Risk Reduction

What is risk reduction all about?

1. Accurate assumptions about which individuals are likely to commit a crime.

2. Effectively targeting interventions and supervision to lower the likelihood a person will commit a crime.
Risk Reduction

- **Risk principle.** Match the level of service to the offender’s likelihood to re-offend.
Risk Reduction

▪ **What do we mean by Risk?**

We mean, “How likely is a person to commit a crime?”

RISK ≠ Crime Type

≠ Sentence or Disposition

≠ Custody or Security Classification Level
Risk Reduction

- How do we know how likely a person is to commit a crime?
  - Predictive assessment instruments.
  - Use algorithms to determine the probability that someone will commit a crime.
  - BUT they must be normed and validated to be predictive.
Risk Reduction

- Risk principle. Match the level of service to the offender’s likelihood to re-offend.

HIGHER RISK = MORE INTERVENTION
  = MORE STRUCTURE
  = MORE SUPERVISION
  = MORE OF YOUR RESOURCES
Risk Reduction

To have enough resources for higher risk offenders, we have to allocate FEWER resources to lower risk offenders.

LOWER RISK  =  LESS INTERVENTION
             =  LESS STRUCTURE
             =  LESS SUPERVISION
             =  LESS OF YOUR RESOURCES
Risk Reduction

- **Risk principle.** Tells us WHO to target
Now, we know WHO.

So, what do we DO?
Risk Reduction

- **Need principle.** Assess criminogenic needs and target those needs with treatment and interventions.
Risk Reduction

- **Criminogenic needs**: Dynamic or changeable factors that contribute to the likelihood that someone will commit a crime.
People involved in the justice system have many needs deserving treatment, but not all of these needs are associated with criminal behavior. Andrews & Bonta (2006)
Risk Reduction

1. Anti-social attitudes
2. Anti-social friends and peers
3. Anti-social personality pattern
4. Family and/or marital factors
5. Substance abuse
6. Lack of education
7. Poor employment history
8. Lack of pro-social leisure activities
### Major Risk/Need (criminogenic) factors and associated dynamic needs

(i.e.: promising intermediate targets for reduced recidivism)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Risk/Need Factor</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Dynamic Need</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial Attitudes</td>
<td>Attitudes, values, beliefs, and rationalizations supportive of crime, and cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment, and defiance. Criminal/reformed criminal/anti-criminal identity.</td>
<td>Reduce antisocial cognition; recognize risky thinking and feeling; build up alternative, less risky thinking and feeling; adopt reform/anti-criminal identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antisocial Friends and Peers</td>
<td>Close association with criminal others and relative isolation from anti-criminal others; immediate social support for crime.</td>
<td>Reduce association with criminal others; enhance association with anti-criminal others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antisocial Personality Pattern</td>
<td>Adventurous pleasure seeking, weak self control, restlessly aggressive, callous, and disagreeable.</td>
<td>Build problem-solving skills, self-management skills, anger management and coping skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family/Marital</td>
<td>Two key elements are weak nurturance/caring and poor monitoring/ supervision.</td>
<td>Reduce conflict, build positive relationships, and enhance monitoring and supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs.</td>
<td>Reduce substance abuse, reduce the personal and interpersonal supports for substance-oriented behavior, enhance alternatives to drug abuse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School/Work</td>
<td>Low levels of performance and satisfactions in school and/or work (low socio-economic achievement).</td>
<td>Enhance performance, rewards, and satisfactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure/Recreation</td>
<td>Low levels of involvement and satisfactions in anti-criminal leisure pursuits.</td>
<td>Enhance involvement, rewards, and satisfactions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2 The minor risk/need factors (and less promising intermediate targets for reduced recidivism) include the following: personal/emotional distress, major mental disorder, physical health issues, fear of official punishment, physical conditioning, low IQ, social class of origin, seriousness of current offence, and other factors unrelated or only mildly related to offending.
# Communication Skills

- Judges, probation officers, service providers, mentors, jail staff, prison staff

# Services

- Addiction Treatment
- Co-Occurring Disorder Treatment
- Job Training/Employment Readiness

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2. The minor risk/need factors (and less promising intermediate targets for reduced recidivism) include the following: personal/emotional distress, major mental disorder, physical health issues, fear of official punishment, physical conditioning, low IQ, social class of origin, seriousness of current offence, and other factors unrelated or only mildly related to offending.
Risk Reduction

Need Principle

- Put higher-risk/higher-need offenders in treatment slots.

- Prioritize a person’s “high” needs FIRST when developing a case plan.
Risk Reduction

- The RISK principle tells us WHO to target.
- The NEED principle tells us WHAT to target.
- The RESPONSIVITY principle tells us HOW to target.
Risk Reduction

- **Responsivity**: Maximize a person’s ability to learn!

Responsivity is all about what helps a person learn.
Risk Reduction

- Responsivity means:
  It’s not enough to target higher risk people with the right interventions, you have to do it in a way that supports them as they learn the new skills you are trying to teach.
So, how do we support a person as they learn new skills?

- Consider a person’s personal **strengths** and personal **characteristics** when interacting with them and designing their interventions.
Risk Reduction

Personal characteristics? Strengths?

- High anxiety?
- Mental disorders?
- Motivation level?
- Verbal skills?
- Concrete thinking style?
- Trauma survivor?
Risk Reduction

How can you build on strengths and reduce barriers to treatment?

- How ready is the person to change? → Meet the person wherever they are in their change process!

- Is their mental health creating a barrier? → Treat their mental disorders and free up their attention to participate fully in risk reduction interventions!
Stages of Change

Pre-Contemplation (Denial)

Contemplation ("yes but...")

Action (Ready for change)

Maintenance (Doing something)

Relapse (Skills to maintain w/o relapse)

PERMANENT EXIT

ENTER HERE

TEMPORARY EXIT
Responses to Changes

- Relapse
- Maintenance
- Action
- Pre-Contemplation
- Contemplation
- TEMPORARY EXIT
- Relapse Prevention
- Practical Strategies
- Avoid Demoralization
- PERMANENT EXIT

**External or Extrinsic Motivation**
External Motivation Strategies

- **Incentives** = Offender-defined incentives to respond to offender-defined goal achievement

- **Graduated Sanctions** = Described BEFORE the behavior and issued QUICKLY after criminal behavior is known
Responses to Changes

Internal or Intrinsic Motivation

- Avoid Demoralization
- Promote Self-Diagnosis
- Increase Ambivalence

Practical Strategies

- Relapse Prevention
- Maintenance
- Action

TEMPORARY EXIT

PERMANENT EXIT

ENTER HERE

Pre-Contemplation

Contemplation

Relapse
Internal Motivation

Behavior

Thoughts
Feelings

Cognitive Structure (Beliefs and Attitudes)

Sometimes Aware
Beneath the Surface

Visible
Risk Reduction

- **Express empathy ≠ approval or sympathy**
- **Roll with resistance = give up being right**
- **Develop discrepancy = notice the teeter-totter**
- **Promote change = Help ‘em believe they have the power to change.**