

INCORPORATING COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS
INTO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS

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INCORPORATING COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS
INTO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS

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Abstract

This paper argues that employment programs for offenders should incorporate cognitive-behavioral treatment interventions. Employment has been shown to be associated with reduced recidivism for offenders, as supported by the social control theory. However, traditional employment programs have not been successful at reducing the rate of re-offending. Research demonstrates that the criminogenic needs of offenders, specifically antisocial personality, cognition, behavior, and associates, need to be addressed in order to provide the greatest reductions in re-offending. Social learning theory supports treatment that models and reinforces prosocial thoughts and behaviors through cognitive restructuring and role-plays. Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Offenders Seeking Employment, a treatment program that follows the principles of risk-need-responsivity, would be beneficial for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to deliver to medium- and high-risk offenders who are less job ready. Improving the risky thoughts and behaviors of offenders would allow them to take advantage of employment services and opportunities which would increase the likelihood of securing and maintaining employment as well as reduce recidivism.

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I. Introduction

Over 7,000 inmates were released from Wisconsin prisons each year between 2000 and 2011, and the average recidivism rate for male inmates released during that time period was 35.5% within a three-year follow-up period (Tatar & Jones, 2016). The fact that over 1/3 of released inmates commit further crime represents a significant issue for communities in Wisconsin. The rates of recidivism have remained fairly constant over the past several years (Tatar & Jones, 2016), and while the Wisconsin Department of Corrections is increasing the use of evidence-based practices in implementing reentry programs and strategies, programs to reduce recidivism can still be improved. In particular, employment programming could be modified in response to recent research examining effective reentry strategies.

Research has shown that offenders who remain unemployed after release in the community have a much higher probability of reoffending and returning to prison (Curtis, Derzis, Shippen, Musgrove, & Brigman, 2013). Conversely, if offenders are able to secure meaningful employment, it can reduce recidivism and improve quality of life (Visher, Debus-Sherill, & Yahner, 2011). For example, in a study analyzing recidivism in parolees, employment significantly reduced the likelihood of recidivism (Staton-Tindall, Harp, Winston, Webster, & Pangburn, 2015). In another study, Engelhardt (2010) found that the released inmates who were unemployed were re-incarcerated at twice the rate of those who were employed. Moreover, if the average amount of time to secure employment for offenders was reduced by three months, crime and recidivism rates would decrease by 5%.

Employment supplies income, self-esteem, and a sense of commitment to conventional values and the community. It also is a source of informal social control and constructive lifestyle patterns (Visher, Winterfield, & Coggeshall, 2005). In particular, the theory of social control

provides a framework to understand the relationship between employment and recidivism. The theory of social control posits that if individuals have a stake in conventional lifestyles, such as stable employment and marriage, the costs of crime increase (Wright & Cullen, 2004).

Therefore, if offenders are able to secure meaningful employment, they are less likely to risk that employment by recidivating. Providing evidence for this theory, Wright and Cullen (2004) found that stable employment decreased delinquency among a sample of 1,725 adolescents. Moreover, this study demonstrated that employment increased social control by increasing bonding with pro-social peers.

However, offenders experience many barriers to finding employment. Incarcerated individuals have fewer vocational skills, less work experience, and higher rates of unemployment than the general population. One study found that 30% of prisoners were unemployed prior to incarceration (Curtis et al., 2013). Once an offender is released, having a criminal record can be an additional obstacle to securing employment. Longer terms of incarceration can increase those barriers as employment gaps lengthen and work skills become outdated (Visher et al., 2005).

In order to address this issue, many prison and community correction programs provide job-seeking skills and vocational training to offenders. These programs often focus on developing resumes, honing interviewing skills, providing job counseling and placement, and increasing specific occupational skills. However, multiple analyses of current employment programs found that they do not effectively reduce recidivism (Mackenzie, 2013; Visher et al., 2005). Other strategies are needed in order to successfully increase an offender's likelihood of securing employment and, thereby, reduce recidivism.

In order for employment programs to be effective, this study proposes that a cognitive-behavioral component should be included. In a systematic review of programs aimed to reduce

recidivism, Mackenzie (2013) found that programs which address criminogenic attitudes and cognitions were successful in reducing the probability that offenders would reoffend. The author found that traditional programs that assisted offenders in obtaining employment, providing services such as vocational training, employment seeking skills, and job placement, did not significantly reduce rates of recidivism. This may be because the offenders do not have the proper cognition to utilize these opportunities. An offender may find a job through an assistance program, but he may not have the skills or desire to arrive on time, cooperate with co-workers, have good attendance, or to follow directions. Cognitive-behavioral programs address criminal thinking patterns and problem-solving skills so that offenders change their patterns of thoughts and behaviors. Incorporating these skills into employment programs may increase the probability of offenders securing and maintaining employment.

Other studies have also found that cognitive-behavioral interventions are effective at changing the thoughts and behaviors of offenders, which has positively affected their employment. For example, Brooks, Heilbrun, and Fretz (2012) evaluated a program in Trenton, New Jersey, which provided treatment to offenders. The programming included behavioral therapy, group and individual counseling, and other classes which targeted individualized needs such as anger management, substance abuse, and education. The counseling and treatment classes focused on antisocial attitudes, criminal thinking patterns, and past behavior patterns. The study found that participants improved in their antisocial attitudes and patterns of behavior which positively affected employment.

These programs are effectively targeting criminogenic needs, which have been identified and categorized by Andrews and Bonta (2010). The Big Four needs are history of antisocial behavior, antisocial personality pattern, antisocial cognition, and antisocial associates. These

cognitive programs improve the criminal cognitions, personality patterns, and behaviors of the offenders, which then can increase success regarding employment which is another criminogenic need, included in the Central Eight.

Targeting criminogenic needs has been shown to be an effective programming practice. Research has demonstrated that the most effective correctional programs are based on the risk-need-responsivity model. The risk principle refers to the fact that higher-risk individuals derive the greatest benefit from more intensive programming. The principle of need dictates that interventions should target known criminogenic needs such as antisocial attitudes or employment and education. The final principle, responsivity, involves providing treatment according to best practices of instruction including the cognitive-behavioral and social learning teaching methods (Brooks et al., 2012).

The University of Cincinnati Corrections Institution has developed a program designed for offenders who have a moderate to high need for employment. The program follows the risk-need-responsivity model and incorporates cognitive-behavioral interventions as they relate to securing and maintaining a job. The modules include cognitive restructuring, social and emotional skills, problem-solving, and planning for success. The group classes emphasize skill-building, role-plays, and connecting thoughts to behavior (University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, 2016). It would be beneficial if this or a similar program were implemented in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

This paper provides a basis for improving employment programs in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. If a cognitive-behavioral employment program were to be implemented in state prisons across Wisconsin, then both employment and recidivism outcomes could be improved. This program would be implemented in medium to minimum security male

institutions, in which the inmates are nearing release. It would also target inmates who have a moderate to high assessed need in the employment area, in order to address the risk-need-responsivity principle.

The cognitive-behavioral components would focus on improving the thoughts, behaviors, and problem-solving skills of offenders. These interventions would specifically emphasize employment situations, so that offenders would be more likely to be successful in job searches and more likely to keep a job. Since employment has been shown to affect recidivism, maintaining employment would reduce the risk of reoffending. Offenders would be more likely to become productive citizens and less likely to reoffend and cause further harm to their communities.

This research will support the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral interventions in treatment programs while establishing the connection between employment and recidivism. This paper will investigate existing programs and incorporate effective elements into employment programs that will assist offenders in successfully maintaining employment. The social control theory as well as research surrounding criminogenic needs and social learning theory will supply the theoretical framework for integrating cognitive-behavioral treatment with employment training. These recommendations can be utilized by the Department of Corrections as well as other organizations to develop effective treatment programs for offenders releasing into the community. The improved programming is anticipated to reduce recidivism and improve the lives of the offenders and the quality of the communities into which they are released.

II. Literature Review

Employment and Recidivism

Though recidivism rates have been slowly declining throughout the past two decades, approximately 45% of prisoners released in United States in 2005 were convicted of a new crime within 3 years of release (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014). The average recidivism rate for males released from Wisconsin prisons in 2000 was 35.3% after 3 years (Tatar & Jones, 2016). This is a significant portion of offenders who are being convicted of a new crime within 3 years. In order to reduce this percentage, differences between recidivists and non-recidivists must be analyzed. One factor that has been repeatedly shown to be correlated with reduced rates of repeated offenses is employment.

Employment is theorized to give purpose and routine to the life of an offender as well as reduce opportunities for criminal behavior. Steady income allows an offender to meet his needs and support his family without resorting to criminal activity to generate income. Holding a job also widens the network of lawful acquaintances and strengthens the connection to a conventional lifestyle, increasing the investments that are risked by committing crime (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

Considerable research has demonstrated the connection between employment and reduced recidivism. For example, Berg and Huebner (2011) studied the effect of employment on recidivism in parolees. After analyzing the re-arrest rates of a sample of 401 males released from prison on parole in 2000, they found that employment after release corresponded to significant reductions in rates of re-arrest for offenders. At 600 days after release, 76% of unemployed offenders had been arrested compared to 58% of those employed. Employment reduced the likelihood of being arrested and lengthened the time before arrest.

Duwe (2012) also analyzed the impact of employment on offenders being released from prison. This study analyzed recidivism rates as measured by re-arrest, re-conviction, revocation, or re-incarceration of 269 offenders released in Minnesota in 2008. Offenders who obtained employment within 6 months of release reduced their risk of re-arrest by 45%, revocation by 53%, and re-incarceration by 45%. Employment had a significant effect on reducing recidivism in this study.

In another study, Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, and Ho, (2013) examined the relationship between recidivism and employment among recently released prisoners. The sample for this study included 6,561 offenders released from Indiana state correctional institutions in 2005. The researchers divided the sample into three groups: offenders never employed after release, offenders marginally employed (annual income less than \$5,000), and offenders employed with annual incomes of \$5,000 or greater. Offenders who were unemployed had significantly higher rates of recidivism than employed offenders. In addition, marginally employed offenders had higher rates of recidivism than fully employed offenders.

Barriers to Employment

While employment may be beneficial when returning to the community and is a goal for a majority of offenders (Visher et al., 2011), many barriers inhibit offenders from attaining meaningful work. Many offenders are released into communities with few opportunities. Offenders often lack education, vocational skills, and substantial work experience; moreover, incarceration adds further gaps to their employment history. Employers are reluctant to hire people with criminal backgrounds, and some fields of work are prohibited by statute to those convicted of specific crimes (Krienert, 2005). Offenders also have high rates of mental health conditions and physical disabilities (Musgrove, Derzis, Shippen, & Brigman, 2012).

Offenders frequently return to their previous neighborhoods which may not be conducive to finding employment. The communities may have high rates of poverty, unemployment, and other signs of socioeconomic disadvantage. In order to find work, residents may have to travel long distances using slow or indirect public transportation. Furthermore, the friends and associates of the offenders may negatively influence them (Wieman, 2007).

A lack of education and work skills constitute another barrier to employment for offenders. Wieman (2007) cites a study by the Urban Institute in which half of the former prisoners surveyed did not have a high school diploma or GED. Only a small number of them had any college education. Moreover, in another sample of inmates from Ohio, the average educational level determined through testing was 7th grade (Wieman, 2007).

Offenders often have had high rates of unemployment prior to incarceration. James and Glaze (2006) reported that approximately 1/3 of inmates in state prisons, federal prisons, and local jails were unemployed prior to incarceration. Offenders often have erratic work histories, numerous changes in employment, and long periods of unemployment (Nally et al., 2013). Visher et al. (2011) surveyed a group of released prisoners and found that most of them had never worked a job for longer than two years prior to incarceration. This deficit of employment history can serve as an impediment to securing employment upon release.

Another barrier is the potential unwillingness of employers to hire someone with a criminal conviction. Krienert (2005) reported that less than 50% of employers who were surveyed would be likely to hire an offender. In another survey conducted by Weiman (2007), over 60% of employers expressed reluctance to hire someone with a criminal background. In addition, legislation or professional licensing regulation prohibits the employment of people convicted of certain crimes in certain occupations (Weiman, 2007).

Traditional Employment Programs

In order to increase employment and address some of these barriers, numerous programs have been implemented targeting offenders. Over 90% of correctional institutions had employment programs in 2000 (Krienert, 2005). These programs include employment readiness classes, job fairs, vocational training certificates, and work experiences. Programs in the community also provide employment training as well as job placement services. However, studies have shown that many of these programs fail to reduce recidivism rates.

Farabee, Zhang, and Wright (2014) evaluated a re-entry program in California which provided free employment services for offenders returning to the community. The program delivered a 4-week job readiness training course and then provided employment placement services as well as access to computer labs for job searches and resume writing. The course addressed interviewing techniques and attitudes and behaviors expected in the workplace. A job specialist then connected participants with employers.

The study sample consisted of 217 offenders randomly divided into control and treatment groups, wherein the treatment group received the employment services. The researchers then surveyed the offenders 12 months after the program, assessing employment in the past 12 months and in the past 30 days, and recidivism as measured by arrest or incarceration in the past 12 months. The groups were not statistically different regarding employment or recidivism, suggesting that the employment program did not have appreciable results.

Valentine and Redcross (2015) analyzed another employment program aimed at offenders. They evaluated two randomly assigned groups of offenders who were provided services in four cities in the Midwest. Both groups received basic job search support, such as assistance with writing resumes, filling out applications, and interviewing. However, members

of the treatment group were also placed in a transitional job which was temporary, minimum wage work designed to build work history and develop work skills. The researchers then determined the effect of the transitional job on long-term employment and recidivism. After 2 years, the control and treatment groups did not significantly differ in the number of arrests, convictions, and incarcerations or in employment rates. These results demonstrate that providing transitional jobs to offenders may not be effective in reducing recidivism or increasing employment.

Several meta-analyses have also discovered scant evidence supporting the effectiveness of employment programming for offenders. Moses (2012) investigated 8 offender employment programs which ranged from the provision of transitional jobs and job placement services to job search assistance and vocational training. The earliest of these programs, Baltimore's Living Insurance for Ex-Prisoners (LIFE), was implemented in the 1970s, while the most recent, New York City's Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), began in 1996. Except for CEO, none of the group significantly reduced recidivism.

Visher et al. (2005) also analyzed 8 studies that evaluated employment programs for offenders. Each study had a random assignment design, and the years of implementation ranged from 1971 to 1994. The evaluated programs, which included the Job Training Partnership Act, JOBSTART, Job Corps, and Opportunity to Succeed, provided the traditional job readiness and placement services, such as job counseling, job search training, skills training, and minimum wage job assignments. Except for participants over 26 years of age in National Supported Work Demonstration in the 1970s, none of the programs reduced recidivism for the treatment group.

These studies demonstrate that traditional employment services are not effective at reducing recidivism for offenders. While evidence has shown that employment correlates with a

reduction in new crime, it seems as if merely assisting offenders with securing a job is not adequate. MacKenzie (2013) proposes that this may be because offenders may not be cognitively prepared to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the employment programs. They may desire a job, but do not display appropriate behaviors or attitudes in order to obtain and maintain employment. For example, an offender may not be committed to waking up on time or attending work daily if it is boring or difficult. They may resist taking direction from authority figures or have conflicts with co-workers. They may struggle with balancing short-term sacrifices and long-term rewards. In order for employment programs to be effective, offenders must be cognitively equipped to succeed in the workforce.

Effective Reentry Programs

In contrast to traditional employment services for offenders, certain other reentry programs have been successful in reducing recidivism. These programs tend to focus on altering the cognitions and behaviors of offenders rather than simply providing assistance.

One successful program is Project New Attitudes in Clearwater, Florida. This reentry program serves jail inmates through a 9-week program. During the program, inmates participate in classes that address interpersonal skills, communication skills, criminal thinking, stress and anger management, and job skills. Project New Attitude also develops a personalized plan for release, assessing housing, education, transportation, and food needs. After release, offenders meet with counselors and attend group meetings for 12 months (Jalazo, 2005).

Jalazo (2005) tested the effectiveness of the program by calculating re-arrest rates for program completers, non-completers, and control group members. Program graduates were rearrested at a rate 14% lower than those who did not complete the program and 13% lower than the control group. Graduates also had positive outcomes regarding gainful employment and

establishing credit. This success of this program may be due to the emphasis on developing life management skills and moderating criminal thinking patterns rather than providing only job assistance.

Another study evaluated the effectiveness of the cognitive-behavioral program Enhanced Thinking Skills (ETS) (Travers, Wakeling, Mann, & Hollin, 2013). The sample for the study consisted of male inmates who participated in the program and were released between 2000 and 2005. During 20 sessions, ETS focused on a variety of skills including impulse control, problem-solving, critical reasoning, and flexible thinking. After two years, the ETS group was reconvicted 6.4 percentage points lower than the comparison group. Moreover, the rates of reconviction for the ETS participants was 9.5 percentage points lower than predicted rates of reoffending.

A cognitive self-change program in the Vermont Department of Corrections was also shown to have reduced rates of recidivism for participants (Henning & Freuh, 1996). Offenders in the treatment group participated in a cognitive-behavioral program which guided in modifying thinking errors associated with criminal behavior. A control group of offenders from the same male medium-security state prison did not participate in the program. Rates of recidivism for the treatment group were 20% less than those of the control group.

In another study, Golden, Gatchel, and Cahill (2006) evaluated the effect of the cognitive behavioral program, Thinking for a Change, on problem-solving skills and recidivism rates. The study consisted of 100 male and 42 female probationers who completed the program and a matched comparison group of similar probationers. The program focused on developing skills in problem-solving, thinking and reasoning, and interpersonal interactions. The results showed that, during the 12-month follow-up period, program completers committed new offenses at a

33% lower rate than the comparison group. In addition, program completers improved significantly in problem-solving skills as measured by a skills assessment, whereas the comparison group made no such gains.

Finally, multiple meta-analyses of cognitive-behavioral programs have concluded that these programs can be effective in reducing recidivism. Lipsey, Chapman, and Landenberger (2001) reviewed 14 studies that had evaluated cognitive-behavioral programs delivered to juvenile or adult offenders who were on probation, incarcerated, or on parole. On average, program participants had recidivism rates that were about 33% lower than those of control groups. Wilson, Bouffard, and Mackenzie (2005) also analyzed numerous studies on cognitive behavioral treatment programs and found positive results. Across 20 studies of programs that incorporated group cognitive skills treatment to reduce criminal behavior, all of the studies that used high quality methods found that the programs were effective at reducing recidivism.

The evidence supporting the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral treatment in reducing recidivism suggests that this treatment protocol would be beneficial in an employment program. In order to overcome the barriers that offenders face in securing employment, not only should job placement services be provided, but also treatment that address the cognitions of the offenders. If programming addressed risky thoughts and behaviors, the other employment services would be much more effectively utilized by the offenders. They would not only be able to find a job, but they would have the appropriate attitudes, thinking patterns, and conduct in order to effectively maintain employment. Modifying criminal thinking and securing employment could be expected then to reduce recidivism rates.

III. Theoretical Framework

Criminogenic Needs

Andrews and Bonta (2010) examined several meta-analyses of the causes of criminal conduct. For example, one analysis reviewed 131 studies that were conducted between 1970 and 1994 and researched risk factors for criminal behavior. Andrew and Bonta concluded from the evidence that the strongest risk factors are antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, a history of antisocial behavior, and antisocial personality; they have named these the “Big Four.” Below these in strength of prediction are family and parenting factors, school and employment performance, and attachment.

The studies in the meta-analyses utilized various definitions and measures of each of the Big Four variables; however, each can be effectively generalized. Antisocial attitudes consist of qualities such as defiance, ambivalence to authority, rationalization, adventurousness, hostility, stubbornness, suspiciousness, and other values and beliefs favorable to crime. Antisocial associates are family members and peers who engage in criminal activity or provide social support for crime. A history of antisocial behavior includes delinquency, crime, and other harmful behavior. Finally, antisocial personality comprises traits such as low conscientiousness, lack of self-control, impulsivity, aggression, alienation, poor problem-solving skills, lack of empathy, and negative reactions to stress (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

After reviewing numerous prominent theories of criminal behavior in order to examine their viability in explaining the criminogenic needs, Andrews and Bonta (2010) devised an integrated approach called the Personal, Interpersonal, and Community-Reinforcement (PIC-R) perspective on deviant behavior. This theory incorporates elements of other theories, such as social learning, differential association, and social control, recognizing that each theory

contributes necessary elements but is not sufficient on its own to account for the complexity underlying criminal conduct. PIC-R combines the theory of control with behavioral and learning principles in order to develop a comprehensive model of deviancy which can be flexible, adaptive, and individualistic. This theory recognizes that many individual, relationship, and societal factors interact in contributing to criminogenic needs.

Though this approach seems extremely general and all-incorporating, it does have certain guiding principles which provide structure. One principle is that behavior is motivated by rewards and consequences which are molded by the experiences and environment of the individual (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Various theories provide support for this principle. For example, according to subcultural theories, certain cultures may reward criminal behavior over law-abiding behavior. Prison may not be perceived as a great stigma in these situations and, therefore, not a threatening consequence. Alternatively, control theories propose that a greater investment in conventional lifestyles such as marriage and employment leads to a greater cost of committing crime. Genetic and biological theories submit that personality and intelligence characteristics can cause differences in the perception of reward (certain personalities may find deviant behavior as thrilling and, thereby, rewarding). Differential association theories posit that deviant peers structure rewards and consequences. For example, committing crime may be learned as rewarding through association and by strengthening feelings of belonging and acceptance. Anomie theorists propose that the material rewards of society outweigh the possible consequences of obtaining them illegally.

The other major principle underpinning PIC-R is that certain preceding factors influence how individuals react to these rewards and consequences. For example, social learning theories state that attitudes and behaviors regarding crime are learned from immediate family members

and peers. Definitions favorable to crime will influence how an individual perceives various behavior and whether it is rewarding. Genetic and personality factors, supported by biological theories, can influence reaction to rewards, such as how individuals with addictive brain chemistry may be more susceptible to drugs and alcohol. Self-control theorists state that certain individuals lack inhibition and are less able to control their behavior. Finally, according to strain theory, individuals under stress are more likely to choose deviant behavior to cope with their strain.

Social Learning Theory

Although Andrews and Bonta (2010) recognize the contributions of various theories to the psychology of criminal conduct, they emphasize the importance of the social learning theory. Social learning theory effectively provides a mechanism through which individuals acquire the major criminogenic needs of antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, a history of antisocial behavior, and antisocial personality. Social learning theory is based on operant and classical conditioning as well as observational learning (Ward, Melser, & Yates, 2007). Individuals may learn antisocial attitudes and behaviors through relationships with people who support this behavior. If deviant behavior is reinforced with rewards, the behavior will be strengthened in the individual. In addition, an individual may adopt antisocial attitudes through observation of those around him. If his immediate family members or peers engage in deviant behavior, the individual may incorporate those behaviors into his future repertoire of actions.

Ronald Akers developed the theory of social learning as an extension of Donald Sutherland's differential association perspective (Pratt et al., 2010). Sutherland proposed that individuals learn deviant behavior through differing associations with people. These associations shape a person's favorable and unfavorable definitions of crime which influence attitudes and

behaviors. Expanding this theory, Akers claimed that definitions about crime may be broad, such as generally approving of criminal behavior, or may be specific to a certain act or situation, such as approving of violence to solve problems. In addition, definitions regarding crime may be negative which disapproves of crime, positive which views crime as desirable, or neutralizing which is permissive of crime. Akers argued that crime may be initiated through modeling and imitation, wherein an individual mimics deviant behavior observed in others. Thereafter, criminal behavior is differentially reinforced. Behavior that is reinforced by reward or avoidance of painful stimuli will be more likely to be repeated, whereas behavior that is punished will lessen. Akers also emphasized that the most important reinforcers are from the individual's immediate social group. Therefore, the social environment of an individual greatly influences his behavior.

Many studies have provided support for social learning theory. For example, Pratt et al. (2010) performed a meta-analysis on 133 studies that examined differential association and social learning theory. The analysis included information on criminal definitions as measured by attitudes and beliefs, differential reinforcement through peer and parental reactions as well as rewards versus costs, and modeling/imitation determined by the number of admired models. The results found that social learning was significantly correlated with criminal behavior. Two factors whose effects were especially strong were differential association and definitions. This implies that social environment and antisocial cognitions and attitudes are robust indicators of deviant behavior.

In another study, Brauer (2009) studied the effect of reinforcement and definitions on youth's involvement in crime. Using data from the National Youth Survey, Brauer compared the attitudes of parents and peers as well as the attitudes of the youth towards crime with the youth's

self-reported participation in theft and marijuana use. The data showed that youth who have friends and parents who have more favorable views of crime had higher rates of theft and marijuana use. Conversely, youth whose friends and parents strongly disapproved of offending were significantly less likely to commit theft or use marijuana. In addition, youth who viewed crime more favorably were more likely to be deviant compared to those with less favorable definitions of crime. These results imply that adolescents' attitudes toward crime may be influenced by parents and peers and that these attitudes affect rates of offending, supporting the social learning theory.

Sweeten, Piquero, and Steinberg (2013) also found support for the social learning theory. Analyzing data from participants in the Pathways to Desistance study, the researchers investigated the potential effects of various theories of criminal behavior. The perspective that was able to account for the largest percentage of change in crime was the social learning theory. This was based on the participants' answers to questions about peer delinquency, peer pressure, depth and quality of friendship networks, and gang membership. Psychosocial factors, including impulse control, suppression of aggression, and consideration of others, also strongly correlated with the deviancy rates. This suggests that social networks and antisocial attitudes and behaviors significantly influence criminal conduct.

The importance of social learning theory on the commission of crime is extremely relevant to cognitive-behavioral treatment programs. If the criminogenic needs of antisocial attitudes, personality, and behavior are developed through observation and reinforcement from others, then it may be possible to alter these criminal thoughts and behavior through prosocial modeling and reinforcement. Cognitive-behavioral treatment can increase definitions that are not favorable to crime and assist with individuals recognizing prosocial rewards in order to

decrease deviant behavior. Positive reinforcement during treatment can be utilized during treatment in order to guide the behavior of offenders. The research that has supported the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral treatment provides further evidence for this theory.

Regarding employment, treatment may focus especially on the cognitions and behaviors that relate to securing and maintaining employment. Antisocial attitudes and behaviors, such as defiance of authority, hostility, lack of empathy, poor problem-solving skills, and impulsivity can be targeted in order to improve the likelihood that offenders will succeed at work. Offenders will then be more likely to have good attendance, follow directions from supervisors, relate well to co-workers, and manage problems at work.

Social Control Theory

Once offenders have improved their antisocial attitudes, personalities, and behavior through cognitive-behavioral treatment, they may be less likely to recidivate and more likely to secure employment. Maintaining stable employment may further reduce the probability of future criminal conduct. Various studies above demonstrated the link between employment and reduced rates of recidivism. As social control theory explains, establishing that conventional bond to society through a job may reduce the risk of crime.

Sampson and Laub (2005) argue that certain life-course turning points, such as marriage and employment, increase social bonds to convention lifestyles and, thereby, decrease rates of crime. These events may provide a symbolic division from the past, new social support and growth, a change in routine activities, and an opportunity to alter identity. Marriage, employment, and other social institutions may also increase exposure to prosocial peers and increase time spent in law-abiding activities. Moreover, stronger and more valuable connections to a conventional life may increase the risk of being caught for committing a crime. All of these

factors can redirect an offender to commit to conformity. Therefore, this theory may partially explain the evidence that supports the connection between employment and lower rates of crime.

Numerous studies have investigated the potential of social control theory to explain criminal conduct. For example, Uggen (2000) analyzed data from the National Supported Work Demonstration Project to which people were referred by the criminal justice system or social service agencies. A sample of participants with criminal records were randomly assigned to either the control or treatment groups; those in the treatment group were hired in minimum wage jobs in the construction or service industry. All participants then reported rates of work, crime, and arrest for the following 3 years. Uggen found that participants 27 years or older in the treatment group experienced significantly lower rates of arrest than those of similar ages in the control group. This suggests that employment may have acted as a turning point, increasing social bonds and commitment to conventional lifestyles.

Bouffard and Rice (2010) analyzed how the level of social bonding in college students affected hypothetical actions regarding drunk driving. Participants completed surveys measuring their level of commitment to social institutions and attachments to others. They were then presented with a realistic scenario and rated how likely they would be to engage in driving after drinking. They found that greater levels of social bonding positively affected decisional self-control which then negatively impacted offending. This implies that more social bonds may increase the cost of criminal behavior in an individual's decision making process.

In conclusion, incorporating cognitive-behavioral treatment in employment programs for offenders is supported by social learning theory. The criminogenic needs would be addressed through modeling and positive reinforcement of prosocial values, especially those related to employment success. Subsequently, as offenders enter the workplace, their commitment to

conventional values may reduce commission of crime and rates of recidivism, as predicted by social control theory. These two theories provide the foundation for providing cognitive-behavioral treatment for offenders seeking employment.

IV. Cognitive-Behavioral Programs

Numerous studies have evaluated the success of treatment programs for offenders and certain elements have been recognized to be essential in reducing recidivism. Cognitive-behavioral treatment should adhere to the risk-need-responsivity principles and seek to promote prosocial thinking and behavior through modeling and role-play. Several programs based on these foundations have been shown to be effectual at decreasing the rate of re-offending.

Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

Research has found that effective cognitive-behavioral programs follow the principles of risk, need, and responsivity. The risk principle refers to targeting medium- and high-risk offenders for intervention. The level of risk should be measured by an assessment that considers both static and dynamic risk factors (Serin, Lloyd, & Hanby, 2010). Static factors that are associated with recidivism risk include variables that do not change such as gender, age of first offense, criminal history, and childhood experiences. Dynamic factors, on the other hand, can potentially be modified. The most predictive are the Big Four criminogenic needs: anti-social associates, attitudes, behavior, and personality, while others include substance abuse, education, and employment. Higher-risk offenders need more intensive treatment services in order to reduce recidivism. Lower-risk offenders, however, require little or no intervention; more intensive treatment may actually increase recidivism in this population (Andrews & Bonta,

2010). This may be due to treatment interfering with protective factors in low-risk individuals and to the association with higher-risk antisocial offenders (Smith, Gendreau, & Swartz, 2009).

The needs principle refers to treating the criminogenic needs of the offender. Dynamic risk factors determined by a risk assessment should be addressed by treatment programs. While static risk factors are important in determining risk level with regards to the risk principle, they cannot be treated since they are fixed. Treatment programs should focus on the aspects of an offender that can change and that are associated with recidivism. The Big Four criminogenic needs, antisocial attitudes, associates, behavior, and personality, are the most effective targets for intervention (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Programs which do not address these needs have shown to be ineffective. For example, “scared straight” programs, boot camps, wilderness programs, pet programs, art or drama groups, or punishment-based treatment have all been unsuccessful at reducing rates of reoffending. One analysis even found theories held by professionals in correctional agencies included the beliefs that offenders needed acupuncture, healing lodges, getting in touch with their feminine sides, being treated like babies, or having better diets (Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002).

The responsivity principle refers to the delivery of the treatment and consists of two components: general and specific responsivity. The general responsivity principle asserts that the most effective interventions are guided by cognitive, behavioral, and social learning theories. For example, strategies such as cognitive restructuring, operant conditioning, modeling and role-playing are effective for reshaping offenders’ thinking and behaviors. Specific responsivity considers the needs, personality, and learning style of the individual. Cognitive deficits, interpersonal problems, anxiety, motivation, cultural differences, gender, and other individual characteristics need to guide effective delivery of treatment. Curriculum, format, instructor, or

level of instruction may need to be altered to best fit the needs of the offender (Smith et al., 2009).

This model is based on research on the effectiveness of treatment programs for offenders. Smith et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis on offender rehabilitation programs analyzing adherence to the principles and the effects on recidivism. Regarding risk, treatment programs had the greatest positive effect on higher risk individuals. Lower-risk offenders were either little affected or negatively affected (recidivism actually increased for low-risk individuals in at least one program). The analysis provided strong support for the needs principle as well. Programs that targeted criminogenic needs were much more effective than those that treated other needs. Finally, the responsivity principle was also validated in that cognitive-behavioral programs were more effective than other types of programs. Programs that adhered to all three principles reduced recidivism by 28% on average compared to other programs whose average risk reduction rate was 5%.

Components of Effective Programs

Cognitive-behavioral programs seek to address criminogenic needs by affecting cognitive and behavioral patterns. Treatment is designed to change distorted or dysfunctional thoughts and to teach new cognitive skills. Coping skills are taught to offenders so that they can respond pro-socially to high-risk stressful situations. In addition, programs educate offenders on problem-solving skills in order to increase positive outcomes and avoid negative consequences (National Institute of Corrections, 2007).

The cognitive aspect of cognitive-behavioral therapy focuses on automatic thoughts, underlying assumptions, and core beliefs. Automatic thoughts occur immediately when triggered by an event in a person's environment. An automatic thought may concern

expectations about how well a person can perform a behavior, assessments of the value or meaning of events, or the internal or external attribution of events. These thoughts may be distorted and cause harmful responses (National Institute of Corrections, 2007). For example, a person may blame a victim for a crime or misinterpret the innocent intentions of another person which can cause conflict. Underlying assumptions and core beliefs are more stable mental processes that organize a person's automatic thinking. Cognitive behavioral therapy seeks to change these cognitions through identifying thoughts and emotions, thought-stopping, and thought-switching. Problem-solving techniques such as calming down, thinking of alternative actions, weighing positive and negative consequences, and viewing the situation from another perspective also are methods to alter distorted thinking (National Institute of Corrections, 2007).

The behavioral component of cognitive-behavioral treatment consists of teaching offenders interpersonal and social skills. These can include communication, assertiveness, and conflict resolution training on skills such as asking for help, apologizing, giving feedback, responding to anger, and making a complaint. In treatment, offenders recognize high-risk situations, identify and change distorted thinking, and practice prosocial responses through role-plays. Positive thoughts and behaviors are reinforced throughout treatment (National Institute of Corrections, 2007).

Effective cognitive-behavioral treatment programs for offenders all have a similar curriculum design. Instructors guide offenders in recognizing the problems that led to past negative consequences, describing goals, choosing prosocial actions to reach goals, and effectively performing these actions. Treatment is usually structured and delivered from manuals to small groups of offenders. Manualized curricula can promote consistency across counselors and locations and have been shown to improve program results. Research has also

found that treatment should utilize modeling and role-playing to teach behavioral skills and that reinforcement should be mainly positive rather than negative (National Institute of Corrections, 2007).

Programs also need to have therapeutic integrity wherein treatment providers are appropriately trained and supervised. This has been found to be critical for the effective delivery of instruction so that programs are delivered according to evidence-based practices. Instructors should practice effective modeling and reinforcement, deliver structured learning procedures for teaching skills, promote cognitive self-change, and engage in motivational interviewing. In order to ensure therapeutic integrity, treatment programs should be evaluated periodically. These evaluations can include program audits, offender surveys, studies of changes in criminogenic needs of participants, and recidivism rate comparisons (Latessa et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2009).

Effective Cognitive-Behavioral Programs

Numerous cognitive-behavioral treatment programs for offenders have been developed which employ evidence-based practices and have demonstrated improvements in criminogenic needs and reductions in recidivism rates. For example, Brooks et al. (2012) evaluated a reentry program that followed the principles of risk-need-responsivity. Offenders in a New Jersey treatment program completed assessments and programming that included treatment plans, lectures, classes, and counseling sessions. Consistent with the principles, programming was targeted toward higher-risk offenders, programming followed a cognitive-behavioral model, and interventions were targeted towards the individual offenders' needs according to the assessment. Specific criminogenic needs that were addressed included antisocial attitudes and orientation, antisocial patterns of behavior, antisocial associates, and education/employment. The results found that, after treatment, offenders significantly improved in attitudes toward crime, antisocial

behaviors, relationships, and education/employment. Offenders who scored highest on the risk scale also demonstrated significant improvements in criminogenic needs. This study provides evidence of the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral treatment on improving criminogenic risk factors.

Another study conducted by Devlin and Gibbs (2010) analyzed the Responsible Adult Culture program which was administered to felony offenders in an Ohio correctional facility. The offenders participated in group meetings that taught social skills and social perspective-taking to improve moral judgment and social decision-making. They also learned skills to modify thinking errors, manage anger, and perform constructive behavior. This model follows the cognitive-behavioral treatment model by addressing antisocial cognition and providing skills to improve antisocial behavior. The authors utilized a treatment group at another facility as a comparison group. The comparison group also addressed criminal behavior; however, the prime motivator for change was peer support. This program did not contain a cognitive-restructuring component. The authors measured recidivism 6 and 12 months from release and found that participants in the Responsible Adult Culture program improved with regards to cognitive distortions and moral reasoning. Moreover, the treatment group had significantly less institution misconduct and lower recidivism rates than the comparison group. This suggests that positive cognitive treatment outcomes are associated with reduced recidivism.

Golden et al. (2006) examined another cognitive-behavioral program, Thinking for a Change, delivered to adult offenders on probation. According to the risk principle, participants were selected only if they were classified as medium or high risk/need. The program facilitators completed a training program and delivered sessions covering cognitive restructuring, social skills training, and problem-solving. Therefore, the program also adhered to the need and

responsivity principles. The treatment group improved regarding social problem solving as indicated by pre- and post-tests on a self-report instrument and an applied problem-solving test. Moreover, the new offense rate for participants in the treatment group was 33% lower than that of the control group. Recidivists had significantly lower problem-solving skills than non-recidivists, which indicates the connection between problem-solving skills and criminal behavior.

Importantly, some cognitive-behavioral programs have specifically addressed the area of employment for offenders. Preparing Inmates for Re-Entry through Assistance, Training, and Employment Skills (PIRATES) is a treatment program designed to improved problematic thoughts related to employment for male offenders. Musgrove et al. (2012) studied a group of offenders in a medium security program who participated in the PIRATES program. The curriculum focused on identifying and modifying negative career thoughts, recognizing values and skills, and teaching job seeking skills. The goal was to teach how to solve life and career problems and to increase confidence in achieving success upon release. The researchers administered the Career Thoughts Inventory to the participants before and after treatment. The inventory measured dysfunctional thinking in problem-solving and decision-making regarding employment. The results demonstrated that participants significantly decreased dysfunctional thinking about employment after treatment. This demonstrates that cognitive programs can be successful when specifically targeted towards employment for offenders.

The University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (2016) also designed a cognitive-behavioral intervention for offenders who have moderate to high need in the area of employment. The program, Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Offenders Seeking Employment (CBI-EMP) consists of five modules: motivational enhancement, cognitive

restructuring, social skills/emotional regulation skills, problem-solving, and success planning. Facilitators teach how to identify and manage high-risk situations associated with securing and maintaining employment. The format is based on improving antisocial cognition and behavior through cognitive restructuring, social skill building, and problem-solving. Facilitators model prosocial behavior and then guide offenders in practicing the skills through role-plays. Positive reinforcement is also an important component in strengthening prosocial thoughts and behaviors in participants. CBI-EMP is a valuable example of a program that meets the risk-need-responsivity principle and utilizes a cognitive-behavioral approach to specifically address the employment needs of offenders.

V. Recommendations

Given the evidence that gainful employment reduces the rate of reoffending, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) can contribute to the reduction of recidivism by successfully addressing the employment needs of offenders. According to evidence-based practices, treatment programs should follow the principle of risk-need-responsivity in order to target the appropriate offenders and in order to effectively structure the program. This also allows for the responsible allocation of limited resources; when abiding by research-driven recommendations, treatment will have the greatest impact.

Risk Assessment

The risk component of the risk-need-responsivity principle states that the offenders who will most benefit from treatment are those who have a medium to high risk of recidivating. Those individuals will experience the greatest gains from intensive services while low-risk offenders may actually be harmed by intensive interventions. In order to determine the risk level

of an offender, the DOC should utilize an actuarial risk assessment tool. Actuarial risk assessments differ from clinical assessments in that an instrument statistically analyzes data about offenders to predict risk level. In contrast, clinical assessments involve a practitioner gathering information about an offender and then using judgment and experience to determine risk level. Evidence has shown that actuarial assessments are more accurate than clinical predictions (Latessa & Lovins, 2010).

Effective risk assessments measure factors that have been shown to be associated with criminal behavior. The 8 major risk factors are antisocial attitudes, associates, personality, and behavior, family factors, education/employment, leisure activities, and substance abuse. This list includes static factors, which cannot be altered, and dynamic factors, which can change. For example, the static factor of a family history of incarceration cannot be modified by the offender or a program, whereas the dynamic factor of antisocial attitudes can be addressed by treatment. A risk assessment tool should account for both types of factors in order to best predict risk level (Latessa & Lovins, 2010).

A risk assessment tool should also be reliable and valid. Reliability refers to the consistency of results regardless of who administers the tool. Multiple people should be able to utilize the assessment for a certain offender and achieve similar results. The validity of an assessment is the ability to accurately predict the risk level of an offender. The number of false positives and false negatives should be minimal in order for the assessment tool to be useful (Latessa & Lovins, 2010).

Fortunately, the Wisconsin DOC already utilizes a risk assessment tool, Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS), to evaluate the risk and needs of offenders statewide (Wisconsin Department of Corrections, n.d.). COMPAS predicts

the risk of re-arrest for any crime based on risk/need scales which include criminal history, attitudes, associates, personality, family, substance abuse, social engagement, and mental health. These scales allow for categorizing offenders into three risk levels: low, medium, and high risk (Lansing, 2012).

Lansing (2012) studied the accuracy of the COMPAS assessment in predicting the re-arrest rates of offenders. The study found that the rates of re-arrest within 2 years significantly increased with each risk level: 16.9% for low-risk, 32.7% for medium risk, and 53.8% for high risk. The assessment was calculated to have an overall satisfactory predictive accuracy of 0.71, which is similar or higher than other current assessments. The results also showed that the five factors that were most strongly associated with re-arrest were non-compliance history, educational/vocational problems, criminal associates, anger, and impulsivity. These results reinforce the importance of addressing criminal patterns of thinking and behavior in order to assist in employment.

Job Readiness

In addition to assessing the recidivism risk level, the job readiness level of offenders should be evaluated. Some offenders already have job skills and a work history; while they may be at a medium or high risk of re-offending, their criminogenic needs do not include the inability to maintain employment. Therefore, these offenders would not greatly benefit from the employment program. Medium to high risk offenders who do have vocational needs are more appropriate for the employment program (Duran, Plotkin, Potter, & Rosen, 2013).

This need can also be determined by the COMPAS assessment since COMPAS includes a scale that measures educational and vocational success. A high score on this scale represents a combination of the following: a failure to graduate high school, trouble in school, few jobs skills,

no current employment, lack of employment history, and/or access to only minimum wage jobs. A score in the Probable range for Vocation/Education indicates that the offender has difficulty successfully maintaining employment (Northpointe, 2015). These offenders would most benefit from an employment focused treatment program.

Recommendations for Employment Program

Every offender in the Wisconsin DOC should have a COMPAS assessment completed to determine risk-level and job-readiness. Once medium to high risk offenders with a vocational need are identified, they should be placed into a cognitive-behavioral employment program, such as CBI-EMP. This program addresses the needs principle by focusing on the criminogenic needs that are highly associated with recidivism, such as antisocial cognition, personality, and behavior. CBI-EMP also follows the responsivity principle by utilizing a cognitive-behavioral approach. Offenders are taught cognitive restructuring, social skills, and problem-solving skills through modeling, role-playing, and reinforcement. Moreover, the program is focused on thoughts and behaviors that relate to securing and maintaining employment (University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, 2016).

Once they have completed a cognitive-behavioral program, offenders should then be provided with more traditional employment assistance. The prosocial attitudes and behaviors learned in treatment will prepare them to fully take advantage of further assistance in securing employment. Skills concerning writing resumes, searching for appropriate jobs, and performing in interviews will be more likely to be successfully utilized by offenders who have the motivation, social skills, and problem-solving skills taught in the cognitive-behavioral program (Duran et al., 2013).

In order for offenders to best utilize the competencies they learn in treatment, the program should be delivered shortly before release or preceding a work assignment outside of prison (Duran et al., 2013). Offenders that are soon to be transferred to a correctional center in order to begin a work assignment or offenders who are 6 months from release should be given priority for enrollment. These individuals would then have the opportunity to immediately practice the skills learned in the program.

Many of the offenders who are close to a job assignment or release are in medium and minimum security institutions. Therefore, the employment program would most likely be delivered in these institutions. If staffing allows, the correctional centers which house inmates on work assignments may be another possible location for implementation. This program may assist inmates in modifying antisocial thinking and behavior while currently employed in order to experience greater success on the job. The concurrence of employment and treatment may serve to better reinforce the newly acquired skills.

Other factors also are important to consider when implementing a cognitive-behavioral employment program. Before delivering the curriculum, facilitators would need to be properly trained by attending certified training sessions. The program should also be periodically evaluated to ensure fidelity. Auditors would observe the delivery of the program as well as analyze the outcomes measured by recidivism rates to determine that the treatment is resulting in significant improvements (Latessa et al., 2002). Communication between treatment providers inside the institutions and probation and parole agents supervising offenders in the community also should be coordinated so that offenders are provided with continuity of services (Duran et al., 2013). Offenders should be matched with appropriate employment assistance upon release

so that they can overcome the multitude of barriers that face ex-inmates. The treatment provided should aid in them taking full advantage of the services offered.

VI. Summary and Conclusion

Thousands of offenders are released into communities across Wisconsin every year and over 1/3 of these offenders are rearrested within 3 years. In order to reduce this recidivism rate, to improve the chances of successful reentry for offenders, and to increase the quality and safety of neighborhoods, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections needs to continue to increase the use of evidence-based practices when considering programming for offenders.

A critical reentry strategy is addressing the employment needs of offenders. Research has shown that stable employment upon release from prison reduces the rate of re-offending. As explained by social control theory, employment provides a prosocial framework and increases investment in a conventional lifestyle. However, ex-inmates face multiple barriers in securing and maintaining employment, including lack of education and vocation skills, limited employment history, few job opportunities, lack of resources, mental health issues, substance abuse problems, and a criminal record.

Traditional employment programs for offenders, which focus on writing resumes, practicing interviews, providing vocational skills, and working in transitional jobs, have been found to be ineffective in reducing recidivism rates. Studies have found that the factors that are most strongly associated with criminal conduct are antisocial attitudes, personality, associates, and behavior. In order for offenders to take advantage of employment resources, these criminogenic needs must first be confronted. It is not adequate to simply supply assistance with finding a job; the underlying criminal thoughts, personality, and behaviors need to be addressed

(Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2016). Therefore, this paper recommends that employment programs include a cognitive-behavioral component.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Offenders Seeking Employment (CBI-EMP) developed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute would be an ideal program to be implemented in Wisconsin DOC institutions. Driven by research, the program follows the principle of risk-need-responsivity. The risk principle states that the offenders with a medium to high risk of recidivating are best served by intensive programming. The DOC can utilize its current risk assessment, COMPAS, to determine which offenders fit this category. Moreover, COMPAS can inform practitioners which offenders score a Probable in the vocational/educational scale which indicates that they are less job-ready and would benefit from an employment program (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2016).

CBI-EMP adheres to the need principle by addressing the criminogenic needs that are correlated with re-offending. The program addresses faulty thinking patterns, antisocial attitudes, and criminal patterns of behavior. In accordance with the responsivity principle, CBI-EMP delivers its curriculum in a format that incorporates cognitive, behavioral, and social learning theories. Offenders identify risky thoughts, connect them to risky behaviors, and recognize the advantages and disadvantages of certain choices. The curriculum also includes building motivation, improving social skills, and cultivating problem-solving skills. Facilitators model prosocial behavior, guide offenders through role-plays which practice important skills, and use positive reinforcement in order to strengthen positive behavior.

CBI-EMP should be delivered to medium to high risk offenders who are less job ready shortly before they are released or are placed into a job assignment in a correctional center. The cognitive-behavioral program should be delivered by trained facilitators and be periodically

audited in order to ensure fidelity. After completing CBI-EMP, offenders then can receive traditional employment services relating to searching for and obtaining employment. They can then incorporate the practiced prosocial skills during a job search and after securing employment.

The cognitive restructuring and prosocial behavioral practice should enable offenders to maintain gainful employment and reduce their risk of reoffending (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2016). Stable employment can increase the quality of life for the offender, his family, and his community and provide an incentive to desist from criminal activity.

Incorporating cognitive-behavioral treatment into employment programs can, therefore, be an important reentry strategy for the Wisconsin DOC and for offenders and communities across the state.

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