



Research in Brief

Facilitator Feedback on the Effectiveness of Women Offender Correctional Programs

Facilitators provide positive feedback and identify areas for improvement in women offender correctional programming.

Why we did this study

In 2010, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) implemented a comprehensive model of women offender correctional programming (WOCP). The gender-informed model was conceived of as a continuum. It provides a series of program components from admission (Engagement, Moderate and High intensity programs) to community release (Self-Management program), depending on a women's level of risk and identified needs. The goal was to enhance program accessibility and participation, while facilitating successful treatment gains and offender reintegration.

Accordingly, CSC conducted a comprehensive study to examine the effectiveness of WOCP components. The current review summarizes facilitator feedback for all elements of the WOCP model.

What we did

The sample consisted of all facilitators who delivered a program within the WOCP continuum and submitted feedback between 2010 and 2014. A total of 220 feedback forms were collected and analyzed for key themes. The feedback was used to identify the most and least effective parts of the program.

What we found

Most of the facilitators believed the programs had a positive impact on participants. Regarding areas of improvement, facilitators found that time management and organization of the sessions should be adjusted. Providing a lot of material during a short time frame created challenges in delivering sessions.

Additionally, facilitators identified a concern with repetition and overlap in content across the programs causing frustration among some of the women. There was also a lack of continuity between facilitator and participant manuals.

Additional themes in the feedback identified certain program activities that could be changed (e.g., less

journaling, more options for icebreakers). They also identified the use of outdated terminology, and stressed the importance of updating the resource material (e.g., videos and manuals).

In terms of recommendations, facilitators suggested more use of real life examples, scenarios, and involvement of guest speakers. Facilitators found that the women benefited when they could relate to the examples provided.

The women also liked exercises where they were required to set goals and objectives. Specifically, they found it helpful to learn about effective goal setting using the SMART approach (i.e. Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time-limited goal setting).

Finally, feedback also suggested that smaller groups and one-on-one sessions increased offender participation and understanding of program material.

What it means

Feedback showed that most facilitators found the programs were beneficial for participants. They also identified possible program improvements. These included simplifying program content for easier delivery given short timeframes, and reducing repetition in program materials. Finally, there were also recommendations for smaller group sizes, and providing more real world examples and scenarios, as well as guest speakers as good learning tools for the women.

For more information

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