



# Evidence-Based Practice Overview

Diversion/Enhancing Behavior  
Change Workgroup

February 17, 2016

# Defining Evidence-Based Practices in Criminal Justice...

Evidence-Based Knowledge: Conclusions drawn from rigorous research studies that have been replicated numerous times with defined, measurable outcomes about the effectiveness of an intervention or process

Evidence-Based Practices: The application of empirical research to professional practice

Evidence-Based Principles: The eight “principles” of evidenced-based practices that have been derived from the research on risk reduction

From: Implementing Evidence-Based Practices: Coaching Packet.  
Frequently Asked Questions: Evidence-Based Practices in Criminal Justice Settings

<http://www.cepp.com/documents/Implementing%20Evidence%20Based%20Practices.pdf>

# Defining Evidence-Based Practices in Criminal Justice...

"Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) are approaches which have been empirically researched and proven to have measureable positive outcomes."<sup>1</sup>

.....

"Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) is the body of research and replicable [clinical] knowledge that describes contemporary correctional assessment, programming and supervision strategies that lead to improved correctional outcomes such as the rehabilitation of offenders and increased public safety. Such principles not only meet the public's expectations for quality, efficiency, and effectiveness but also reflect fairness, public safety and accountability."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Frequently Asked Questions: Evidence-Based Practices in Criminal Justice Settings  
[http://www.caction.org/CAN-Issue-Area-Groups/Reentry\\_Roundtable/CJP\\_EBP\\_FAQ.pdf](http://www.caction.org/CAN-Issue-Area-Groups/Reentry_Roundtable/CJP_EBP_FAQ.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Evidence-based Practice: Principles for Enhancing Correctional Results in Prisons  
Author: Ralph C. Serin  
<http://static.nicic.gov/Library/023360.pdf>



## Defining Evidence-Based Practices continued...

“Evidence-based practice refers to the use of research and scientific studies as a base for determining the best practices in a field.”

.....

“Evidence-Based Practice is the partnership between research and practice. Research is used to measure how effective a practice is at achieving certain outcomes or goals - in the case of the criminal justice system - reduction of recidivism and increasing public safety.”

# What is Evidenced-Based?...

Evidence helps staff form informed decisions or judgments

It is an outward sign rather than intuition

The most reliable form of evidence is empirical, based on well designed studies.

Anecdotal evidence is the least reliable form of evidence.

# Research Support Gradient

Taken from work done by  
Brad Bogue "Implementing  
Effective Correctional  
Management of Offenders  
In the Community"  
NIC/The Crime and Justice  
Institute, May 4, 2004

Gold

- Experimental/control design
- Significant sustained results
- Multiple site replications

Silver

- Quasi-experimental control
- Significant sustained results
- Multiple site replications

Bronze

- Matched comparison groups
- Significant sustained results
- Multiple site replications

Iron

- Conflicting findings
- Inadequate research design

Dirt- Conclusive that it doesn't work

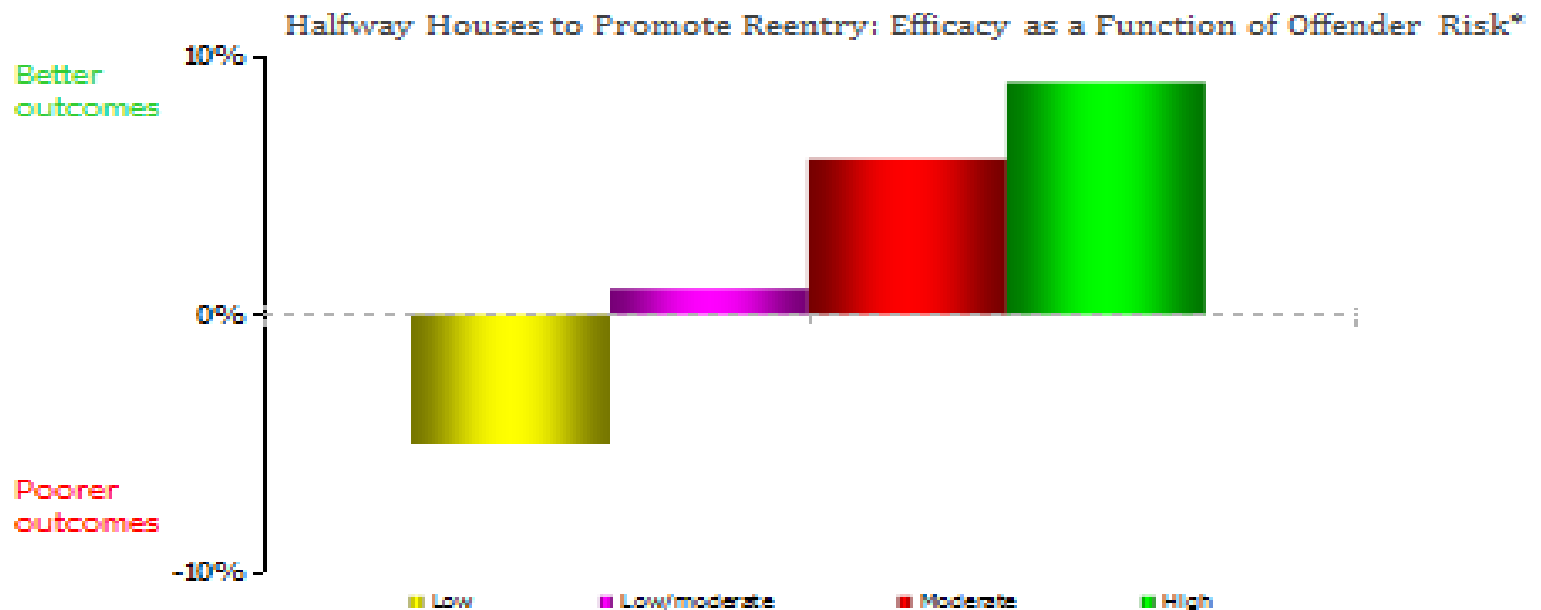
# What is the Difference Between Evidence-Based Practices and Promising Practices?

Evidence-Based Practices	Promising Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasis on empirical research</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conventional wisdom, initial results look promising</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Control of variables through random assignment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency of findings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not necessarily proven through rigorous research</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cross-site replication</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sporadic replication</li></ul>

# What are Effective Practices?

- **RISK Principle (WHO)** - Focus resources on the individuals who are most likely to reoffend.

## Focusing on Higher Risk Individuals - Supporting Research



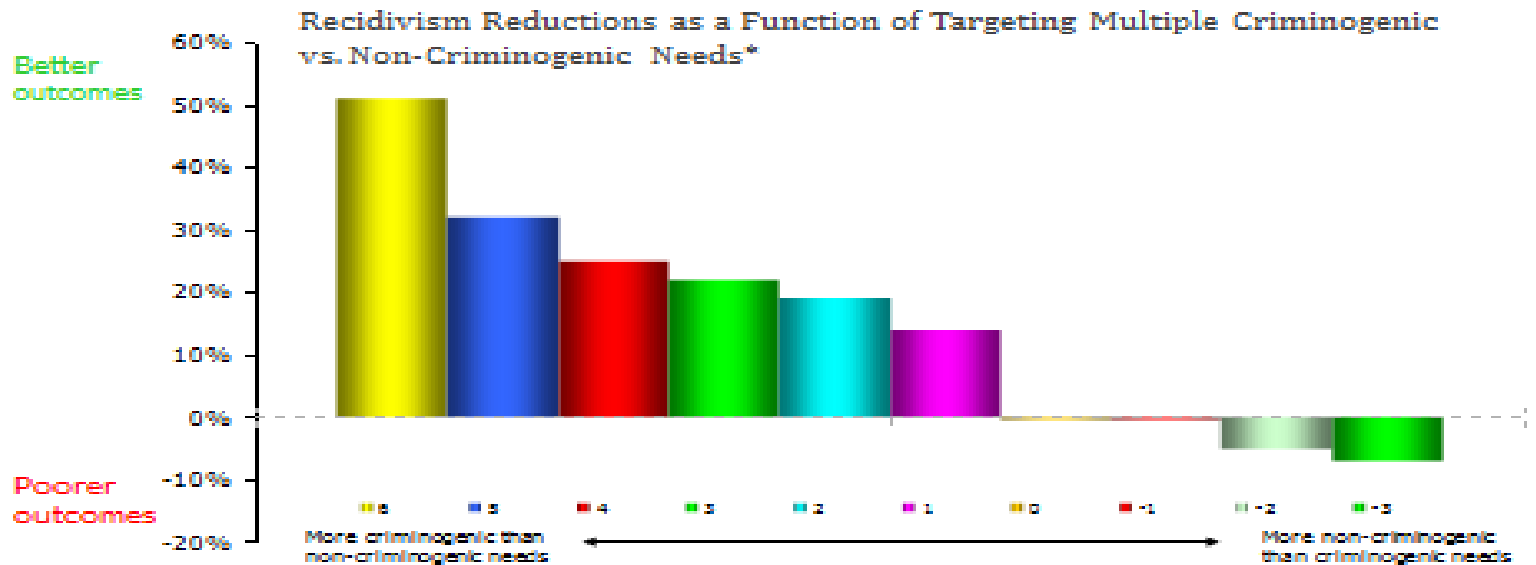
\* Approx. 3,500 offenders placed in halfway houses, compared to 3,500 not placed in a halfway house

(Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005b)

# What are Effective Practices?

- **NEED Principle (WHAT)** - Target the criminogenic needs of moderate and high risk offenders (i.e. the dynamic risk factors that, when changed, will change the probability of an offender's recidivism)

## Addressing Criminogenic Needs – Supporting Research



(Andrews, Dowden, & Gendreau, 1999; Dowden, 1998)

# Criminogenic Needs

## • Top Four

- Cognition (pattern of antisocial thinking/beliefs)
- Personality factors (e.g., coping, self-control, problem solving)
- Associates (hanging around peers who get into trouble)
- Family/marital issues (lack of support/accountability)

## • Lesser Four

- Substance abuse
- Employment (lack of success at work; little desire to work)
- Education (lack of success at school; little desire for school)
- Leisure (lack of appropriate recreational outlets)

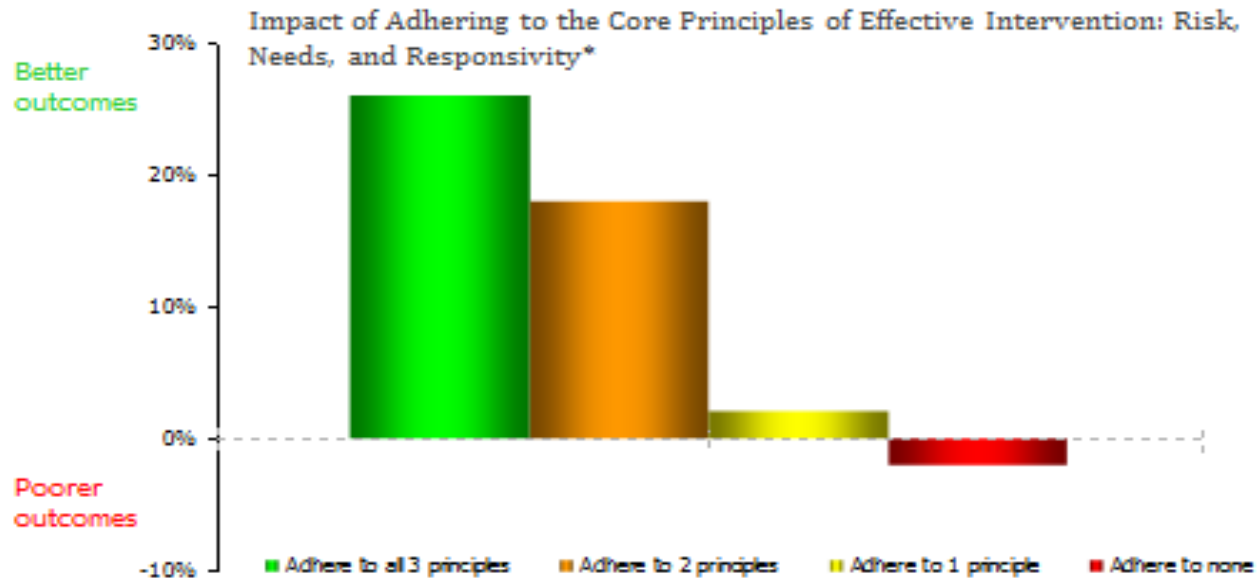
# Non-Criminogenic

- Self-esteem
- Personal distress
- Learning disability
- Health issues
- Mental health

# What are Effective Practices?

- **RESPONSIVITY Principle (HOW)** - Design efforts around behavioral and cognitive-behavioral techniques. Tailor efforts to the individual abilities (strengths), style, culture, motivation, and personality.

## Combining Risk, Need, Responsivity – Supporting Research



\* meta-analysis of 230 studies (Andrews et al., 1999)

# What are Effective Practices?

- **FIDELITY Principle (HOW WELL)** - Is the program being delivered as designed?

## Program Quality and Fidelity – Supporting Research



\* Approx. 7,300 offenders placed in halfway houses, compared to 5,800 not placed in a halfway house

(Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005a)

# Eight Guiding Principles

## For Risk/Recidivism Reduction

