and learn problem solving skills while reducing impulsive decision-making. It could also provide positive role models if the group includes some newly released people and some people who have been out for awhile and are being successful. Reentry support groups should provide recognition and support for members who are setting and meeting goals and making good choices while coaching those who are having trouble with these kinds of things.

Q. What level of care is our legal obligation?

A. Ginger Martin, Assistant Director, Oregon Department of Corrections

I don’t believe we have a legal obligation to provide treatment to offenders at any level, but I do believe we have a professional obligation to address the criminal risk factors of those who come in to our systems. Since we know that addressing criminal risk factors in those offenders who are the most likely to re-offend makes the most difference, we should have treatment programs available and designed to do that. As to the level of care, that is a clinical decision rather than a correctional decision. For example, the type and intensity of addictions treatment or sex offender treatment should be based on a clinical assessment of that person and his or her problem.

Q. Can you describe a practical way treatment providers and probation used data to identify and solve a specific problem?

A. Maureen DeLude, Program Manager, Contractor Data Collection System, Connecticut Court Support Services Division

Probation staff (as well as bail and family services staff) are required to hold regional meetings with treatment providers to discuss the respective performance on the Risk Reduction Indicators Reports. Specifically, probation staff are invited to share performance and concerns regarding making referrals to programs, the timeliness and frequency by which clients actually start treatment, and the extent clients complete treatment. Treatment provider staff are invited to share particular concerns about the referral process, as well as their own curriculum-specific completion rates. The basis for these discussions is the Risk Reduction Indicators report that provides not only descriptive data (e.g. % completion, % policy compliance), but also the ability to drill down to the case level to facilitate client-specific issues.

Q. What evidence-based practices lend themselves to a jail environment realizing that the lengths of stay are short and unpredictable?

A. Chris Lowenkamp, Ph. D., Probation Administrator, Pretrial and Probation Services, Federal Probation

It is not so much environment as it is who you are dealing with. Jail inmates probably don't differ all that much from other criminal justice populations. My suggestion would be to assess with a risk instrument and then provide an intense dose of cognitive behavioral treatment...You could probably modify Thinking for a Change or some other cognitive behavioral curriculum so that you hit the highlights--external events can't control you. You control internal events (thoughts) and your behavior that follows. Also some relapse prevention...help them understand what their high risk people places and things are, how to avoid those, and if they can't avoid them how do they cope with those high risk situations to reduce risk.

Q. How do you keep ex-offenders motivated toward self-sufficiency when they feel they are blacklisted?

A. Chris Lowenkamp, Ph. D., Probation Administrator, Pretrial and Probation Services, Federal Probation

This is not a motivation issue; it is an issue of cognition. Victim mentality (there just out to get me), cutoff thinking (screw it, everyone is out to get me so I'll never make it), distrust of the system are all classic criminal thinking errors. Correcting the error is the key not motivating the offender. Think about it, would you rather have someone thinking "I have

done some bad things in my life and it is a mark against me but I can continue to build on what I have started and soon those marks will be a distant past" versus "I'm motivated to change even though I'm blacklisted." Being blacklisted is not reality nor is it an adaptive thought. It is maladaptive and probably, in part, what led to their decisions to violate the law, skip out on treatment, work, etc. Change the thoughts = change the behavior.

Q. How can we as treatment providers better educate parole and probation that reentry, stabilization and treatment should come before employment?

A. Chris Lowenkamp, Ph. D., Probation Administrator, Pretrial and Probation Services, Federal Probation

When offenders are released from federal prison they go to a halfway house. They have to have a job to stay at the halfway house (and avoid going back to prison) and have to be employed to be released from the halfway house. Every officer can relate to the experience that the offenders quit or "lose" their job once they leave the halfway house.

When you ask officers why this happens they say "because they don't need it anymore." When you ask, "did they lose it because they suddenly lost the skill to work?" They say no. When you ask did they lose their job or quit because they lost some vocational skill? They say no. When you ask officers why offenders quit their job they say because they are lazy and they don't want to work. A-ha! They are lazy (maybe) and they don't *want* to work? Why don't they want to work? Because they think working stinks, it is for stiffs, and they see very little if any value in pro-social employment. So the halfway house got them to work, and an officer can get an offender to work but until you change their attitudes about work and how they see that change, brought about by external controls, only lasts as long as that external control is in place. So we see here with employment the attitude drives the behavior. Getting them a job, in and of itself, has very little long term impact. I would submit that in getting them a job you are dealing with a symptom and not a cause.

I do realize the incredible pressure we put on officers to get their offenders employed and collect monetary obligations. Our system is set up to push employment over other more predictive needs but that doesn't mean it is the most effective.

Recommended Reading:

- ❖ Working with Involuntary Clients: A Guide to Practice (1999 and 2006) by Chris Trotter, Sage Publications
- ❖ *Exploring the Black Box*, James Bonta; Tanya Ruge; Terri-Lynne Scott; Guy Bourgon; Annie K. Yessine, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 1540-8558, Volume 47, Issue 3, 2008, Pages 248 – 270

- ❖ [Tools of the Trade: A Guide to Incorporating Science into Practice](#) by Faye Taxman, Ph. D. for the National Institute of Corrections
- ❖ [Using Motivational Interviewing to Change Offender Behavior](#)
- ❖ [Principles of Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations: A Research Based Guide.](#)
- ❖ Additional [NIDA resources for criminal justice and drug use can be found here](#)
- ❖ [Roadmap for Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections](#) for the Commonwealth of Virginia by Kristy Pierce-Danford and Meghan Guevara, Crime and Justice Institute
- ❖ [Interventions for High-Risk Youth: Applying Evidence-Based Theory and Practice to the Work of Roca](#) by the Crime and Justice Institute
- ❖ Evidence-Based Practice Tools and Resources by the Crime and Justice Institute for [Implementing Effective Correctional Management of Offenders in the Community: An Integrated Model](#)
- ❖ Download and view a bibliography of [CJI's works produced and forthcoming](#)
- ❖ Materials referenced during Maureen DeLude's responses (also located at <http://cjinstitute.org/projects/webinars/seriesVI>)
 - [CDCS Alternative Incarceration Center \(AIC\) Services Risk Reduction Indicators: Metrics & User's Guide](#)
 - [CDCS Family Support Center \(FSC\) Services Risk Reduction Indicators: Metrics & User's Guide](#)