

## PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY USING EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS WITH OFFENDERS<sup>1</sup>

Overview of Presentations by Dr. Ed Latessa to PSCC and Related Bodies  
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### FRAMEWORK – Principles of Effective Correctional Intervention<sup>2</sup>

- RISK PRINCIPLE: Treatment interventions should be used primarily with higher risk offenders. (Shouldn't mix high-risk offenders with low to moderate risk)
- NEED PRINCIPLE: Target the known criminogenic predictors of crime & recidivism
- TREATMENT PRINCIPLE: Treatment & services should be behavioral in nature:
  - Cognitive behavioral (programs that target attitudes)
  - Social learning models (programs that teach new skills)
  - Graduated practice
  - Role playing
  - Reinforcement
  - Extinction
  - Resource provision
  - Concrete verbal suggestions
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Family based interventions (that help train families)
- A range of other considerations, if addressed, will increase treatment effectiveness
  - Responsivity – targeting lack of offender motivation
  - Interventions in community rather than institution
  - Well trained, interpersonally sensitive staff
  - Assist with other needs of offenders
  - Close monitoring of offender whereabouts & associates
  - Follow offenders after they have completed the program & give structured relapse prevention & aftercare

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<sup>1</sup> This handout is a summary of notes from presentations along with material contained in Promoting Public Safety Using Effective Interventions with Offenders, Sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections, the International Community Corrections Association, and state and local corrections agencies. 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Adopted from Cullen, F.T. and Gendreau, P.

### **MAJOR SET OF RISK/NEED FACTORS**

1. Antisocial/procriminal attitudes, values, beliefs and cognitive-emotional states
2. Procriminal associates and isolation from anticriminal others
3. Temperamental and personality factors conducive to criminal activity including:
  - psychopathy
  - weak socialization
  - impulsivity
  - restless/aggressive energy
  - egocentrism
  - below average verbal intelligence
  - a taste for risk
  - weak problem-solving/self-regulation skills
4. A history of antisocial behavior:
  - evident from a young age
  - in a variety of settings
  - involving a number and variety of different acts
5. Familial 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
  - outright neglect and abuse
6. Low levels of personal educational, vocational or financial achievement.

## **WHAT WORKS**

### **What does the research say?**

- Not a single reviewer of studies of the effects of official punishment (custody, mandatory arrests, probation, increased surveillance, etc.) has found consistent evidence of reduced recidivism
- At least 40% and up to 60% of the studies of correctional treatment services reported reduced recidivism rates, relative to various comparison conditions, in every published review.

### **Research tells us we should:**

- Assess to determine level of risk of offenders – assessment tool needs to identify all major and minor risk factors. Assessment:
  - Guides decision making
  - Reduces bias
  - Improves placement of offenders for treatment and security
  - Helps manage the population in a more effective manner
  - Aides in legal challenges
  - Helps us better utilize resources
- Follow general principles of classification
  - Risk
    - Predicts future criminal behavior
    - Matches level of treatment/services to the risk level of the offender
  - Need
    - Match offenders to programs that address their criminogenic needs
  - Responsivity (learning style and characteristics of offender which can affect their engagement in treatment)
    - Deliver interventions in a style and mode that is consistent with the ability and learning style of the offender
    - Recognize that individuals may be more responsive to certain staff

### **Characteristics of good programs:**

- Strong leadership
- Based on theory and research
- Good assessment of offenders
- Use of behavioral treatment approaches
- Good staff

## WHAT DOESN'T WORK

- Drug prevention classes focused on fear
- Drug education programs
- Talking cures
- Non-directive interventions
- Self help programs
- Increasing cohesiveness of criminal groups
- Targeting non-crime producing needs
- Vague unstructured rehab programs (life skills, counseling)
- Fostering self respect (self esteem)
- Radical non-intervention (doing nothing)
- Targeting low risk offenders
- DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)
- Punishing smarter:
  - Boot camp
  - "Scared straight"
  - Electronic monitoring (use as a tool, not a program)
  - Intensive supervision (use as a tool, not a program)