



REENTRY
A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS!

Council on Offender Reentry Meeting
12/06/17 1:30pm-3:30pm
3099 E. Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53707

Call to Order:

Silvia Jackson called to order the quarterly meeting of the Council on Offender Reentry at 1:32 pm on December 6, 2017.

Member attendees:

Attendees included Silvia Jackson, Chuck Brendel, Chytania Brown, Jerome Dillard, Karley Downing, Dashal Young, Michael Knetzger, Constance Kostelac, Jon Nejedlo, Antwayne Robertson, Honorable Stephanie Rothstein, Carolyn Stanford-Taylor and Robert Koebele.

Members not in attendance:

Members not in attendance included Karen Cumblad, Beth Dodsworth, Steven Landreman, Angela Mancuso, Sue Opper, Ann Perry and Paul Rifelj.

Guests:

Guests included Secretary Jon Litscher, Mary Davies and Jeanie Verschay.

Secretary Jon Litscher addressed the group, thanking them for their work with the committee and their roles in work with offenders.

Review and approval of minutes:

The minutes for September were approved without discussion at 1:33 pm.

Introduction to Council Members: Jerome Dillard and Michael Knetzger

Jerome Dillard Statewide Director EXPO (Ex-Prisoner Organizing) has been on the committee since 2008. Jerome is a strong believer in Peer Support and individuals with lived experience supporting other individuals. He works hard at building support networks throughout the state.

Michael Knetzger is an Academic Instructor at Northwest Technical College-Green Bay, and has provided instruction for a number of colleges. He is also a 25 year veteran in Law Enforcement.

Principles of Effective Intervention #5: Increase Positive Reinforcement
Use of COMPAS and How it Elicits Strengths and Rewards

Erin Thorvaldson, Evidence Based Program Manager, Department of Corrections, Reentry

Erin gave an overview of the previously covered Principles of Effective Intervention. With respect to this 5th principle, research reflects that when human beings are learning new skills and making behavioral changes, they respond better and maintain learned behaviors for longer periods of time, when approached with rewards rather than sanctions. While accountability is necessary, research shows that increasing rewards for positive behavior is effective for behavior change. Behaviorists recommend applying a much higher ratio of positive reinforcements to negative reinforcements in order to better achieve sustained behavioral change. While rewards are most effective when delivered immediately after the positive behavior occurs, rewards do not have to be applied consistently to be effective (as negative reinforcement does) but can be applied randomly. Research indicates that a ratio of *four positive to every one negative* reinforcement is optimal for promoting behavior changes.

Research suggests using a graduated system of rewards and sanctions, whereby a more complex positive behavior change should result in a larger reward. For rewards to be most effective and meaningful, they should be varied and personalized to the individual whenever possible. Lower level rewards include verbal praise or a token or point system, as well as certificates of completion. The DOC has encouraged community providers to use tokens or point systems to help offenders see they are earning rewards, which serves to reinforce their positive progress. A graduation ceremony can be a great reward for many offenders.

COMPAS is more than just risk and needs assessment tools. COMPAS is a comprehensive case management and case planning program. The results of the risk/needs assessment are pulled into a Bar Chart (shown to the group), which highlights the criminogenic needs that may be responsible for driving the offender's criminal behavior and risk to re-offend. To address these needs, the agent and offender create a Case Plan, which includes various goals, tasks and activities to help the offender achieve positive behavior change. COMPAS also has a built-in module called "Behaviors and Rewards", which is a four level, graduated behavior-reward system (shown to the group). For example, Level 1 positive behavior will receive a Level 1 reward, and so on.

Evidence Based Response to Violations and how it includes rewards

Gena Jarr, Regional Chief, DCC Region 5

Gena gave an overview as to how DOC became involved with Evidence Based Principles. We focused on Four Core Competencies: professional alliance/engagement with offenders, effective case planning and management, practice skills/cognitive interventions with offenders, and effective responses to behaviors. With criminogenic needs, we identify what is driving the criminal behavior, while considering the skills deficits that inhibit the offender from moving forward in a successful way. Evidence-based interventions go hand in hand with skill building so it becomes second nature. When responding to behaviors, we have to have an intentional approach to respond positively as well as responding appropriately to negative behavior. It is much more important to focus on the positive behaviors. We used to have more of a weighted focus, and the idea of responding harshly to bad behavior to stop it. Research shows it is more important to respond to the positive behavior. Despite violations, small, positive baby steps can still be going on. Plan for success by using evidence based supervision strategies, which also includes effectively responding to non-compliant behavior.

Dashal Young asked about the importance of accessing resources. Agents have a dual role: protect the public by holding offenders accountable, and rehabilitate the offender by incorporating effective supervision strategies to increase the likelihood of their success. Having access to all available resources is critical to offender success.

Gena introduced the principles of Evidence-Based Response to Violations (EBRV). These principles are: swiftness, certainty, consistency, neutrality, parsimony & proportionality, risk/need principle. When considering behavior change in relation to risk reduction, research shows the following:

- Incarceration does not change behavior
- Graduated sanctions has not been demonstrated to change behavior
- Supervision without effective interventions does not change behavior
- Severity of penalty does not change behavior.

On the other hand, research clearly shows that adhering to the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Principle when incorporating effective intervention strategies, will result in a reduction in recidivism rates.

Dr. Jackson asked Gena to explain the term “responsivity”. Responsivity factors are individual factors such as personality, gender, motivation, lack of transportation, intelligence level, language barrier, mental health, etc., that may impede the individual from being successful. Therefore, we work with the offender to either remove or work with these impediments, in order to improve their chances at success. When we are looking at changing behavior we want to focus on strategies that extinguish and change the behavior. In the past we focused on the sanction. We didn’t know what we know now – that it is most important to do an intervention coupled with a sanction response.

Components of structured Evidence Based Response to Violations decision making policies/tools are anchored in risk assessment, defined and scaled violations, defined and scaled response options and defined aggravating and mitigating factors. Accountability in the past equaled jail. We have a lot more options than just jail today in DCC. Jail is an external accountability. Cognitive Behavioral Interventions is intrinsic accountability. Probationers/Parolees will not be on supervision forever. They need to build internal capacity to respond differently. Violations are an uncensored view of an offender’s real world. We view violations as opportunities to understand them better and address issues before they repeat or escalate. Violations are most often associated with a risk behavior.

Determination of Response Level Matrix was shown as the methodology used - and later built into COMPAS - to guide decision-making when responding to violations. First they had to decide how they were going to view violations. A complete list was created, putting them in low, medium, high, very high response that regions throughout the state could agree on. First severity of the violation is determined, and then the person’s risk level is considered. The matrix guides them to a recommended response. They also consider overall positive adjustment, prior violations, prior responses, other relevant factors, other mitigating/aggravating factors. A two fold response includes accountability as well as a

treatment/intervention tied to the underlying criminogenic need and skill deficit. DOC contracted programs are required to provide the offender population with evidence-based treatment/programming.

Jerome Dillard asked about the average caseload: It depends on the type of caseload (sex offender, mentally ill/NGI, Domestic Violence, OWI, sex offenders, etc.). However, generally speaking, the higher the risk, the lower the caseload and vice versa. Also, caseloads vary depending on the geographical area, but an average caseload may be 90 offenders.

Mike Knetzger stated that in the past a “No Drink” rule violation would have resulted in a jail hold, but today he noticed that these violations don’t result in jail holds. He notices that it is more collaborative and offenders look differently at police officers now, compared to the past, when they embrace this type of philosophy.

Carolyn Stanford-Taylor stated that through an educator’s lens there are many parallels as to how one in K-12 schools react to students, especially those with trauma. They are working to have alternatives and are not just punitive.

The Honorable Stephanie Rothstein stated that Milwaukee has been an early implementer of Evidence-Based Principles. They are conducting many more court review hearings, which is a more collaborative process between the offender, the agent and the judge. This allows the judges to be more involved in the offender’s supervision than in previous times.

Drug Abuse Correctional Center, Behavior Modification Program

Alison Nebl

In 2013 a Corrections Program Checklist was completed by the University of Cincinnati to review how their program lined up with Evidence Based Standards. The review showed room for improvement. Staff came together to brainstorm ideas and to develop a rewards-based behavior modification program. The purpose of the behavior modification program is to manage the behavior of inmates in programming, increase skillful and wanted behavior, shape inmates’ behavior, decrease anti-social behavior, and decrease behaviors that interfere with treatment.

Alison gave a recent example of some inmates who were not yet in active treatment, but were waiting for their program to start. Often these inmates aren’t motivated to keep their cells clean. Alison told the inmates that if they got their area cleaned and kept it clean for one week, they would receive a reward. The inmates worked hard and had the best looking unit. Rewards have helped promote pro-social behaviors in a lot of ways.

Initially some staff were resistive to rewarding inmates. They found a study that University of Vermont did in 2006. The study included three groups of offenders. One group received Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, a second group received Cognitive Behavioral Therapy + Vouchers, and the third group received only Vouchers. They were followed for one year. The category that was most effective was the

group that had Cognitive Behavioral Therapy + Vouchers. The findings showed that people like free things and getting pats on the back.

Examples of pro-social behavior include: 4:1 praise, behavior incentive points, monthly incentive, and certificate recognition. We want to give praise immediately. Anytime they recognize a pro-social behavior, they get an incentive point to use in the incentive store. For example, an inmate may show up late repeatedly, but he finally shows up on time. For this particular inmate, he might get an incentive point for showing up on time. Another example may be an inmate who is having trouble opening up in group, but decides one day to share during a group session. To reward this behavior, this inmate may also be given an incentive point. Both treatment staff and security staff can give incentive points.

Community Application of Positive Reinforcement

Tiffany Minguay and Amanda Nelson, Rock County Drug Court

Tiffany and Amanda shared how they use positive reinforcement/incentives in the court process and then in the treatment setting. The Judge's interaction is very important to the client. The Judge's goal is to provide incentives 4:1. Treatment progress is recognized in court. Examples of incentives used include: raffle drawings, group recognition, special recognition by the Judge, and gift cards. In treatment they try to provide positive reinforcement as they are exhibiting positive behaviors. Finding personal incentives are also important such as playing basketball, taking a nature walk, mindfulness activities, therapy in the community, treatment, office recognition board for new employment, graduation and All-Star recognition. Silvia Jackson said this appears to be very comprehensive, and asked if this approach is a model for drug courts in WI. They do follow best practices, and they have attended the Wisconsin and national conference. She isn't sure if other programs are doing the same exact thing. The Honorable Stephanie Rothstein stated their court operates in a similar fashion. Family drug treatment court operates in a similar fashion.

Closing:

The Council set the next meeting for March 8, 2017 in Milwaukee to be hosted by DCF.

Adjourned at 3:30 pm.