

EBDM Decision Point: State Institutional Interventions

Why this Decision Point is Important:

- This decision point provides opportunities for deterrence, punishment, and rehabilitation for offenders, while protecting the safety of the public.
- Programming needs are identified, and evidence-based services provided at this decision point can reduce risk/harm and improve public safety.
- Prison is the most costly intervention available in the criminal justice system and therefore should be used judiciously.

What Should Happen at this Decision Point:

1. Services provided are matched to inmates' needs.
2. Dosage needs of inmates are met.
3. There is equity in opportunities to receive treatment.
4. A safe and humane environment is provided.
5. Inmates are housed in a facility that is as close as possible to the community where they will be released.
6. Opportunities for peer to peer mentoring are provided.
7. Treatment resources are available and are strategically placed within institutions based on need.
8. Programming for inmates is incentivized.
9. The organizational culture at DOC recognizes that offenders have the ability to change, and staff engages inmates to support progress in programming.
10. Social worker caseloads are manageable to ensure they can successfully work with inmates on their programming.
11. Programming is evidence-based and is prioritized based on assessed risk/needs.
12. Institutional sanctions for rules violations are evidence-based and consider the risk/needs of the inmate as well as the gravity of the violation.
13. Institutions have flexibility to meet the needs of an ever changing population.

Selected Research:

- Validated risk assessments have been demonstrated to effectively identify risk and criminogenic needs. *Primary Citation:* Gendreau, Goggin, & Little (1996)
- A single one-size-fits-all approach to risk assessment may not be appropriate across all levels of criminal justice processing. For example, dynamic factors that are important for community adjustment (e.g., substance abuse) may not be as important to predicting misconduct in custodial settings. Ultimately, jurisdiction-specific validation of risk assessment tools vis-à-vis the various outcomes of interest is highly recommended. *Primary Citation:* Makarios & Latessa (2013)
- Higher levels of security within institutions can exert criminogenic effects. Prison administrators might experiment with classification thresholds to ensure the least restrictive conditions possible given one's level of risk. *Primary Citation:* Gaes & Camp (2009)
- Enhanced prison management will result through a strategy in which programming has a central role. *Primary Citation:* French & Gendreau (2006)
- Correctional interventions that are grounded in the principles of risk/need/responsivity produce recidivism reductions in the most cost-effective manner. *Primary Citation:* Romani, Morgan, Gross, & McDonald (2012)
- Recidivism is more likely reduced when the justice system focuses on criminogenic needs, uses a cognitive behavioral approach, reserves more intensive services for the higher risk offender, and uses aftercare services. *Primary Citation:* Andrews (2007)
- Cognitive behavioral programs applied across both institutional and community settings (e.g., Reasoning and Rehabilitation) effectively reduce recidivism rates. *Primary Citation:* Tong & Farrington (2006)
- The majority of services and more intensive supervision should be directed to higher risk offenders. *Primary Citation:* Lowenkamp & Latessa (2004)

Resources:

Further resources on the topic

