Developing Optimal Individual Reentry Plans: Balancing Offender Needs, Community Factors and Practical Realities

Brought to you by the National Reentry Resource Center and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

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A project of the CSG Justice Center

www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org

- The resource center is continually updating its website with materials relevant to the reentry field.
- Sign up for the monthly NRRC newsletter to receive news about upcoming distance learning and funding opportunities.

Speaker

- Kathleen Gnall

  Independent Criminal Justice Consultant

  Background in research and evaluation, criminal justice policy development and implementation. Spent 17 years with PA Department of Corrections in multiple positions including the Deputy Secretary for Specialized Programs and Reentry.

Overarching VALUES

- Founding Fathers' Vision:
  - Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness

- The Justice System exists to PROMOTE:
  - SAFER, HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES,
  - BETTER INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES,
  - RESPECT FOR ALL HUMAN CAPITAL.

  - NO MORE VICTIMS!

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Presentation Overview

- Review the facts about correctional populations.
- Identify characteristics and needs of prison inmates at intake to prison.
- Consider the evidence on what contributes to better reentry outcomes.
- Suggest strategies for prioritizing and addressing individual needs.
- Explore resource availability in institutions and communities.
- Propose approaches to make the best use of available resources.
- In Short: TO IDENTIFY WAYS WHICH PROMOTE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR LESS $$$!

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A LOOK AT CORRECTIONAL POPULATIONS

- At the end of 2009, total correctional population, incarcerated and under community supervision , 7.2 million.
- In 2009, combined federal-state-local inmate count, 2.2 million.
  - Federal 200,000
  - State 1.4 million
  - Jails (ADP) 760,000
- U.S. incarceration rate surpassed 750 per 100,000 residents which is the highest in the world by far.
- 1 in 100 adults in U.S. incarcerated.

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CORRECTIONAL POPULATIONS

- 700,000 offenders released from federal and state prisons annually.
- More than 9 million offenders cycle through local jails annually.
  - Jails have contact in three weeks with as many individuals as prisons have contact with in one year.
- 95% of incarcerated prison offenders will be released.
- Most are released to supervision (75%), but there is a growing percentage (increase from 20% in 2000 to 25% in 2010) who are released unconditionally.

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CORRECTIONAL POPULATIONS

- Success rates are low and relatively unchanged for decades.
  - Only 1 in 3 offenders released from state prison remains arrest-free three years after release.
  - Failure rates are highest in the period immediately following release.
  - Offenders are 3 times as likely to fail in the first month as they are in month 15.

Supervised Populations

- 70% (5 million offenders) of correctional populations are under community supervision.
  - Probation 4.2 million
  - Parole 760,000
- 1 in 45 Adults in U.S.
- Again, success rates are low contributing to tremendous growth in prison populations and devastating select communities and families.
  - Over 227,000 parole violators admitted to U.S. prisons in 2010.
  - About half of the U.S. jail population are individuals who failed on community supervision.
  - About 9 percent of failures on probation end up incarcerated for the violation.

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Offender Profile

Numbers at Year-End 2010		
	Men	**Women**
Incarcerated	2.0 million	0.2 million
On Community Supervision	3.9 million	1.3 million
Total	5.9 million	1.5 million

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Offender Profile

- Men are more likely than women to be serving time for a violent offense (54% of men v. 36% of women).
- 46% of male offenders in state prisons are under 35 years old.
- 60% of female offenders in state prisons are under 35 years old.
- The incarceration rate for men and women who are black or of Hispanic origin are tremendously higher than for those who are white.

Offender Profile

Incarceration Rate Males Ages 18 to 64	
Race	
Black	1 in 12
Hispanic	1 in 36
White	1 in 87

- Offenders are disproportionately made up of young, minority men who come from a relatively small number of neighborhoods in urban areas.

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Offender Profile

Pennsylvania Illustration…

- 27% of offenders released from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in 2008 were admitted from only 6 of PA's 67 counties.
  - Within these counties, there are 14 zip codes with high concentrations of residents under correctional control. Eight times the average!
  - More than 1/4 of offenders admitted to the PA DOC, come from ½ of 1% of the total zip codes in the Commonwealth.
  - Neighborhood residents have higher than average unemployment rates, low household income levels, higher than average school drop-out rates.
  - The neighborhoods are characterized by high crime rates and low property values.

Offender Profile - RISK

- The average offender admitted to prison has a significant criminal history as measured by the number of arrests.
- A study conducted on PA prison admissions indicated that 85% of male offenders entering the prison system over a two month period had 5 or more total arrests , while 50% had 10 or more arrests.
- PAST BEHAVIOR IS PREDICTIVE OF FUTURE BEHAVIOR. THE NUMBER OF ARRESTS IN A PERSON'S HISTORY IS A ROBUST PREDICTOR OF FUTURE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR!
- While ½ of offenders in nation's prisons are serving time for a "violent" offense, instant offense conviction is *not* a good predictor of risk to commit additional crimes.

Offender Profile - Needs

- While static (unchangeable) factors are critical to measure using actuarial tools, it is just as important to measure dynamic risk factors or *criminogenic* needs.
- WHY? Because these can change and there are strategies and practices which can influence change in a positive direction.
- MAJOR RISK FACTORS
  - Antisocial attitudes, beliefs, values, associates
  - Poor self-regulation skills
  - Poor problem-solving and decision-making skills
  - Low levels of educational attainment, few vocational skills, little work history
  - Substance abuse/dependence

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Offender Need Profile

- Offenders, especially those incarcerated, tend to have *multiple* and *serious criminogenic needs*.
  - EDUCATION/SKILLS:
    - —About 62% of incarcerated offenders have a High School Diploma or GED.
    - —About 20% have any post-secondary education.
    - —Most offenders have limited work histories and can be classified as unskilled workers.
    - —Significant portions of the offender population have very low reading levels.
    - —***A black male between the ages of 20 and 34 who is a high school drop-out has a higher probability of being incarcerated than he does of having a job***.

Offender Need Profile

- IMPLICATIONS
  - 60% of the 20 fastest growing occupations require post secondary education, most especially an associate's degree.
  - Former offenders have high unemployment rates and depressed earnings. Research findings suggest that having been incarcerated impedes future economic success.

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Offender Need Profile

- Substance Abuse/Dependence
  - Only 1/3 of state prisoners are *not* substance abusers or dependent on alcohol or other drugs.
  - Many substance abusing offenders have a co-occurring mental illness.
  - The percentages of offenders who self-report mental illness and who are diagnosed as seriously mentally-ill are significantly higher than in the general population. This is particularly true with female offenders.

- IMPLICATIONS

— One major reason for violations and return to prison is positive drug tests.

— While mental illness itself is not a criminogenic need, untreated mental illness can greatly influence an offender's ability to succeed not to mention cause tremendous suffering.

Offender Need Profile

- High needs for instant gratification.
- High levels of restlessness, egocentricism and impulsive behavior.
- Significant issues with hostile interpretations of common social situations.
- Low levels of attachment to pro-social people and institutions.
- Lack of skill in thinking through problems, generating potential solutions, considering consequences and choosing options.

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System Considerations

- As if the offender profile itself isn't daunting enough, consider this:

  - According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics report *Prisoners in 2010*, the estimated mean time expected to be served by state prison admissions entering in 2010, is 2.1 year. This number has remained virtually unchanged since 2000.

  - Considering the multiple and severe needs the average offender presents with, this is not much time to "correct."

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System Considerations

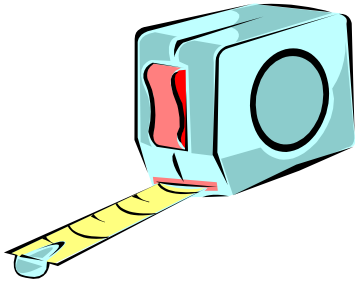
- Many correctional systems are operating above capacity and resources are tight and in most cases are becoming tighter.
- The criminal justice system must compete for limited resources with other critical areas funded with state and local tax dollars including education, behavioral health and environmental protection.
- Every dollar spent in the justice system is a dollar not spent in another area (opportunity cost).
- Decreasing community resources has significant implications for returning offenders and reentry planning!

What We Know About What Works

- So much hinges on focusing on those more likely to fail absent intervention.

- MEASURE RISK AND NEED. Understand and use the data you gather for individual planning and aggregate analysis and system organization.

- Consider strengths or protective factors.



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What Works

- Excellent, practitioner- friendly resources available.
  - Campbell Collaborative systematic reviews.
  - Office of Justice Programs CrimeSolutions.gov
  - National Reentry Resource Center's What Works Clearinghouse
  - Multiple Programs and Publications.
    - *Transition from Jail to the Community.*
    - *Transition from Prison to the Community.*
    - *The Report of the Reentry Policy Council.*
    - *A Ten Step Guide to Transforming Probation Departments to Reduce Recidivism.*

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What Is Effective and Efficient

Strategies and Programs Which Improve Outcomes for Adult Offenders	
Name	Benefit minus Cost per Participant
Correctional education in prison	$20,298
Vocational education in prison	$18,875
Drug treatment in prison	$10,974
Drug treatment in community	$16,108
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (mid to high risk)	$9,283
Employment training/job assistance in community	$5,366
Work release	$6,456

Lee, S., Aos, S., Drake, E., Pennucci, A., Miller, M. and Anderson, L. (2012) *Return on Investment: Evidence-based options to improve statewide outcomes,* April 2012 (Document No. 12-04-1201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

System Considerations

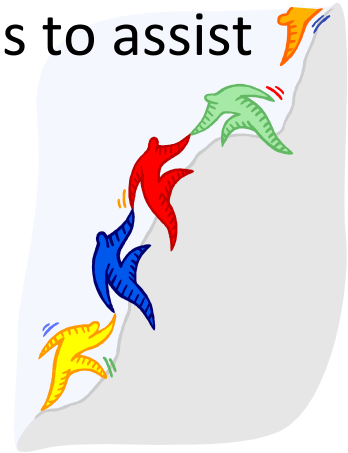
- Analyze your Overall Population
  - —Consider the overall risk/need profile. Pay attention to the needs of sub-populations (e.g., woman often require trauma-treatment).
  - —Length of stay is highly variable between and within systems (e.g., determinate v. indeterminate sentencing states, conviction offense).
  - —As an example, offenders serving time for sex offenses in the PA DOC serve on average 200% of their minimum sentence regardless of specific crime, whereas the average offender served 130% of their minimum sentence.

System Considerations

- Develop different priorities/strategies for groupings of offenders.
  - Mid- to high-risk with less than 1 year to serve.
  - Offenders serving longer sentences.
- Think through blanket mandates – are they reasonable for everyone?
- Consider overall resource levels. Some services take relatively little time but can have big impacts.
  - Having appropriate identification when leaving an institution.
- Volunteers are a great resource. Can facilitate life-skills and other services.

System Considerations

- Take Advantage of "public domain" programs and services.
  - —National Institute of Corrections.
  - —The FDIC MoneySmart program is free, addresses needs identified by offenders , and does not require training to offer.
  - —Resources are limited. Think about how to appropriately engage offenders, capitalize on their strengths to assist others. AA/NA.



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System Considerations

- Offer core cognitive behavioral programs which provide a foundation and are unlikely to be found in the community. Some examples: Reasoning and Rehabilitation, Thinking for a Change, Moral Reconation Therapy.

- Consider creating "Living Communities" in which offenders participate in treatment and life skills training.
  - IMMERSION.
  - Group as Method.
  - Staff can observe behavior
    - Appropriate use of rewards and punishers.
    - Motivational interviewing.

System Considerations

- In offering vocational training:
  - Look for programs where inmates can earn multiple, industry recognized credentials in relatively short order. Layering.
  - Think about reading and math level requirements.
  - Seek out programs that don't require tons of space and high-end, easily outdated equipment, especially if it requires capital funding.
  - Partner with industries who are ex-offender friendly.
  - For correctional industries participation, may consider offering to those with longer sentences who will reintegrate.
    - Keep positively engaged. Sense of Purpose.
    - Reward.
    - Time to learn specific skill and do the job.

System Considerations

- Support family connectivity where it makes sense as offenders who remain connected to their families tend to have better outcomes.
  - Family-friendly visiting policies
  - Phone calls
  - Virtual visits
  - Parenting support
- Work on the hand-off, should be a step-down, not a step-off.
  - Have joint documents that capture all relevant information, including risk/need, what offender has done to address need areas, highlight strengths, what RE-ASSESSMENTS find, triggers, etc.
  - More supervision and services immediately upon release. FRONT LOAD.

System Considerations

- Offenders need to get off on the right foot. The downslide can be quick and steep and is more likely in the early days and weeks after release.
- Consider using well designed and faithfully implemented deterrence strategies. (e.g., HOPE and 24/7)
- Be reasonable about the conditions set.
- Communicate openly and clearly about what the expectations are, that conditions will be relentlessly monitored and each and every infraction punished.
- Swiftness. Certainty. Celerity.
- Tools such as kiosks, electronic monitoring, GPS can be useful.

System Considerations

- Examine opportunities to transition offenders into their communities through jail/work release. Maximizes strengths of each system.

- Harness the power of "informal social controls."

- Seek to connect offenders with pro-social people, and businesses, non-profits, faith-groups, sponsors, mentors. The more and stronger the "hooks" into conventional society, the better the odds of success.

- Keep offenders productively engaged especially in early days. Avoid unstructured time which allows for opportunities to fall into bad habits, anti-social friends.

Individual Considerations

- Knowing risk and need levels, consider the relative strength of the need areas. Prioritize, but tackle multiple needs.
- Consider dosage requirements for the individual offender in treatment and education.
  - Do you have the resources and time to make a meaningful dent?
  - Do the specific needs identified lend themselves to COMPLETING core levels and moving into the community for further treatment?
  - Completion is critical. Some research findings indicate offenders who start but do not complete programs, can have poorer outcomes than if they never started programming.

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Individual Considerations

- Strive for Balance.
- Engage the offender in identifying concerns and triggers.
- Develop reasonable plans.
- Be clear and transparent.
- Stay the Course, make major change only when there are compelling reasons (e.g. new information).
- Collaborate.

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Individual Considerations

- Develop individual relapse prevention plan.
- Promote realistic expectations of life post-release.
- Develop specific and tangible strategies.
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.

What Can We Do To Improve Probabilities for Good Outcomes ?

- Pay Attention to the SCIENCE not What Feels Good, is Popular or is Driven by Anything other than Evidence.
- Pay Attention to the findings of ALL scientifically-rigorous studies.
  - Effectiveness Matters.
  - Juice for the Squeeze Matters.

- Do not point only to those which support your positions or beliefs (e.g. the only thing that works is targeted treatment).
- Remember that one study, no matter how rigorous, is but one study. Look to be informed by bodies of evidence.

What Can We Do To Improve Probabilities of Good Outcomes ?

- Support rigorous research. Partner with experienced, qualified, independent researchers.
- It is as important to know what doesn't work as it is to know what does work. AND THE REASONS FOR BOTH!
- Assess Risk and Needs Using Actuarial Tools developed for offenders and tested for your specific population.
- Treat offenders as the individuals they are. Base plans on assessed individual needs.
- Collaborate with other agencies. There is tremendous cross-over of clients – offenders are often high consumers of other services (e.g., emergency rooms, community substance abuse treatment, Career OneStops, homeless shelters).

What Can We Do To Improve Probabilities of Good Outcomes ?

- Don't try to be all things to all people. If everything and everyone is a priority, then nothing and no one is a priority.

- Concentrate on serving those offenders who are more likely to fail without intervention, services and supports.

- KEEP LEARNING AND KEEP TRYING. Implementation is hard work, which requires leadership, extensive staff training, on-going monitoring and a commitment to continuous assessment and adjustment as required.

- Be RELENTLESS in STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE. Encourage and Reward Innovation.

What Can We Do To Improve Probabilities of Good Outcomes ?

- Be smart and strategic. Learn from other practitioners and share your implementation challenges and successes.

- Use the many, high quality resources available. Be willing to ask for assistance.

- Seek input from offenders, their families, those who work with offenders in the community, partner agencies serving the same core clients, staff who work with offenders every day….

- Know that there are no perfect solutions, there may be better strategies, but we all have lots to learn.

What Can We Do To Improve Probabilities of Good Outcomes ?

- Every research study ends with "More Research is Needed." While that is true, do not let what we don't know stop you from acting to help the offenders in your jurisdiction succeed today.

- We will never know all we would like to, but we must be proactive and use the evidence we do have to develop intelligent approaches. DUE DILLIGENCE and GOOD STEWARDSHIP.

- Do not tolerate deliberate indifference or defeatist attitudes.

What Can We Do To Improve Probabilities of Good Outcomes ?

- When you are frustrated and tired as we all become from time to time, REMEMBER WHAT WE ARE WORKING TOWARD:

- Safer, Healthier Communities,
- Higher Numbers of Productive, Engaged, Law-Abiding Citizens,
- Better Quality of Life,
- Greater probabilities that communities and families hard hit by residents and family members cycling through levels of the justice system, will be able to take positive steps to tackle poverty, unemployment, and limited educational opportunities.

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