Improving Job Readiness and Retention for Higher Risk Populations

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Speakers

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• **Delivers** technical assistance (TA) and training for Second Chance Act grantees
• **Advances** the knowledge base of the reentry field
• **Promotes** what works in reentry and successes of grantees
• **Facilitates** peer networks and information exchange
• **Provides** information for people returning to communities and their families
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National Criminal Justice Initiatives Map

Directories for State and Local Reentry Services

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Agenda

- Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
- Assessing the service capacity of employment programs
- Integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions in employment programs
Correctional systems across the country are managing large populations

- 1 in 38 adults are under correctional control
- 95% of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released
- 68% will be rearrested within 3 years
- 5 of 6 will be rearrested within 9 years
Having a felony conviction and/or having been in prison can make people less employable.²

- Skill deterioration*
- Lack of access to pro-social networks*
- Employer bias
- Legal barriers to employment

* For people who spent time in prison
Research on the intersection of reentry and employment

Simply connecting someone to a job has not been shown to reduce recidivism.

- Address underlying needs related to recidivism
  Not every person with a criminal record needs the same interventions.

- Assess level of job readiness and likelihood of recidivism
  People who are higher risk require cognitive-behavioral interventions, while those services can be detrimental to people who are lower risk.

- Match people to interventions based on assessment results
Risk-needs-responsivity (RNR) model as a guide to best practice

Risk Principle: *Match the intensity* of a person’s intervention to their risk of reoffending.

Needs Principle: *Target criminogenic needs*, such as antisocial behavior, substance abuse, antisocial attitudes, and antisocial peers.

Responsivity Principle: *Tailor the intervention* to the learning style, motivation, culture, demographics, and abilities of the individual. Address issues that impact responsivity.
## Major risk/need factors associated with committing future crimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Presence of Antisocial Behavior</td>
<td>Build alternative behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Antisocial Personality Pattern</td>
<td>Problem solving skills, anger management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Antisocial Cognition</td>
<td>Develop less risky thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Antisocial Associates</td>
<td>Reduce association with criminal others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family and/or Marital Stressors</td>
<td>Reduce conflict, build positive relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Low Levels of Performance and Satisfaction in Work or School</td>
<td>Enhance performance, rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lack of Prosocial Leisure Activities</td>
<td>Enhance outside involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Reduce use through integrated treatment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common barriers associated with people who are hard to employ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family, Logistical, and Legal Challenges</th>
<th>Education and Skills Gap</th>
<th>Needs Related to Responsiveness of Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for child care</td>
<td>Low education level</td>
<td>Mental illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-conflict family situation*</td>
<td>Lack of occupation skills</td>
<td>Substance addiction*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation problems</td>
<td>Limited work experience</td>
<td>Learning disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of stable housing</td>
<td>Lack of “soft” job skills*</td>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal barriers to employment</td>
<td>Gaps in work experience</td>
<td>Negative attitudes about work*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor physical health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Areas highlighted are also factors associated with committing future crime
Why should workforce development professionals care about risk factors?

The “Big 4” risk factors affect one’s ability to succeed in the labor market.

- Negative attitudes on the job
- Unrealistic expectations about work
- Lack of self-control/self-regulation
- Poor problem-solving or coping skills

Less likely to secure/maintain employed
Takeaway: you need to address the top 4 risk factors to see improvements in employment outcomes.
Why should correction/reentry professionals care about employability?

People with steady employment and earnings above minimum wage:

- Engage in more pro-social activities
- Engage in fewer risky activities
- Generate income for family which creates:
  - Stronger positive relationships
  - Improved mental health
  - Enhanced self-esteem

Less likely to reoffend
The value of an integrated approach

Reducing Criminogenic Risk
by addressing antisocial attitudes and behaviors

• Better attitude on the job
• Greater valuation of work
• Conflict resolution skills
• Problem-solving skills

Improving Employment Outcomes
through workforce development strategies

• Structured time
• Ability to support family
• Prosocial associates
• Job and income stability
Polling question: What is the most significant barrier to employment facing your clients?

(A) Limited work experience
(B) Legal barriers to employment
(C) Lack of occupational skills
(D) Lack of “soft job skills”
(E) Negative attitudes about work
Agenda

- Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
- **Assessing the service capacity of employment programs**
- Integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions in employment programs
Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) Framework

The framework bridges and integrates best practices from the corrections, reentry, and workforce development fields.
Resource-Allocation and Service Matching Tool

Step 1: Assess Risk & Needs

Low or Lower Risk

Risk and Needs Assessment with objective, validated tool

Moderate/High or Higher Risk

Step 2: Assess Job Readiness

Lower Risk/More Ready (Group 1)

Lower Risk/Less Ready (Group 2)

Higher Risk/More Ready (Group 3)

Higher Risk/Less Ready (Group 4)

Step 3: Deliver Targeted Services

Integrated Risk and Job-Readiness Packages

Group 1 Employment Program Components

Group 2 Employment Program Components

Less Intensive Application of Service-Delivery Principles for Groups 1 and 2

Integrated Risk and Job-Readiness Packages

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions

Group 3 Employment Program Components

Group 4 Employment Program Components

More Intensive Application of Service-Delivery Principles for Groups 3 and 4
Self-Assessment for Employment-Focused Reentry Programs checklist

Assesses the extent to which programs are adopting best practices from the *workforce development field* that are shown to improve outcomes for hard-to-employ populations

Evaluates programs’ use of service-delivery principles from the *corrections/reentry field* that have shown to reduce recidivism in cost-effective ways

Program components to promote job readiness for people less ready for employment (What to do)

- Education that leads to credentialing
- Training programs that focus on employment sector needs
- Soft skill interventions that utilize cognitive-behavioral, social learning approaches
- Transitional job placements that provide coaching and teach workplace behavior
- Supportive services to address non-skill-related barriers to employment
Program components to assist job finding/retention for people who are more ready for employment *(What to do)*

- Non-transitional, subsidized employment opportunities with training and supports
- Ongoing job coaching and job search guidance
- Work with local employers to identify job openings
- Job placement services
- Participant and employer-facing retention and advancement services
- Financial work incentives to encourage job retention and advancement
Assessing employment program components capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention and advancement services (employer-facing) to mediate workplace issues, facilitate opportunities for advancement, and provide on-site support</th>
<th>No retention or advancement services are available to employers.</th>
<th>Retention and advancement services are mostly reactive (i.e., when an employer seeks support).</th>
<th>Retention and advancement services are proactive and include strong employer-program staff relationships and coordination to identify growth opportunities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial work incentives to encourage job retention and advancement</td>
<td>No financial work incentives are available.</td>
<td>Financial work incentives are offered for job acquisition.</td>
<td>Financial work incentives are offered for job acquisition, as well as on an ongoing basis to recognize retention milestones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each statement selected in the “A” column, add 1 point. For each statement selected in the “B” column, add 2 points. For each statement selected in the “C” column, add 3 points.

**TOTAL SCORE:**

Based on your score above, determine the current degree to which your program is providing job-retention and advancement services:
7-8 points = not providing job retention and advancement services
9-16 points = providing some job retention and advancement services
17-21 points = providing robust job retention and advancement services
Employment service-delivery principles to reduce recidivism *(How to do it)*

**Engagement**

Address antisocial thinking and behavior through positive, high-impact staff-participant interactions (e.g., mentoring relationships or cognitive-behavioral interventions).

**Timing**

Provide services shortly before or immediately upon release, or at the start of community supervision to address participants’ immediate needs and adapt the services to the person’s changing needs over time.
Employment service-delivery principles to reduce recidivism *(How to do it)*

**Incentives**

Increase motivation for positive change and improve job performance with measures such as stipends for maintaining employment and peer-supported recognition for program completion.

**Coordination**

Collaborate with corrections, workforce development, and reentry professionals as well as other service providers to ensure that interventions are provided in a way that supports recidivism reduction and employment goals.

**Structured Time**

Organize individuals’ time with effective programming and positive activities to minimize opportunities for criminal actions and time with antisocial peers.
## Assessing service delivery capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured programming in planned, prosocial activities</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Between one and three hours per week of structured programming is available. If more hours of structured programming are available, participation is voluntary.</td>
<td>☐ Between four and six hours per week of structured programming is available, and participation is required.</td>
<td>☐ More than six hours per week of structured programming is available, and participation is required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programs are not available.</td>
<td>☐ Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programs are offered and span between 1 and 20 hours per week.</td>
<td>☐ Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programs are offered and span between 20 and 40 hours per week.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each statement selected in the “A” column, add 1 point. For each statement selected in the “B” column, add 2 points. For each statement selected in the “C” column, add 3 points.

**TOTAL SCORE:________________**

Based on your score above, determine which criminogenic risk and need grouping(s) your program is most appropriate to serve based on the amount of structured time available to participants:
- 2 points = structured time of services is most appropriate for low-risk participants
- 3-4 points = structured time of services is most appropriate for low- or moderate-risk participants
- 5-6 points = structured time of services is most appropriate for high-risk participants
Building service capacity

- Increase knowledge of effective practices for reducing recidivism and improving work outcomes
- Align employment services with effective practices
- Develop differentiated service tracks based on a participant’s level of job readiness and risk to reoffend
- Develop formal partnerships with other agencies to provide targeted services
Agenda

- Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
- Assessing the service capacity of employment programs
- Integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions in employment programs
What are cognitive-behavioral interventions?

• This type of intervention:
  - Focuses on changing the individual’s thinking patterns in order to change behavior
  - Can be incorporated into any routine engagement with a participant (e.g., a 15 minute case management meeting)

• Participants practice new behavior patterns and skills with feedback from facilitation/program staff

• Studies estimate between 23-25 percent reduction in recidivism
READI Chicago (Chicago, IL)

Engages men who are at the highest risk of gun violence involvement and connect them to paid transitional jobs, cognitive behavioral interventions, and support services.

WE ARE DRIVEN TO:

• Decrease shootings and homicides
• Create pathways for better life outcomes
• Promote long-term safety and opportunity in Chicago’s most impoverished communities
Turning Leaf Project (Charleston, SC)

- Serves men ages 25-50 who were recently released from incarceration and assessed at a medium to high risk of rearrest
- Helps change participants’ attitudes, thinking, and behavior so they can complete probation and stay out of prison
- Integrates three hours of daily group CBI (150 hours over 10 weeks) with in-house employment, case management, and job placement.

www.turningleafproject.com
Selecting a cognitive-behavioral intervention (CBI) curriculum

Things to consider:

• Staff training
• Cultural competency of material
• Service delivery model
• Participant engagement strategies
Staff Training

- Training/credentialing and fidelity is more important than the evidence-based curriculum selected.
- Training non-CBI facilitators on cognitive-behavioral principles will support reinforcement of new behaviors.
- Developing opportunities for booster staff trainings is important to reinforcing fidelity to CBI delivery.
- Monitor facilitators delivery and provide feedback for improvements.
- Training in facilitation skills and effective communication skills is as important as training in content.
Cultural competency of material used

Consider a curriculum that does not use the term “offender”

Consider material that is holistic/considers the multiple needs of the person
Service delivery model

Things to consider:

• It is important to have a well-designed classroom behavior management system

• The quality of delivery is just as important as the quantity of delivery/hours of dosage provided

• Delivery should include one-on-one case management sessions
To reduce the recidivism rate of the high-risk population, programming should include cognitive-behavioral, human service, and additional skills building interventions.

**Interventions focus on:**
- Substance abuse
- Family and/or marital stressors

**Interventions focus on:**
- Low levels of performance and satisfaction in school/work
- Lack of prosocial leisure activities

**Interventions focus on:**
- Antisocial behavior
- Antisocial personality patterns
- Antisocial cognitions
- Antisocial associates

Given the limited research on dosage and recidivism to date, this chart presents a theoretical model to guide interventions for people assessed at a higher risk of recidivism.
### Dosage, intensity, and duration by risk level for adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mod/High</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dosage</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>3-6 months</td>
<td>6-9 months</td>
<td>9-18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>1 time/week</td>
<td>2 times/week</td>
<td>2 times/week or residential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the limited research on dosage and recidivism to date, this chart presents a theoretical model to guide interventions for people assessed at a higher risk of recidivism.
### Examples of cognitive-behavioral, human service, and additional skills building interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
<th>Column C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-behavioral correctional interventions (provided as the primary response, may or may not be provided concurrently with columns B &amp; C)</td>
<td>Substance addition treatment (may be provided before cognitive-behavioral correctional interventions to support physical stabilization or concurrently to support learning new skills)</td>
<td>Job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-behavioral intervention that addresses one of the top four criminogenic factors (examples: Anger Management and Domestic Violence Treatment – validated curriculum)</td>
<td>Mental health treatment (may be provided before cognitive-behavioral correctional interventions to support psychiatric stabilization or concurrently to support learning new skills)</td>
<td>Education services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agent for community supervision that address top four criminogenic factors through a cognitive case management model (examples: EPICS, STICS, STARR)</td>
<td>Family reunification services (cognitive-based program where skills are practiced)</td>
<td>Traditional case management (excludes referrals and compliance based models)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parenting skills training (cognitive-based program where skills are practiced)</td>
<td>Structured pro-social activities or mentoring services with identified prosocial peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-occurring disorder treatment</td>
<td>Health services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the limited research on dosage and recidivism to date, this chart presents a theoretical model to guide interventions for people assessed at a higher risk of recidivism.
Offer supportive services not directed towards changing criminogenic risk
Participant engagement strategies

- Use of stipends and incentives
- Well-designed program stages that move participants forward and back based on behavior
- Staff with lived experiences
- Employment as a motivation factor
Integrating CBI with subsidized and unsubsidized job placement
Integrating CBI with subsidized and unsubsidized job placement

READI Chicago

- Integrates CBI and transitional jobs
  - Offers participants an opportunity to learn and practice new behaviors and techniques that can aid in job retention
  - Incorporates 18 months of paid work
  - Includes extensive outreach and reengagement
- Staff work with participants to address discrimination and collateral consequences to support long-term employment
Integrating CBI with in-house employment and unsubsidized job placement

Turning Leaf Project

- CBI is integrated with social enterprise programs and in-house employment daily for 3-5 months
- Completion of CBI and in-house employment experience results in job placement with local government or a private company
- Specific set of criteria determines whether a company is appropriate as a job placement site
- Ongoing career advisement and connections to other agencies for more specialized job training supports long term employment
Questions and answers
References


Resources


• National Transitional Jobs Network: www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives/our-initiatives/national-transitional-jobs/


• Clean Slate Clearinghouse: www.cleanslateclearinghouse.org
Thank you!

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For more information, contact: Erica Nelson (enelson@csg.org), Chris Warland (cwarfand@heartlandalliance.org), and Amy Barch (abarch@turningleafproject.com)