Evidence-based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC)

Douglas County Jail- Reentry Program

Executive Summary

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The following Executive Summary provides the findings of the CPC for the Douglas County Jail Reentry Program based on an on-site assessment conducted February 11, 2013 through February 14, 2013 within the jail.[1] This CPC provides the initial or baseline CPC for the program as there have not been any previous standardized correctional intervention program assessments conducted for this site. For purposes of completing the evaluation and to begin the process with the Douglas County Jail of defining their program, it is essential to describe this program as it contains three primary components, Bert Nash, Programming, and Reentry. With the agreement of Douglas County Jail senior management, the definition of the overall program used for conducting this CPC incorporates all three components.[2]

This executive summary is organized in the following manner: (1) Strengths and areas that need improvement for each CPC domain, (2) Recommendations, and (3) Program content and capacity scores and overall rating.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

The first CPC domain examines the program director's qualifications and previous experience, as well as his/her current involvement with the staff and the program participants. The program director is identified as the individual responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the program. For this CPC there were two individuals who were identified as Program Directors, Mike Brouwer and Mike Caron. This section also evaluates whether the literature is consulted with the initiation of programming, and whether new initiations are piloted. Furthermore, this section of the CPC assesses the degree of support received by the program from both the at-large and criminal justice communities. Lastly, this domain considers the stability of the program, including the adequacy of funding to provide rehabilitative services.

Program Leadership and Development Strengths

- Program Directors Qualified
- Program Directors Experienced

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[1] Only one task took place off site, which was an interview with a program participant.

[2] Due to how the program was defined for this CPC, scoring of this instrument was sometimes the result of one component. This was done so that where there are strengths noted, the process can be modeled and sustained as the Douglas County jail works toward defining how these three components can collaborate and transition to a more comprehensive and structured program.

- Program Director Selects Staff
- Program Directors Supervises Staff
- Valued by CJ Community
- Valued by at-large Community
- Funding Adequate and Stable Past Two Years
- Program Three Years or Older

Program Leadership and Development Areas that Need Improvement

- Program Directors should be involved in the training of staff
- Program Directors should conduct core program areas
- Literature reviews should be conducted with new interventions
- New interventions should be formally piloted
- Groups should be gender specific

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT RATING: EFFECTIVE

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW

This section of the CPC concerns the qualifications, experience, stability, training, supervision and involvement of the program staff. Staff considered in this section includes all full-time staff within reentry primarily and as indicated mentions factors related to Bert Nash staff. Excluded from this group are: support staff, senior administration at the jail, as well as the program directors that were evaluated in the previous section.

Staff Characteristics' Strengths

- Staff Education and Relevant Experience
- Staff Selected for Skills and Values
- Regular Staff Meetings Held
- On-going Training
- Staff Input
- Staff Support Treatment Goals
- Ethical Guidelines for Staff

Staff Characteristics' Areas that Need Improvement

- Staff should be assessed on service delivery
- Clinical Supervision is limited
- Staff are not formally trained on the program due to lack of defining program model

STAFF CHARACTERISTICS RATING: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

QUALITY ASSURANCE OVERVIEW

This CPC domain centers on the quality assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the program is functioning. Specifically, this section examines the type of feedback, assessments, and evaluations used to monitor the program.

Quality Assurance Strengths

- Evaluator Working with Program

Quality Assurance Areas that Need Improvement

- Internal quality assurance procedures are not fully developed
- External quality assurance efforts are limited
- Program participant satisfaction is not fully considered
- Participants are not being reassessed
- Recidivism is not consistently tracked in the overall program
- The program has not been previously evaluated
- A rigorous outcome study examining the program's effectiveness has not been conducted

QUALITY ASSURANCE RATING: INEFFECTIVE

OFFENDER ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the services provided and the use of proven assessment methods is critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsivity of offenders, and then provide services and treatment accordingly. The Offender Assessment domain examines three areas regarding assessment: selection of offenders, the assessment of risk, need, and personal characteristics of the offender, and the manner in which these characteristics are assessed.

Offender Assessment Strengths

- Risk Factors Assessed
- Risk Methods
- Risk Level Defined
- Need Factors Assessed
- Need Methods
- Need Level Defined

Offender Assessment Areas that Need Improvement

- The program has not defined overall which inmates are appropriate clients

- Exclusionary criteria is not clearly defined and the efforts related to following these criteria are not consistently followed
- The program does not target a higher risk group and may be mixing risk levels
- Responsivity factors are not being assessed using a standardized instrument and therefore, responsivity factors are not being identified or addressed within the program
- The program has not validated the LSI-R or the Three Item Proxy on their target population

OFFENDER ASSESSMENT RATING: INEFFECTIVE

TREATMENT CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW

This domain of the CPC examines whether or not the program targets criminogenic behavior, the types of treatment or programming used to target these behaviors, specific programmatic and intervention procedures, the use of positive reinforcement and punishment, the methods used to train offenders in new prosocial skills, and the provision and quality of aftercare services. Other important elements of effective intervention include matching the offender's risk, needs, and personal characteristics with appropriate treatment programs, treatment intensity, and staff. Finally, the use of relapse prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations is considered.

Treatment Characteristics Strengths

- Criminogenic Targets
- Use Appropriate Awards
- Ratio Favors Awards
- Groups Monitored and Facilitated by Staff
- Aftercare Provided
- Quality Aftercare

Treatment Characteristics Areas that Need Improvement

- Criminogenic target density varies across the program and does not consistently focus on antisocial behavior, attitudes, peers, and personality. There is also a strong focus on non-criminogenic targets
- The current program model is not cognitive behavioral
- The length of treatment varies and is not defined by the program
- There is no location monitoring by the program for participants in the community
- No formal manual defining the overall program has been developed or followed. Further, some groups do not have a manual or if the group has a manual it is not consistently followed
- New prosocial skills are not being consistently modeled for participants and there is no training or graduated skills practice for participants in learning new prosocial skills.

- Program involvement does not reach 40% to 70% of the participant's time of in structured activities.
- The overall program does not separate groups by risk, vary program intensity by risk or use assessments to match the program or group to the participant, or to staff members. Groups Separated by Risk
- There is no specific process for participants to provide input into changing the program model
- There are no formal procedures for rewards
- There are no punishers provided by the overall program or a formal process for consequences
- Staff are not trained on how to identify negative effects following consequences or challenging issues for participants
- The program has not defined the completion criteria and therefore is unable to report the successful completion rate
- Group size varies
- Significant others are not trained on how to assist participants with reentry
- There is no formal template or process for discharge planning in the overall program

TREATMENT CHARACTERISTICS' RATING: INEFFECTIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

There were three recommendation themes which emerged during the site visit. These themes follow closely with the domains in which the lowest ratings were noted. Several of these recommendations will be more straightforward and realistic to implement within the jail and the others will require more extensive efforts, such as training, and adoption and implementation of new groups.

Recommendation Themes:

(1) Address Quality Assurance

- Integrate a systematic process for the primary program directors to conduct group observations. A standardized group observation form should be developed or adopted. Data from these forms should be collected, analyzed, and as appropriate, feedback should be given to group facilitators based on the observation. Group observation criteria should include establishing group norms, starting and ending the group on time, using visual techniques, assigning and reviewing homework, modeling prosocial behavior, developing professional rapport, following the curriculum, providing opportunities for structured skills building and practice, and demonstrating use of core correctional practices.
- A systematic process should be established for conducting file reviews, developing files for the programs component, and updating the data collection system with the appropriate intake, progress, and discharge information on all participants.
- Develop template reports for measuring client participation, completion status, and recidivism. Update the program database as needed to ensure that these data are being measured properly

and can be readily extracted for analysis (e.g., data are not found within the general chronos, but in specific fields or drop down boxes).

- Develop a logic model with realistic activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes. This is to be done to define the program overall and this logic model should be refined with changes in the program structure.[3]
- Develop a formal questionnaire/survey to measure participant satisfaction. Establish standard criteria for when the formal questionnaire/survey is to be disseminated and determine a regular timeline for when the information is going to be summarized so that possible modifications to the program can be made.

(2) Address Offender Assessments

- Consider examining how the Three Item Proxy can be fully used to triage the administration of the LSI-R. Examine the items from the LSI-R found on the LSI-R: SV to see which of the screeners produces the strongest predictive validity.
- Provide a booster training session on risk assessment to all relevant staff and set up a data collection and analysis process to monitor the fidelity and decision-making with the risk assessment instruments.
- Establish a communication process for sharing assessment information with all relevant staff.
- Draft policy on how the risk levels differ for groups, interventions, services, dosage, and case management. Include components of this within the data system as needed to monitor the fidelity of these practices.
- Draft policy on an override process, requirements for an override, and set up data points to collect this information electronically so that overrides are not being used excessively and follow written protocol.
- Identify appropriate responsivity tools to be administered on medium and high risk participants only and for those who will actually be participating in long term programming and services. Include this within the data system to monitor the fidelity of the assessment. Further, integrate responsivity factors and how they are going to be addressed within participant case management files.
  - o If needed, have staff trained on responsivity factors.
  - o Conduct a training for all new responsivity tools and include a case management component related to addressing the responsivity factor(s).
- Set up a standard process for identifying who is matched with staff and groups based on assessment information.

(3) Address Treatment Characteristics

- Adopt a formal and structured cognitive behavioral program model. This should include additional groups and opportunities that use cognitive behavioral, cognitive restructuring, or social learning techniques to address the criminogenic needs of your target population.

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[3] This will be an activity conducted during the site visit following this report.

- o Complete a comprehensive literature review prior to the adoption of all new curriculum
  - o Identify implementation steps or develop a logic model for the adoption of any new programmatic changes, such as adding new groups or switching curriculum.
- Have staff trained on all new curriculum and groups. New curriculum should include multiple opportunities for skill modeling, skills practice, reinforcement, and graduated rehearsal.
- New curriculum should include opportunities for homework
- Develop a systematic process for participants to provide feedback on all groups and activities.
- Establish formal written system for rewards and punishers. Rewards and punishers should both be linked to behaviors. Rewards and punishers should be appropriately balanced with the behavior and staff should be trained on how to identify negative effects in the participant receiving the consequence. Include a data component to analyze the fidelity toward issuing a reward or consequence. Add information on rewards and punishers to the participant handbook.
- Consider providing volunteers and staff from Bert Nash with abbreviated core correctional practice skills trainings, which focuses on role clarification, effective use of authority, effective use of disapproval, and effective use of reinforcement.
- Develop some writing materials for families and significant others on the successful reentry and transition process for program participants. Make this service more readily available to families and support persons.
- Develop a formal process and template for discharge planning. Capture this information electronically and integrate all three components into the discharge plan as needed.

CONTENT, CAPACITY AND OVERALL PROGRAM SCORES AND RATINGS

Program capacity: Score: 53% Rating: Needs Improvement

Program content: Score: 24% Rating: Ineffective

Overall: Score: 36% Rating: Ineffective