

# FORUM

ON CORRECTIONS RESEARCH

January 2001, Volume 13, Number 1

## Featured issues

### Reintegration Levers

Selection

Intervention

Supervision



Correctional Service  
Canada

Service correctionnel  
Canada

FORUM ON CORRECTIONS RESEARCH is published three times a year in both English and French for the staff and management of the Correctional Service of Canada and the international corrections community.

FORUM reviews applied research related to corrections policy, programming and management issues. It also features original articles contributed by staff of the Correctional Service of Canada and other international researchers and practitioners.

FORUM is prepared and published by the Research Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada.

FORUM invites contributions to any section of the magazine from researchers in the field. Please send your contributions to

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Canada Post  
Publication mail agreement no.  
1454455

**Editor:** Larry Motiuk

**Assistant Editor:** Dean Jones

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**Typesetting and Layout:** Acart  
Communications

**Printing:** National Printers

Sections of *FORUM on Corrections Research* without acknowledgement of authorship have been researched and written by the staff of the Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada.

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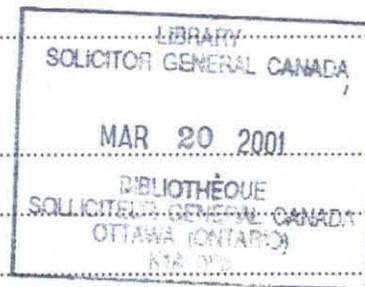
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# FORUM

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# The safe return of offenders through selection, intervention and supervision

Larry Motiuk<sup>1</sup>

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Offender reintegration has been defined as all correctional and programming activity conducted to prepare an offender to return safely to the community as a law-abiding citizen.<sup>2</sup> Reintegration encompasses a broad range of decisions commensurate with public safety, and intended to: place offenders in the least restrictive setting possible, grant temporary absence or conditional release, and invoke suspension or revocation of conditional release when necessary.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, safe, effective and efficient reintegration can yield fewer days spent in prison, longer periods on conditional release and reduce recidivism.

There are many opportunities, from admission to end-of-sentence, where improvement in case management activities (selection, programming, monitoring and support) has the potential to yield reintegration dividends. Based on a review of the available applied research on key offender management functions, sixteen reintegration levers were uncovered. The assumptions supporting these sixteen reintegration levers are discussed below and their potential contribution to safe reintegration is illustrated in the accompanying articles.

Correctional decision-making is the foundation on which the success of offender reintegration rests. While objective selection procedures and programming efforts have been refined and improved over the years, additional contributions to the reintegration effort can be realized by encouraging greater efficiencies across case management functions. Based on a review of operational research at least sixteen functions were identified along the case management continuum where appropriate decisions and improved efficiencies could impact on reintegration.

## Reintegration Levers

### 1. Classifying initial security level

Initial security level placement has an impact on the probability and timing of discretionary release.<sup>4</sup> Simply stated, the lower the level of initial security placement the greater the probability of discretionary release and the shorter the period of incarceration prior to release. At admission, appropriately placing offenders to the least restrictive measures of confinement contributes to the reintegration effort by increasing opportunities for gradual release, improving release credibility, eliminating the time consuming and sometimes questionable practice of security transfer reviews, and by exposing the offender to release-oriented case management teams.

### 2. Profiling reintegration potential

Accurate profiles of each offender's initial security level placement, release risk, programming requirement at admission<sup>5</sup> and reintegration potential<sup>6</sup> at admission serves as a means to predict good candidates for early release and can help to establish case preparation priorities.

### 3. Developing correctional plans

The correctional plan developed at intake is the foundation upon which prison release is predicated and often the basis on which discretionary release is supported or denied and often understood or have the tendency to become "binding contracts," especially when the plan is associated with a statement of reintegration potential.

### 4. Improving program motivation

Offenders who are highly motivated to succeed in programs represent prime candidates for successful reintegration.<sup>7</sup> Motivation is often a critical factor in parole officer support for program referral, participation, progress and early release. Accurately assessing offender motivation to target offenders for program participation and to establish release priority can make an important contribution to safe reintegration.

### 5. Increasing program participation

Institutional program participation often consumes a large proportion of case preparation time and can become a source of delay in eventual release. Successful program participation has been demonstrated to improve the likelihood of post-release success. Assignment to programs, where the need is not identified or, the program is inappropriate, may offer little or no benefit and actually contribute to conditional release failure.

### 6. Ensuring program completion

Program completion is a critical foundation for the safe release of offenders. The full effects of programming are not always fully known, however, completing programs provides important information about post-release success; and program non-completers or dropouts impose a cost both in terms of wasted resources and in depriving motivated offenders program opportunities.

### **7. Improving program performance**

The assessment of program performance although critical in the decision to support early release, is often subjective and largely without guidelines. Assessing program outcome/treatment gain or relating program performance to reintegration potential and post-release adjustment is important.

### **8. Reviewing preventative detention referrals**

Increasing preventative detention referrals (to be held to the end of sentence) results in longer incarceration periods. Profiles of offenders who are returned to custody following detention can be established and provide the basis for improving detention referrals.

### **9. Moderating administrative segregation**

Placement in administrative segregation for disciplinary (such as assault) or voluntary reasons (such as protection) is a major impediment to correctional progress and early release. Profiles of offenders identified as "at risk" to be segregated provide an opportunity to develop interventions designed to divert offenders from administrative segregation and to ensure their quick discharge; effective implementation of segregation policies can prevent the segregation of some offenders and ensure the speedy release of others.

### **10. Reclassifying security level**

Reclassification and expeditious transfer of offenders to the "least restrictive measures of confinement" can improve the offender's chances for earlier, discretionary release. Regular and systematic reviews of security classification play an important role in the reintegration process.

### **11. Increasing successful temporary absences**

Participation in either escorted or unescorted temporary absence programs are critical to establishing offender credibility for early release and re-establishing the temporary absence program can make a major contribution to safe reintegration.

### **12. Enhancing case preparation activities**

Case preparation<sup>8</sup> is the total of all activity designed to prepare appropriate offenders for an early safe release and manage them throughout conditional release. Achieving modest efficiencies at any one of number of critical stages along the case management continuum can result in significant reductions in "days of incarceration" and a corresponding increase in community supervision.

### **13. Encouraging safe community release**

Participation in work release programs<sup>9</sup> or other types of early release programs (such as day parole, correctional halfway house placement, program attendance centres) are critical to establishing offender credibility for full release and re-establishing the view that this type of programming can make a major contribution to safe reintegration.

### **14. Enhancing community supervision**

The effective use of frequency of contact guidelines, special conditions and community-based programming as well as compliance to standards<sup>10</sup> can play an important role in determining whether offenders successfully complete their conditional release.

### **15. Moderating suspensions**

Reintegration success can also be achieved by maintaining conditionally released offenders in the community. Predicting offenders who are at greater risk for being suspended is greatly improved by use of measurement techniques. More importantly, suspension practice is subject to broad interpretation, often-reflecting local decision-making traditions and case management efficiencies that can impact on the reintegration progress. While it is unwise to prescribe an "appropriate" suspension rate (particularly in the absence of specific operational suspension criteria) improving suspension efficiencies and narrowing disparities in practice has the potential to sustain more offenders for longer periods in the community.

### **16. Moderating technical revocations**

Technical revocations (those not based on a criminal conviction, charge or absconding from the parole jurisdiction) may provide an additional source for improving the reintegration process. There has been little study of revocation decision-making processes and guidelines could be developed to support field staff. A better understanding of the process and corporate guidelines, particularly those that support alternatives to revocation submissions, may improve reintegration efforts.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly, the number of reintegration levers presented offer mechanisms for reductions in incarceration days and improved post-release outcomes. Within this context, the aforementioned "levers" can also contribute substantially to the integrity of custody, care, control and safe reintegration practices and the success of offender population management. ■

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- <sup>2</sup> Thurber, A. (1998). Understanding offender reintegration. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 10(1), 14-19.
- <sup>3</sup> Motiuk, L. L., & Serin, R. (1998). Situating risk assessment in the reintegration potential framework. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 10(1), 19-22.
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- <sup>9</sup> Grant, B.A., & Beal, C. (1998). Work release program: How it is used and for what purposes. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 10(2), 35-38.
- <sup>10</sup> Luciani, F. (1994). Conditional release supervision standards revisited: An examination of compliance in Ontario region. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 6(3), 26-29.

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# Reporting on results: The Correctional Service of Canada experience

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Performance Assurance, Correctional Service of Canada

Canadians expect it, the Government of Canada has promised it, legislators need it and taxpayers are entitled to know what they are getting for the money that is spent on their behalf. This is the basic message behind the question “why report on results?” However, it is only the beginning of the answer. Reporting on results serves the needs of a variety of people. Sometimes to help them do their jobs, sometimes to inform them, to provide direction for further research, to show new opportunities, to explode myths or to give the satisfaction of knowing what came about as a result of hard-work. In short, results information helps shape intelligent debate and focussed action...at least for those interested in knowing the truth, or willing to be confused by the facts.

*This means that citizens, managers, legislators, critics, members of the media, editorialists ... all of them can use information to do their jobs better and with more integrity.*

At the Correctional Service of Canada, we are rather proud of the fact that we began reporting and monitoring some years ago, in some ways long before the current emphasis on the subject. Closer inspection suggests that these earlier efforts were not as focussed on results as they should have been. They were more designed to report on activities, incidents and processes, than on outputs and outcomes. This is not an insignificant distinction; there are at least two cautionary notes.

First, there is an off-quoted cliché “what gets measured gets managed”... if for “measured” you substitute “counted” then you risk treading on dangerous ground. The risk is obvious: effort is focussed on improving the number, on climbing or falling on some scale, not on contributing to a quality output or outcome. We have experienced this; it is often easier to count than to measure. We have derived false comfort from numbers that said compliance to time standards was increasing only to learn, through more in-depth review, that quality, the real contribution to achieving our Mission and legislative obligations, was being sacrificed.

Second, unless you clearly understand how events and activities are linked to outcomes, then reporting on them really tells you nothing about results; it merely tells you “more” vs. “less.” In the business of corrections, we feel this acutely. “More offenders in the community” can be used to inflame strong feelings both positive and negative. But it may be the result of nothing more than a coincidence of release dates, a change in sentence lengths or better

compliance with the law of the land. Similarly, we can derive false comfort from increases in offender programming. More offenders in more programs sound encouraging. What we need to know is who successfully completes programs, what skills or insights that program(s) gave them, which in turn, is likely to lead to safer reintegration into society. Even then we must be careful. If an offender does or does not return to criminal behaviour we should never assume that the credit, or the blame, are entirely ours. There are too many variables at play.

If we fail to heed these apparently obvious cautions, we do indeed run serious risks, whether you are a practitioner, a manager, an advocate or a critic. As an old mentor used to caution “be sure you know what you really know.”

From some ambitious early beginnings, we have tried to learn and refine our reporting on results. We have moved our focus from the “obvious”, the “common sense” and the “intuitive” and are trying to work backwards, in our reporting strategy, from our Mission and Legislative mandate. We have a long way to go. We ask ourselves, in short, “if this is what we are supposed to do, what will we report on that will tell us, directly or by proxy what we are achieving or what contribution are we making to those eventual achievements.”

In this we are lucky, we think, in having very clear legislative requirements and very emphatic statements in our Mission, core values and strategic objectives.

The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* provides guiding principles that give clear areas against which to report, for example:

- Protection of society be the paramount consideration
- All relevant information be used in the corrections process
- Least restrictive measures consistent with safety be used

The Mission gives similar fertile ground for monitoring and reporting, if we wish to manage with integrity.

*“... respecting the rule of law, contributes to the protection of society by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law abiding citizens, while exercising safe, secure and humane control.”*

Both of these documents provide the basis for our reporting efforts, whether we report on compliance (rule of law), actions by offenders while incarcerated or on conditional release (protection of society, safe, secure humane control) or program interventions (actively encourage and assist).

Indeed we do use these principles as the basis for our reporting, whether through audits, investigations, evaluations, or more particularly for this discussion, our regular presentations of data to our managers.

Building around the Act and our Mission we have created hundreds of reports for the management cadre of the Service ... even the Auditor General refers to it as a "vast array" of information. This material, the "*Corporate Results*" is presented at every meeting of the Service's Executive Committee and is extensively discussed. It is not an easy session as reasons are offered, excuses dismissed, corrective actions proposed and objectives for improvement are set. But that is "what it is all about". In order to manage in an informed focussed way, to manage with integrity, we accept that you have to have the information, assess the results and confront what they tell you.

It also helps, to be fair, to deal with perceptions and myths that abound in our profession. To have information, to have data, to have results helps respond to those who through lack of knowledge, fear or who knows what other motives, form inaccurate impressions. It helps both us and Canadians move closer together on what needs to be done in criminal justice. We know, and we can show, that people genuinely interested in knowing more about our business learn, change attitudes and contribute insights when the data and the results are known and shared.

Today we enjoy the secondary benefits of a significant investment in technology. Over the last decade an "electronic file" has been created on each offender, a file that is the official offender file. This system, with its electronic files and structured data fields, gave us an unrivalled opportunity to access vast amounts of information, in millions of combinations. A real bonanza, to be sure, but one that brought yet another set of problems.

Our early efforts at reporting set off a series of seemingly endless, often acrimonious debates that, in crude summary said "your numbers are different from ours ... ours are right, yours are wrong." Frustration reigned.

In many ways this was inevitable; the database is huge, with the same or similar information recorded in many different fields. The chances of going to different fields for similar or similar sounding reports were, and are, great. There were data quality

problems too, particularly as old file data were converted en-masse to a new medium. Early errors were rampant, however, we worked through it.

In an ideal world, nothing would have been produced until we had consensus on sources, definitions and "interpretation rules" for data and reports, but that is not reality. Organizations constantly need information on how they are doing and they need it in increasing detail and complexity. Finally we caught up, though this particular race never ends, and have built consensus around existing reports and processes to decide on the need for and the content of new ones. We invite anyone contemplating moving into this field to avoid our mistakes! And as anyone can see who reads newspapers, the debate over definition and interpretation goes on, and on.

Finally, we had to mature and to discipline ourselves. It is too easy to use results to decide who is right and who is wrong, who won and who lost. This may be a predictable human reaction, but it is not the reaction of mature managers in what aspires to be a learning organization. Nothing stifles creativity, contribution and progress like the fear of reports that will be used to inflict pain and punishment rather than to make progress. This is a constant challenge. As in all things, there is another side to reporting on results.

We have talked a little about what we have done and what we do. As noted earlier, much remains to be incorporated before results can be reported in a truly broad and balanced fashion.

We need to access the outcome data for program interventions and participation and link it to correctional decisions and outcomes in a routine way. We need to have virtually seamless links to financial data, so we can add the critical managerial insight into cost per "unit" and cost per outcome. We need to add information about our staff and their utilization to help with costing, training and recruitment strategies. Perhaps the biggest lesson of reporting on results is that the biggest product is more questions ... and more reports.

This does not mean we have misgivings about the effort, even when our reports generate still more work or are used to criticise us. That is part of being open and accountable. Reporting openly and often has let us understand what we need to do. It has let us focus on things that will improve outcomes, and shift resources. Reporting, as said at the outset, leads to more structured and informed decision making. That makes it worthwhile. ■

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# Initiating safe reintegration: A decade of Custodial Rating Scale results

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**W**e are accustomed to thinking of objective or actuarial measures of risk assessment as an assessment aid to classification officers confronted with making specific decisions about individual offenders. While this is their prime function, objective assessment also serves a number of other objectives that may not often come to the attention of field staff. These involve strategic issues that address organizational or macro level objectives and include standardizing criteria and decisions rules for risk assessment, establishing authority and accountability frameworks, ensuring consistency and fairness, and creating an information base to validate and refine tools. Objective measures can also serve to shape, promote and evaluate the values and objectives of the correctional agency. This article explores the last of these objectives. Specifically, it examines the Custody Rating Scale and how its introduction has influenced both the policy and practice of initial penitentiary placement and contributes to safe reintegration.

## Background

**T**he Custody Rating Scale (CRS) is a twelve item instrument that assesses institutional adjustment and public safety risk and yields an initial security classification rating.<sup>2</sup> The CRS was approved for system-wide application by the Correctional Service of Canada in 1991, and is applied to both newly sentenced and return to custody admissions. Validation results<sup>3</sup> based on the first five years of operation demonstrated that the CRS is effective in assigning security classification ratings that are consistent with actual incidences of institutional offence, escape, release type and community release adjustment. Also, offenders rated minimum-security by the CRS recorded significantly lower rates of new offence and escape from minimum-security facilities than medium-rated offenders who were also initially placed to minimum-security facilities. These findings support the position that the CRS is useful in identifying minimum-security candidates at time of admission.

Modern correctional legislation embraces the principle of “least restrictive” measure of confinement for reasons of fairness, practicality and economy. In addition, there are a number of advantages that enhance the discretionary release potential of offenders placed to lower security level facilities. Offenders reviewed for early release or parole from medium-, and in particular minimum-security level

facilities, enjoy greater opportunities to establish release potential through wider access to community programmes, temporary absences, institutional employment and recreational activities. Over and above these opportunities, minimum-security status alone seems to improve discretionary release potential.

Research<sup>4</sup> has shown that offenders rated minimum-security by the CRS and initially placed at a minimum-security facility enjoyed much higher discretionary release rates and were released much earlier in their sentence than minimum-rated offender placed to a medium security facility. Both minimum-rated groups shared higher reintegration potential ratings as measured by the Statistical Information on Recidivism (SIR) scale.<sup>5</sup> As well, medium-rated offenders placed to a minimum-security facility enjoyed much higher and earlier release rates than medium-rated, medium-placed offenders even though both medium-rated groups shared lower reintegration potential ratings. In fact, the medium-rated, minimum-placed group was more likely to be released and released earlier than even a minimum-rated, medium-placed group.

Notwithstanding, analyses of initial placements found 43% of offenders with minimum-security ratings were overridden to a higher security level.<sup>6</sup> It was estimated that improving concordance with the CRS could result in an increase in releases and reduce incarceration days. Operational reviews demonstrate the utility of the CRS in identifying minimum-security candidates and how initial placement can influence both the likelihood of discretionary release and the length of incarceration prior to release.

While there is little argument with the concept of assigning offenders to the lowest level of security, over-classification remains a hindrance to safe reintegration. The introduction of offender classification scales<sup>7</sup> at both the initial and reclassification stages exposed the often conservative nature of classification practice.<sup>8</sup> The tendency to error on the side of caution, to over-estimate security risk and the tendency to place (and thus classify) offenders to institutions that meet protection, medical or programme needs, as opposed to security profile, are all potential contributors to over classification practice.

## Strategies for increasing placement to lower security

Objective measures of security classification represent the established norms for classification and offer a convenient method of communicating corporate policy and direction. They are based on fixed, weighted criteria and decision rules, amendable within discrete, identifiable increments that allows their effects to be tracked or calculated. In an effort to influence initial classification practice an analysis<sup>9</sup> of the potential effects on institutional incident and escapes rates from minimum-security was undertaken utilizing CRS data gathered for validation purposes. The object of the analysis was to determine what effect moving the minimum-security cut-off points had on incident and escape rates and whether revising the cut-offs values could increase initial placement to minimum-facility.

CRS data was available on 6,745 offenders admitted to federal institutions between 1991 and 1995. Offender institutional incident and escape information was gathered for a period of up to four years following the application of the CRS. Table 1 presents a summary of the effects on incident and escape rates at the original cut-off values and those associated with 30%, 35% and 40% cut-off options.

The original cut-off values of the CRS assigned 26% of admissions to the minimum-security category and produced a minimum-security candidate pool of 1,844 offenders. The incident rate for offenders rated minimum-security was 15.6%, and the escape rate was 4.2%. By way of comparison, adjusting the cut-off values to produce a 35% distribution to the minimum-security category expands the candidate pool by approximately 509 offenders and resulted in a very slight increase in the overall escape rate to 4.3%. The escape rate for the new candidate group associated with all three cut-off options is essentially indistinguishable from the rate of the original candidates. The incident rate for the new candidate group resulting from all options is approximately 10% higher than that of the original candidates.

Table 1

The Relationship Between Theory and Offender Assessment				
	Original	Cut-Off Options		
		30%	35%	40%
<b>Outcomes</b>	26%	30%	35%	40%
<b>Number of Incidents</b>	288	329	420	497
<b>Incident Rate</b>	15.6	16.4	17.9	18.5
<b>Incident Rate of New Candidates</b>	—	24.6	25.9	25.9
<b>Number Escapes</b>	78	86	102	115
<b>Escape Rate</b>	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3
<b>Escape Rate of New Candidates</b>	—	4.8	4.7	4.6
<b>CRS Candidate Pool</b>	1,844	2,011	2,353	2,651
<b>Distribution Gain</b>	—	167	509	807

The differences in incident rates are more evident and suggest there may be distinctions between original and new candidates, however, any negative influence of the latter would be dispersed across minimum-security facilities.

The results suggest that expanding the candidate pool by moving the minimum-security cut-off values of the CRS would have little or no effect on the escape rate and cause only a marginal increase in the institutional incident rates. As a result the cut-off values were adjusted in 1998 to allow for a 35% distribution to minimum-security. This strategy, however, would have marginal effects if the concordance rate with the CRS remained unchanged. Accordingly, new standard operating procedures were developed, additional attempts were made to improve staff understanding of the CRS guideline, and encourage higher concordance. An indication of the influence of the CRS and the effects of these steps are illustrated in Table 2.

Initial direct placement to minimum-security is an important source for minimum-security offenders contributing about thirty-five percent of the stock population. As noted in the table the overall concordance between CRS ratings and final initial

Table 2

CRS/Placement Concordance and Escape from Minimum Security								
Concordance (%)	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Concordance (%):								
– Overall	63.0	59.0	56.6	57.1	57.4	71.5	79.4	76.7
– W/Min. Rated	75.7	73.1	73.5	73.5	75.2	75.6	80.4	80.7
Distribution to Minimum (%)	12.0	24.4	27.3	27.0	25.1	26.6	32.7	37.5
Min. Sec. Escape Rate (%)	13.1	10.2	10.4	5.3	2.8	2.4	3.0	4.5

classification decisions improve from the low seventy percent to over eighty percent range. The improvement in overall concordance is attributed to increase in the concordance rate of minimum-rated offenders that rose from the high fifty percent to over seventy-five percent range in the recent years. The effect of improving concordance and the revisions to the minimum-security cut-off values can be seen in recent years where distribution to minimum security exceeds thirty percent of the admission population. Finally, the escape rate from minimum-security facilities (expressed as a percent of the annual, average minimum-security population) drops precipitously in the middle years under review and increases slightly in recent years. Closer examination of escapees suggests that the recent rise in the escape rate is largely attributed to offenders transferred from higher security facilities rather than those initially placed at admission. The escape rate, although slightly higher in recent years, remains below the ten-year average (6.8%) while during the same period the minimum-security population doubled. (Incident data is not available for later years and made it impossible to conduct similar analyses).

## Conclusion

Objective measures of risk assessment provide a benchmark or standard that is useful in evaluating decisions and the decision-making process. They offer strategic insight to correctional practice and represent a convenient vehicle to both develop and implement policy.

Operational reviews over the last ten years demonstrate that the CRS serves as an effective aid to initial security placement and provide insight to the potential of offender classification to promote broader organizational goals.

In our analyses of the first five years of operation it was demonstrated that the CRS ratings were more accurate than subjective decisions in identifying offenders who would engage in incidents or escape from minimum security. Recent observations suggest that the gap is closing. In part, we would like to believe because of the growing confidence in the CRS (as evidenced by concordance gains) and its contribution to improving the classification assessment process. In addition, the initial placement trends over the last ten years suggest that the conservative nature of classification practice is gradually abating, without serious increase to the escape rate, and perhaps due in part to the support derived from corporately established classification norms.

Where an offender is initially placed effects discretionary release potential. Over classification of high reintegration potential offenders can erode and delay release while placing low reintegration potential offenders at lower security levels, in the long run, does not always serve the goal of safe reintegration. Measures that improve selection and initial placement of appropriate offenders to lower security will contribute to both maximizing reintegration and help ensure it is safe. ■

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<sup>2</sup> Solicitor General of Canada. (1987). *Development of a Security Classification Model for Canadian Federal Offenders: A Report to the Offender Management Division*. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

<sup>3</sup> Luciani, F. P., Motiuk, L. L., & Nafekh, M. (1996). *An Operational Review of the Custody Rating Scale: Reliability, Validity and Practical Utility*. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

<sup>4</sup> Luciani, F. P. (1998). Exploring reintegration potential Impacts of initial placement practice. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 10(1), 23-27.

<sup>5</sup> Nuffield, J. (1982). *Parole Decision-Making in Canada: Research Towards Decision Guidelines*. Ottawa, ON: Solicitor General of Canada.

<sup>6</sup> Luciani, Motiuk, & Nafekh (1996).

<sup>7</sup> Buchanan, R. A., Whitlow, K. L., & Austin, J. (1986). National evaluation of objective prison classification systems: The current state of the art. *Crime and Delinquency*, 32(3), 272-290.

<sup>8</sup> Austin, J. (1983). Assessing the new generation of prison classification models. *Crime and Delinquency*, 29(1), 561-577. See Solicitor General of Canada (1987), and Luciani, Motiuk, & Nafekh (1996). And see Bonta, J., & Motiuk, L. L. (1990). Classification to correctional halfway houses: A quasi-experimental evaluation. *Criminology*, 28, 497-506. See also Van Voorhis, P. (1988). A cross classification of five offender typologies: Issues of construct and predictive validity. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 15(1), 109-124.

<sup>9</sup> Correctional Services of Canada (1998). *Effects of Adjusting the CRS Minimum Security Cut-Off Values: An Illustration of the Impact on Escape and Incident Rates*. Ottawa, ON: Internal document.

# Using reintegration potential at intake to better identify safe release candidates

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**R**eintegration dividends can be realized by directing available programming resources and correctional controls to the level of reintegration potential candidates present at time of admission and encouraging greater efficiencies across offender management functions. In 1994, the introduction of the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process provided the Correctional Service of Canada with the capacity to produce custodial, release risk and programming requirement profiles of the federally sentenced inmate population at the time of admission. Since the implementation, over 25,000 OIA profiles have been generated by Service staff and stored in the automated Offender Management System (OMS). These profiles have been giving the Service an early indication of the level of security required by new admissions for initial penitentiary placement, risk to re-offend upon release to the community and the amount of program services necessary to reduce their likelihood to re-offend post-release. Among offenders with the highest potential for safe release and for whom priority case preparation might be provided are those cases rated as minimum-security, good release risk and lower criminogenic need (contributing factors to re-offending behaviour) categories at admission. For these groups, offenders who do not receive a discretionary release (parole) or receive it after their eligibility date represent a potential pool of candidates who may derive similar or better correctional benefits from a supervised release when eligible.

The 8,216 male inmate Reintegration Potential (RP) profiles explored in this article are based on the convergence of three objective classification instruments used by the Correctional Service of Canada. These are — the Custody Rating Scale (CRS), the Statistical Information on Recidivism – Revised 1 (SIR-R1) scale, and the Static/Dynamic Factors ratings obtained for each newly sentenced offender during the OIA process. The predictive validity results reported here suggest that objective security; release and program classification is desirable for good correctional management.

**A**ll federally sentenced offenders undergo a comprehensive and integrated Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process at time of admission.<sup>2</sup> The OIA has a number of components: community intake assessment, initial assessment (physical, mental health, suicide potential), Static Factors risk (youth and adult criminal history) assessment, Dynamic Factors risk (employment, marital/family, associates/social interaction, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional

orientation, attitude) assessment, psychological and supplementary assessments, level of motivation assessment, release risk assessment using the Statistical Information on Recidivism-Revised (SIR-R1) scale,<sup>3</sup> security level designation using the Custody Rating Scale (CRS),<sup>4</sup> and an estimate of Reintegration Potential (RP).<sup>5</sup>

A total of 8,216 (63% of 13,019) federally sentenced men were identified in the OMS of the Service with complete OIA classifications and located in federal institutions on December 31, 1998. It should be noted that the inmate RPs reflected in this study reflect available OIA process information. A review of OMS indicates variations exist in the number of classification instruments completed (the files of those offenders admitted prior to implementation would be missing information). Future analyses will account for more completeness.

The average age of the 8,216 federal male inmates with complete intake assessment measures was 35 years, ranging from 18 to 82. Among the federally incarcerated male offender population there were 884 homicide offenders, 1,631 sex offenders, 3,305 robbery offenders and 1,608 drug offenders. The average sentence length was 5.2 years (excluding lifers and revoked cases). Nearly 55% were serving sentences 4 years or less and 921 cases (11%) were serving life sentences.

## Reintegration potential at intake

A particular combination or convergence of three objective classification measures — CRS security level designation, SIR-R1 release risk grouping and OIA Static/Dynamic Factors level rating determines RP at admission for male offenders. For example, an offender rated at admission as “minimum” on CRS, “good” on SIR-R1, “low” on OIA Static/Dynamic Factors and would be classified as “high” reintegration potential. Conversely, an inmate rated “maximum” on CRS; “poor” on SIR-R1, “high” on OIA Static/Dynamic Factors would be classified as “low” reintegration potential. The 27 possible combinations of the three intake measures are grouped according to relative RP ranging from “low” to “moderate” to “high.”

Table 1 shows a distribution of the three objective classification measures taken at admission — CRS security level designation, SIR-R1 risk grouping, OIA Static/Dynamic Factors rating as well as RP level by quarter in 1998. As the table illustrates, male inmates, as a group, show considerable potential for successful reintegration at admission. In fact, slightly more than one-third of the male inmate population were objectively classified as “high” reintegration potential at admission. The possibility remains that with the benefit of appropriate programming those inmates assessed at admission to be “moderate” or “low” reintegration potential might be re-evaluated as having “high” reintegration potential upon successful program completion at time of parole eligibility.

### Predictive validity

One way of looking at the validity of an estimate of RP for male inmates at admission is by examining the relationships between the various categories and post-admission discretionary release (parole from penitentiary) and post-release outcome (return to federal custody). A follow-up of the 8,298 male offenders in the end-of March 1998 profile to December 1999 (average 8 months, range 1 to 19 months) revealed that 4,864 (58.6%) had been released. Of those released, 42% were assessed at admission to be “high” reintegration potential, 36% were “moderate” and 22% were “low” (Chi-square = 359, df = 2,  $p < .001$ ).

When discretionary release was taken into account (21% of those assessed), 60% were classified as

“high” reintegration potential, 30% were “moderate” and 10% were “low” (Chi-square = 679.7, df = 2,  $p < .001$ ). Higher reintegration potential was found to be significantly associated with likelihood of discretionary release ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

As for post-release outcome (see Figure 1), 1,523 (31.3%) of the released male inmates had been returned to federal custody and 476 (10%) with a new offence. Of note, the highest percentage of return to federal custody was among the “low” reintegration potential group (47%), followed by “moderate” (39%) and then “high” (17%). Lower reintegration potential was found to significantly associated with a greater likelihood of return to prison ( $r = .27$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and return with a new offence ( $r = .16$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

### Discussion

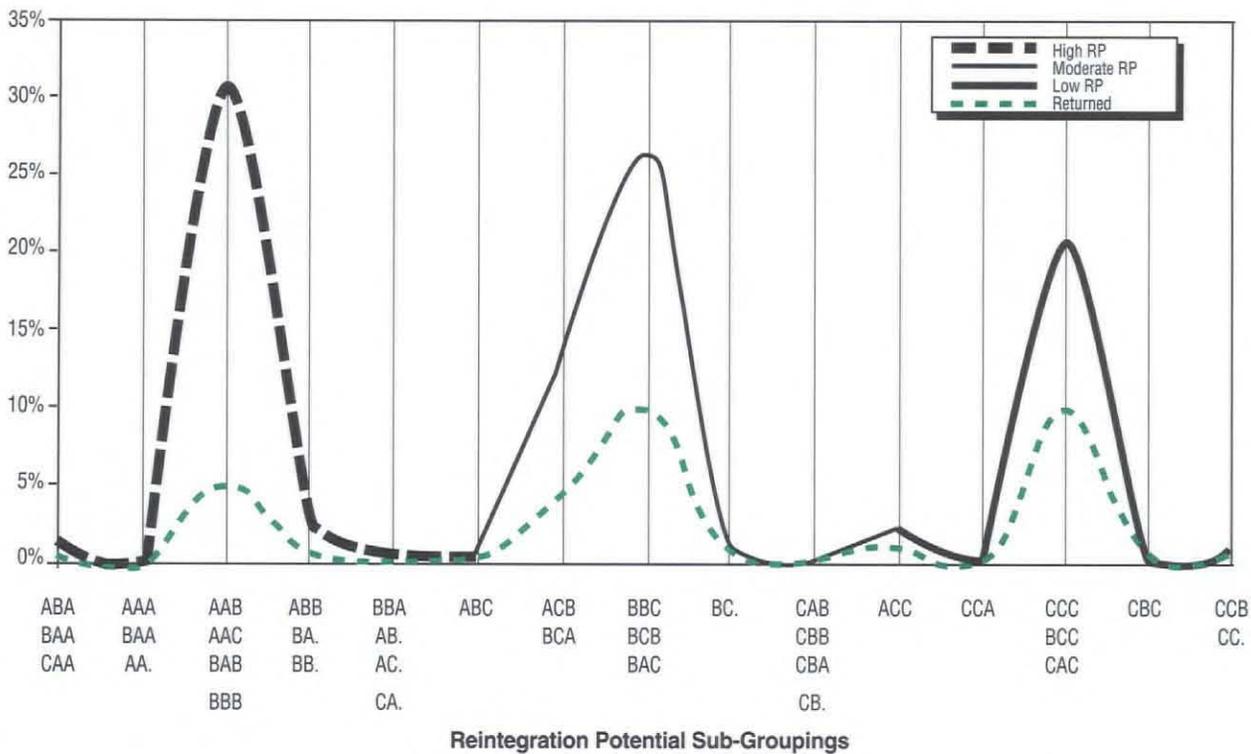
The incorporation of objective and systematic assessments of incarcerated offenders and principles of effective intervention into a reintegration framework is both legitimate and potentially fruitful. The process and content reflected in the Correctional Service of Canada’s classification practices with male inmates are clearly compatible with the goals of safe reintegration. Importantly, this appears to be occurring as correctional staff and decision-makers have begun to more carefully consider the issues of inmate initial security level placement (CRS), release risk (SIR-R1), programming requirements (OIA Static/Dynamic Factors), and reintegration potential (RP) at admission.

Table 1

Intake Measure	Percentage Distribution of Intake Classification Measures (quarterly one year)			
	1st n (%)	2nd n (%)	3rd n (%)	4th n (%)
<b>CRS: Security Level</b>				
Minimum	1,467 (18)	1,495 (18)	1,518 (18)	1,582 (19)
Medium	5,931 (71)	5,946 (71)	5,844 (70)	5,678 (69)
Maximum	900 (11)	915 (11)	935 (11)	956 (12)
<b>SIR-R1: Release Risk</b>				
Good/Very Good	3,644 (44)	3,714 (44)	3,628 (44)	3,587 (44)
Fair	1,286 (15)	1,315 (16)	1,306 (16)	1,281 (15)
Poor/Very Poor	3,368 (41)	3,327 (40)	3,363 (40)	3,348 (41)
<b>Static/Dynamic Factor</b>				
Low	857 (10)	891 (11)	860 (10)	855 (10)
Medium	2,978 (36)	2,978 (35)	2,920 (35)	2,880 (35)
High	4,463 (54)	4,487 (54)	4,517 (54)	4,481 (55)
<b>Reintegration Potential</b>				
Low	2,283 (27)	2,277 (27)	2,289 (28)	2,300 (28)
Moderate	3,129 (38)	3,319 (38)	3,165 (38)	3,125 (38)
High	2,886 (35)	2,940 (35)	2,843 (34)	2,791 (34)

Note: Distributions based on availability of three intake measures on each offender.

**Distribution of Reintegration Potential (RP) Sub-groupings and Post-release Outcome — National Overview  
(Men Released from Prison)**



Taken together, the results reported here provide ample empirical support for the risk-based case differentiation approach to the allocation of correctional resources and controls. The convergence of three reliable and valid classification measures to yield an estimate of RP coupled with discretionary release eligibility dates provides a combined measure for compliance control, quality assurance and performance measurement.

Consistent with efforts directed towards contributing to the protection of society by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, a direct and concerted effort is still required to ensure that correctional programs and interventions are linked to estimates of RP at

admission and subsequent re-evaluations. To accomplish this task several things in corrections must happen.

First, evaluations of core offender programs such as education, employment, alcohol/drug abuse, cognitive/behavioural, and sex offender treatment have to be ongoing and reflect impacts on achieving safe reintegration. Second, the practice of accrediting correctional programs for incarcerated offenders has to begin to ensure programs meet high standards of integrity, both in terms of content and delivery. Finally, a mechanism is required to incorporate treatment information on male offenders into decisions regarding future reintegration potential. ■

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# The importance of developing correctional plans for offenders

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**T**here is good reason to be hopeful! Individuals and correctional organizations that intervene with offenders can indeed significantly reduce recidivism. A vast and, by now, indisputable body of knowledge based on operational and meta-analytical research has clearly demonstrated that correctional treatment does work when we structure our assessment and intervention activity and when we respect some basic principles of correctional intervention.

This article reviews the principles of classification for effective correctional treatment as developed by Andrews and Bonta<sup>2</sup> and examines some key elements of the assessment and intervention process. Citing examples of practices used by the Correctional Service of Canada, the author demonstrates that the most important tool for making these principles work in our institutional and community reintegration activities is the Correctional Plan.

## What are the principles and why are they important?

**T**he following is a short review of the four principles of offender classification for correctional management and treatment mentioned above.

- **Risk Principle:** Higher-risk cases benefit from more intervention; lower-risk cases benefit most from low (or no) levels of service.
- **Need Principle:** We can achieve the greatest reductions in recidivism by targeting criminogenic needs<sup>3</sup> for treatment and supervision.
- **Responsivity Principle:** Our treatment programs and supervision approaches will be most effective when geared to the offender's own abilities and learning style.
- **Principle of Professional Discretion:** Careful use of professional judgement and discretion can improve the structured assessment and management of risk.

### Risk principle

Research has clearly demonstrated that we can distinguish between offenders according to the level of risk each presents, that higher-risk offenders reoffend more often than lower-risk offenders, and that the risk principle does work in practice. For example, a recent meta-analysis of 400 research studies

on the effectiveness of treatment with juvenile offenders found greater reductions in re-offending when higher risk offenders were treated than was the case for lower risk offenders; similar results were found with another meta-analysis using a sample of 294 tests and treatments.<sup>4</sup>

### Need principle

There is convincing evidence to support the need principle as well. Research conducted by the Correctional Service of Canada revealed that offenders with criminogenic needs are significantly more likely to fail on conditional release<sup>5</sup> and that assessments of offender risk and needs were good predictors of outcome on parole.<sup>6</sup>

The combined assessment of risk associated with criminal history and need levels of offenders actually increases the predictive power of the risk assessment. In a 1993 study conducted by Motiuk and Brown,<sup>7</sup> higher-risk/higher-need offenders were four times as likely to fail on conditional release as were lower-risk/lower-need offenders.

Research also supports the utility of distinguishing between criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs. In a recent meta-analysis, Dowden<sup>8</sup> provided an in-depth examination of the need principle. Analyses focused on the "more promising" (criminogenic) and "less promising" (non-criminogenic) targets for change identified by Andrews and Bonta.<sup>9</sup> Dowden reported that each of the non-criminogenic needs were either not related to, or were negatively associated with, reductions in recidivism. Each of the criminogenic needs, on the other hand, was positively correlated with reduced recidivism. More important, 75% of the individual criminogenic need targets produced significant reductions in recidivism. Dowden also completed an overall test of the need principle. He reported that programs that appropriately addressed the need principle were associated with significantly higher mean effect sizes ( $r = .19, k=169$ ) than programs that did not ( $r = -.01, k=205$ ). These findings suggest that correctional treatment programs that seek to reduce recidivism should target appropriate criminogenic needs.

### *Responsivity principle*

Once we have appropriately targeted the offender's criminogenic need areas and have identified a level of service that corresponds to the assessment of risk, we should consider the mode and style of service that is best suited to the individual offender.

Generally, programs that have proven to be the most effective have focused on cognitive behaviour and social learning. Andrews and Bonta<sup>10</sup> report on studies that demonstrate the differential effectiveness of rehabilitation programs depending on the nature of the treatment provided and the characteristics of the offenders involved. They also point out that, while there is a growing body of research in this area, further study is warranted.

To summarize, these and other<sup>11</sup> research studies related to the first three principles for correctional treatment demonstrate that assessing a variety of static and dynamic risk factors using actuarial methods, providing more intensive levels of treatment to higher-risk offenders, and targeting criminogenic needs in a manner consistent with the characteristics of the offender results in considerably reduced rates of recidivism.

### *Principle of professional discretion*

A wealth of literature has clearly shown that actuarial prediction tools consistently outperform prediction methods that rely exclusively on clinical assessments.<sup>12</sup> Actuarial methods offer correctional professionals some definite advantages over clinical approaches:

- they are generally more systematic and consistent;
- they are usually more accurate;
- they represent a fairer assessment (clinical judgement tends to be more conservative to avoid "false negatives");
- they offer greater legal protection for the assessor; and
- they are more efficient. (The assessor is not required to explain his or her approach to the assessment and conclusions for each case.)

Andrews and Bonta do argue, though, that correctional staff should use actuarial information provided by the application of the risk, need and responsivity principles in an informed and sensitive way. Although they are efficient, empirical tools are still subject to error. Carefully using professional judgement to override objective results in exceptional cases can improve the accuracy of assessments; this principle applies to all situations where clinical and objective assessments are used jointly.

### **How does the Service put these principles into action?**

The Correctional Service of Canada recognizes the need for a structured approach to offender assessment (and re-assessment) and intervention. *The critical function of the Correctional Plan is to link these two activities.* The following examines how the Service does this.

#### *Offender Intake Assessment*

In 1994 the Service replaced existing penitentiary placement practices with the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process,<sup>13</sup> a comprehensive and systematic approach to assessment at admission. Information is obtained from various internal and external sources, including the courts, police, probation officers, victims, family members, employers and the offender. The OIA may also include supplementary assessments in such areas as education/vocation, psychology, family violence and psychopathy. Using a multidisciplinary team approach and case conferencing, case managers at centralized intake units then integrate the information into a summary report and a comprehensive Correctional Plan. For each offender, case managers provide an overall static/dynamic risk rating, ranging from "low/low" to "high/high." Since implementation of the OIA, all newly admitted federal offenders have been assigned a static/dynamic risk classification. This assessment information is currently available for over 11,000 Correctional Service of Canada inmates, representing more than 90% of the Service's incarcerated population.<sup>14</sup>

The intake assessment report uses a revolutionary automated format for recording information: details of the assessment are entered on screen in the Offender Management System (OMS), the Service's mainframe computer network. In each area of the assessment, indicators (short statements describing a risk factor) are flagged where present, and static and dynamic risk levels are assigned. This approach makes it possible to track precise statistical information related to offender risk for use by managers and researchers.

The OIA process has two main components: static factor risk assessment and dynamic factor identification and analysis.

#### *Risk level based on static factors*

The offender's static risk level is rated as high, medium or low based on a systematic review of the offender's criminal history, including previous adult and youth court involvement, details about use of violence and sex offending, and the results of an actuarial recidivism prediction scale (SIR-R1).

### *Dynamic factor identification and analysis*

Using a similar approach, the offender's risk level based on dynamic factors is rated following a detailed review of seven dynamic risk (need) areas:

- employment;
- marital/family;
- associates/social interaction;
- substance abuse;
- community functioning;
- personal/emotional orientation; and
- attitude.

For each of these dimensions, case managers flag indicators (risk factors) and rate the severity of need. They also provide details and programming recommendations for dynamic risk areas requiring intervention, rate the offender's motivation for change, describe other specific characteristics (e.g., learning disabilities), chronicle the offender's social history and note any immediate concerns (suicide, physical and mental health).

The Service's Research Branch recently reviewed the design and application of the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis (DFIA) instrument.<sup>15</sup> A number of changes to streamline the DFIA and augment its utility will soon be implemented.

### *Reintegration potential*

Another important product of the OIA is a Reintegration Potential (RP) rating.<sup>16</sup> The Service assigns an admission RP level based on the combined results of three separate objective measures (SIR- R1 score, Custody Rating Scale and levels of intervention based on static and dynamic factors). This rating provides a useful reference point (or anchor) for clinical assessment and for quality control. It has the further advantage of allowing the Service to profile its offender population for planning, case management and program delivery, and for appropriately targeting offenders for intensive release preparation.

### *Correctional Plan*

This is the pivotal document created through the OIA process. A well-developed Correctional Plan should be in reality the most important document that a correctional jurisdiction produces on an offender. It is a strategic map that defines the best professional opinion on how the agency intends to manage the offender's sentence and what expectations the agency has for the offender. It includes long term, time-referenced goals (particularly with respect to important sentence milestones like conditional

release eligibility dates), program requirements and their sequence, offender-specific supervision techniques, and behavioural indicators related to the offender's crime cycle.

### **How does the Service use the Correctional Plan?**

The Correctional Plan is the foundation upon which release is predicted and often the basis upon which discretionary release is supported or denied.

Since the results of the OIA process are reflected in the Correctional Plan, the plan should provide direction for decisions about the need for immediate intervention or intensive supervision, programming and security requirements, initial custody level and assignment to a placement institution.

Decisions to transfer the offender to reduced security, to grant a conditional release to the community or to detain the offender past the statutory release date are also based on the information contained in the plan. However, a word of caution is warranted. Since plans are often understood to be "binding contracts," especially when the plan is associated with a statement of Reintegration Potential, care should be exercised to ensure the plan, or updates to the plan, reflect a structured re-assessment of the offender's static and dynamic risk. The Service has, in fact, developed an approach for doing exactly this.<sup>17</sup>

### **What is the future for correctional planning?**

The Correctional Service has made considerable progress in incorporating static and dynamic risk assessment into the development of correctional plans, in a manner that respects the risk and need principles. The Service must be vigilant, though, to ensure that levels of treatment and supervision correspond with assessed levels of risk, since treatment has traditionally been "one-size-fits-all." In addition, the Service's definition of dynamic risk must expand to encompass other more temporal factors such as those included in the Coping Relapse Model of Criminal Recidivism.<sup>18</sup> This model views recidivism as a breakdown process beginning with identifiable precursors like daily life hassles, chronic life stressors, and negative affective. Offending behaviour occurs when these factors interact negatively with enduring individual differences (such as temperament and emotional reactivity) and dynamic response mechanisms (such as criminal attitudes and coping efficacy).

More attention is also required to address issues related to the principles of responsivity and professional discretion. Correctional plans should more clearly take into account responsivity issues

and include individualized treatment approaches. To increase the effectiveness of the correctional planning process, correctional agencies need to carefully attend to selection, training and

supervision of staff, and devote resources to tracking results and quality assurance. Given the clear importance of correctional planning, the pay off for such investments will be considerable. ■

- <sup>1</sup> Addictions Research Division, 23 Brook Street, P.O. Box 1360, Montague, PEI C0A 1R0.
- <sup>2</sup> Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (1994, 1998). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Co.
- <sup>3</sup> *Criminogenic needs* may be defined as those offender need areas in which treatment gain will reduce the likelihood of recidivism; they have also been referred to as dynamic risk factors. On the other hand, *non-criminogenic* needs are those need areas that, while dynamic, are **not** associated with a potential reduction in recidivism.
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- <sup>6</sup> Grant, B., & Gillis, C. (1996). *Day Parole Program Review: Case Management Predictors of Outcome*, Report R-52. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.
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- <sup>8</sup> Dowden, C. (1998). *A Meta-Analytic Examination of the Risk, Need and Responsivity Principles and their Importance Within the Rehabilitation Debate*, unpublished M.A. thesis. Ottawa, ON: Psychology Department, Carleton University.
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- <sup>10</sup> Andrews & Bonta (1994, 1998). See also Bonta, J. (1995). The responsivity principle and offender rehabilitation, *Forum on Corrections Research*, 7(3), 34-37.
- <sup>11</sup> Gendreau, P., & Goggin, C. (1996). Principles of effective correctional programming, *Forum on Corrections Research*, 8(3), 38-40. See also Gendreau, P., Little, T., & Goggin, C. (1995). *A Meta-Analysis of the Predictors of Adult Offender Recidivism: Assessment Guidelines for Classification and Treatment*. Toronto, ON: Corrections Branch, Ontario Ministry Secretariat.
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## Coming up in *FORUM on Corrections Research*

The May 2001 issue of *FORUM* will present a Special Issue of *Research Summaries: R-56, 1997 to R-100, 2001*.

The September 2001 issue of *FORUM* will focus on Alcohol and Drugs.

# Improving offender motivation for programming

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Implementation of correctional programs in the Correctional Service of Canada has been guided by the principles of effective corrections of Andrews and his colleagues.<sup>2</sup> Correctional planning adheres to the Risk and Need principles by systematically assessing risk and need level at intake and formulating a correctional plan to address the factors related to their offending (Need Principle) for offenders at a significant risk to reoffend (Risk Principle). Recently, however, we have begun to turn our attention to a more detailed understanding of the nature and impact of the Responsivity Principle. To address responsivity, program designers and program facilitators need to know what adaptations in content or delivery produce better outcomes for specific groups or individuals.

Not all potential clients are equally ready to undertake personal change; yet most interventions presuppose the participants are motivated and prepared. The research on general psychotherapy indicates that client motivation is one of the “most frequently cited reasons for patient dropout, failure to comply, relapse and other negative treatment outcomes.”<sup>3</sup> Lack of motivation to change is not a trait, rather motivation is fluid and can be influenced. Recent innovations provide guidance on how to systematically apply techniques that can increase client motivation and spur interest in personal change. In this article, motivation is defined as the extent of the willingness of an individual to engage in changing harmful behaviours. In the correctional area it will specifically refer to offenders’ willingness to address factors related to their offending.

A study of offenders on conditional release in the community demonstrated that even a very basic assessment of the offenders’ motivation to address the needs identified in their correctional plans was significantly related to their outcome.<sup>4</sup> Supervising parole officers were asked to rate on a three point scale the extent to which offenders were willing to address need domains that were associated with their offending: at the highest level of rating, offenders were described as “self motivated,” at the next, “willing if mandated,” and, at the lowest level, “not willing.” The most motivated offenders had the lowest recidivism rates.

Further evidence that motivation to address criminogenic need is linked to targeted outcomes is found in a study of dropouts from the Cognitive Skills and Anger and Other Emotions Management

programs.<sup>5</sup> The reason most commonly identified by program delivery officers for offenders dropping out of the programs was grouped under the category “lack of motivation.” The risk level of dropouts was not higher than that of completers, yet in their evaluation of the Anger and Other Emotions Management program, Dowden and Serin<sup>6</sup> found that dropouts had recidivism rates eight times higher than completers. They created a program performance variable derived from an offenders’ completion of core programs. The variable was strongly associated with recidivism reduction ( $r = 0.32$ ), out-performing the Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale, age, ethnicity, offence history or institutional history. It appears that dropouts are particularly prone to reoffending and that the risk factors contributing to poorer outcomes are not entirely historical, but may be also related to factors grouped under the rubric of motivation. Those who complete the core programs, on the other hand, have a cumulative improvement in outcome, beyond what would be expected based on their risk and need levels.

If increasing offenders’ motivation to address change through participation in their correctional plan is an important contributor to reducing recidivism, the next step is to identify what factors influence motivation. In considering this, we are assisted by years of outcome research in general therapy and the substance abuse treatment fields.<sup>7</sup> The factors that have been the subject of review may be classified according to key areas: client characteristics, therapist characteristics, therapeutic relationship, service/client matching on conceptual style and provision of environmental or organizational supports. We will discuss only factors that are dynamic or changeable. Among the dynamic client characteristics linked to motivation are the client’s recognition of the extent of problem severity and the client’s self-efficacy (extent to which clients believe they can be successful). Therapists who are sympathetic, experienced and knowledgeable, supportive, and provide advice and an expectation of positive outcome are consistently linked to positive outcome. Therapeutic processes in which the therapist works with the client on mutually agreed-upon goals enhances outcome.<sup>8</sup> Client/service matching, linking level of complexity to the capacity of the client, and building in a progressive skill attainment approach, aids in increasing self-efficacy

Table 1

Motivation factor	Correctional intervention or service provision
Client characteristics (problem severity, confidence that he or she can change and manage relapse)	Individual or group interventions that help offenders recognize the impact of their problems, support self-efficacy and teach relapse prevention
Therapist (staff) characteristics	Train and recruit staff who meet the characteristics of effective intervenors: enthusiastic, competent, encourage self-efficacy, empathic, model prosocial beliefs and values
Therapeutic (staff-offender) relationship	Establish mutually agreed-upon goals. The relationship should be supportive but directive
Client/service matching	Provide programs that are structured, skills based, progressive, not too cognitively complex
Environmental supports	Provide an environment that supports change, notes and encourages effort to change, identifies other sources of support outside of treatment; provides access to a range of options to assist in change

and reduces information overload. Finally, organizational aspects of treatment such as the lack of waiting lists, continuity of care, and providing a choice of treatment programs positively influence motivation for treatment.<sup>9</sup> In a similar vein, others point to the importance of assisting the client to identify environmental or social supports for self-change.

The evidence from the general literature on what can be done to increase motivation and treatment compliance can be applied to service provision for offenders. Table 1 translates the information from the general psychotherapy literature to correctional interventions.

There are approaches or interventions that incorporate many of these recommendations. Miller<sup>10</sup> has reviewed various strategies common to successful brief treatment interventions that he has represented under the FRAMES acronym represented in Table 2.

Since this work, the focus on motivation in treatment has turned to the implementation of therapeutic approaches, incorporating strategies such as those listed above. Motivational Interviewing (MI), is one approach used to increase motivation that is based

on the FRAMES principles.<sup>11</sup> It has been applied to the area of substance abuse treatment and to health compliance but, to date, has had limited application to the area of correctional populations. Ginsberg has used it as a brief intervention with alcohol abusing inmates<sup>12</sup> others have used it to a limited extent with sex offenders.<sup>13</sup>

Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) is an approach that is comprised of 4 sessions conducted over a 12-week span. In general, the sessions include: personalized feedback regarding the negative consequences of alcohol abuse, helping the client develop a clear plan for change, exploring ambivalent feelings regarding changing their behaviour, and summarizing of progress and development of future plans.<sup>14</sup> Typically, the clinicians using this approach use the MI style.

The Transtheoretical Model of change has been applied to many areas of intervention, for example: smoking cessation, alcohol and drug treatment, pain management, domestic violence, and treatment adherence. Prochaska and Di Clemente<sup>15</sup> have identified 5 discrete stages of change that define the extent to which individuals are committed to changing harmful behaviours. Individuals at the Precontemplation stage are not motivated to change, those in the Contemplation stage are thinking of changing, those in the Preparation stage are planning to change, those in the Action stage are already actively engaged in change and those who have made changes but recognize that they need to remain vigilant in case of relapse are in the Maintenance stage.

Prochaska and Di Clemente specify experiential and behavioural processes that support and sustain individuals at each stage. The Precontemplators and Contemplators benefit from consciousness raising, dramatic relief and environmental reevaluation strategies that provide potential clients with an understanding of the impact of their unhealthy

Table 2

Feedback	Provide feedback to increase awareness of his/her situation and the ways in which it is harmful.
Responsibility	Emphasize that it is the individual's own decision to change.
Advice	Provide advice to identify the problems and discuss the necessity for change.
Menu	Provide a choice of strategies for change.
Empathy	Express acceptance and understanding of the person.
Self-Efficacy	Instil client's perception that he or she can implement a change strategy.

behaviours on themselves and others and that help them to realize that behaviour change can be an important part of a new identity. Those in the Preparation stage benefit from exposure to intervention strategies that reinforce self-efficacy, that is, their ability to choose to change and make a commitment to change. For those in the Action and Maintenance stages, techniques such as reinforcement management (increasing the rewards for change and decreasing the rewards from the old behaviours) and encouraging participants to seek and use social support to assist them in sustaining change, using counter conditioning to substitute healthier alternative cognitions and behaviours and stimulus control to remove the cues to engage in the unhealthy behaviours should be components of the intervention strategy.

### Recent initiatives that incorporate the motivational enhancement techniques

In the last year, the Correctional Service of Canada has launched a number of projects that combine the interventions derived from Motivational Interviewing and those recommended by the

Transtheoretical Model of change. A three-day, two-day and half-day training package has been developed to train staff in the techniques of MI. Regional trainers have been trained and have begun the process of training program facilitators, parole officers, shop supervisors and correctional officers. All new programs such as the Family Violence Prevention and the Violence Prevention programs have built in motivational enhancement modules at the beginning of the program. All offenders referred to the Cognitive Skills, Anger and Other Emotions and Counterpoint programs are involved in an initial Motivational feedback interview that is built on the principles of Motivational Interviewing. Finally, in collaboration with experts at the Prochange Behaviour Systems lab, we are developing a treatment primer for offenders who meet the criteria for screening into a family violence prevention program but are refusing to participate. These packages of initiatives are designed to enhance responsivity by increasing motivation to address criminogenic risk factors thereby reducing the number of program refusers and dropouts, and in the longer term, contribute to reductions in recidivism and improvements in reintegration. ■

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# Increasing offender participation in programs

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A sizeable body of high quality research has amassed over the last few years that confirms that it is possible to assist offenders in making positive behavioural change.<sup>2</sup> In addition, this literature provides guidance regarding interventions and models that are most effective in fostering change. Presently, many advanced correctional jurisdictions are placing considerable emphasis on programs to reduce the likelihood that offenders will become re-involved in criminal activity upon release from custody. The Correctional Service of Canada is an example of an agency in which assisting offenders in making positive change is entrenched in its Mission Statement.

Summarizing, the effective correctional treatment literature underscores the need for the accurate identification of treatment-relevant factors that are directly linked to criminal behaviour, such as substance abuse. Further, the most intensive intervention resources should be reserved for offenders who are at the greatest risk to re-offend and who have the greatest treatment needs. Finally, interventions should be strongly oriented toward skill-development and the treatment approaches used should be selected accordingly, to match the outlook, orientation, and characteristics of the client. Operationally, appropriate and maximal utilization of treatment resources demands a strong adherence to the theory and practice indicated by the basic tenets of effective correctional intervention, popularly referred to as the "risk," "needs," and "responsivity" principles.

## Significant investments in program delivery

Since the late 1980s, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has emphasized the development, implementation, and delivery of high quality intervention programs to incarcerated offenders and offenders on release in the community. The corporate priority given to assisting offenders in changing their behaviour in more pro-social and law-abiding directions has resulted in the proliferation of intervention programming and has helped the Service earn the reputation of being one of the most program-oriented correctional jurisdictions in the world. The Service's current menu of intervention programs are arranged under major content areas such as substance abuse, sex offending, family violence, living skills, violence prevention, Aboriginal-specific intervention, education programs, and other personal development programs.

A recent analysis of program availability in institutions and in the community undertaken by the CSC Reintegration Programs Division exemplifies the priority and investment given by the Service towards providing effective intervention programming for offenders. Based on population statistics for September 2000, there were 12,976 incarcerated offenders and 10,328 offenders in the community under CSC jurisdiction. Table 1 summarizes the number of institutional and community program seats that are planned for the six-month period September 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001. A total of 25,826 institutional program spaces are available and 7,621 program spaces in the community.<sup>3</sup> This large number of seats reflects the range of criminogenic factors in need of direct intervention and the fact that many offenders have multiple treatment needs.

About 60% of institutional spaces are for intervention programs such as substance abuse, violence prevention, etc., whereas about 40% of the available institutional seats are for education programs. The proportion of education spaces drops dramatically to about 2% of seats in the community in favour of other community-based programs (for example, Living Skills, Counterpoint, other personal development programs).

## Utilization of substance abuse programs

The "Increasing Program Participation" Reintegration Lever suggests that, in order to ensure maximum

Table 1

Program spaces	Institutional	Community
Substance Abuse	3,591	2,556
Sex Offender	948	954
Family Violence	645	369
Living Skills	5,904	2,202
Counterpoint (community only)	N/A	326
Violence Prevention	283	100
Aboriginal	1,050	190
Other Personal Development Programs	2,853	766
Education	10,552	158
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,826</b>	<b>7,621</b>

benefit from programs, offenders must be referred to programs according to the program's model and approach which has been developed to address their needs. Incorrect targeting of programs may lead to over- or under-prescription as well as potentially affecting the efficacy of treatment.

We decided to examine the way in which the Service's substance abuse program model is used both in institutions and in the community. We chose substance abuse because an offender's use of alcohol and other drugs is a significant criminogenic factor. Moreover, the assessment-treatment matching model is clearly defined and based in research, as well, the programs have been the subject of multiple outcome evaluation studies, and they have been accredited using the Service's program accreditation processes.

During the intake assessment process, the prevalence and nature of an offenders' substance abuse problems is identified using the substance abuse domain of the *Dynamic Factors Identification and Analysis (DFIA)* followed by the *Computerized Lifestyle Assessment Instrument* or *CLAI*. Embedded within the *CLAI* are a number of standardized alcohol and other drug screening instruments.<sup>4</sup> The National Service data (Table 2) consistently indicate that about 67% of the total offender population exhibit problematic use of alcohol and other drugs. When disaggregated, a full third of the population do not have a substance abuse problem; about one third of the population has low severity problems (requiring low intensity treatment); and a final third engage in more serious use of a variety of substances. Research also indicates that offenders with more serious substance abuse problems are much more likely to have engaged in criminality related to their substance use.<sup>5</sup>

In September, 1998, the Service's core substance abuse programs, the *Offender Substance Abuse Pre-Release Program (OSAPP)* and the *Choices* community-based program were accredited by a panel of international addictions experts as state-of-the-art substance abuse intervention programs for offender clients. *OSAPP* is a 26-session institution-based program that was designed for offenders with intermediate to severe substance abuse problems. The *Choices* program is intended for delivery in the community as the primary form of treatment for offenders with low severity problems and as the community treatment component for offenders with more serious problems. Of the 67% of offenders identified with substance abuse problems, 50% of that group has been identified as having a serious substance abuse problem and should participate in *OSAPP* prior to their release and virtually *all* offenders with substance abuse problems should participate in the *Choices* program following their release.

Table 2

Use of OSAPP	National
March 2000 incarcerated population	12,929
Offenders with substance abuse problem (67%) <sup>i</sup>	8,663
Offenders with serious substance abuse problem (50% of above)	4,333
Average number of years served prior to first release	2.1
Approximate number of OSAPP seats required per year (Offenders with serious problems divided by Years to first release)	2,051
OSAPP Enrolments April 1, to September 31, 2000 (Prorated for one year)	1,920
Overage/(Shortfall)	(131)

Close examination of the data displayed in Table 2 suggests that, with some variation across the five regions of the country, there seems to be only a modest national shortfall of 131 spaces in enrolments to the program. These data would also suggest that the program is likely used appropriately and targeted correctly toward offenders with more serious problems. However, when offenders' substance abuse assessment data are directly linked to the intervention they received, a somewhat different picture emerges. The substance abuse severity scores were examined from the *CLAI* for a sample of 667 offenders who were enrolled in *OSAPP*. It was found that almost 31% of offenders in the sample who were referred to the program had either a low severity substance abuse problem or no substance abuse problem. In general, these findings constitute inappropriate utilization of the program. Indeed, while it is possible that a small number of offenders with low severity problems could be referred to the program for various case-specific reasons, as mentioned previously, *OSAPP* is intended for offenders with serious substance abuse problems.

## Conclusion

The review of the use of the Correctional Service of Canada's Substance Abuse Program Model identified the following issues the Service should address:

- The "Increasing Program Participation" Reintegration Lever underscores the need for appropriate assignment of offenders to programs based on their assessed level of risk and need.
- Despite the clearly defined assessment-treatment matching model for the Service substance abuse programs, a sizeable number offenders who evidence low severity or no substance abuse problem are participating in *OSAPP*.

- While respecting the fact that other substance abuse treatment options are available in the community coupled with the acknowledged challenge of delivering group-oriented treatment in remote locations of the country, the *Choices* program continues to be grossly under-utilized

despite the fact that it is an accredited program with demonstrated effectiveness.

- The Service must continue to actively work toward addressing the “*Increasing Program Participation*” Reintegration Lever.

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# Improving program performance among offenders

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**A**t the extreme negative end of the program performance spectrum is offenders who fail to complete a prescribed correctional program. Relative to program completers, these dropouts have markedly higher post-release failure rates.<sup>2</sup> The actual differences vary according to the type of outcome (general, sexual or violent recidivism) and type of offender (sex offender versus non-sex offender), because of different base rates. Furthermore, rates of attrition (typically calculated as the proportion of offenders who did not complete a program)<sup>3</sup> vary according to setting and type of program. For the Correctional Service of Canada, across all core programs, the dropout rate has been estimated at 18%, although there are some program differences.<sup>4</sup> Further, programs for highly resistant offenders report attrition rates of approximately 20%.<sup>5</sup> Finally, program attrition rates in the community appear to be significantly higher (by a factor of 3.5).<sup>6</sup> Intuitively, then, program performance seems important in considering the broader issue of program effectiveness. Accordingly, program performance is critical to effective correctional practice, including safe and timely release.

*With respect to program performance, the question is whether offenders who do better in a program, have relatively better outcomes. Several issues have impeded our ability to answer this fundamental and apparently straightforward question regarding program performance. A discussion of these issues forms the basis of this article.*

## Referral issues

**O**ne measurement issue that might improve our understanding of program performance is that of program referral criteria. Having an offender in the wrong program, or one that is not required, will clearly interfere with program performance and demonstration of a treatment effect. Determining how well an offender has done in a program will be impeded if the offender is poor in motivation<sup>7</sup> or if the program is a poor match, either in terms of program content or intensity.<sup>8</sup> Although increased motivation may be a legitimate treatment target, alone it may be insufficient to yield improved outcome. For these reasons, explicit program referral guidelines are required for accredited programs.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, strategies for enhancing treatment response such as motivational interviewing,<sup>10</sup> the use of a decisional balance,<sup>11</sup> and the use of cost benefit analyses<sup>12</sup> can lead to improved program performance.<sup>13</sup>

## Classification/typology

One approach to gaining a better understanding regarding treatment response is the use of typological or classification schemes.<sup>14</sup> In this manner, it is possible to generate hypotheses regarding the likely response by particular offenders who share certain traits, characteristics and needs. Moreover, it may help account for apparently discrepant findings.

## Assessment

Increasingly, program staff recognize the limitations of over-reliance on offender self-reports regarding the measurement of program participation and performance. Whether due to self-deception or exaggerated insight, the situational demands on offenders to present favourably are substantial. This is particularly noteworthy, as correctional programming has gained increased prominence in correctional planning and discretionary release decision-making. Offenders likely believe that while a positive post-treatment report does not guarantee parole release, a negative report is a significant obstacle to overcome. This is not to say that consumer satisfaction reports of a program cannot be informative, but offender self-reports are typically highly correlated with measures of social desirability.<sup>15</sup> Further, in some cases, offender self-reports and clinician independent ratings of performance are discrepant. This finding implies that discretion is required when interpreting post-treatment comments by offenders. This state of affairs does not fare well within a decision model already suspect about clinical ratings.<sup>16</sup> For the past several years the Research Branch has been investigating the utility of an assessment protocol related to program performance. This is a structured rating scale with behavioural anchors regarding aspects of program performance or participation.<sup>17</sup> As well, other structured ratings of program performance are emerging that warrant investigation.<sup>18</sup>

In a related vein, quality assurance evaluations across programs provide information about program drift. That is, poor adherence to standards erodes the quality of the service, which in turn results in poor program performance, which negatively impacts on program effectiveness.<sup>19</sup>

## Threshold versus change scores

In addition to overall or global ratings regarding an offender's participation and gain, another index of performance relates to change scores on the pre and post-treatment test battery. The test battery should reflect those needs addressed by the program, such that change scores should represent gain.<sup>20</sup> In principle, then, those offenders who make the greatest change might be considered to have the best performance. Alternatively, the post-treatment score could be considered a threshold score. Thus, of interest is not how far an offender has travelled, i.e., degree of change, but whether she/he reached the final destination, i.e., mastery or competence or a skill. One possible caveat may be in cases where the offender begins the program with very poor skills and despite substantial effort and motivation, achieves relatively modest post-treatment skill levels. These case-specific (within subject) analyses may be important to avoid diluting an overall treatment effect (some offenders do well, others do not, and the result may be a null effect).

## Intermediate measures

In addition to considering global ratings of performance and pre-post-treatment test results, another index of performance could be intermediate measures.<sup>21</sup> Again, these could be offence-specific and directly related to program content.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in the case of violent offenders these could include reduced incidence or severity of institutional misconducts or fewer verbal confrontations (assuming there is a baseline and reliable monitoring strategy). Although such research is preliminary compared to using recidivism, as the penultimate index of program performance, the expectation is that there should be a modest relation between intermediate measures and outcome.

## Role of staff

Increasingly, there is evidence regarding the impact of staff on program performance and effectiveness.<sup>23</sup> As the field moves away from strict reliance on offender self-reports of program performance, staff issues become increasingly important. Again, program accreditation guidelines provide structure regarding the requisite staff qualities, characteristics,

and skills. These guidelines also describe initial training and ongoing professional development requirements. These should greatly facilitate the reliable use of clinical, behavioural rating scales of program performance, which in turn should yield improved predictive validity.

## Differentiated outcome

Presently, there is evidence that certain factors, such as risk, influence differential outcome. Specifically, greater effects are noted in higher risk offenders.<sup>24</sup> An important task, then, is to conduct systematic, prospective research utilizing multi-method assessments to investigate the influence of program performance on outcome. Further, this research should also consider the contribution of other independent variables such as type and intensity of program, type of offender, and programming sequence.

## Model for incorporating performance into risk management

The final impediment to measures of program performance contributing to reintegration potential and post-release adjustment, relates to the absence of a systematic model to incorporate such information into post-treatment risk appraisals.<sup>25</sup> For instance, in the case of high-risk offenders, how much gain is sufficient to warrant release? Alternatively, in the case of low-risk offenders, how marginal a performance is sufficient to withhold discretionary release? Presently the correctional strategy provides for an assessment of an offender's needs at intake and the development of a correctional treatment plan that prescribes programs. The assumption is that these programs will address criminogenic needs (dynamic factors) and provide for improved risk management.<sup>26</sup> This is different than stating that effective correctional programs reduce risk. In those circumstances where risk is based on static factors, programming cannot alter the estimate. Positive program performance can, however, provide for a case-differentiated risk management strategy. This strategy considers other factors such as risk level, release plan, community support, and programming aftercare to ensure that a particular offender's release does not constitute an undue risk to public safety. ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

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# Affecting detention referrals through proper selection

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**T**his article briefly summarizes a study on the use of Detention Legislation in Ontario between April 1996 and August 1998. Detailed pre-release information was collected on 78 detained and 64 non-detained offenders. Recidivism rates were collected over a 2.5-year period on 122 released offenders. Detained offenders had lower rates of general recidivism and more arrests for a new violent offence. Several structured risk assessments designed to predict recidivism were used to assess each offender's risk of recidivism.

## Introduction

**D**etention legislation in Canada was designed to protect the public by incapacitating offenders who are dangerous and most likely to inflict serious physical harm on a future victim. Federal law specifies three criteria, which must be met in order to refer an offender for detention under section 129 (2)(a) of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA). The legislation clearly implies that an offender should be assessed as high risk to commit a future violent offence.

To select dangerous individuals for detention effectively, one must accurately predict future violent behaviour. Advancements in criminological research support the fact that actuarial and structured risk assessments are superior to clinical and lay judgements in predicting future behaviour.<sup>2</sup> A number of validated risk assessment measures that predict general<sup>3</sup> and violent recidivism<sup>4</sup> are now available. Logic dictates that detained offenders should have higher risk scores on these instruments. Furthermore, if offenders are accurately detained, they may also be expected to have higher rates of recidivism upon release, particularly with respect to violent or serious offences.

Contrary to expectations, previous studies have found that detained offenders had lower rates of recidivism than offenders released on parole.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, these lower rates of violent recidivism were not attributed to the increased time served on detention.<sup>6</sup> However, these studies lacked sufficient detail to determine what factors were effecting detention decisions and recidivism rates. The current study provides detailed comparisons of risk levels and recidivism rates between detained and

non-detained offenders. It also examines factors that effect detention decisions, and contribute to the accurate prediction of recidivism among high-risk offenders.

## Method and procedure

Data were collected on 142 male offenders, from medium and maximum-security facilities. Only detained offenders or those being released on Statutory Release were approached and assessed approximately 3 months prior to release. Detailed information was obtained from files, a semi-structured interview, several psychometric tests, and the following actuarial and structured risk assessments: General Statistical Information on Recidivism (GSIR), Level of Supervision Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R), and the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG). One hundred and twenty two offenders were eventually released and followed up for 2.5 years. Recidivism was defined as an official conviction for any new offence or a new violent offence. Violent offences included assault, murder, armed robbery, use of a weapon, threatening, sexual assault and any sexual contact with children, but excluded non-violent sexual acts such as exhibitionism and voyeurism. Results were analyzed using a variety of statistical tests.

## Results

The results replicated early findings that detained offenders had significantly lower rates of overall recidivism and remained offence free for longer periods in the community than non-detained offenders (see Figure 1). Detained offenders also had a lower rate of violent offending, although this difference was not statistically significant. However, detained offenders showed significantly lower rates of arrest for new violent offences (Figure 2).

These results raise the following issues: Are the highest risk offenders selected for detention? If the risk of recidivism does not determine detention status, then what other factors are affecting detention decisions? How can the detention process be improved?

Figure 1

## Differences in Survival Time between Detained and Non-Detained Offenders for General Recidivism

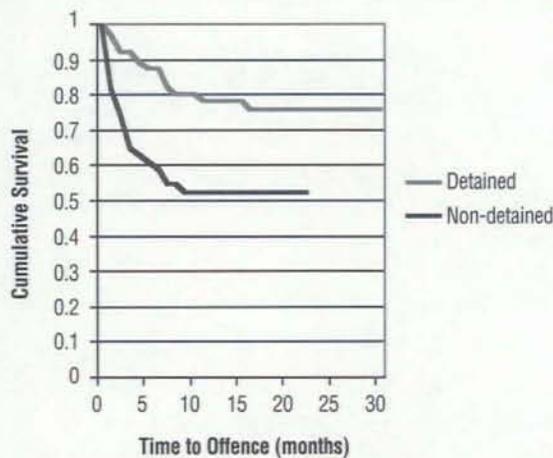
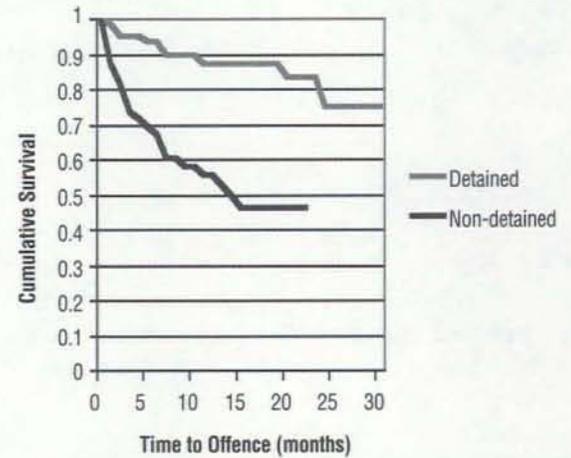


Figure 2

## Differences in Survival Time for Detained and Non-Detained Offenders Prior to an Arrest for a New Violent Offence



### Comparisons of risk levels

Detained and non-detained offenders were compared on four commonly used risk measures. Table 1 shows that detained offenders had significantly lower risk scores on the GSIR while the LSI-R, PCL-R, and the VRAG did not discriminate between the two groups. Detained offenders consistently had lower risk scores than non-detained offenders with the exception of Factor 1, the personality component, of the PCL-R. Interestingly, several studies have suggested that Factor 1 may not be a good predictor of recidivism.<sup>7</sup> The current data support the

conclusion that detained offenders, as a group, were not higher risk than the group of non-detained offenders.

The results suggest that the difference in general recidivism will likely hold for violent recidivism and may become more apparent with a longer follow-up time.

### Factors affecting detention

If detained offenders were not higher risk, then what other factors might be influencing the decision to detain certain offenders? Table 2 lists some of the

Table 1

Differences between Detained and Non-Detained Offenders on Risk Measures						
Risk Assessment		Detained (n = 78)	Non-Detained (n = 64)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
GSIR	<i>M</i>	0.94	- 6.13	4.03	140	.000
	<i>(SD)</i>	(10.55)	(10.18)			
LSI	<i>M</i>	29.69	31.73	-1.40	140	.163
	<i>(SD)</i>	(9.77)	(7.56)			
PCL-R Total Score	<i>M</i>	23.13	22.16	0.86	140	.391
	<i>(SD)</i>	(7.43)	(5.96)			
Factor 1	<i>M</i>	9.85	7.94	3.91	140	.002
	<i>(SD)</i>	(3.70)	(3.33)			
Factor 2	<i>M</i>	10.04	11.25	-1.73	138	.085
	<i>(SD)</i>	(4.87)	(3.48)			
VRAG	<i>M</i>	7.64	8.88	-0.74	138	.462
	<i>(SD)</i>	(11.59)	(8.32)			

variables where significant differences occurred between detained and non-detained offenders. In summary, detained offenders were older, and typically had been convicted of a sexual crime. Consequently, detained offenders had more child victims, were more likely to have known their victims, more likely to have a diagnosis of paraphilia, and had a higher incidence of reported childhood sexual abuse. Detained offenders had a greater number of current violent offences, and their current offences were rated as more severe. Detained offenders also were more likely to deny their offence, and use more socially desirable responses such as rationalization, denial, and impression management, in order to minimize their actions. Finally, detained offenders were more likely to have refused or quit treatment, and showed less progress in institutional treatment programs.

Detained offenders scored lower on many factors previously shown to predict recidivism. For instance, they had significantly fewer past offences, fewer youth offences, fewer criminal associates, and more stable employment records. On personality measures, detained offender showed less alienation from society, had fewer interpersonal problems, and better impulse control. These latter characteristics are generally indicative of a lower risk of recidivism.

Table 2

**Differences between Detained and Non-detained Offenders**

Variable	Detained	Non-Detained	p
Sexual Offence <sup>1</sup>	80.8%	23.4%	***
Child Victim <sup>1</sup>	48.9%	15.0%	***
Paraphilia <sup>1</sup>	21.8%	3.1%	**
Childhood Sexual Abuse <sup>1</sup>	46.1%	21.3%	*
Stranger as a Victim <sup>2</sup>	1.87%	2.27%	*
Rationalization <sup>2</sup>	1.63%	1.29%	*
Denial of Offence <sup>2</sup>	2.22%	1.50%	*
Refusal of treatment <sup>2</sup>	0.77%	0.41%	***
Progress in treatment <sup>2</sup>	4.79%	7.20%	*
Age <sup>2</sup>	38.90%	32.73%	**
No. Current Violent Offences <sup>2</sup>	3.15%	1.95%	**
Offence Severity <sup>2</sup>	3.14%	2.18%	**
No. Past offences <sup>2</sup>	10.56%	18.81%	***
No. Past Youth Offences <sup>2</sup>	1.05%	4.05%	***
Criminal Associates <sup>2</sup>	1.45%	2.17%	***
No months employed <sup>2</sup>	61.66%	29.31%	*
Alienation <sup>2</sup>	5.20%	7.55%	***
Interpersonal problems <sup>2</sup>	6.86%	8.78%	*
Impulse expression <sup>2</sup>	6.86%	8.22%	*

\*p < .01, \*\*p < .001, \*\*\*p < .0001.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers reflect percentage of offender in category.

<sup>2</sup> Number reflects mean score.

In summary, detained offenders could be described as socially reprehensible, dislikable, and uncooperative. Actual recidivism rates suggest these characteristics do not necessarily correspond to an increased risk of offending. Moreover, in some cases they may predict lower rates of recidivism. It is easy to understand how detained offenders have been unsuccessful in endearing themselves to staff and associates within the correctional system. It is important to recognize that decisions based on personal reactions may not provide better protection to the public.

### Improving prediction of recidivism

The final part of this study looked at variables that successfully predicted recidivism. Initially, several actuarial and structured risk assessment tools, commonly used within the Service, were compared on their ability to predict recidivism. Table 3 shows the partial correlation, controlling for time at risk, between risk assessment measures and recidivism. The GSIR had the strongest correlation with both overall recidivism and violent recidivism, although the LSI-R and VRAG were equally good predictors. This would be expected since these three instruments were specifically designed for the actuarial prediction of recidivism. While the PCL-R was not developed to predict recidivism, it is commonly used in conducting risk assessments. Factor 2 of the PCL-R predicted recidivism, but Factor 1 did not and consequently reduced the overall effectiveness of the PCL-R. The data indicate that the actuarial risk assessment measures were strongly associated with recidivism and imply that accurate prediction of both general and violent recidivism within this population is possible.

Other variables that contributed to the prediction of recidivism among this population were examined with multiple regression techniques. Table 4 shows that the strongest predictors of overall recidivism included: the GSIR, age, the total number of months incarcerated prior to the current offence, and the number of institutional charges incurred during the two years before release. Four personality traits, as measured by the Basic Personality Inventory, also predicted recidivism, including measures of anxiety, alienation, impulsiveness, and interpersonal problems. Other variables such as criminal self-efficacy, criminal associates, antisocial family members, and poor employment records also indicated an increased risk of recidivism. Note that age, offence severity, and convictions for sexual offences negatively related to recidivism and that age was the only variable negatively correlated with violent recidivism.

Statistical techniques can be used not only to determine combinations of variables that predict

Table 3

**Partial Correlation between Structured Risk Assessment Measures and a New Conviction and a New Violent Conviction**

Risk Assessment	New Conviction (n=120)	New Violent Conviction (n=120)
GSIR	-.38***	-.23*
LSI	.27**	.21*
VRAG	.26**	.23*
PCL-R	.15 <sup>ns</sup>	.17 <sup>ns</sup>
Factor 1	-.05 <sup>ns</sup>	.04 <sup>ns</sup>
Factor 2	.24**	.20*

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001, ns = non significant.  
(Note: The above r values reflect partial correlation which controlled for the time at risk.)

recidivism, but can also be used to compare the accuracy of predictions. A statistic called the Common Language Effect Size Statistic (CLES) can compare the accuracy of actual detention decisions to decisions that would have been made using the GSIR. The CLES represents the probability that an offender sampled from a high-risk group would be a recidivist and an offender sampled from a low-risk group would not. The CLES for the GSIR in this study was 72.24 for general recidivism and 65.54 for violent recidivism. This means that over 72% of offenders were correctly classified with respect to general recidivism and 65% for violent recidivism. In contrast, detention decisions made by the parole board correctly classified 34% for general recidivism and 42% for violent recidivism. The accuracy of predicting future recidivism can be further improved using a combination of predictor variables, such as shown in Table 4. These numbers provide strong support for the use of actuarial risk assessment methods and the assessment of criminogenic risk factors in order to improve the accuracy of detention decisions.

Table 4

**Partial Correlation between Predictive Variables and a New Conviction and a New Violent Conviction**

Risk Assessment	New Conviction (n=120)	New Violent Conviction (n=120)
GSIR	-.34***	-.23*
Age	-.31***	-.20*
Previous Months Incarcerated	.36***	.28**
Institutional Charges	.46***	.37***
Personality Factors (anxiety, alienation, impulsiveness, interpersonal problems)	.31**	.18 <sup>ns</sup>
Criminal Self-Efficacy	.24**	.11 <sup>ns</sup>
Antisocial Family	.23*	.24*
Criminal Associates	.30**	.21*
Employment Rating	.30**	.23*
Offence Severity	-.24**	-.05 <sup>ns</sup>
Sexual Offence	-.34***	-.17 <sup>ns</sup>

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001, ns = non significant.  
(Note: The above r values reflect partial correlations which controlled for the time at risk.)

## Conclusions

Current detention decisions appear to be influenced by several factors, such as the nature of the offence, denial, refusal of treatment, and undesirable personality traits. Human reactions to repulsive crimes and individuals appear to play a large role in influencing detention decisions. Although these reactions may be entirely justified, they are not necessarily predictive of future criminal behaviour.

Detention decisions based on actuarial or structured risk assessment measures were more accurate than the detention decisions currently being made. The former approach would both protect the public more effectively and provide financial savings by reducing the cost of over-incarceration. ■

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# Moderating segregation as a means to reintegration

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The Correctional Service of Canada has developed a reintegration strategy to promote the safe release of offenders most likely to succeed in the community with appropriate safeguards. The probability and timing of release can be affected by many factors, not the least of which is institutional behaviours. One very important indicator of these factors is whether or not an offender is placed into segregation.

Placement in segregation can have wide ranging effects, and may even directly impact on the possibility of a discretionary release. Segregation involves voluntary or involuntary confinement of an offender to a cell, with limited movement out of that cell. These cells are primarily used for administrative or disciplinary reasons which are clearly outlined in the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*.<sup>2</sup> However, offenders may also be temporarily separated from the general population for other reasons (such as awaiting a disciplinary hearing).

## Study design

A review of Correctional Service of Canada's Offender Management System (OMS) revealed that 48,732 segregation placements had been logged for offenders in federal institutions between 1995 and 2000. While men offenders accounted for the majority of placements in segregation, women offenders accounted for 2.3% of these placements.

As depicted in Table 1, the main reason for involuntary placements for men were the risk that the offender posed to others, the safe running of the institution and as a sanction for conviction of a serious institutional offence. Voluntary placements were mostly due to personal safety difficulties the offender would face by remaining in the general population.

For women offenders, the distribution of reasons for segregation was different. About two thirds of the involuntary placements for women were due to the risk they posed to others. Interestingly, institutional offences accounted for 8% of involuntary placements for women compared to 21% for men. Although the predominant reason for voluntary segregation among women was their personal safety, 8.5% of these placements were requested by the women because the risk they potentially posed to others.

Table 1

Reason For Segregation	Percentage Distribution of Reasons for Segregation			
	Men		Women	
	Involuntary (37,484)	Voluntary (10,087)	Involuntary (926)	Voluntary (235)
Jeopardizing Institution/Others	58.4	4.4	64.2	8.5
Interference with Investigation	4.4	0.2	5.1	0.0
Personal Safety	6.8	93.8	21.0	77.0
Institutional Offences	20.7	0.4	8.3	0.0
Other	9.7	1.2	1.4	14.5

## Characteristics of segregated and non-segregated offenders

### Demographics

Overall, there were no significant differences between involuntarily and voluntarily segregated men in relation to selected demographic variables (see Table 2).<sup>3</sup> This is consistent with previous research on the characteristics of segregated and non-segregated offenders.<sup>4</sup> However, Aboriginal women offenders had a substantially higher percentage of involuntary placements to segregation than voluntary placements.

### Criminal history

Between group differences were explored separately for men and women by comparing the two groups

Table 2

Variable	Demographic Information			
	Men		Women	
	Involuntary (10,248)	Voluntary (5,617)	Involuntary (234)	Voluntary (89)
Age at Admission	M 25.0	25.6	28.0	29.7
Sentence Length (years)	M 5.3	3.6	3.6	4.1
Aboriginal	% 16.8	15.8	25.9	13.5
Serving Life/Indeterminate	% 7.4	6.0	6.0	6.7

Note: M = arithmetic average.

of segregated offenders with comparison groups not placed in segregation during their sentence. To control statistically for demographic differences between these two groups, they were matched on sentence length, age at first admission, and type of offence.

An examination of past involvement with the criminal justice system revealed that compared to non-segregated men, both involuntary and voluntary groups were significantly more likely to have had prior contact with the criminal justice system as juveniles ( $p < .001$ ). This finding did not hold true for the women. Nevertheless, the majority of segregated offenders (men and women) had a prior adult criminal record. Finally, both men and women offenders later segregated (involuntarily or voluntarily) were more likely to have experienced difficulties with institutional adjustment relative to their non-segregated counterparts.

### Static and dynamic risk factors

Tables 3 and 4 depict a breakdown of the static (criminal history) and dynamic (criminogenic needs such as: employment, education, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional orientation, and attitudes) risk factors ratings from the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process completed when offenders enter into federal custody.<sup>5</sup> The findings indicated that segregated offenders were more likely to be rated higher risk at intake than their matched counterparts.

### Reintegration potential at intake

One of the measures employed to assist with reintegration efforts is the determination of each offender's reintegration potential at intake.<sup>6</sup> A three-point rating (high, moderate, or low) is determined by a combination of three standardized risk-based measures during OIA. For example, an offender

rated as "high" reintegration potential could be viewed as requiring minimum security, as a very good release risk, and as having few or no criminogenic needs.

Figure 1 displays the reintegration potential for segregated and non-segregated men offenders. Figure 2 reflects the breakdown of reintegration potential ratings for women offenders. As the figures show, both men and women offenders placed in segregation were, at intake, rated as being significantly higher risk, higher need, and lower in reintegration potential than offenders who were not subsequently placed in segregation.

### Implications of segregation

#### Security reclassification

Institutional adjustment is an important consideration in determining whether offenders, men or women, cascade down to lower levels of security. Consequently, placement in segregation, and other indices of adjustment are major factors being considered during a review. In fact, placement in segregation is the strongest predictor of security reclassification, having been found to account for up to one-quarter of the variance in these decisions.<sup>7</sup> Thus, standardized instruments developed to inform routine security reviews are heavily influenced by this factor.

#### Program participation

The nature of the segregation environment can impose limits on offender programming while in custody. As many offenders could be held there for significant periods of time, their ability to address the goals of their correctional plan may be impeded. In fact, research has shown that program completion is inextricably linked to an offender's ability to cascade to lower levels of security.<sup>8</sup>

Table 3

Static and Dynamic Risk Factors by Group for Men				
Risk Factors	Involuntary		Voluntary	
	No (3,596)	Yes (8,682)	No (5,306)	Yes (4,720)
<b>Static ****/****</b>				
Low	16.5%	4.5%	19.3%	4.1%
Medium	44.9%	36.3%	45.7%	36.2%
High	38.6%	59.2%	35.0%	59.7%
<b>Dynamic****/****</b>				
Low	14.1%	3.2%	16.0%	2.3%
Medium	41.8%	30.2%	42.6%	26.6%
High	44.1%	66.6%	41.4%	71.2%

Note: statistical significance involuntary/voluntary.  
 \*\*\* = The difference is statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Table 4

Static and Dynamic Risk Factors by Group for Women				
Risk Factors	Involuntary		Voluntary	
	No (131)	Yes (207)	No (43)	Yes (77)
<b>Static Risk ****/****</b>				
Low	37.4%	20.3%	34.9%	16.9%
Medium	40.5%	45.9%	46.5%	40.3%
High	22.1%	33.8%	18.6%	42.8%
<b>Dynamic Risk ****/****</b>				
Low	23.7%	8.7%	23.3%	3.9%
Medium	48.1%	37.7%	46.5%	36.4%
High	28.2%	53.6%	30.2%	59.7%

Note: statistical significance involuntary/voluntary.  
 \*\*\* = The differences is statistically significant at  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Figure 1

Reintegration Potential for Men by Group

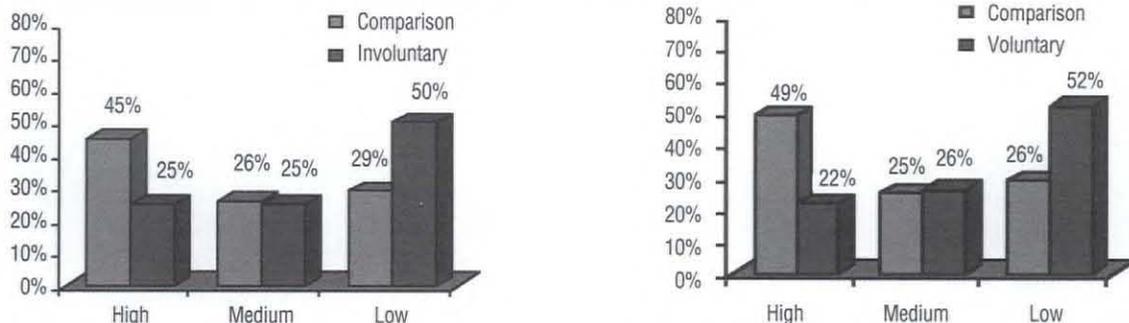
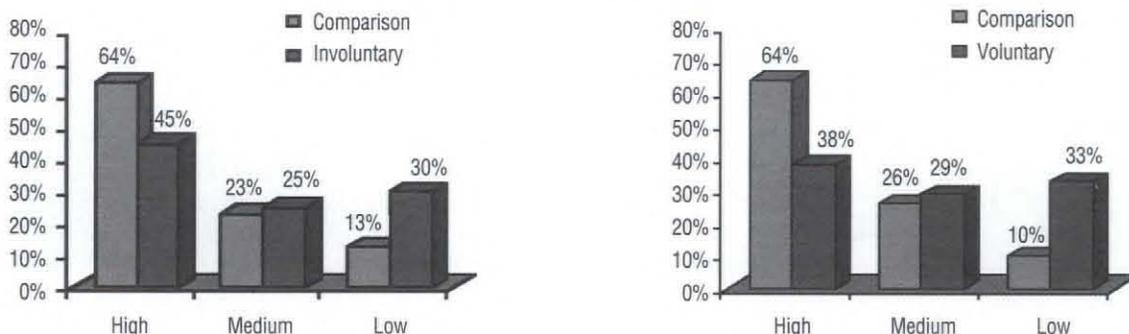


Figure 2

Reintegration Potential for Women by Group



### Discretionary release

Follow-up release and readmission information was gathered for the sample and statistical controls were introduced for level of reintegration potential. Due to the relatively small number of segregation placements for women, these analyses were conducted only for men offenders.

Within the high reintegration potential group, men offenders who were subsequently placed in segregation, were found to be less likely than their

non-segregated counterparts to have been granted a discretionary release (63% versus 85%,  $p < .001$ ).

Among the offenders assessed at intake to be “high” reintegration potential and subsequently released, significantly more of the segregated offenders were readmitted before their sentences ended.

In sum, it would appear that moderating the relative use of segregation would result in some important reintegration dividends. Notwithstanding, discovering creative and innovative alternatives to placement in segregation remains the task at hand. ■

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<sup>2</sup> The reasons for placement into segregation are described in Section 31-3 and 44-1(f) of the CCR: 1) the inmate poses a danger to staff, other inmates or to the security of the institution (31-3a); 2) the inmate may interfere with an ongoing investigation (31-3b); 3) the inmate's own safety is at risk (31-3c); or 4) as a sanction from conviction of a serious disciplinary offence (44-1f).

<sup>3</sup> There was some overlap between the involuntary and voluntary groups as some offenders had experienced both types of segregation.

<sup>4</sup> Motiuk, L. L., & Blanchette, K. (1997). *Case characteristics of segregated offenders in federal corrections*. Research Report R-#57. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada. See also Motiuk, L. L. & Blanchette, K.

Characteristics of administratively segregated offenders in federal corrections, *Canadian Journal of Criminology* (in press).

<sup>5</sup> Motiuk, L. L. (1997). Where are we in our ability to assess risk? *Forum on Corrections Research*, 5(2), 18-22.

<sup>6</sup> Motiuk, L. L. & Nafekh, M. (1999). Reintegration potential profiles for federally sentenced women, *Forum on Corrections Research*, 11(3), 13-17. See also Motiuk, L. L. & Serin, R. C. (1998) Situating risk assessment in the reintegration potential framework, *Forum on Corrections Research*, 10(1), 19-22.

<sup>7</sup> Luciani, F. (1997). *The security classification of offenders: Development of security reclassification protocols*. Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

<sup>8</sup> Luciani, 1997.

# Inmate security reclassification: Increasing reintegration potential

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**C**lassification of inmate populations is one of the most important functions of any correctional agency; it serves numerous purposes. As a management tool, appropriate classification minimizes the potential for institutional misbehaviour and violence, mitigates the probability of escape, and directs resources to where they are most needed. The Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)<sup>2</sup> mandates that the Correctional Service of Canada assign a security classification of minimum, medium, or maximum to all inmates. As a guiding principle for practice, section 4(d) of the CCRA directs that “the Service use the least restrictive measures consistent with the protection of the public, staff members and offenders.” The Service is therefore tasked with the responsibility of assigning each inmate the lowest level of security possible, while concurrently managing risk, both within and outside of the institution. Following initial security classification, this is achieved through regular security review and reclassification procedures.

**U**pon admission to federal custody, all inmates are assigned a security classification as a part of the comprehensive and integrated Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process.<sup>3</sup> Initial security classification is informed by the Custody Rating Scale (CRS),<sup>4</sup> an objective risk-based measure consisting of two independently-scored dimensions: Institutional Adjustment (5 items) and Security Risk (7 items). The reliability, validity, and practical utility of the CRS have been assessed favourably within male, Aboriginal, and women offender samples.<sup>5</sup>

Following initial security classification, the CCRA decrees that each offender’s security level be reviewed annually. The Correctional Service of Canada policy<sup>6</sup> dictates that the security classification of each offender is reviewed prior to making a recommendation for any decision (e.g., transfer, temporary absence, work release or parole). Policy also directs that receipt of any new information affecting an offender’s risk should result in an immediate review of his or her security classification. In each case, the review could result in either confirmation of the offender’s security classification, or a recommendation to change the offender’s security classification.

Clearly, an inmate’s security designation is not immovable. Rather, the security review process is designed, in accordance with the Service’s Mission, to ensure the safe and timely re-integration of offenders. For those offenders who are initially classified at higher levels of security, the process

of reintegration should be reflected in successive reductions in security until release into the community. Moreover, reclassification and expeditious transfer of an offender to the “least restrictive” level of confinement improves the likelihood of that offender being considered favourably for discretionary release.

There is research evidence demonstrating a strong association between security level placement and discretionary release, even when controlling for risk.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, lower-risk offenders placed in higher security have lower discretionary release rates and longer incarceration periods than higher-risk offenders placed in lower security. Thus, it is the actual placement, rather than assessed risk, of the offender that facilitates discretionary release. While reclassifying offenders to lower levels of security is commensurate with community reintegration efforts, it is also important to remember that there are potential costs in terms of increased incident and escape rates.

Ideally, reclassification criteria recommend the least restrictive security levels, without compromising accuracy in prediction. Policy directives guide the review process, proscribing three dimensions on which to rate the offender: probability of escape, risk to public safety in the event of escape, and level of control and supervision required for appropriate management of the offender within the institution. Although these criteria provide a structure for the security review and reclassification process, there is also some reliance on professional discretion.

There are two principal ways of aggregating information to make a classification decision. The clinical method relies mostly on human judgement that is based on informal, subjective techniques, sometimes including case conferencing strategies. The actuarial/ mechanical method involves formal, objective procedures such as statistical equations to render a score and recommendation for decision. There is over 70 years of research suggesting that actuarial methods of prediction generally outperform clinical methods with respect to accuracy.<sup>8</sup>

Importantly, objective instruments are also often more lenient than professional judgement. With respect to security classification, actuarial tools tend to significantly lower the average classification. It has been suggested that staff, left to their own professional discretion, will act more conservatively because there are serious consequences for under-

classification such as institutional violence, and inmate escape. While over-classification also evokes consequences, especially for the inmates, they are less apparent than those caused by under-classification.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, there are obvious benefits to using actuarial methods for offender classification: evidence suggests that they are both more accurate and more liberal than clinical classification. Mechanical approaches have other advantages as well. At the federal level of corrections in Canada, implementation of an actuarial tool for classification (such as the CRS) provides an objective, cost-effective, equitable, and nationally standardized approach. The use of actuarial measures assists staff by providing an accountability framework for their decisions. Objective instruments provide inmates with explicit behavioural criteria regarding their security level, and how they could achieve a reduced security classification. Finally, actuarial/mechanical methods can help management modify policy to either reduce or increase security classification distributions; with mechanical methods the effects of proposed policy changes can be simulated in advance.

Until recently, CSC used a structured professional judgement method to render security reclassification decisions. In December 1998, the Service introduced the Security Reclassification Scale (SRS)<sup>10</sup> for male offenders. The mechanically derived scale has been validated and field-tested, with results suggesting a high degree of concurrent validity. Unlike the Custody Rating Scale, the SRS emphasizes dynamic criteria and proximal in-custody behaviour. The SRS has an approximate 30-point scoring range, with higher scores representing higher risk and resulting in higher security ratings.

The SRS ensures that the security review and reclassification process is based on consistent and clearly articulated criteria. Importantly, it also includes provisions for professional discretion to override the SRS score recommendation. Despite this allowance, overrides to the SRS do not occur often (about 15% of the time); when they do, staff

must clearly articulate their reasons for contravening the scale recommendation.

Following an operational review of the SRS, minor revisions have been suggested and are pending national implementation. The revised scale is projected to be more liberal than current practice, in support of the "least restrictive measure of confinement." In turn, these results will expedite the community reintegration process without compromising institutional security or public safety.

While the SRS was developed, validated, and field-tested with male offenders, a parallel process was undertaken to develop a security reclassification protocol for female offenders. The Security Reclassification Scale for Women (SRSW)<sup>11</sup> is currently in the field-testing phase. Similar to the SRS, the SRSW has an approximate 30-point scoring range, with higher scores representing higher risk and resulting in higher security ratings.

The structured clinical method (professional assessment of three risk domains), currently in use for women, has demonstrated predictive validity.<sup>12</sup> The research evidence suggests that the SRSW will match the clinical method with respect to predictive accuracy. Moreover, results of preliminary data analyses suggest that the SRSW will recommend placement of more women in minimum-security, and fewer in maximum-security.

Fundamentally, an objective security reclassification instrument reflects the agency's risk-taking policy. The use of objective actuarial measures in security reclassification facilitates management in taking responsibility for the Service's risk-taking policy. This, in turn, enables staff accountability in applying the policy to individual inmates. The use of actuarial tools such as the SRS and the SRSW for reclassification supports the process, by placing offenders in the least restrictive environment while maintaining predictive accuracy and managing risk. As such, the Service is maximizing reintegration potential through the security reclassification process. ■

1 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9

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6 See *Standard Operating Practice* #700-14.

7 *Op. Cit.* Luciani, Motiuk, & Nafekh, (1996).

8 Grove, W. M., & Meehl, P. E. (1996). Comparative efficiency of informal (subjective, impressionistic) and formal (mechanical, algorithmic) prediction procedures: The clinical-statistical controversy, *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 2(2), 293-323.

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10 Luciani, F. P. An Operational Review of the Security Reclassification Scale: Findings and Recommendations for Improving the Protocol, Draft Research Report (in press), Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

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# Using temporary absence in the gradual reintegration process

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Temporary absences are the first opportunity for incarcerated offenders to be released into the community. The time away from an institution may last a few hours with a correctional officer escort, a few days if the individual is unescorted, or several weeks if the purpose is to attend a treatment program in the community. A review of each case ensures that temporary absences are only granted to offenders who are low risk to reoffend. The extremely low failure rate demonstrates the effectiveness of these reviews.

The objective of temporary absences is to "encourage offenders to maintain family and community ties and avail themselves of rehabilitative activities, with the goal of safely reintegrating them into the community as law-abiding citizens through a gradual and controlled release program of temporary absences."<sup>2</sup> Medical and compassionate TA's are used to ensure the humane treatment of offenders by providing access to health care and time for offenders to be with seriously ill family members or to attend funerals.

Temporary absences (TA's) can be either escorted (ETA's) or unescorted (UTA's). Escorted TA's require supervision by an approved escort. Escorts may supervise a single offender or a small group of offenders. Unescorted TA's are always individual, with no escort, but the offenders may be required to report to police or a parole supervisor. Temporary absences may also be classified as either reintegration or non-reintegration. Reintegration TA's are for

purposes such as community service, family contact, parental responsibility, and personal development for rehabilitative purposes while non-reintegration TA's are granted for administrative, medical or compassionate reasons.

Temporary absences are the first opportunity for the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board to gauge how well an offender adjusts when the restrictions of the penitentiary environment are removed. Therefore, they are the first step in the gradual reintegration process that will ensure a safe return to the community.

If temporary absences are usually successful, and are beneficial to the reintegration of offenders into the community, then their use should be encouraged. While an earlier study<sup>3</sup> found that the granting of TA's for purposes other than medical ones declined from 1990-91 to 1995-96, more recent statistics show a steady increase in both the number of reintegration ETA's and UTA's and the number of offenders granted reintegration TA's (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Results are shown for both TA releases and offenders granted TA's because an offender may receive multiple TA's in one year.

The recent increase in reintegration TA use is encouraging, but it is also important to know if reintegration TA's contribute to successful reintegration.

Figure 1

Changes in the number of reintegration ETA's and the number of offenders granted ETA's, 1994 to 1999

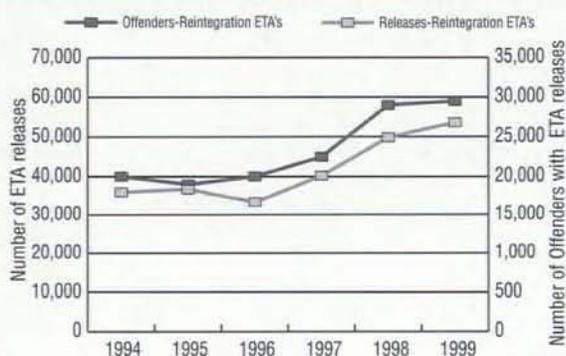
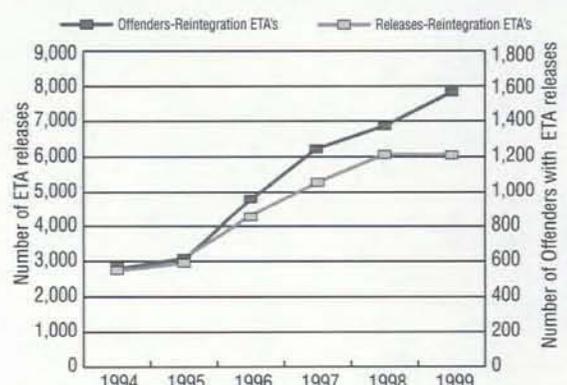


Figure 2

Changes in the number of reintegration UTA's and the number of offenders granted UTA's, 1994 to 1999



## What is the success rate of TA releases?

Two studies examined the rate of failure for offenders participating in TA's. Grant and Millson<sup>3</sup> found a failure rate of 0.2% for reintegration group TA's, 0.2% for reintegration individual ETA's, and 1.1% for reintegration UTA's. Molhman<sup>4</sup> reports similar results, and he found that two-thirds of the TA failures did not result in additional charges being laid against the offender. Overall, only 4 in every 10,000 TA releases resulted in additional court or legal system activity. Grant and Belcourt<sup>5</sup> found that the rate of failures for those offenders convicted of murder and other serious crimes is lower than the already very low failure rate for other offenders (approximately 1% for UTA's and 0.1% for ETA's). Given that even offenders convicted of serious offences by and large successfully complete their TA's, the use of TA's, as part of the reintegration process, appears to be pose a minimal amount of danger to public safety.

## Does the use of TA's benefit offender reintegration?

The use of temporary absences could potentially benefit offenders in several ways. Since they have proven that they can successfully remain in the community for short periods of time, offenders who are successful on temporary absences may be more likely to be granted day parole or full parole. Motiuk and Belcourt<sup>6</sup> found that approximately half of the offenders who had received ETA's received a future discretionary release, while two-thirds of offenders who had received UTA's were subsequently granted discretionary release. Therefore, TA participation increases the likelihood of offenders being granted parole, especially when the TA's are unescorted.

Another measure of the benefit of TA participation is outcome after release from prison. Several studies have examined the rate of success following release, and in general, offenders who have participated in TA's had a higher likelihood of success on future conditional release. Grant and Gal<sup>7</sup> reported that reintegration TA's had a positive effect on the rates of success of offenders granted day parole, with approximately three-quarters of offenders with previous reintegration TA's being successful versus less than two-thirds without reintegration TA's. Furthermore, Motiuk and Belcourt found that approximately 20% of offenders granted ETA's prior to release were returned to federal custody within a two year follow-up period while only 8% of offenders who had participated in UTA's were returned. These results indicate that TA's appear to

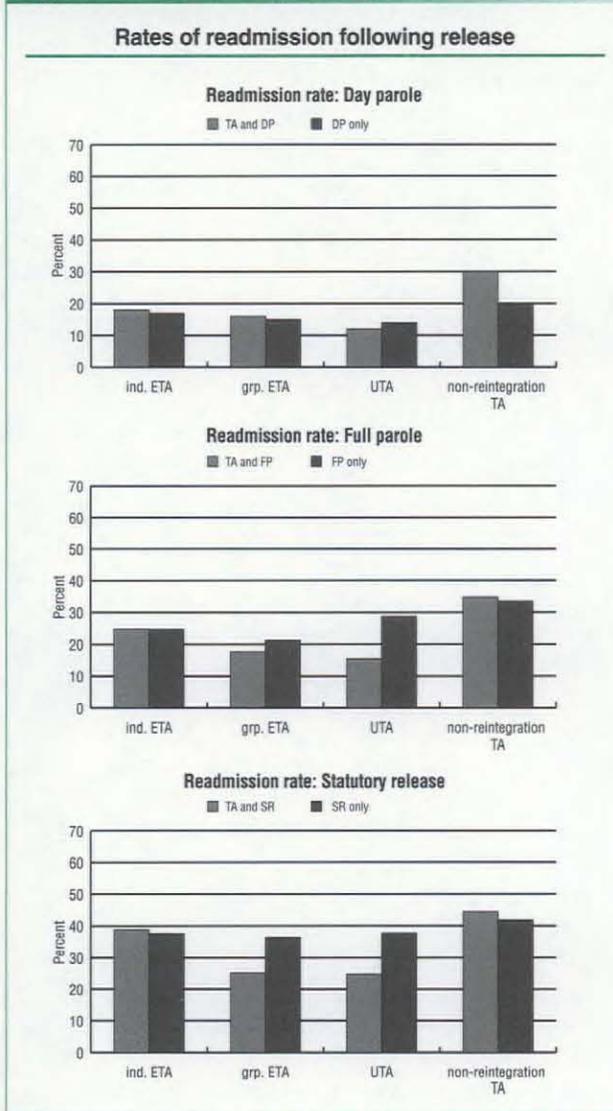
have a positive effect on offender outcome following release, with those receiving UTA's showing the greatest benefit. However, these results are limited in the conclusions that can be drawn due to the lack of proper comparison groups.

In a well controlled study, LeClair and Guarino-Ghezzi<sup>8</sup> compared the recidivism rates pre and post implementation of a TA program. Overall, they found that offenders granted TA's had lower recidivism rates than predicted, with only 16% recidivating compared to the predicted rate of 25%. Therefore, the results of this study indicate that offenders who participate in TA's do derive some benefit post-release.

A recent study<sup>9</sup> examined rates of readmission, technical violation, and new offence among several groups of offenders, with the primary comparison between those with and without reintegration TA participation. This study examined four types of TA's (individual reintegration ETA's, group reintegration ETA's, reintegration UTA's and non-reintegration TA's) and three types of release (day parole, full parole, statutory release). For this study, comparison groups were constructed, using offenders without the relevant TA experience. Study and comparison groups were matched on 11 critical variables that are known to be associated with risk of offending: race, gender, age, aggregate sentence length, previous federal admissions, previous offences, previous violent offences, total number of current offences, current violent offence, criminal history risk score, and proportion of sentence served. Overall, there were a total of 12 study groups and 12 comparison groups that were compared on recidivism following release.

Comparisons were made between offenders with and without TA's on readmission rates for a fixed two year follow-up period following day parole, full parole, and statutory release (see Figure 3). Positive impacts on release outcome were observed for offenders released on full parole and statutory release. Overall, offenders participating in reintegration UTA's appeared to derive the most benefit. As expected, given that non-reintegration TA's should not impact outcome, differences were not observed between offenders released on full parole or statutory release with and without non-reintegration TA's. There appears to be minimal effect of reintegration TA participation on readmission rates following day parole release. In addition, individual reintegration ETA's were not found to have an effect on outcome following day parole, full parole or statutory release.

Figure 3



A further examination of the effect of risk level (low, high) indicated that both lower and higher risk offenders released on full parole or statutory release had lower readmission rates than offenders who did not participate. This benefit is greatest for offenders with reintegration UTA's and to a lesser degree for offenders with group ETA's.

These results indicate that offenders participating in group reintegration ETA's and reintegration UTA's prior to release on full parole or statutory release have lower rates of readmission than similarly matched offenders without these TA experiences. These results may reflect the accumulation of experiences offenders gather with multiple TA releases. Once a TA that requires a high level of supervision is

completed, such as an individual ETA, the next logical TA which is less supervised, such as a group ETA, is attempted. If, once again, the offender successfully completes the group ETA, an unescorted TA (UTA) may then be attempted. Therefore, by the time offenders are participating in UTA's, they are likely to have already participated in individual and group ETA's. The seemingly large effects of participation in UTA's may, in fact, reflect this accumulation of experiences, more so than the unique effect of UTA experience. If this is the case, then there is further support for the concept of gradual release as an important component of successful reintegration.

### Conclusions

Given the low rate of failure (less than 1%) while on temporary absences, and the positive effect of TA participation on outcome, TA's are a safe and effective method of providing offenders opportunities for short periods of release and are a good first step in the process of gradual reintegration. In this way, TA's provide offenders with opportunities to establish credibility for future release, and once released, offenders with prior TA experience are likely to have better outcomes following release than those who had not participated in TA's. ■

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# Enhancing case preparation for release decision-making

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The preparation of reports for conditional release decision-makers, particularly National Parole Board (NPB) members, are in many ways the culmination of all case management activities that have preceded them and they are essential for quality NPB decision making. The purpose of this article is to contribute to an examination of means to improve case preparation for conditional release which is crucial in the National Parole Board's and the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) joint delivery of the conditional release program.

The article summarizes some of the challenges with case preparation and plans that have been developed in the past to address these long-standing challenges, and presents a number of critical success factors for the continued improvement of case preparation.

## Case preparation

The essence of case preparation is define as:

*“The total of all activity designed to prepare appropriate offenders for safe release and manage them throughout conditional release.”*

With this all-encompassing definition, case preparation could basically be seen to be everything that is done within the corrections system and conditional release process to prepare offenders for safe release and management of offenders in the community. This could include offender intake assessment; correctional planning; programming and/or other interventions in the institution and community; progress reporting; preparation of documentation for decision making; and conditional release supervision.

The responsibility and accountability for the joint delivery of the conditional release program are clearly outlined in many documents such as; current legislation; CSC and NPB Mission documents, policies, and the Administrative Agreement; and in CSC Standard Operating Practices (SOPs). These documents, particularly the legislation, provide very clear direction in NPB decision making policies; and the Correctional Service of Canada SOPs provide very clear direction adhering to the legislative criteria, content, format and timeframes of case preparation reports for the various types of conditional release. Although responsibilities and requirements for case preparation are clear, it is certainly true that completing quality case preparation has, for many reasons, become more complex and challenging over the years.

## Case preparation significance

All stages in the reintegration process are important, from offender intake assessment to supervision in the community. Case preparation for conditional release decision is one of the most important steps, if not the most important. It is also an area where there remain significant opportunities for improvement.

Conditional release decisions are extremely important decisions that impact directly and extensively on public safety and on individual freedom. As the case preparation documentation prepared by CSC staff is the main source of information used for this decision making, its importance cannot be over-emphasized. This information in a sense is a culmination and synthesis of all previous stages of the reintegration process. If it is not done in a quality and timely manner, much excellent work that may have preceded it cannot be fully considered and understood.

It has always been this author's view that a high degree of confidence between NPB members and staff, and CSC staff, at all levels is required in order to ensure the best possible joint delivery of the conditional release program. The main point of contact between the two organizations occurs many times annually as part of the case preparation and decision-making process.

## Quality and timely case preparation

Concerns with case preparation have been noted in recent years in various CSC task forces and audits, and by consultants under contract with CSC. Issues with respect to case preparation have also been raised in various Auditor General and Correctional Investigator reports, and in a recent report of the Public Accounts Committee. This has provided a further impetus to identify and address the issues.

NPB is in a unique position to obtain an overview of the quality and timeliness of case preparation, and to be significantly impacted by problems with case preparation. The thousands of case preparation documents prepared annually by CSC staff and parole offices are “funnelled” into five relatively small NPB regional offices. A small number of NPB staff in each of these offices review these reports to determine if the reports meet requirements for NPB decision making.

NPB regional staff have always indicated that there are certainly examples of quality case preparation. In recent years, staff in the Board's regional offices have estimated that between 50 to 90% of the cases reviewed lack varying degrees of case preparation information which requires them to follow up with CSC. These identified problems can include failure to address legislative criteria; poor or no analysis; recommendations not supported by the preceding narrative; missing or conflicting information; "cutting and pasting" from other reports that results in lengthy and disjointed reports; major risk factors not addressed or downplayed; failure to address results of interventions; late reports; and problems with sharing of information and/or confirmation of sharing. Follow-up on such a large number of cases has huge implications for NPB resources and for the CSC staff who must then also take further action to address the issues raised.

In recent years, discussion of case preparation issues has come to the fore-front. For example, NPB Regional Directors and CSC Assistant Deputy Commissioners have discussed many aspects of this issue for a number of years, and a wide range of follow-up action was determined. Unfortunately, widespread, lasting positive impact from this follow-up action has been elusive. It was recently acknowledged again by this group that there continue to be significant concerns that must be addressed.

### Improving case preparation

The following are suggested as some of the critical success factors in continuing efforts to enhance case preparation:

- Quality and timely case preparation must be a high priority at all levels of the organization and remain so to ensure that the desired results are achieved and maintained;
- Ensure implementation of action plans for improvement;
- Individual case managers must clearly be responsible and accountable for the quality of case preparation;
- Preparing quality documentation is a difficult task that should be done by the smallest number possible of professional staff;
- Effective and efficient staffing process for parole officers which results in the hiring of the best people without undue delays;
- Case managers must be provided with the tools to enable them to do professional case preparation

(training, coaching, feedback, adequate resources, technology). Training with respect to risk assessment and case preparation must occur prior to undertaking these responsibilities;

- There must be quality assurance by CSC staff in each operational unit with a background and expertise in, or a very good understanding of, case preparation and with the time to perform this function. A co-signature on a report must mean that legislative and policy requirements have been met and that the report meets CSC standards for case preparation prior to sending to NPB;
- Co-ordination of information processes between institutional and community staff;
- Case preparation should clearly be based on the NPB decision-making policies and present a complete, objective, accurate, concise, balanced presentation and analysis of relevant factors in the case;
- Board members and CSC staff must be provided with more opportunities (joint training) to get to know each other and understand each other's jobs and requirements;
- Periodic feedback from NPB on the quality and timeliness of case preparation;
- Daily contacts between CSC and NPB within regions and other periodic contacts such as meetings between region focusing on specific action that needs to be taken to make improvements;
- Region by region, site by site review and analysis of the situation should help to identify and develop individualized plans for improvement;
- The focus should be on identifying and addressing the most significant concerns;
- Sharing of best practices within and between regions; and
- Continuing constructive and, open discussions of this subject are required at all levels within and between both CSC and NPB.

### Conclusion

There is a shared recognition within CSC and NPB, and externally, that further improvements are necessary. CSC is continuing to take action in many of the above areas and NPB is involved where necessary and appropriate. ■

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# Encouraging community release and appropriate supervision

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**C**orrectional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board are committed to ensuring the safe and timely reintegration of offenders into the community. Frequency of contact standards and special release conditions are used in part, to meet this objective. While frequency of contact refers to the minimum number of face-to-face contacts an offender must have with his or her parole officer while in the community, special conditions are restrictions that the National Parole Board imposes upon newly released offenders to facilitate safe reintegration. Examples include 'must not associate with criminal others' or "must attend psychological counseling" This article describes each practice and reviews existing research evidence regarding their effectiveness.

**A**lmost all offenders who receive a carceral sentence will eventually return to society. Further, most will serve a portion of their sentence in the community under supervision. In Canada, federal offenders<sup>2</sup> may be released into the community prior to the expiration of their sentence under day parole, full parole, or statutory release. Statutory release is a legislative requirement that directs the automatic release of all offenders (excluding lifers and dangerous offenders) after serving two-third's of their sentence provided that they are unlikely to present a danger to society. In contrast, day and full parole are not automatic. An offender must apply to the National Parole Board (NPB) who in turn, decides whether or not the applicant is ready for early release. While offenders on day parole are required to return to a halfway house each night, this is not a requirement for offenders on full parole. Regardless of release type, all offenders are subject to various conditions or restrictions while under community supervision. These conditions are specifically designed to facilitate the offender's safe return to society.

Three types of conditions or standards currently exist to facilitate the successful reintegration of offenders into the community. First, all offenders on conditional release are subject to conditions outlined in the *Regulations of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)*.<sup>3</sup> In sum, these conditions require that all offenders under community supervision travel directly to their predetermined destination, that they report immediately to their parole officer upon release, that they obey the law and keep the peace, and that they remain within the territorial boundaries specified by the parole officer. Second,

the NPB may impose an additional set of special conditions such as "abstain from alcohol," "must avoid certain persons" or "must follow psychological counseling." Unlike, the CCRA conditions, special conditions are not mandatory for all offenders. Rather, each case is examined individually to determine which special conditions, if any, should be imposed. Conditions are only imposed if it is believed that such conditions will facilitate successful reintegration. Lastly, Standard Operating Practices within the Service provide an additional set of supervision standards that offenders must abide by in order to remain in the community. This article reviews one such standard, namely, frequency of contact and more generally, special conditions imposed by the NPB.

## Frequency of contact in practice

Frequency of contact refers to the number of face-to-face contacts an offender must have with his or her parole officer while under community supervision. This condition, imposed by the Service is specifically linked to research in that, offenders with higher level of static and dynamic factors are required to meet more frequently with their parole officer.<sup>4</sup> Briefly, the literature has conceptualized factors that predict recidivism as either static or dynamic. While static factors such as criminal history remain constant and do not change as a function of intervention, dynamic factors such as attitude are changeable and in theory, can be altered through appropriate intervention. Further, changes in dynamic factors achieved through treatment that are subsequently linked to reductions in recidivism are known as contributing factors or criminogenic needs. Conversely, changes in dynamic factors that do not necessarily reduce recidivism but nonetheless generate some benefit such as enhanced self-worth are referred to as noncontributing factors or noncriminogenic needs.<sup>5</sup>

Before reviewing the frequency of contact standard it is necessary to first describe how the Service generates the two factors used to determine the frequency of contact level, namely, the level of intervention based on static factors and the level of intervention based on dynamic factors. The static and dynamic levels of intervention are initially determined when the offender first enters the federal system during the Offender Intake

Assessment (OIA) process.<sup>6</sup> Each rating is independently scored as low, medium, or high based on a multi-method assessment approach. The static rating integrates information related to the statistical probability of recidivism, for example, the Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale (SIR-R1),<sup>7</sup> the nature and severity of criminal history, and lastly, public safety concerns. Higher ratings are associated with a greater probability of recidivism. Similarly, the dynamic level of intervention rating of low, medium or high considers the severity and number of dynamic factors. Dynamic factors considered include employment, marital/family, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional and criminal attitudes.

Both ratings are initially assessed at intake and are subsequently re-assessed every six months thereafter.<sup>8</sup> However, in most cases, the static rating is not likely to change until the offender has been released to the community and has remained in the community for at least six months. Further, the Services' Standard Operating Practices indicate that each rating can only move up or down one level if significant and sustained changes have occurred in one of following areas: 1) time since offender's release, 2) the existence of collateral contacts that could assist in supervision, 3) significant disciplinary problems, suspensions or police intervention in the last year, and 4) offender's progress and/or motivation to participate in his/her correctional treatment plan.

Currently, the Service has five different levels of supervision contacts. Each of which varies as a function of both the static and dynamic levels of intervention. Offenders who are rated as being high on both the static and dynamic levels are required to meet with their parole officer at least four times per month (Level A). Conversely, offenders rated as low on both dynamic and static levels are only required to meet with their parole officer at least once per month (Level C). The remaining combinations for example, low static and medium dynamic, require two minimum contacts per months (Level B). At the parole officer's discretion, offenders can progress to Level D, which requires a minimum of one face-to-face contact every two months. Offenders are eligible for Level D if they have been at Level C for six months, have no special conditions or programming requirements, and have been on full parole or statutory release for at least one year. Lastly, offenders can move from a Level D to a Level E (one face-to-face contact every three months), if they have successfully met the criteria outlined in Level D for at least one year. Once again, this transition is based on the parole officer's discretion.

It is important to note that the Services' Standard Operating Practices pertaining to frequency of

contact are merely guidelines. While the parole officer must meet the minimum requirements, he or she can choose to increase the frequency of contact based on his or her discretion. Interestingly, research suggests that factors such as age, the nature of the offence, motivation level, and reintegration potential all play a role in determining whether or not a parole officer will increase or maintain the frequency of contact condition.<sup>9</sup> Briefly, reintegration potential is a composite rating of low, medium, or high derived from the SIR-R1, the static level of intervention, the dynamic level of intervention, level of motivation, the number and type of successful or unsuccessful releases, and lastly, public safety concerns. Individuals assessed as having a high reintegration potential are considered low risk for future criminal offending. Conversely, individuals assessed as having a medium and low reintegration potential are considered medium and high risk for future criminal offending, respectively.

### Does frequency of contact matter?

Research to date has not specifically examined whether or not frequency of contact per say can prevent offenders from engaging in criminal activity. However, we can infer from related research that frequency of contact in isolation, most likely will not have a dramatic impact on recidivism. A recent research review<sup>10</sup> demonstrates that community-based, "get tough" strategies such as restitution, boot camps, scared straight initiatives, drug testing, electronic monitoring, and intensive supervision programs (ISPs) have little, if any, impact on recidivism. Briefly, ISPs are probation and parole supervision models characterized by control strategies such as intensive monitoring and surveillance techniques rather than treatment-orientated services. They [ISPs] "turn up the heat by: greatly increasing contact between supervisors and offenders; confining offenders to their homes; enforcing curfews; submitting offenders to random drug testing; requiring offenders to pay restitution to victims; electronically monitoring offenders; and requiring offenders to pay for the privilege of being supervised".<sup>11</sup> The research review, which included 20 different ISPs studies involving 19,403 offenders, demonstrated that there was virtually no difference in recidivism rates between offenders who received the ISPs and those who received regular probation or parole. Interestingly, however, ISPs that also included a treatment component generated a 10% reduction in recidivism.<sup>12</sup>

This research demonstrates that intensive supervision models emphasizing monitoring and control in the absence of treatment will have virtually no effect on successful reintegration. However, it

should be noted that unlike frequency of contact practices within the Service, ISPs generally target low risk offenders. No attempt is made to match supervision level with risk level. Given that past research<sup>13</sup> demonstrates intensive services aimed at low risk offenders may do more harm than good, the ISP results are not surprising. However, arguably, if frequency of contact is linked to risk level or alternatively, level of intervention based on static and dynamic factors as it currently is in the Service, some benefit should accrue. This hypothesis is consistent with both the risk principle: higher risk offenders should receive the most intensive level of service to derive maximum benefit and the need principle: treatment should target criminogenic rather than noncriminogenic needs to optimize benefits.<sup>14</sup> However, research has yet to specifically examine whether or not frequency contact based on risk level can contribute to successful reintegration.

### The National Parole Board and special conditions

The National Parole Board of Canada is mandated to contribute to the protection of society by facilitating the safe and timely return of offenders back into the community. Not only does the Board determine whether or not an offender is ready to be released but also whether or not it is necessary to impose conditions or restrictions on his or her behaviour to prevent future criminal conduct. While the Board is responsible for imposing special conditions, it is the responsibility of the Correctional Service of Canada to monitor each offender's compliance with these conditions. Further, while the Board is ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not to impose or modify a condition, the Service typically recommends whether or not to impose a condition. Interestingly, the Board and the Service are in agreement approximately 86% of the time in terms of which conditions should be imposed.<sup>15</sup>

Typically, special conditions include restrictions such as "must abstain from alcohol or drugs," "must avoid certain places or persons," "must follow psychiatric or psychological counseling," "must follow correctional treatment plan" and "must reside at a specific location." As with the frequency of contact standard imposed by the Service, special conditions are linked to research in that they generally target criminogenic needs or contributing factors. Moreover, special conditions can also be modified if they are deemed no longer reasonable or necessary for the protection of society or for facilitating the offender's reintegration back into society. More specifically, the Board will consider the following factors when deciding whether or not to alter a special condition: progress during release,

degree of stability associated with current situation, the existence of stressors, and whether or not the offender has addressed the factors that lead to imposing the condition in the first place.

Most offenders will receive at least one form of special condition upon release. For example, data from the early 1990s indicates that approximately 85% of offenders on day parole will be released with at least one special condition. The most common conditions are abstain from alcohol (57.6%), abstain from drugs (57.2%), obtain psychological counseling (27.3%), and do not associate with criminal others (22.6%).<sup>16</sup> Similarly, almost 1/3 of the statutory release offender population currently has a residency condition attached to their release.<sup>17</sup> Briefly, individuals with a residency condition are required to live at a Community Residential Facility (halfway house) or a Community Correctional Facility.

### Do special conditions work?

Determining whether or not special conditions imposed by the Board impact criminal recidivism is difficult to answer. It can be argued that failures resulting from technical violations such as a breach of one's non-association condition are actually successes in that they prevented offenders from engaging in criminal conduct. Alternatively, it could also be argued that failures resulting from technical violations are too conservative and simply represent a misallocation of resources in that these individuals may not have committed a new crime if they had been permitted to remain in the community. Clearly, we can not conduct research that directly answers this question given that it would be unethical to risk public safety in order to determine whether or not technical violators would have committed a new offence if left in the community.

Despite methodological difficulties, one study<sup>18</sup> has managed to shed some light on the efficacy of special conditions. The research examined whether or not special conditions had any impact on the successful completion of day parole. Interestingly, the study found that special conditions imposed by the Board in and of themselves had no effect on whether or not an offender committed a new crime while on day parole. Further, even when the imposed conditions were clearly linked to an identified criminogenic need the likelihood of committing a new offence remained unaffected. However, there was one notable exception: criminal associates. New offence rates dropped from 10.4% to 6.5% when the Board imposed a non-association condition for cases where it was identified as a problem area. Interestingly, the imposition of the non-association condition was also linked to a reduction in offence

rates regardless of whether or not the Service had identified criminal associates as criminogenic.

In sum, we can conclude that frequency of contact standards and special conditions can potentially play an important role in the reintegration process provided that they are used *in conjunction with* treatment and are linked to the principles of risk and need. However, it is also reasonable to assume that

additional benefits would accrue if the system considered not only quantity of contact but quality of contact as well. More specifically, adopting principles of effective correctional intervention such as role modeling, positive reinforcement, and firm but fair strategies should in theory, make substantial contributions to the reintegration process. Research examining this very issue is currently underway.<sup>19</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.

<sup>2</sup> In Canada, provincial governments are responsible for administering sentences less than two years while the federal government is responsible for carrying out sentences more than two years.

<sup>3</sup> *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (June, 1992) (Chapter 20).

<sup>4</sup> Countless studies have clearly demonstrated that offenders who possess higher levels of static and dynamic factors are more likely to recidivate. See Gendreau, P., Little, T., & Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: What works! *Criminology*, 34(4), 575-607.

<sup>5</sup> Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (1998). *The psychology of criminal conduct* (2nd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

<sup>6</sup> Motiuk, L. L. (1997). Classification for correctional programming: The Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 9(1), 18-25.

<sup>7</sup> Nuffield, J. (1982). *Parole decision-making in Canada: Research towards decision guidelines*. Ottawa, ON: Supply and Services Canada.

<sup>8</sup> For offenders serving sentences greater than 10 years or indeterminate sentences (e.g., lifers and dangerous offenders) the re-assessment occurs at a minimum once per year.

<sup>9</sup> Blanchette, K. D. (2000). Raw unpublished data.

<sup>10</sup> Gendreau, P., Goggin, C., Cullen, F. T., & Andrews, D. A. (2000). The effects of community sanctions and incarceration on recidivism. *Forum on Corrections Research*, 12(2), 11-13.

<sup>11</sup> Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen & Andrews (2000).

<sup>12</sup> Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen & Andrews (2000).

<sup>13</sup> Andrews, D.A., Zinger, I., Hoge, R.D., Bonta, J., Gendreau, P., & Cullen, F. T. (1990). Does correctional treatment work? A psychologically informed meta-analysis. *Criminology*, 28, 369-404.

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<sup>15</sup> Grant, B. A., Motiuk, L. L., Brunet, L., & Lefebvre, L. (1996). *Day Parole Program Review: Case Management Predictors of Outcome*. Research Report R-52, Ottawa, ON: Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada.

<sup>16</sup> Grant, Motiuk, Brunet & Lefebvre (1996).

<sup>17</sup> National Parole Board. Mid-year 1998-1999 performance monitoring report (1998). Available at [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)

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<sup>19</sup> Correctional Service of Canada. Compendium 2000 on Effective Programming. Ottawa, ON: Research Branch (in progress).

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# Towards effective application of suspension discretion

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*The nature of conditional release supervision has been greatly influenced by recent policy changes, by advances in risk assessment methods and an aggressive expansion in program opportunities. The Correctional Service of Canada has long embraced the principle of “least restrictive measure of confinement” — consistent with the demands for public safety. The promulgation of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) in 1992 provides the legislative and strategic reinforcement to pursue greater efficiencies in measures of control and confinement of offenders.*

The Service has also introduced a number of empirically derived objective measures of risk assessment designed to inform decision-making at critical points throughout the correctional plan. Actuarial instruments are routinely employed to provide indices of recidivism<sup>2</sup> and reintegration potential,<sup>3</sup> risk and needs status and program profiles.<sup>4</sup> Finally, expanded program opportunities<sup>5</sup> both in the institutions and the community better prepare offenders for successful reintegration and often provide meaningful alternatives to conditional release suspension or revocation. Despite spirited public debate and politically motivated attacks, the safe reintegration of offenders remains a cornerstone of the Service policy and effective use of conditional release suspension is critical to advancing this objective.

## Authority to suspend conditional release

The National Parole Board retains the exclusive prerogative to revoke conditional release while the authority to suspend, established under Section 35, of the CCRA, is delegated to selected Correctional Service of Canada staff located throughout one hundred and eighteen district or area parole offices and community correctional centres. The Act specifies three, broad legal criteria under which a suspension can be issued — in the event of a breach of a term or condition of release, to prevent a breach or term or condition of release, and for the protection of society. Furthermore, conditional release practice is governed by a labyrinth of regulations, policy directives, standard operating practices, supported by electronic applications and enforced through a system of audits, inquiries, program evaluations, and on-site quality assurance measures. The introduction of actuarial measures of risk assessment

are designed to promote consistent decision-making practice while legal imperatives stemming from the Charter of Rights encourages equity and fairness. Nonetheless, personal discretion permeates the correctional decision-making process to suspend conditional release, to cancel or withdraw a suspension of conditional release.

Local authority over suspension decisions is critical in the management and control of offenders. It allows for the immediate apprehension, and at the discretion of the delegated authority, confinement of the offender for up to thirty days during which the area office retains authority to cancel the suspension. The extent to which current suspension decision-making is informed by a growing body of actuarial information is not clear.

Approximately fifty percent<sup>6</sup> of suspensions result from criminal conviction, charge, or the offender absconding from the parole area, circumstances that allow for little or no discretion. In the remaining cases involving breaches of special conditions or instructions, missing contacts or failing to adhere to the correctional plan etc., the delegated authority exercises much wider discretion. It is in these cases that opportunity to practice measures of least restrictive confinement are more likely to be considered and where the effective use of assessment tools and program alternatives can contribute to safe reintegration.

## Safe reintegration and suspension practice

Reducing suspensions as a means to promote reintegration can be a double-edged sword. Simply mandating a reduction in suspensions or revocation is no guarantee that safe reintegration is achieved or that the measures employed to achieve policy objectives are appropriate. Correctional agencies that rely primarily on policy to reduce revocation rates have demonstrated some success. In some instances, the results are the product of rising tolerance to offender infractions or misconduct and lowering of supervision standards.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, agencies that have developed a decision-making framework in support of policy objectives to reduce revocation<sup>8</sup> stand a much better chance of ensuring safe reintegration. The questions remains how best to reduce the reliance on suspension without

jeopardizing public safety? And what are criteria of effective and successful suspension practice?

### Suspensions and risk assessment

The key to advancing safe reintegration while sustaining offenders under supervision lie in accurate assessment and effective use of program options. Assessment is accurate to the extent that it is predictive. In turn, research has demonstrated that the predictive accuracy of clinical and correctional decisions can be improved and in some cases substantially with the use of actuarial tools.<sup>9</sup>

Many of the actuarial tools employed by the Service and available to area offices have demonstrated favourable results, which are available to areas offices. The Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale Revised 1 (SIR-R1), used since the mid-eighties, has undergone a number of validations<sup>10</sup> and continues to provide a competent index of recidivism potential. Likewise the predictive accuracy of the offender risk, needs profiling is established by research that consistently finds a linear relationship between risk, needs ratings and return to incarceration rates.<sup>11</sup> (The September 1998 issue of this periodical was dedicated to validating and refining the case needs identification and analysis protocol).

The recently introduced Reintegration Potential index combines the results of three risk scales that early results suggest<sup>12</sup> are useful in confirming recidivism potential. The search for relevant risk predictors is well advanced,<sup>13</sup> while approaches that combine information from a multiple sources offer the potential for improving accuracy.<sup>14</sup> These and other information systems currently employed by the Service supply the data critical to development of a suspension decision framework.

In designing a framework for suspension decisions, the principle of reconciling the risk represented by objective methods with the actual decision-making is fundamental. Identifying a range of options available to the local decision-maker commensurate with typical forms of parole violation and actuarial risk is another. This is not to suggest that the decision to suspend or cancel a suspension can or should rely on a scale outcome. Rather, actuarial results, particularly those consistent across a variety of available instruments, should inform judgement and support and explain decision-making. Guidelines derived from an objective analysis that reflect a consensus among practitioners and are endorsed by the correctional agency provide an important vehicle for improving and ensuring consistent practice. They also provide field staff with agency support that is important when exercising broad discretionary authority.

### Suspension and program assessment

Program alternatives to suspension, revocation or that allow for local cancellation has grown substantially across all parole districts in the last decade. It is now common for many area offices to have access to the Service's core programs (life skills, substance abuse, family violence, clinical interventions and sex offender treatment), and "half-way-back" referrals to private residential or Correctional Service of Canada facilities that offer specific treatment opportunities. In addition many traditional supervision strategies (increased contacts, additional conditions, police reporting, disciplinary interviews etc.) continue to serve as alternatives to re-incarceration. Restorative justice initiatives<sup>15</sup> are being explored in some area offices and intensive parole supervision units are accessible to most offices.

All community programming advances at least two objectives: to address criminogenic needs and to provide additional controls through structured intervention. Both serve as risk reduction strategies providing that the offender program needs and responsivity are accurately identified, offenders are appropriately matched to programs and the risk reduction potential of programs is realized. The best intended programs, however, can fall prey to the "widening the net" principle resulting from the miscalculation or overestimation of offender needs and in turn the over prescription of programs. A recent evaluation of substance abuse programs<sup>16</sup> suggests that pre, post treatment gains, as measured on a number of psychometric tests were marginal, in part, the result of the high level of functioning of many offenders assigned to treatment programs. In the same report we find evidence that some programs were ineffective with high-risk offenders. The results suggest that some programs have little to offer, particularly to high functioning offenders while others have little or insufficient impact on risk. In either case, simply assigning offenders to community programs is no guarantee of safe integration. Making better use of available approaches to assessing and matching offenders to programs,<sup>17</sup> and of improving understanding of program<sup>18</sup> results will help to ensure that the Service and offender resources are not squandered. Safe reintegration is advanced not only by ensuring higher risk/need offenders are assigned to appropriate programs but as well by limiting the assignment of lower risk/need offenders to the ineffectual program.

Suspension authority is a daunting responsibility, one that balances the demands for public safety and the rights of the offender. In many cases the parole office enjoys discretionary authority. Both the

process by which decisions are made and the results of decisions are important in defending the integrity of the discretion. The goal should be not only to make the correct suspension discretionary decisions, but make them "in the correct way".<sup>19</sup> The parole offices have ready access to a substantial offender

information base, including both narrative assessments and actuarial results and to a variety of program options. Establishing consensus as to core criteria and decision rules governing suspension practice may prove to be an efficient and effective way to make use of this information. ■

- <sup>1</sup> 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P9.
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# Managing offender risk through revocations

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**A**s a federal correctional service, why would we want to consider reducing revocations? As our mandate is to protect society, why would we not want to look at every possible avenue to return those who have committed crimes in the past to custody?

**T**hese are questions that often enter the minds of community members and are asked of professional correctional workers in public forums. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) believes strongly in gradual, supervised releases and believes that our task is to protect society by assisting and encouraging offenders to be law abiding. Incarceration and incapacitation are important considerations for some offenders at certain times however; they are short-term fixes for a social problem. Eventually, with a few exceptions, the problem will be returned to the community and it is in the community that the problem originated. Therefore, the treatment of the problem must also occur in the community.

## Community supervision

All offenders being released to the community represent some level of risk to reoffend given the fact that they have already committed crime. However, the task of community supervision is to manage the risk the offenders represent and assist the offenders to address the risk factors that have been identified. CSC has implemented a very comprehensive intake assessment process that systematically reviews the offender's risk factors as they enter the system. Staff has been trained to identify the static risk factors, analyze the offender's behaviour and determine the contributing factors to criminal behaviour (dynamic risk factors). The role of supervision in the community is to monitor the risk factors and ensure that they are being addressed through some form of programming or treatment. Parole officers must be sensitive to the factors involved in each case and make ongoing assessments regarding the degree to which the case is being effectively managed. When it is felt that there is escalation in risk, the parole officer must intervene and determine the best course of action to take to ensure the risk is effectively managed.

## Conditions to assist in managing risk

Attached to every release are standard terms and conditions that the offender must follow and the parole officer must monitor to ensure compliance

with the release. In addition, the National Parole Board (NPB) may impose special conditions if they are reasonable and necessary to manage risk. If there is a breach of the special condition, the parole officer must notify the NPB and indicate the action that has been taken with respect to the breach. Each time a breach occurs, the NPB must take a decision. This process paves the way for revocation.

In the writer's opinion, there is an overuse of special conditions and I question how necessary the conditions are. Special conditions and the required processes that are attached to them interfere with developing innovative supervision practices and limit the parole officer in dealing with problem situations. Offenders present a myriad of difficulties in reintegrating back to the community as they are for the most part, multi-need individuals and often have complex lives. The challenge for the parole staff is to work through the problem areas and ensure the offender is taking part in the appropriate programs within the community that will increase their success in achieving a lifestyle free of criminal behaviour. The parole officer must be afforded the opportunity to work with the offender and encourage the offender to address their problem area without the imposition of a special condition. If necessary, the condition may be requested by the parole staff and imposed by the NPB at any time.

To seriously look at reducing revocations and seeking alternatives to revocation to successfully reintegrate the offender, we need to ensure that the appropriate resources are in place to deal with these difficult situations/offenders. As public safety is key to our decision-making, we must ensure that our effort to work with the offender and deal with the situation in the community is continuing to provide the protection to the community. We need crisis intervention programs that can be accessed when a problem arises. Many times, an offender may continue to be managed in the community if we can immediately address the concerns that have made suspension a consideration. If this is available, the case may continue to be managed in the community and the need to seek a revocation decision would be lessened. In the absence of a special condition, we negate the requirement to seek a decision by the NPB whenever the offender has a slip and empower the staff to manage the offender.

## To reincarcerate or not...

The challenge for parole staff is to assess when the behaviour has reached a point in the community where the risk can no longer be managed and the only way to avoid further criminal behaviour is to suspend the offender's release. A recent national study on revocations revealed that of 140 cases reviewed, the revocation recommendation was made only after several breaches of a condition were dealt with and all alternatives to revocation had been exhausted.<sup>2</sup> But, was a crime about to be committed or had parole staff simply exhausted their tolerance to work with the offender's difficulties in adhering to a condition? Sometimes parole staff move toward suspension as they live in fear of an investigation into the management and supervision of a case that will be criticized for not taking more severe action for obvious breaches of conditions. This leads to the attitude that it is better to err on the side of caution. Many of correctional processes in place lead parole staff to recommend revocation.

## Availability of community options

If we are serious about working with offenders in the community, we need to develop the structure to manage the most difficult clients in the community at times when they are at risk. We need to have the availability of programs, residential space, detoxification facilities, halfway back measures and intensive supervision regimes that can assist an offender through a crisis in the community. The return to prison is not a long-term solution as this has often been a pattern that offenders have relied on for a lengthy period of their lives. It is the pain and effort to work through a crisis while maintaining community living that is a challenge for all community members and offenders in particular. This is where those who manage correctional services must ensure that appropriate resources are in place to deal with the crisis.

Programs such as intensive supervision can be applied to work more closely with those offenders who represent a risk to the community and expend the time and resources on dealing with the crisis situation and revising the supervision plan to deal with the crisis in the community. This leads to teaching the offender how to deal with a crisis in the community and may lead to the development of new skills to assist the offender in dealing with future difficulties.

To effectively deal with offenders in the community, we need to fully develop and monitor every offender's crime cycle. The development of the cycle does not end at intake. We need to focus the supervision of the offender while incarcerated on the further elaboration of the cycle. Once released to the community, the cycle must be the focus of supervision and we need to monitor and intervene when the events of the cycle

begin to reappear. To do this, the staff need to have an array of programs and services to immediately address the concern at hand. If the parole staff are constantly monitoring the offence cycle, through the various supervision practices (combination of office/employment/family interviews, contacts with program providers/therapists, collateral contacts with family/friends and other community individuals) they will be more likely to intervene at the appropriate time to avoid further criminal behaviour. The intervention, however, does not need to be immediate suspension in all cases, but may be an agreed upon change in circumstances or a revision in the plan for supervision. Community involvement with the offender to support attitudes and values reflective of law-abiding behaviour is also key to effective reintegration. The use of volunteers, community agencies and other community members to assist offenders with their reintegration is key to the development of an array of services available to assist in managing risk.

## Conclusion

The desire to reduce revocations is led by the desire to safely reintegrate the offender into the community and provide the offender with the necessary skills to deal with problematic situations without resorting to criminal behaviour. Processes that are built into correctional organizations often interfere with successful reintegration. The teaching of coping skills through cognitive behavioural programs and equipping parole staff with a variety of tools, skills, innovative techniques and autonomy to effectively monitor offenders in the community will result in more timely interventions and more successful reintegration measures. Overloading the offender with conditions does not allow the parole staff to be innovative in their supervision techniques.

We need to rely on our risk assessment processes and the professional judgement of staff. We need to ensure staff are trained and are confident in the decisions they make and are able to make sound, rational decisions based on risk principles.

The involvement of the community to a greater extent in assisting with reintegration and monitoring will strengthen our ability to deal with the offender in the community and lead to successful reintegration. To ensure the safety of our community, we need to make every effort to work with the offenders in the community to reach a point where they are integrated and have the tools to deal with problem situations without resorting to criminal activity. ■

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<sup>2</sup> Please see the *Revocation Study*, Institutional Reintegration Operations, Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada (1999).

# Offender reintegration monitoring tools

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**T**he Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is traversing through an era of change with respect to information management and the fundamental role it plays in the actualization of our strategic direction. This change has emerged as a direct result of increasing demand for more comprehensive and intuitive management information in line with corporate objectives and increased public safety. The Service is technologically positioning itself to promote excellence within the correctional agenda with the development of new, integrated data management tools that focus on the quality of our correctional performance.

**I**n recent management literature, corporate analysts have described the performing organization as the intelligent organization. The intelligent organization is a dynamic, evolving enterprise skilled at creating, organizing, and sharing knowledge. Such an organization is capable of effectively mobilizing various kinds of knowledge that exist within the corporate infrastructure to facilitate the realization of specific objectives. In other words, the most effective way to empower an organization is to create an environment conducive to knowledge sharing. However, data cannot be transformed into information and ultimately knowledge on its own.<sup>4</sup> In order to achieve this result, a dynamic information analysis process must be in place within the framework of the organization to produce an effective Decision Support System (DSS).

During the Throne Speech of 1997, the federal government of Canada committed to "...building safer communities," with an emphasis on the government's strategy to remedy information management shortcomings. While the responsibility to deliver on this promise is dispersed among several government departments, CSC is tasked with a significant portion of this mandate. This considered, the notion of increased safety and the "protection of society" has been an integral component of the Service guiding principles since the signing of the Mission Document in 1989.

The means by which CSC administers this mandate is through a systematic correctional agenda that includes comprehensive offender assessments, required treatment at the optimum time, dynamic

supervision and informed decision-making. During each phase of the correctional process, offenders' risk and deficit areas are continually assessed. Central to this procedure is the philosophy that effective risk management and risk reduction are the basis of good case management practices and good corrections and contribute to both violence prevention and increased public safety. This having been said, the quality of risk assessment is contingent upon the validity and appropriateness of the information used to determine risk factors. Through empirical validation and contextual analysis, risk assessments yield data elements which, when viewed collectively, form the very fabric of an effective correctional management information system.

In general terms, management information is aggregate data used to set, or assess progress toward, corporate objectives and is a useful tool in the determination of factors within the decision-making process. Through the collection of data, we obtain information; through the organization of information, we obtain knowledge; and through the assemblance of knowledge, we obtain direction. Management information is therefore key to informed decision-making, however the information must be derived from data that is consistent in definition, reliable in form and readily accessible.

## Current information systems/services

CSC has an extensive repository of offender-related data in electronic format, having begun implementation of the Offender Management System (OMS) in February 1991. This database was designed to capture a broad spectrum of offender-related data, such as sentence data; bio-demographical information; offence cycles; risk assessments; program/ treatment information; community supervision and decision information. In short, OMS comprises a wide variety of offender-related data that can be used to provide a range of criminogenic profiles.

Several other systems have been designed to extract OMS data, such as the Executive Information System/Corporate Reporting System (EIS/CRS), Criminal Justice Information Library (CJIL) and

Reports of Automated Data Applied to Reintegration (RADAR) were created to deal with the vast demand for provision of a DSS.

Each of these systems is specifically designed to provide information within the scope of their respective client groups, issues and concerns. Through the measurement of key process areas within the correctional agenda, these systems have provided a starting point for the information analysis process. In assessing the vital components of a process or processes, an organization is better equipped to detect strengths and weaknesses, identify meaningful trends and forecast probabilities. Such analysis provides essential management information and lends itself to a very effective DSS.

As a result, an increasing number of managers within CSC have acquired a functional understanding of offender-related data and the perspectives from which it can be viewed. Along with this increased level of understanding comes a higher expectation with respect to:

- having accurate information for informed decision-making;
- the ability to compare results in reflection of net change;
- the ability to monitor issues in response to mandated changes;
- developing a proactive focus where problems are identified, corrective actions implemented and performance monitored; and ultimately
- managing for results.

Notwithstanding the progress achieved thus far in the dissemination of management information, the stage has clearly been set for the development of an interactive online analytical processing tool that will promote a more effective DSS. The various systems now in place within the Service have played a key role in supporting compliance and in the realization of reintegration objectives. For example, the implementation of the RADAR system, which provides indications of key reintegration process timeliness, has resulted in more emphasis, and more success in these areas. Similarly, the EIS/CRS systems have enabled managers to monitor trends and develop insight into the dynamics of our correctional processes. We are now at a point where singular or uni-dimensional blocks of information within our organization may be assembled to provide a greater perspective than is currently available within our compliance and performance indicators. The next logical stage would see a

synthesis of existing data resources with an increased focus on quality and the fundamental components of “good corrections.”

### Next steps

Design work has begun on a Reintegration Lever Information Analysis System based on research. A preliminary analysis and design team was recently formed at the request of the Regional Deputy Commissioner, Atlantic region to investigate the feasibility of developing such a system. Other divisions within the Service have also expressed interest in contributing to the project (NHQ Reintegration, NHQ Performance Assurance, NHQ Operational Support, NHQ Criminal Justice Information Library, NHQ Correctional Programs and the National RADAR team).

Through collaboration, consultation and information sharing among the various divisions, the end result will be an analytical information tool applicable to an increased number of staff groups and interests.

The architectural design goals of this intranet-based quality measurement tool are as follows:

- User-friendly intranet-based technology with easy to use navigation (point and click);
- Graphical display (line/bar graphs, pie charts);
- Interactive pivot-style data sets;
- Consolidation of current and historical information, with links to supplemental tools (i.e., RADAR, CRS, policy, etc.);
- Multiple perspectives (tiered views), with drill-down functionality:

National view	(current/historical)
Regional view	(current/historical)
Site view	(current/historical)
Process-specific view	(current/historical)
Offender-specific view	(current)

Ideally, the product will incorporate a dynamic graphical interface with variable data schemes for optimal interpretation and analysis of information. The intent of this type of visual platform is to provide an easy to understand, intuitive view of correctional results within the context of the 16 key success areas identified by Dr. Motiuk.

### Conclusion

A review committee is being struck to explore the system development lifecycle for the Reintegration Lever concept within the framework of a functional

prototype. This will include a cost-benefit analysis, exploration of design and development issues and an ultimate culmination in recommendations to Correctional Service of Canada's senior managers and project stakeholders.

The Service has made considerable gains in the improvement of its internal processes, compliance toward law, policy and corporate mandate. As we move forward in this direction, the issue of improved "quality" in our business operations becomes the predominant factor. Awareness is the key component for achieving this level of functioning within our organization and is brought about through information sharing, increased knowledge and management direction. With the

effective use of information as knowledge, the Service will enter the new millennium with the necessary tools to enable us to more efficiently and safely realize our Mission. ■

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<sup>4</sup> A data element in isolation reflects little or no meaning. However, a data element in a specific context will yield something intelligible: information. This information can then be turned into something greater than its previous state through interpretation and analysis: or knowledge.

## Let's Talk

*Let's Talk* is a magazine published by the Communications and Consultation Sector of the Correctional Service of Canada.

*Let's Talk* welcomes letters to the editor, suggestions for articles and contributions from readers. Materials submitted may be edited for style and length. Please include your electronic mail address and a daytime telephone number. Address all correspondence to:

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# New directions in effective correctional treatment

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Treatment programs for incarcerated offenders have historically been designed to address a single treatment need (such as substance abuse, anger management). In such a discrete needs approach to correctional treatment, treatment needs are first identified through appropriate assessment techniques. Offenders are then encouraged to participate in as many treatment programs as necessary to address each of their treatment needs. Problems with this model are discussed and an alternative approach, called the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM), is presented. This model is designed to improve the provision of treatment in two ways. One improvement is to create more efficient treatment for both the offender and the institution. The integrated approach allows for multiple needs to be addressed within a single treatment program. The second improvement is to offer treatment more consistent with the principles of effective correctional treatment programming identified by Andrews.<sup>2</sup> In the integrated approach, the offender is assigned to a program based on factors such as the offender's risk to recidivate, the number and nature of his treatment needs, his motivation level, and his sentence length. This article focuses on risk and needs factors.

## Developments at Rideau Correctional and Treatment Centre (RCTC)

A large body of outcome/evaluation research over the past two decades has demonstrated that treatment programming for incarcerated offenders is effective in reducing recidivism.<sup>3</sup> Leaders in the field such as Andrews and Gendreau<sup>4</sup> then took this analysis one step further and attempted to answer the question "what works best?" They compared various therapeutic approaches used with offender populations and were able to identify eight characteristics that appeared to distinguish between the most effective and least effective programs. Andrews outlines these attributes which include advocating for the need for behavioural or cognitive-behavioural therapies, the importance of targeting appropriate criminogenic needs, the importance of matching treatment with appropriate offender risk levels, and the need for including relapse prevention components. Research also indicates that the most effective use of treatment resources is to assign fewer resources to lower risk/lower needs offenders and more resources to higher risk/higher needs offenders.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that offenders who are classified to RCTC are, on average, high risk/high need

individuals as classified by the Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI-OR).<sup>6</sup>

## Discrete needs model of program delivery

Several challenges face today's institutions in the delivery of programs guided by the empirical evidence of effective programming. Administrators faced with developing and planning programming are typically confronting groups of offenders who have different sentence lengths, varying risk levels, and a multiplicity of needs. Most offenders, in fact, present several needs, thereby requiring more than one treatment program. Discrete needs models of programming entail taking programs consecutively, often with changing group membership and program leaders, usually with some overlap of program content, and frequent delays while the offender waits for the recommended programs to begin. These factors also raise a plethora of institutional and practical issues such as inmate movement and management. Offender requests to accelerate or delay participation in programming before or after various hearings and requests for additional programming also accumulate. These issues tend to complicate the design and implementation of effective and efficient institution based correctional treatment.

## Integrated service delivery model (ISDM)

Treatment at Ontario's RCTC is seen as a two-step process; assessment and treatment are both integral parts of programming. Assessment is designed to differentiate offenders assigned to each program based on the offender's risk and needs. Offenders with a lower risk to recidivate, fewer needs, shorter sentences, and, perhaps, little motivation for treatment, are assigned to a less intense and shorter program (5-week program). Residents with a higher risk to recidivate, more treatment needs, and longer sentences, are assigned to more intense and longer programs (15-week program).

This new treatment model is more integrated in that:

- each program addresses the basic treatment needs (anger management, substance abuse, and criminal thinking/lifestyle);

- the same counsellors deliver all treatment to an individual offender;
- the offender remains with the same group of offenders throughout his treatment.

The model is more efficient in that:

- several needs are addressed in the same program such that duplication of material does not occur;
- the offender's start and termination dates are set before he enters treatment;
- there is no waiting list for further programming;
- the same group leaders remain with the offenders throughout programming, eliminating the transfer of information to new therapists.

### Resident movement and treatment

Residents who receive treatment normally progress in three steps through the institution. Classification personnel first interview the offender and those offenders who agree to participate in treatment are then moved to the Assessment Unit (AU). A psychological test battery assessing factors such as motivation, personality, social desirability, hostility, and attitudes towards criminal behaviour are administered, files are reviewed, case management and clinical interviews are conducted, and a Risk-Needs Assessment Report is prepared. The program that the offender is assigned to is a function of his risk/needs assessment and available time remaining in his sentence. Three primary criminogenic needs (criminal thinking, substance abuse, and anger management) have been identified as having significant contribution to criminal behaviour.<sup>7</sup> Residents who have more serious problems in the three treatment areas or who have additional treatment needs are assigned to the more intense and longer program.

Following assessment, the offender moves to the Treatment Centre. Each dormitory of the Treatment Centre functions as a program area in which clinical staff comprised of psychology and social work professionals are responsible for programming. They are also involved in daily institutional concerns. Correctional officers who function as case managers assist with discharge planning. The 5-week program involves approximately 100 hours of group counselling by the interdisciplinary team. Offenders are taught how to become aware of and recognize their thoughts and behaviours that promote problematic behaviours such as aggression and criminal behaviour with the emphasis on substance abuse. The 15-week program involves a minimum of 290 hours of group intervention. Treatment needs addressed include criminal thinking/behaviour, anger management, domestic violence, substance abuse and relapse prevention, and dysfunctional personal

relationships. Intensive small groups are provided for survivors of childhood sexual abuse, Adult Children of Alcoholics, and those confronting issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, grief management, life skills, and parenting. Individual counselling is also provided when the need arises.

Programs are cognitive-behavioural in nature in that an important part of programming is the identification of thinking that promotes anti-social, negative behaviour, such as, using drugs, committing crimes, or acting aggressively, and learning how to replace such beliefs with more positive, pro-social thinking. Skill acquisition is also emphasized and the programs share the same language. Treatment is primarily conducted in a group format where a variety of techniques are employed (discussion/exercises, work-books, role-playing, videos, mentoring, journals). Moreover, the treatment milieu provides an opportunity for offenders to practice skills acquired through programming. A final report summarizes each offender's progress in treatment and makes recommendations for future case management.

### Measuring treatment effectiveness

One hundred-twenty-eight offenders were selected for follow-up because they had completed programming and had been released for one year. Of this sample, 93 had completed the 5-week program and 35 had completed the 15-week program.

The average age of the offenders in the two treatment programs were not found to be different from one another. The groups, however, differed as expected on a number of demographic measures. Offenders with significantly more serious past offences and longer current sentences were assigned to the longer program. A significantly higher number of individuals who were multiple substance abusers, serious psychiatric disorders, and serious literacy difficulties were found in the 15-week program as compared to the 5-week program.

In differentiating between criminogenic risk and needs, this study used the overall LSI-OR score as the measure of criminogenic risk, while the subscales of the LSI-OR served as a broad measure of criminogenic needs. The majority of offenders in this sample fell in the high-risk range of the LSI-OR. The average score was 22.9. The average LSI-OR score in the 5-week program was 21.8, significantly lower than the offenders in the 15-week program who had an average LSI-OR of 25.8. Significant differences between the groups were found on the subscales measuring criminal history, family/marital issues, substance abuse, and antisocial patterns, indicating that the 15-week program participants had significantly more treatment needs.

The comparison group consisted of 79 offenders who were formally assessed through the AU and subsequently placed on a waiting list to receive programming. The offenders, however, were discharged before programming commenced and thus, form a Wait List comparison group. These men were provided standard intervention (assistance with discharge planning in order to connect them to available treatment services upon their release).

All offenders were followed for one year post-release by accessing information from the Offender Management System (OMS) of Ontario. Recidivism was measured by reconviction rates. For the offenders in the 15-week program, the reconviction rate was found to be 37.1% at one-year post-release. For the Wait List comparison group, the reconviction rate was 62% at one year post-release. Despite no significant difference between the 15-week and Wait List comparison group on criminogenic risk as assessed by the LSI, reconviction rates were significantly different from one another.

In order to compare the 5-week program participants and the Wait List control group, 17 subjects with very high scores on the LSI-OR were dropped from the analyses leaving a subset of 62 offenders as the comparison group. This subset had a one year reconviction rate of 59.7% which was found to be significantly higher than the 5-week program participants who were reconvicted at a rate of 30.1%. There were no significant differences noted between these groups on the LSI.

Finally, reconviction rates of the two treatment groups were not statistically different from one another. One-year reconviction rates for all groups are portrayed in Figure 1.

## Conclusion

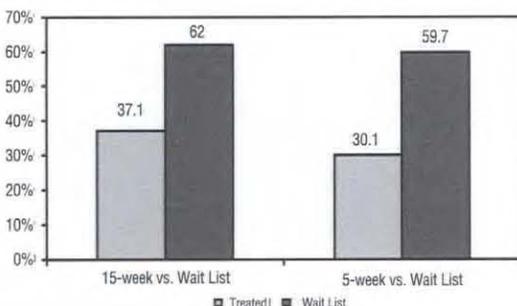
Program evaluation results suggest that the treatment model used at RCTC is an effective and efficient mode of treatment programming for incarcerated offenders. It was possible to differentiate offenders for participation in the 5-week and 15-week program based on their risk to recidivate and their treatment needs. Higher risk/higher needs offenders were assigned to a higher intensity program while lower risk/lower needs offenders were assigned to a less intense and shorter program. In addition, the developments in the service delivery method allowed an increase in the number of offenders completing treatment from 226 to 334 per year indicating a more efficient means of treating offenders.

Results demonstrate that significant differences in reconviction were obtained between treated offenders and the comparison group. Treated offenders had significantly lower recidivism when compared to the untreated comparison group. Results also illustrate that reductions in the reconviction rate for the higher and lower risk/needs groups were comparable. The two groups were found to have different risk and needs levels prior to entering treatment. Participation in either of the appropriate treatment program led to findings that indicate both treatment groups demonstrated significant and similar reductions in reconviction rates relative to their counterparts who served in the comparison group. Thus, results illustrate that correctional treatment derived from empirical findings is an effective and efficient means of reducing recidivism. ■

Figure 1

### Differences in Survival Time between Detained and Non-Detained Offenders for General Recidivism

One year reconviction rates for the 15-week and 5-week program participants compared to the Wait List group



- 4707 Donnelly Drive, Merrickville, Ontario K0G 1N0. The authors must also acknowledge the help of K. Ricciuti, E. Yates, S. Boudreau, J. Finn, B. Goguen, K. Morton, E. Rivera, O. Simonyi, K. McFarlane, V. Mowat-Leger, L. Robertson, & C. Holmes.
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# Group versus individual treatment of sex offenders: A comparison

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Some authors have argued that group treatment is a more effective treatment modality than individual treatment. However, this may be a matter of confusing cost and time effectiveness with treatment efficacy. Further scrutiny reveals there are still unanswered questions with reference to treatment efficacy. This study examined the efficacy of the Regional Treatment Centre (Ontario) Sex Offender Program (RTCSOP), which consisted of group plus individual therapy (i.e., full treatment program), versus individual therapy alone (i.e., individual treatment program). The treated sample included high-risk/high-needs sex offenders. The relative efficacy of group versus individual treatment of sex offenders was assessed.

## Participants

All offenders who participated in this study were referred to the RTCSOP for assessment or treatment and completed treatment in the period between January 1, 1989 and January 1, 1996. The individuals selected represented consecutive admissions to either the RTCSOP full treatment program or the individual treatment program. The full treatment program was only offered to sexual offenders or offenders for whom there was a sexual component to their crimes. Furthermore, the target group for the full treatment program were those sexual offenders identified as being a high risk to re-offend, who also presented with high treatment needs, or both. In total, 205 offenders were considered to meet the criteria for the RTCSOP. One hundred forty-three sex offenders were treated in the full treatment program during the period of this study. Those participants were compared with a group of 62 sex offenders who were provided the individual treatment program. Those individuals who were not considered appropriate referrals for the group therapy modality were screened into the individual treatment program. Reasons for offenders being considered more appropriate for individual therapy included, for example, their having more cognitive impairments (low cognitive functioning), psychiatric based difficulties (psychosis), or difficulties with daily living skills. For individuals involved in both treatment programs, the index offence referred to the offence for which the offender was referred to treatment.

## Background

The RTCSOP is the oldest continuously run sexual offender treatment program offered by the Correctional Service of Canada. From its inception in 1973, Dr. W.L. Marshall and Dr. S. M. Williams designed the program for offenders deemed to be at high risk for sexual recidivism or who presented with significant treatment needs or both. Rather than treat offenders for an extended period of time it was felt from the outset that a time-limited treatment program of relatively short duration would be the preferable mode of treatment delivery. Given the available resources it was felt that providing a larger group of offenders with treatment made more sense than providing in-depth treatment to a small number of clients.<sup>2</sup>

There are three primary components to the RTCSOP program: group therapy, individual therapy, and milieu therapy. The program meets the basic requirement of being sensitive to a client's level of treatment responsivity. Andrews and Bonta<sup>3</sup> first described the responsivity principle as "delivering treatment programs in a style and mode that is consistent with the ability and learning style of the offender." As demonstrated by recent outcome study which have focussed on the RTCSOP, this philosophy and approach to treating sex offenders has met with some success. Abracen, Looman, and Nicholaichuk found a greater than 2:1 ratio (51.7% vs. 23.6%) with regards to sexual recidivism between untreated and treated sexual offenders, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

## Treatment approaches

### Full treatment program

All clients attended two groups a week related to victim empathy and self-management. Clients also attended two groups per week run by nursing staff (which included a human sexuality component). The social skills groups related to a variety of issues frequently encountered with high-risk/high-need forensic clients. For example, modules dealing with communication skills, assertiveness, anger

management and problem solving were included. With regards to victim empathy, clients discussed the impact of sexual assault upon victims. Sessions related to relapse prevention were also included as a core component of the program. These sessions included discussions on high-risk situations, lifestyle balancing and the development of relapse prevention plans.

All clients in the full treatment program attended two individual sessions a week with a psychologist and one individual therapy session with a nurse. Each of the individual sessions lasted approximately one hour. Individual sessions with nursing staff were scheduled on an as needed basis. The content of individual sessions varied. With lower functioning clients (cognitive impairment), a number of individual sessions may have been dedicated to discussing material presented in group and clarifying any issues about which the client was confused. The approach was most often on a concrete level except when dealing with higher functioning clients. In other cases, clients may have needed to confront issues associated with minimization and denial in more detail than could be discussed in group. In other circumstances, a number of sessions may have been dedicated to the discussion of thoughts and behaviours related to institutional maladjustment (impulsive or manipulative behaviours). This last issue was particularly true for individuals who met the criteria for psychopathy as measured by the Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised.<sup>5</sup> Finally, all clients attending the full treatment program were provided the benefits associated with living in a therapeutic milieu.

#### *Individual treatment program*

Clients assigned to the individual treatment program were provided three individual session a week with a psychologist and one hour of individual treatment with a nurse. Each session lasted approximately one hour in length. Many of the same issues presented in the full treatment program were discussed with the individual treatment clients. However, with low functioning clients the material may have been presented in a more leisurely and concrete fashion. Typically, all the information presented in the full treatment program was not discussed with the individual treatment clients. Nonetheless, basic information related to relationship skills and the self-management component of the full treatment program was typically presented to individual treatment clients. Further, all clients attending the individual treatment program were provided the benefits associated with milieu therapy as they were housed in the same living unit as those individuals who attended the full treatment program.

#### *Milieu therapy*

The residential nature of the program was considered to be an integral part of the treatment approach. In addition to the full and individual treatment components, nursing staff spend at least two hours per shift on the unit. Interactions with clients were either formal or informal. Aside from reinforcing the behaviours discussed in-group or individual therapy, nursing staff were able to monitor the behaviour of clients when the clients were not engaged in therapy. Any inconsistencies between what clients said regarding their behaviour in-group or individual sessions and their actual behaviour on the unit were discussed.

#### *Program evolution*

As might be expected the RTC SOP has undergone a series of changes since its inception. One of the most significant changes to the program occurred in 1989 with the formal introduction of Relapse Prevention training. Previous to that, specific treatment techniques aimed at empathy enhancement were added in 1986, and the length of the program has changed over time. At the time the study was conducted, the program lasted approximately 5 to 6 months, with clients receiving approximately 8 hours of group therapy and three hours of individual therapy per week.

#### *Procedure*

The participants screened as candidates for the two treatment groups were compared with reference to sexual offence category. Participants were coded, based on their sexual offending histories, as rapists (victim 16 years or older), paedophiles (victims 12 years or younger), hebephiles (victims 13-15 years of age), and incest offenders. Offender categories were established for all 143 of the men in the full treatment program and 59 of the 62 men in the individual treatment program. Treatment files were used to classify offenders in this study. Of those offenders for whom offence specific information could be located, 57.3% of the full treatment sample and 52.5% of the individual treatment sample offended against adults. The remaining participants offended against children or adolescents. More specifically, 11.2% of the full treatment sample and 15.3% of the individual treatment sample were coded as paedophiles (victims aged 12 years or younger). In addition, 10.5% of the full treatment sample and 15.3% of the individual treatment sample were coded as hebephiles (victims aged 13-15 years). Finally, 21.0% of the full treatment sample and 16.9% of the individual treatment sample were coded as incest offenders. None of the differences between groups reached acceptable levels of significance.

## Results

### Matching variables

Analyses were conducted to determine similarities between the two samples of participants, those in the full treatment program and the individual treatment program. Results indicated that participants in the full treatment program and individual treatment program did not significantly differ on most of the pre-treatment variables. Categories of specific interest that were investigated included: age at first conviction, age at index offence, pre-treatment number of sexual offences, and subsequent age at time of release following treatment at the RTC SOP (see Table 1). The two groups were not found to significantly differ on any of the pre-treatment variables.

### Treatment outcome

Follow-up analyses were performed among those sex offenders released to the community. For the purpose of the present analysis all offences not classified as sexual according to the *Criminal Code* of Canada were grouped under the heading of non-sexual offences and thus not considered relevant for our analyses. The follow-up periods were  $M = 5.05$  ( $SD = 2.23$ ) for the participants in the full treatment program and  $M = 6.98$  ( $SD = 1.90$ ) for those participants in the individual treatment program. This difference, that is, the number of years before follow-up was completed with each treatment group, was considered significant,  $t(203) = -5.95$ ,  $p < .001$ . In order to control for the differing periods of follow-up, a survival analysis was conducted. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in the rates of recidivism for the two groups, Wilcoxin(1) = 2.67, ns. At follow-up, no difference was found between the full treatment program and the individual treatment program when they were compared in terms of number of individuals who recidivated versus those who did not recidivate following post-treatment release,  $\chi^2(1, N = 205) = 0.70$ , ns. Of those individuals who had been in the full treatment program ( $N = 143$ ), 21 (14.7%) were convicted of a new sexual offence, while 12 (19.4%) of those individuals who had been participants in the individual treatment program ( $N = 62$ ) were convicted of a new sexual offence.

## Discussion

Researchers continue to debate whether or not sex offenders benefit from treatment aimed at reducing rates of sexual recidivism. Moving beyond this debate, more specific and pointed issues come to light. One such issue is that of treatment modality

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics	Pre-treatment demographic characteristics						
	Full treatment			Individual treatment			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>
Age at first conviction	20.67	6.45	143	22.94	10.46	62	-1.90
Age at index offence	31.18	7.84	143	33.15	9.49	62	-1.55
Pre-treatment number of sexual offences	1.46	.86	143	1.45	1.21	62	+0.07
Age at time of release	34.48	8.02	143	36.97	9.48	62	-1.93

efficacy. Specifically, this study addressed the relative efficacy of group therapy versus individual therapy in treating and subsequently reducing the risk of sexual recidivism among high-risk/high-needs sex offenders. The current research attempted to assist in clarifying this issue by providing treatment to a group of high-risk/high-need sex offenders in the form of a full treatment program (group plus individual therapy) and an individual treatment program (individual therapy alone). It is, perhaps surprising that no difference in the effectiveness of either the full treatment program or the individual treatment program in reducing rates of sexual recidivism was noted to exist when the treated sample was comprised of high-risk/high-need sex offenders.

Of interest, was the fact that no significant differences in rates of sexual recidivism between the full treatment and individual treatment approaches emerged even though the intensity of the treatments provided to the samples was dramatically different. Overall, clients in the individual treatment program sample received less total treatment (direct contact hours) than did those clients in the full treatment program. The rationale for the discrepancy in the provision of treatment hours was that the level of functioning of clients in individual therapy was such that they could not participate in the full treatment program. For example, such clients may have been more psychiatric, low functioning, or more likely to misinterpret social cues. It may be hypothesized that changes in both groups of offenders resulted from increases in feelings of self-efficacy derived from participation in treatment, regardless of modality. Self-efficacy is believed to arise in clients when they perceive an effective and realistic change strategy to be available and that they are capable of carrying it out.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, more work needs to be conducted in this area before any definite conclusions can be made.

## Implications

Group therapy is typically regarded as more convenient and cost-effective while individual therapy is viewed as more idiosyncratic though it does provide clients with increased levels of confidentiality. One possible implication of the present findings for researchers and practitioners is that rather than endeavour to champion one treatment modality over the other, it may be that more specific recommendations for client treatment modality should be sought. For example, the full treatment program might be better designated for those sex offenders who are of a high-risk/high-need nature but lack the additional burden of cognitive difficulties, social skills deficits or psychiatric problems. In much the same fashion, individual therapy can be reserved for those sex offenders who in addition to being high-risk/high-need have some form of cognitive impairment, social skills deficits, or psychiatric history. Of note, is the fact that decisions such as those described above would include accounting for whether the clients in the individual therapy program are equally high risk as the full treatment clients.

For sex offenders who are cognitively impaired part of the treatment strategy might be to reduce the complexity of the treatment package. One approach might involve reducing the complexity of such an individual's relapse prevention plan. Relapse prevention is aimed at having offenders identify those behaviours, thoughts, and feelings which suggest an increased likelihood that they will re-offend in a sexual fashion. As such, the ultimate goal of a relapse prevention plan is to help reinforce the maintenance of positive behaviour change with sexual offenders. Eccles and Marshall<sup>7</sup> recognized a

divergence in the amount of material some clients are capable of handling. Rather than striving for an unrealistic objective, they proposed instead aiming for simplicity. In this vein, possibilities include options such as reducing the jargon involved in the relapse prevention plan, defining warning signs in a more specific and concrete fashion (for example, avoid the local shopping mall), and not conveying to offenders the belief that their plan must attempt to encompass all possible future events. Ultimately, they advocate instilling within offenders a more generic problem-solving approach. Early data would suggest that less time spent on developing relapse prevention plans may not prove deleterious to rates of recidivism among sex offenders.<sup>8</sup> As such, sessions otherwise spent can subsequently be restructured to meet an individual's or a group's idiosyncratic needs. For example, therapists may choose to focus, to a greater degree, on such topics as enhancing intimacy and relationship skills.

Ultimately, as therapists we should be more concerned with benefit to clients. Some high-risk/high-need clients may indeed be sufficiently well served by a full treatment program. Nevertheless, with some clients individual therapy may be more effective. If indeed individual therapy is the more efficacious of the two approaches, among high-risk or at least high-need sex offenders who have additional difficulties, then rather than denying the procedure to clients we should look "to lower the financial burden of treatment by individualizing and lowering fees, adopting long-term payment plans, seeking government and agency contracts to reduce costs, and lobbying for improved third-party coverage for sexual offender treatment."<sup>9</sup> ■

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