

Offender re-entry risk assessment: How using risk need responsivity, criminogenic factors and assessment can reduce recidivism rates.

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Offender re-entry risk assessment: How using risk need responsivity, criminogenic factors and
assessment can reduce recidivism rates.

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Abstract

Offender re-entry risk assessment: How using risk need responsivity, criminogenic factors and assessment can reduce recidivism rates.

Tassie Crews

Under the supervision of Dr. Michael Klemp-North

Statement of the Problem:

According the U.S. Department of Justice, at the end of the 2014 year there were 6,851,000 persons under the supervision of the adult correctional system (Kaeble, Glaze, Tsoutis, & Minton, 2015). The rates of crime, correctional supervision and incarceration are disproportionately high in the United States. Connected to this is a high cost to the individuals, the public at large and the states budgets. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) tracked over 400,000 offenders in 2005 and found that of those offenders two-thirds were rearrested within three years of their release. The rate of rearrests jumped to three-quarters after five years (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). The researchers for the BJS also found that of the offenders that were rearrested more than half of them were arrested by the end of their first-year post release.

The Purpose of this research:

The purpose and significance of this research is to show that the implementation of a dynamic risk-need-responsivity assessment can help to identify high risk offenders for re-offending. When high risk offenders can be identified early on an intensive reentry plan can be implemented with the offender and their community support system upon release. The

development of a dynamic risk need responsivity assessment tool that not only addresses criminal factors but criminogenic elements in the offenders' profile, can potentially predict the likelihood of recidivism. When barriers to success can be identified early on interventions can successfully be implemented for the offender to help overcome those barriers.

Methods of Approach:

Data and information for this paper will be gathered from secondary resources that are related to the topic and empirical data and findings from the Ohio Risk Assessment System and others that are implemented in the criminal justice system. Resources for this paper will be found within periodicals, magazines, journals, textbooks, National Crime Justice Statistics, Congressional Research, Department of Corrections and the internet.

Social learning and social bond theory will be explored in connection to behavior and rates of recidivism. The processes of criminal thinking will also be explored in conjunction with the sociological theories and criminogenic factors. Criminogenic factors will be explored in connection with not only social learning/social bond theory but recidivism and high risk potential for re-offending.

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**I. INTRODUCTION: HOW USING RISK NEED RESPONSIVITY,
CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS AND ASSESSMENT CAN REDUCE
RECIDIVISM RATES.**

a) A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON RECIDIVISM RATES

For over 30 years the criminal justice system policy and procedure has been overrun by a “get tough” approach to dealing with offenders. The system has attempted to increase punitive measures to reduce rates of recidivism but this approach has failed time and time again. What has been seen is a rapidly growing criminal justice system. One area that needs to be looked at is rehabilitation for offenders to help reduce recidivism rates.

Per the National Institute on Justice recidivism is one of the most fundamental concepts in criminal justice. Recidivism is defined as a person’s return to criminal behavior after being released and given sanctions, both probation and parole, for the commission of a previous crime. The rates of recidivism are tracked by the number of criminal acts committed that result in re-arrest, return to prison or reconviction in a three-year period following an offenders’ release from prison (NIJ,2011).

According the U.S. Department of Justice, at the end of the 2014 year there were 6,851,000 persons under the supervision of the adult correctional system (Kaeble,et al, 2015). The rates of crime, correctional supervision and incarceration are disproportionately high in the United States. Connected to this is a high cost to the individuals, the public at large and the states budgets. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) tracked over 400,000 offenders in 2005 and found that of those offenders two-thirds were rearrested within three years of their release. The rate of rearrests jumped to three-quarters after five years (Durose et al., 2014).

b) BRIEF DISCUSSION ON RISK NEED RESPONSIVITY

One area of research that has gained considerable momentum is risk assessment for recidivism rates. This research is a critical for offender management both in correctional institutions and community correction settings. The importance of this is that risk assessments allow for professionals in the correctional setting to measure the variables that are the best predictors of recidivism. The reality of offender re-entry from the penal institution systems to community supervision is that the offender needs to make changes, some can be drastic, to be prepared for a life free of crime. It would appear as though the current strategies that are in use by community professionals in the criminal justice system is not as comprehensive as is could be and this leaves the offender at a higher risk to recidivate (Bonta, Rugge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008).

In their research, Jones and Foreman (2016) identified that while offenders are given some guidance upon release there is a greater need for individual release plans to be developed and implemented. The implementation of post release risk-need-responsivity assessments not only individualizes the release plans but also creates a more comprehensive network of support for the offender. Offenders are often released into the community that they came from and they are left to their own devices.

c) BRIEF DISCUSSION ON CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS

Criminogenic needs are characteristics, traits, problems, or issues of an individual that directly relate to the individual's likelihood to re-offend and commit another crime. There are two categories that criminogenic factors and characteristics can be broken down into they

are: static and dynamic. Static factors cannot be changed or addressed by any sort of program or therapy in the prevention of future crimes. Dynamic factors can be addressed by therapy, training, education, and/or targeted programming and behaviors and/or attitudes can be changed resulting in more law-abiding actions, therefore reducing the risk of reoffending (Andrews, & Bonta, 2010). If there can be a successful combination of risk-needs-responsivity assessment and criminogenic factors for re-offending, it is reasonable to believe that a stable, intensive framework for interventions and support can be implemented for offenders entering back into society successfully. With the intensive intervention and support for identified high risk offenders the rates of recidivism can be effectively reduced.

Jones and Foreman (2016) also pointed out that the criminogenic risk factors of offenders need to be assessed for propensity to reoffend so that more intense programming can be implemented upon release into society. In Massachusetts recidivism rates dropped 8% from 2005 to the year 2011, looking closer as to why the decrease happened it was found that there were more intensive supervision programs (Jones, & Forman, 2016). The researchers also found the most successful reentry initiatives will have greatest impact in the first few months of release, when the offenders are returning to the community with intensive supervision and support.

d) BRIEF DISCUSSION ON SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Sociologists state that a criminal act is essentially more of a social act than an individual act because a criminal actor will deviate from the norms that are important to society and formally defined as crime (Behravan, 2010). Behravan (2010) postulates that control theory may have the power to predict offender re-entry rates. Social learning theorists share the idea that human behavior results from watching the behaviors of others that possess traits that they

admire. Essentially this states that we watch what others do and from that determine in what manner we should behave, i.e. what do we value, what is appropriate in a social setting for behavior. Social learning allows for individuals to adjust behavior according to responses from peers or society and then adjust accordingly, if or when needed (Akers, & Sellers, 2004).

I (a) STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According the U.S. Department of Justice, at the end of the 2014 year there were 6,851,000 persons were under the supervision of the adult correctional system (Kaeble et. all, 2015). The rates of crime, correctional supervision and incarceration are disproportionately high in the United States. Connected to this is a high cost to the individuals, the public at large and the states budgets. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) tracked over 400,000 offenders in 2005 and found that of those offenders two-thirds were rearrested within three years of their release. The rate of rearrests jumped to three-quarters after five years (Durose et. al., 2014). The researchers for the BJS also found that of the offenders that were rearrested more than half of them were arrested by the end of their first-year post release.

a) PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose and significance of this research is to show that the implementation of a dynamic risk-need-responsivity assessment can help to identify high risk offenders for re-offending. When high risk offenders can be identified early on an intensive reentry plan can be implemented with the offender and their community support system upon release. The development of a dynamic risk need responsivity assessment tool that not only addresses criminal factors but criminogenic elements in the offenders' profile, can potentially predict the

likelihood of recidivism. When barriers to success can be identified early on interventions can successfully be implemented for the offender to help overcome those barriers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a.) THE DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT FOR OFFENDER RE-ENTRY

The Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) (Serin, 2007) is an assessment instrument for criminal justice professionals that takes into consideration the static, dynamic and protective factors of an offender. Protective factors are influences in an offenders' life that are positive (Serin & Lloyd, 2009). The DRAOR was essentially developed to provide probation/parole officers and other criminal justice professionals with a tool in assessment and continual reassessment of an offender and their life situation as it relates to the criminal justice supervisory processes.

What this means is that offenders are assessed for risk factors every time that they meet with someone in a supervisory capacity. In doing this criminal justice professionals can adjust according to the current and potential changing risk factors in the offenders' life (Hanson & Harris, 2000). Not only does this offer for continual assessment of the offender, DRAOR is also able to help develop effect case management based on risk factors. Hanson and Harris (2000) state that the variables that are considered in the DRAOR assessment not only show that they are dynamic factors for risk but that the amount of risk is reduced when interventions implemented help successfully change those risks.

Initially, once an offender had been assessed or classified for risk factors as they enter the criminal justice system they were never reassessed or re-classified unless they picked up new charges. Due to this fact, correctional professionals never had the opportunity to report changes

in risk factors, specifically dynamic factors. DRAOR assessment is one that is implemented throughout an offenders' time in the criminal justice system allowing for the reassessment regardless of new charges because it focuses on both dynamic and static risk factors (Lewis, Olver, & Wong, 2012).

Andrews and Bonta (2010) have shown that following the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principles will ultimately enhance the ability of correctional professionals to implement successful interventions for offenders. The ability to have interventions in place that match the risk potential for offenders based on the criminogenic needs has shown to lower recidivism rates. According to Andrews and Bonta (2010) there is support for the aforementioned and they are effective both in correctional institutions as well as in community correctional settings e.g. half-way house, residential facility, probation and parole (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Andrews et. al, 2011).

In a study conducted from March of 2011 to November of 2013, to assess the accuracy of the DRAOR, data concerning technical violations, the rates of general recidivism and violent recidivism were analyzed with a variable follow up based upon time spend in the community (Chadwick, 2014). There were comparisons made between offenders that recidivated and those who could complete their community supervision without incident. These comparisons were made by examining the DRAOR subscales and total scores of the offenders in each category (Chadwick, 2014). This study happened in the 5th district of the state of Iowa, and all offenders that were on supervision in the community were eligible to be in this study.

Chadwick (2014) gathered all the data points for the DRAOR electronically and had 1,963 participants in his study. There were also 38 offenders in the study that had independent

supervision, or self-supervised (informal) probation, bringing the participant total to 2,001. After excluding those offenders that had missing data points, and had been on supervision for an extended period of time, in other words successful in community supervision, Chadwick (2014) had an end sample of 391. Chadwick (2014) used the Iowa Parole Risk Assessment data points to connection with DRAOR. The Iowa Parole Risk Assessment is a risk scale that uses static risk factors that assess variables to determine a level of risk for the offender and estimates the potential level of risk that could result in a possible conviction. The Iowa Risk Assessment has a total of 13 items that are considered for scoring. These items can range in score totaling -5 to 25. Then through formulation two scores are calculated: victimization risk or recidivation risk and propensity for committing a violent offense. The level of risk directly correlates to the level of supervision received by the offender (Chadwick, 2014).

Chadwick (2014) shares that the average level of supervision of his sample according to the offenders' classification score on the Iowa Parole Risk Assessment was intensive supervision. The age range of the sample size was 16 to 85 with the average age being 32, and 72% of the sample had either completed high school or had received their GED. The data also shows that 34.5% of the offenders had been convicted of violent offenses (e.g. assault). The other offenses noted in the study were drug offenses (26%), property offenses (21%), however public order offenses topped out as the most common offense at 45%.

For this study, there were four possible recidivism events that could have occurred: general recidivism, technical violations of supervision, violent acts, and a category listed at any recidivism, which included technical violations or re-arrest for any offense. Chadwick (2014) defined technical violations as breaking restrictions for supervision (e.g. an offender having alcohol in his possession) or facility reports if an offender were staying in a halfway house or

residential facility. General recidivism was defined as all re-arrests (e.g. driving while barred or suspended, OWI). Violent acts are when an offender is arrested while on probation/parole for committing assault, domestic violence.

Chadwick hypothesized that the DRAOR assessment would successfully predict recidivism rates and that increased protective factors would predict a successful completion of supervision. What Chadwick (2014) found was that data including technical violations of supervision and recidivism were analyzed that DRAOR scores were significantly predictive of recidivism rates. Chadwick also found a correlation between static criminogenic factors scores being higher and rates of recidivism.

DRAOR has been found to be a valid and reliable assessment tool for correctional and criminal justice professionals to use to better serve the offenders they supervise, in getting them proper services, interventions and social supports which promotes successful completion of supervision. When used properly it can also reduce the rates of recidivism by being able to help predict which offenders are at higher risk due to criminogenic factors and implementing proper interventions for those offenders.

b.) OHIO RISK ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

In 2011, The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections introduced, the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) into their criminal justice practices (Latessa, Lemke, Makarios, Smith & Lowenkamp, 2009.). The significance of this system is that the assessment is implemented throughout the offenders' time that they are justice involved. The ORAS tools can be used at pretrial, prior to or while on community supervision, at prison intake, and in preparation for reentry just prior to release from prison. There are few states that have an

assessment tool that can be used at various stages for offenders that are justice involved and uniform assessment across the state (University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, 2016).

The ORAS has enhanced the over effectiveness of the support, classification and rehabilitation of offenders thereby allowing for reduction in recidivism rates, successful reintegration into society for offenders and offering greater piece of mind for public safety (Latessa et. al, 2009). The ORAS works in much the same way that DRAOR does however it is accessible to criminal justice professionals throughout the justice system, unlike DRAOR which is only post release. ORAS, identifies risk levels and helps professionals find the areas of criminogenic need that must be addressed to have an effective reduction in recidivism rates. ORAS, is not a case management tool, however the data gathered from it at each stage of the journey can be integrated with case management/planning services and can follow an offender through their time with the justice system (Latessa et. al, 2009).

The ORAS is not a replacement for professional judgement nor is it a definitive decision making tool however it will inform the decisions of the professionals based on empirical data. This will help identify better the needs of the offender at a specific stage while they are justice involved, (e.g. pre-trial release, probation, incarceration, half-way house). Ohio Risk Assessment System also allows for a continuity throughout, there are standards, guidelines and a basic framework that helps the professionals make these informed decisions (Latessa et. al, 2009). Giving the correctional professional tools that will allow them to provide ways to fill the gaps in services for offenders can and will ultimately lead to lower rates of recidivism.

**c.) SECOND CHANCE ACT OF 2007: COMMUNITY SAFETY THROUGH
RECIDIVISM PREVENTION**

In 2007, the 110th Congress in the 1st session introduced the Second Chance Act of 2007: Community Safety Through Recidivism Prevention. What this did was enable grant funded monies to be available for re-entry programs improving planning and implementation of the following for offenders: providing coordinated supervision and comprehensive services that include help with housing, mental health, and physical health (James, 2015). Providing programming that encourages offenders to develop safe, healthy and responsible family connections. This act followed a 2006 survey done by Krisberg, & Marchionna, that found the over-all sentiment of the public at large was that there needed to be a “get smarter not tougher” approach to offender re-entry.

This survey found that by an 8:1 margin U.S. voters believed that there needed to be a comprehensive approach to bringing offenders back into the community. The respondents to the survey, 66 %), believed that many of the offenders’ lack general life skills and had barriers to re-entry e.g. criminogenic factors, socially learned behaviors prior to entry into the prison, and were not getting the services they needed at the level they needed to be successful (risk need responsivity) (Krisberg & Marchionna, 2006).

There have been national programs that have been put into place to help with offender re-entry due to the complex nature of the reintegration into society with what can be a vulnerable population. The Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative is one of those programs. This initiative is one that asks agencies to work in collaboration with each other, helping to identify risks, needs and the responsiveness of the offenders to the support that they are receiving (Winterfield, Lattimore, Steffey, Brumbaugh & Lindquist, 2006).

The Transition from Prison to Community Initiative is another community program that was sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections. This initiative advocates and pushes to have a comprehensive, system wide approach to offender reintegration. ORAS is just this type of programming, while ORAS and the Transition Initiative are not the same program they have the same premise. They are engaging in interdisciplinary planning through the process of placing offenders back into the community. They both also implement assessment processes throughout the process of being involved with the criminal justice system from entry to exit (Holtfreter, K & Watanaporn, 2014).

III. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Social learning theory (Akers, 1998; Burgess & Akers, 1966) combines the concepts of operant conditioning and cognitively based psychological and sociological theories to help explain how and why individuals tend to get involved in criminal and deviant behaviors. According to Akers (1998) it is an overarching theory as to the learning processes that are involved in an individual's personal history and how it relates to the opportunity for crime.

Sutherland's (1947) developments of differential association theory is where the sociological portion of social learning theory found its roots. Where Burgess and Akers (1966) expanded the development of this theory to include the idea of reinforcement to help explain social learning and social bond. Akers then added the idea of an individual imitating behavior helps to additionally define the why behind criminal behavior.

a.) SOCIAL BOND/LEARNING THEORY EXPANDED

Wood, Pfefferbaum & Arneklev (1997) found that many social behavioral scientists believe that people find risky behaviors to be intrinsically rewarding (e.g. rock climbing, skydiving,

parasailing) and that the feeling the intrinsic reward creates, in the voluntary risk taking, plays a role in why people avoid non-criminal behaviors (Lyng, 1990). On that same token, the intrinsic sensation and arousal perspective postulates that the same feelings generated by skydiving can also be generated by deviant behaviors as well (Wood et al, 1997). The deviant act coupled with the intrinsic reward and the lack of positive influences on an individual can lead to the continuation of the deviant, almost in an operant condition type of way, hedonistic behaviors.

The desire to look for thrills, excitement and adventure was classified as a subterranean value by Matza and Gresham (1960), who also believe that this desire is not inherently a deviant behavior, but becomes so when it is pursued in a manner that relates to criminal behavior and intrinsic reward. When looking at this theory it is reasonable to believe then that the attraction for deviant behavior and criminality is the risk that is involved in breaking the law, allowing for the bad boy persona, living by my own rules motto and having issues with authority figures becomes a trait common among offenders.

The development of social learning theory came from the concept of differential association theory which was developed by Edwin Sutherland (1947) which states people learn delinquent behavior in the same ways that they learn non-delinquent behaviors. Individuals who associate with delinquent groups are more likely to learn an excess of ideals, and values that favor a delinquent nature, which directly correlates to the likelihood that they will engage in delinquent behavior (Brauer & De Coster, 2007). To break it down simply, criminal behavior is learned in a social context through interaction and observations. Sutherland explains that the learning process for criminal behavior involves the same mechanisms that all behaviors involve. However, Sutherland never unpacked what those mechanisms were, and thus the formulation of the social learning theory.

Many social learning theorists will say that human behavior can be the result of learning from others (social learning theory) who already have or show aspects of a specific behavior giving indicators on what to value, what motives are proper, and how to behave. Essentially theorists are talking about taking cues from your peers on how to act in a social situation. Social learning takes place through imitation and reinforcement (Sellers, Akers & Minor, 2009). Burgess and Akers (1966) developed the idea of differential association reinforcement, in an attempt to use Sutherlands (1947) theory of differential association in combination with the concepts of behavioral psychology.

Sutherlands theory of differential association highlighted specific points: criminal behavior is a learned behavior, this learned behavior happens within the communication process, the premise of the criminal behavior is learned in an intimate peer group setting, this learned behavior has two phases (1) the how to of committing the crime (2) motives behind the how to, rationalization of committing the crime, and a person engages in delinquent behavior due to the low perception of harm correlated with breaking the law (Sutherland 1947).

Social learning theory incorporates both the formal applications of having sanctions from the legal or correctional system to help maintain control of violations of the norm and informal social rewards and punishments (Akers, 1990). This theory also looks at the direct efforts that are taken in a formal control setting that are implemented to deter deviance and prevention of the effects of formal and legal ramifications. Akers stands by the ideal that social learning happens through imitation and reinforcement. Studies indicate that offenders tend to look at their crimes as perfectly legitimate and acceptable under the circumstances that they occurred (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph 2002). When an offender looks at their behavior they do not usually

see it as immoral or unjust. They consider the criminal act to be one that is sensible, inevitable or necessary due to circumstance (Steffensmieier & Ulmer, 2005).

Often offenders, after arrest, will find that their perception and that of the public is drastically different than that which they intended it to be. This finding would suggest the challenge in defining deviant behavior both pre-incarceration and post-incarceration is identifying the factors that cause individuals to see deviant behavior and criminal actions as warranted and even justified (Baumeister, 1997). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) states that early childhood experiences such as lack of appropriate attachment to parents can set the path to criminality. Laub and Sampson (2003) believe that seeing persistence in crime is due to lack of social bonds, lack of structure, routine activities, and lack of healthy human relationship.

Hirschi (1969) posits that most of the theories of crime started with the faulty idea that the behavior of an offender required some form of criminal motivation. Whereas, Hirschi looked at the other side of the problem and indicates that from birth it is essentially in human nature to act in a selfish and aggressive way that is driven by a hedonist type of thought, in other words being self-indulgent in the search for what can be derived as pleasure, can lead to criminal behavior. For example: we see in toddlers often how if one child is playing with the newest toy and another child wants that toy, it doesn't take very long before we see the child without the toy make attempts to steal the toy to derive the pleasure of having the fun that the child they stole the toy from was having. While it seems simplistic to explain it in that manner, the stealing of the toy would be deviant behaviors. This is not to say that toy stealing is the gateway to criminal behavior however it exhibits the hedonistic drive that is seemingly innate. The child in question does not think about the long-term effects of their actions, but focuses on the immediate

gratification of having the toy. The aforementioned is the basic premise of Hirschi's (1969) approach to how he defines the why of why do offenders commit crimes.

Hirschi (1969) started looking at how people would connect or bond with one another, in prosocial manners i.e. values, peers and activities. It was in looking at the manner of these bonds that Hirschi found, behavior could be controlled. The types of bonds formed could potentially predict the criminality of the person. Hirschi's research found that the bonds formed by people fell under four categories: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. He states that attachment is the essentially the level of affection that a person gives for other people, places and things, it could be spousal relationships or educational relationships if a teacher has made a profound impact on a student. Hirschi (1969) found that these attachments can possibly effect the behavior of a person, given that they don't want to disappoint the ones they love by misbehaving.

The second bond that was looked at was commitment, this is defined as the level of importance placed on social relationships. Where one might value and place a high level of importance on their relationship with their parents, they might not place that same level of value for the person that they sit next to in class or at work. While they value that person, they don't risk jeopardizing the relationship of their fellow student or co-worker by engaging in criminal behavior. However, it is reasonable to believe that according to Hirschi's (1969) beliefs that people are less likely to engage in deviant behavior and criminality if they believe they will lose something of value to them. For a teenager, it might mean not wanting to disappoint their parents, peers or perhaps a teacher by getting into trouble. Whereas for an adult one could assume that they would not engage in risky or deviant behavior so they would not threaten the

safety and security of their job or long term relationship. It is these social bonds that act as a form of social behavior rules and in turn as a potential social control.

Involvement is, according to Hirschi (1969) considered to be how one engages spending their time, stating very simply if an individual is highly involved in pro-social activities that they have less time and are less likely to be engaged in deviant behaviors. This is part of the reasoning that after school sports, extra-curricular activities and social clubs are developed and supported, it helps to structure the time of youth and adults as to keep them busy and primarily lessens the chances of engaging in deviant or criminal behaviors.

Lastly, the social bond that Hirschi found to be important was that of belief. This is essentially the values and behaviors that are associated with those values and how they conform to society's definition of what is normal and law abiding. The basic premise to this would be that the level of importance placed on a value determines the types of behaviors that one might potentially engage in. The connection that Hirschi (1969) is attempting to make with the social bond of belief is a connection between attitudes and behaviors, ideally saying that those with pro-social attitudes are less likely to lean towards criminality and deviant behavior.

The idea of self-control has been the center of many theories of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), it boasts a large body of research that demonstrates that an important predictor of crime is self-control, supporting what Behravan (2010) has also found to be true. More importantly, research shows that an individual's self-control can be influenced by social experiences i.e. parenting, peers, and community characteristics (Haynie, 2002; Wright, Pratt, Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2012). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) posit that self-control involves the inhibition of impulses and being able to delay gratification as to obtain a reward later.

b.) CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS AND HOW THEY AFFECT SOCIAL BEHAVIOR/LEARNING

The factors that can contribute to criminality, criminal behavior and recidivism are both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. These intrinsic and extrinsic factors are broken into two categories: static and dynamic risk factors. The static risk factors are things like criminal history of the offender, criminality of the family, entrance age into the criminal justice system things that do not change and can be statistically related to recidivism rates. Dynamic risk factors are things that change in the offenders' life such as; the peer group the offender has, the offenders attitude, values or morals, and the employment status of the offender (Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2005). These dynamic and static risk factors are commonly known as criminogenic needs.

There has been quite a bit of research done on ways to identify what criminogenic needs are. Criminogenic needs refer to the major risk factors that are associated with criminal actions and conduct. To break down the idea of criminogenics more Latessa and Lowenkamp (2005) state that offenders have several needs that are deserving of treatment however not all of the needs identified are always associates with their criminal behaviors. Some of the other factors that create additional risk when overlapped with the static risk factors these factors include substance use, family dynamics, stability of housing and employment.

In 1997 Zamble and Quinsy conducted an analysis of 311 offenders that reoffended after being released from a prison setting. They also had a sample (36) offenders that did not reoffend after being released as a control group, this analysis was done to gain more understanding on how dynamic risk factors might influence recidivism rates. The researchers performed interviews with the offenders to gain understanding as to what the circumstances of the offenders situation

was prior to getting a new charge, and the circumstances upon release for those who did not recidivate. These offenders were asked specifically about the dynamic factors in their lives i.e. employment, peer groups and living arrangements etc. They also had the offenders answer assessments based on psychological needs.

The results of this research showed that those offenders that were in the community and did not have a solid framework of intervention and social supports were more likely to reoffend. These offenders cited that they had feelings of frustration, depression, anxiety and anger in the time, generally a month, prior to the commission of another crime resulting in charges (Zamble & Quinsey 1997). It was found in offender reports that there were more instances of interpersonal problems that were the antecedent to the offense being committed, e.g. substance abuse, relationship strain, employment and financial issues.

The Zamble and Quinsey analysis (1997) laid the foundational frame work for the importance of the how the dynamic risk factors influence the potential for recidivism. More recently, studies have shown that the initial findings of the Zamble and Quinsey analysis are indeed correct. Howard and Dixon (2013), Schlager and Pacheco (2011) and Simourd (2004) support the finding with empirical data that correlates to the idea of offenders with higher scores on dynamic risk factors are more likely to reoffend, than their counterparts who manage to return to society and not recidivate.

Researchers have consistently listed the following as major criminogenic factors: Antisocial values and beliefs (criminal thinking), having antisocial peers, personality traits, low self-control, dysfunctional family and substance abuse (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). However, researchers

have been looking at the top 4 factors (Antisocial peers, antisocial attitude/values, antisocial behavior, and antisocial personality) to define the major criminogenic factors for offenders.

Looking closer at each of these top four or the big four factors starting with, antisocial values and beliefs or criminal thinking, we find that offenders will generally exhibit a certain type of thinking error that will affect how they interpret and process the information they get. These errors can often include a sense of entitlement, some self-justification, blaming others for the issues and problems they have, unrealistic perceptions of reality and taking on a victim role. It is not uncommon for an offender to misread a very general behavior from someone or a simple general remark as being threatening or threatening their individuality. Many times, offenders will confuse their wants with their needs (Andrews & Dowden, 2007).

Having antisocial peers or associating with those who are involved in criminal behaviors eventually puts an offender at higher risk for engaging in the same behaviors. In turn, the offender eventually will lose contact with those peers who are a positive influence or pro-social in nature. When this happens the positive support network of positive influences and social supports that model appropriate behaviors for society disappear. Research has shown in many cases that peer group that one associates with will often be the best predictor of potential criminal behaviors. Offenders on the other hand will deny the influence their peers have on them and their actions as that is a threat to their individuality. Many offenders consider themselves to be leaders in their respective peer groups as opposed to being followers (Andrews & Dowden, 2006).

Offenders that display anti-social personality traits are typically characterized by patterns of blatant disregard for the rights of others as well as violation of the rights of others. The can be

habitually deceitful, irresponsible, and even aggressive and violent in nature. It is not uncommon for those offenders to also display low impulse control when it comes to the decision-making process. It is also common for those who display these traits to also be non-conforming to the ideals of society and the law. A final trait is also the lack of remorse for their actions towards others and society. Studies of crime and deviance that observed personality traits and individual differences with an individual have shown that these traits and difference have significance (Andrews & Wormoth, 1989). The differences that were found correlated to the level of stimulus or intrinsic rewards that the individual was seeking. Gibbons (1989) observed that there are different levels of risky behaviors that individuals seek based on their need for intrinsic rewards and immediate gratification.

The reasonable conclusion would be that any one of these traits or a combination can lead an offender towards criminal behaviors (Andrews & Dowden, 2006). While everyone is not attracted to risky behaviors and thrill-seeking at the same level, it is logical that individuals can be attracted to deviant behaviors and criminality based on the level of excitement it brings this giving an intrinsic reward for that behavior.

c.) TIE SOCIAL LEARNING/BOND THEORY TO CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS

The risk needs responsivity concept of rehabilitation, outlines both the central causes of recidivism and broader ideas about ways to reduce recidivism rates. Currently the risk need responsivity model is the only model that is empirically validated model for criminal justice interventions that look to help offenders leave the criminal justice system successfully (Polaschek, 2012). The substantial strengths of risk need responsivity is as a theoretical framework for offender rehabilitation, as the research has a large volume of information

regarding offender interventions and transformed that information into data points. Those data points were then turned into principles that can be applied for offender intervention (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

The risk needs responsivity model makes the assumption that placing interventions for offenders helps to reduce the rates and risks of recidivism and that the best effective form of interventions are those that are compassionate, collaborative and based in human dignity and worth. There is a supposition that these interventions when targeting the specified criminogenic factors and risks and handled in the above mentioned manner that risk of recidivism can be reduced (Blanchette & Brown, 2006).

The idea of looking at an offenders' risk for reoffending, the needs that they would have upon re-entry back in to society and the responsivity to the treatment implemented has been going on since the early 20th century (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). In the early part of the 20th century however, the assessment of risk-need-responsivity (RNR) was largely based on professional opinions. Essentially, the assessment of what the offender risk for recidivism was left to the professional opinion of correctional staff, probation officers, psychologist, psychiatrist and social workers. While it seemed to work, the consideration that the educational framework that each professional had was inherently different and there was not a baseline of risk or need to properly define risk or need by other than opinion.

It was not until the 1970's that there was a push for more evidence based practices in risk need assessment. It was determined that individual elements in an offenders' life needed to be assessed for potential influence on recidivism, (e.g. does the offender have a substance use history, familial criminality) as these types of factors have been noted to have an increase risk on

the possibility of re-offending. In developing assessment tools based on quantitative evidence, researchers and developers of assessments can assign a score to each of the factors identified (Andrews & Dowden, 2010). The development of this scale in turn allowed researchers to develop top criminogenic factors for offenders and determine the level of risk of recidivism each offender had (Andrews & Bonta, 2007). These assessments were defined as actuarial assessments, in other words assessments that are based on statistical computations of the elements defined as risk factors for the offenders. Researchers have reviewed the effectiveness of using the actuarial assessments (Andrews, Bonta & Wormith, 2006) and found that in using the statistical computations they were better able to predict the level of risk an offender had than by simply using clinical/professional judgment. As word spread of the reliability of the actuarial based assessments, correctional professionals began to implement the use of these assessments in the classification process of offenders which allowed these professionals to begin implementing different levels of treatment as offenders began to move through the system towards re-entry (Andrews & Bonta, 2011).

Unfortunately, one of the downfalls of the actuarial based assessments is that the idea that an offender can change for the better was not considered, initially. Bonta and Wormith (2007) realized the short comings of the actuarial assessments and started development of another assessment which included dynamic risk factors. One of the things that were considered was the static items in an offenders' background i.e. criminal history, past substance use/abuse however, they added dynamic risk factors as well, the parts of the offenders' life that could possibly continually change. They considered for their assessment employment, familial relationships (are they supportive or unsupportive), what type of peer group do they have or will they have

upon release. These assessments were often referred to as the “risk-need” assessment (Andrews & Bonta, 1995).

In using both static and dynamic risk factors what Andrews & Bonta, (1995) were able to do was to provide correctional staff and professional staff within the correctional setting information as to what areas in an offenders’ life needed to be enhanced for support and interventions. The risk-need assessment provided empirical evidence that the level of scoring is associated with possibility of recidivism (Raynor, 2007; Raynor, Kynch, Roberts & Merrington, 2000). This evidence essentially showed the researchers that when there were changes in risk scores there was a correlating change in the risk for recidivism, this evidence was important for correctional programming staff as they go the process of assessing the offenders for risk.

Bonta (2002) suggests that because the dynamic risk factors such as peer groups, employment and substance abuse, to name a few, are included in the newer assessments that correctional staff and professionals can better direct interventions for offenders that address those risk factors. By addressing those dynamic risk factors and doing so successfully those interventions can contribute in reducing the risk of recidivism for an offender.

The risk principle states that there can be a reduction in the rates of recidivism as long as the level of treatment services and interventions is provided at a level in relation to the offenders’ potential risk to re-offend. This principle works in two parts the first being the level of treatment and the following is the actual level or risk to re-offend that the offender has. Research has shown that criminality and criminal behavior can be reliably predicted by using the risk-need-responsivity assessments e.g. actuarial vs. professional judgment (Andrews et al.,2006). In looking at the risk principle, applying a valid and reliable assessment tool to correctional

professionals will continue to help them make decisions based on risk for re-offending with empirical evidence and not simply professional judgement (Campbell, French and Gendreau, 2007).

Looking at how to create and apply interventions in a correctional setting, leads to what is known as a need principle. The need principle helps professionals in the correctional setting decide what areas to target when looking to help rehabilitate and/or change an offender, i.e. dynamic factors or criminogenic needs. The general principle behind this is that targeting the dynamic factors that correlate to criminal behaviors can help design the proper interventions for the offenders as they are being released in to society or even as early as being sanctioned/sentenced by the court system.

The benefit to using the need principle is that professionals are looking at the dynamic factors that lean heavily towards criminality in an offender is that they can implement proper interventions designed specifically for high risk offenders. Latessa and Lowencamp (2005) states it is important to note that most offenders are not high risk for recidivism because they have one risk or need factor, but offenders are high risk because they have a culmination of risk/need factors at play.

After identifying the risk and the need, the last thing would be to identify the responsivity to the social support network needed by offenders. The responsivity portion of this equation or the responsivity principle maximizes the offenders' ability to learn from programming and interventions in their social support network that provides them with cognitive behavioral treatment. It also identifies ways to tailor the treatment to the specific learning style, motivations, abilities and strengths of that individual offender (Bonta & Andrews, 2010).

The responsivity principle has two levels: specific and general responsivity. The general responsivity principle uses cognitive behavioral learning approaches to change behaviors. This approach is the most affective as it is something that works across the board and isn't specific for an offender, but can be used with all offenders. The general responsivity would be the ability for offenders to see pro-social behaviors being modeled by professionals in the correctional setting. Offenders seeing how following or breaking rules has consequences and a continuity to those consequences, and teaching offenders' effective communication skills, mediation and problem solving (Dowden & Andrews, 2004).

Specific responsivity principle would be taking the cognitive behavioral interventions and individualizing them to the offender that a correctional professional or counselor is working with. This means sitting down with the offender finding out what their strengths are, interests, potential barriers to success (the non-criminogenic factors), and then creating a responsivity plan for their needs and risks that they will be highly responsive to (Andrews & Dowden, 2006).

Typical RNR programming regardless of the risk level of the offender will have interventions that teach offenders skills that are found to be helpful. Things such as mood regulation, behavior modification and regulation, stress management skills, coping skills and communication skills to name a few (Polaschek, 2011). These successful RNR programs and frameworks also involve other dynamic criminogenic factors like vocational skills, educational goals, and engaging and understanding family dynamics. Do other non-criminogenic needs affect an offenders risk for recidivism? Yes, they do however, thinking big picture if the criminal justice system fails to address the risks and needs of an offender the other factors become less important (Ward, Yates & Willis, 2011).

d.) COMPILATION OF HOW RISK-NEED-RESPONSIVITY, CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS, AND SOCIAL LEARNING/BOND THEORY CAN BENEFIT OFFENDERS THROUGH ASSESSMENT.

When you consider the number of adults in the criminal justice system and under some form of correctional supervision you can see the extent of the problem in the correctional system. The number of adults in the correctional system either incarcerated, pre-trial or supervised release in the year 2005 was 5 million (Glaze & Bonczar, 2006). The rates of incarceration have not only increased at a record rate over the past 20 years it has also increased the number of offenders that will be reintegrated back into society at some point (Harrison & Beck, 2006). Of all of the offenders that are released back into society, more than half of the offenders violate their supervision and end up back in prison (Langan & Levin, 2002). The number of offenders that recidivate within the first six months of release is 60%, within three years of release that number increases to two-thirds (Langan & Levin, 2002).

The reason for failure in offender re-entry is predictable, all too often, individuals that enter the criminal justice system have a host of problems. When one looks at the many issues each individual has there is a common thread, they are dynamic criminogenic factors. Consider mental health disorders, one third of all offenders enter into the criminal justice system with a diagnosis of a mental illness, however, the services available in a correctional institution setting are minimal (Ditton, 1999). According to Harlow (2003) up to 60% of offenders that are within the criminal justice system do not get their mental health needs addressed. Another dynamic factor that affects successful reintegration is substance abuse. The NIJ (2002) reports that there are approximately three fourths of offenders that are in the criminal justice system have a substance abuse history, however of those offenders only ten percent actually receive some form of

substance abuse treatment. So, when those offenders are released they have not received the skills and education needed to learn how to deal with their substance abuse issues. Lack of education is also a dynamic risk factor that affects the majority of offenders that are reintegrated back into society. Data indicates that 40% of offenders released do not have a G.E.D. or a high school diploma (Harlow, 2003). This lack of education leads to the criminogenic need concerning employment barriers, without education offenders struggle finding successes in employment. With low levels of literacy, lack of vocational training, and minimal employment histories offenders face the issue of not being able to support themselves and feel as though they are contributing to society (Mears & Travis, 2004). When this happens, offenders go back to their comfort zone and do what they know, social learning theory and social bond theory applies here, and leads to recidivism.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

As research continues to develop the pendulum of the criminal justice system is swinging back to the way of restorative justice and looking to community agencies and collaboration to help have successful offender reentry. Offender treatment programs that conduct thorough, continuous, and objective assessment of offenders and use the assessment information to help in developing treatment plans, making informed decisions have been proven to have much better outcomes than programs that do not use risk need responsivity assessments. These assessments not only maximize resources of staff, time, and money but risk need responsivity treatment plans and assessments target the high-risk offenders and allow for proper use of resources. Akers (1998) stated that one of the key elements to understanding criminal and deviant behavior, there was a need to understand the individuals' environment, social structure. He goes on to theorize that the social structure is organized in such a way that it will ultimately affect the decisions an

individual makes that leads to criminal and deviant behaviors. When correctional professionals can begin to understand the thinking and learning processes of offenders they can start to effectively assess them for risk and classify according to need for interventions. Using risk need responsivity based assessments, allows for correctional professionals to prioritize how primary supervision and treatment resources are allocated.

Research shows that when you focus intensive therapies and supervision on low risk offenders there is very little effect on recidivism rates. However, that same research shows that when high risk offenders are identified using RNR based assessment that recidivism rates lower because of having the proper amount of supervision, support and interventions implemented.

Andrews and Bonta (2010) found that during the initial three to nine months after release offenders that are identified as high risk require that between 40 to 70 percent of their free time needs to be structured through interventions e.g. schooling, substance abuse treatment, vocational rehabilitation. By applying the appropriate amount of intensive supervision and pro-social structure resources are used more effectively, in areas that they are most needed. This is the connection between social learning theory and recidivism rates.

By looking at the research from Andrews and Bonta (2009) one can assume that offender changes require re-socialization of the offender, by observation and modeling the desired behaviors of the offenders in the environment they are in to continually assess their risk levels. Specifically looking at the theory that social learning plays a large part in teaching the offenders what is socially acceptable behaviors. Ultimately what using risk needs responsivity assessments allows correctional professionals to do is to find the gaps in the offenders' rehabilitation, assess the level of need and what the barriers are and allocate interventions and education to help

change the offenders thinking patterns, while realizing that many offenders are deeply integrated into thinking patterns that they cannot break without these interventions.

When correctional professionals can identify these thinking patterns, and socially learned behaviors they can implement the learning of new thought processes and behaviors which will allow for the regulation of emotions, actions, and behaviors by the offenders through positive social learning experiences. Ultimately, applying the principles of risk need responsivity assessments in conjunction with criminogenic needs, and application of social learning theory, is an effective and valid way to predict and reduce the rates of recidivism for high risk offenders.

Also, combining the risk need responsivity assessments with identifying socially learned behaviors, and criminogenic factors can address barriers to re-integration for offenders allowing the offender and criminal justice professionals to identify those barriers early and help the offender overcome those barriers. Things like employment opportunities, substance abuse treatment, educational barriers and vocational training, can all be identified using risk need responsivity assessments and addressed prior to release and post release. When identified early enough pre-release or post release interventions can help reduce recidivism rates because offenders are given the opportunity to learn socially acceptable behaviors from positive influences in their lives.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The risk need responsivity model when implemented properly and applied by corrections and criminal justice professionals has resulted in reduction of recidivism rates resulting in safer communities. When correctional and criminal justice professionals successfully match offenders

to programming and interventions based on level of risk, using risk needs responsivity assessments they can effectively reduce recidivism rates.

The research discussed has revealed that intensive programming works well for those offenders that are assessed at a high level of risk, however can increase the recidivism rates for those offenders that are found to be lower risk by assessment. Applying the risk needs responsivity assessments in conjunction with criminogenic factors also helps correctional and criminal justice professionals make the best use of resources in the community and within the correctional system.

When targeting offenders that are classified as high risk by using risk need responsivity based assessments they can be matched with the programming that will have the greatest impact on their reintegration back into society. While risk needs responsivity, assessments cannot predict an offender, or individuals, behavior with absolute certainty these assessments are reliable predictors of what criminogenic factors need to be targeted for those offenders and offer a better chance at change. There is always a chance that there will be low risk offenders who recidivate as well as high risk offenders who do not recidivate. These tools serve as a basis and framework for decision-making, but professional discretion remains a critical component.

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