Use of Incentives and Sanctions to Promote Compliance with Supervision during Reentry:

An Implementation Strategy

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Speakers

Nathan Lowe
Research Associate
American Probation and Parole Association

Brett Garland, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Missouri State University

Eric Wodahl, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Criminal Justice
University of Wyoming
The resource center is continually updating its website with materials relevant to the reentry field.

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- Offers easy access to important research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of reentry programs and practices.

- Click on “What Works” tab on home page.

What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse

The What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse offers easy access to important research on the effectiveness of a wide variety of reentry programs and practices. It provides a user-friendly, one-stop shop for practitioners and service providers seeking guidance on evidence-based reentry interventions, as well as a useful resource for researchers and others interested in reentry. To get started, click the button below for additional information about this project or how to use this site; or, click on a focus area topic on the left to begin exploring. You can also conduct a customized search by clicking the advanced search link on the right.

Click here for more information about the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse and information on how to use this site.
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Learning Objectives

1. Describe the impact of relevant policies on supervision practices.
2. Review the behavioral science theory that underlies the use of incentives to promote positive behavior.
3. Explain the key findings of the research that has examined incentive-based practices and policies.
4. Discuss the key components of an implementation strategy for both research and practice.
Reduce Corrections Costs

Reduce People in Prisons
Increase Compliance!

Better Outcomes!
Implement EBPs
NEW TREND?
Behavioral Science Theory
Behavioral Approach

• “Most problem behaviors develop, are maintained, and change primarily through learning” (Spiegler & Guevremont, 2010).
• Violations as learned behavior
• Do we ignore other underlying causes – genetics, mental illness, etc.?
Operant Conditioning

• Behavior is learned
  • Changes in our environment
    • Positive/pleasurable changes - behavior will likely continue
    • Negative/unpleasant changes – behavior less likely to continue

• Behavior can be changed/manipulated
  • Manipulation of the environmental consequences
Key Principles of Incentives & Sanctions

- Certainty
- Swiftness
- Proportionality
- Fairness
- Individualized
Types of Incentives and Sanctions

- Tangible (typically reinforcers)
- Giving electronic gadgets
- Token
- Activity Based
- Social
Empirical Support for Operant Learning in Changing Problem Behaviors
Broader Scope of the Use of Reinforcements and Sanctions

- Schools
- Medical Professions
- Employee Performance
- Substance Abuse Counseling
Applications in CJ Settings

- DC Superior Court Drug Intervention Program
- Hawaii Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE)
- Wyoming Intensive Supervision Program
Wyoming ISP Behavioral Strategies Study

- Examining incentives and sanctions in community corrections
- Application of incentives and sanctions to ISP offenders
- Random selection of 283 adult ISP offenders in Wyoming between 2000 and 2003
Wyoming ISP Behavioral Strategies Study

Sanctions
- Verbal reprimand
- Written assignment
- Modify curfew hours
- Community service
- Program extension
- Electronic monitoring
- Inpatient/Outpatient TX
- County jail time

Rewards
- Verbal reinforcement
- Good time
- Remove from EM
- Level advancement
- Approve special activity
- ISP fee reduction
- Approve special visitation
Key Findings

• Reinforcements are more effective than sanctions at changing behavior; best when used in concert

• Achieving at high reinforcement to sanction ratio provides the best opportunity for success
  • 4:1 reinforcement to sanction incentive
Ratio of Rewards to Sanctions and the Probability of Success

![Graph showing the relationship between the ratio of rewards to punishments and success probability. The graph indicates an increase in success probability as the ratio of rewards to punishments increases.]
Key Components for an Effective Implementation Strategy
Putting the 4:1 Ratio into Practice

• Achieving a 4:1 incentives to sanctions ratio will not always be possible

• 4:1 **does not** mean 4 rewards have to be given before any sanction is delivered

• Adjust focus of supervision
Targeted Behaviors

- What are targeted behaviors?
- Identify target behaviors
- Address issues/concerns
Supervision should Commensurate with Risk
Importance of Structured Discretion

Why is DISCRETION essential?

Why is STRUCTURE essential?
Perceptions Matter…

…Among Both Officers and Offenders
Perceptions of Sanction Severity

![Graph showing perceptions of sanction severity. The x-axis represents various types of alternative sanctions, and the y-axis represents the equivalency ratio of alternative sanction to jail. The graph includes data points for agent/supervisor and offender perceptions.](image-url)
Relationships Matter
Engage Key Stakeholders
Organizational Culture

Skills
Staff
Strategy
Style
Shared Values
Structure
Systems
For Additional Information

Nathan Lowe
859.244.8057 or nlowe@csg.org

Brett Garland, PhD
417.836.6954 or brettgarland@missouristate.edu

Eric Wodahl, PhD
307.766.3803 or ewodahl@uwyo.edu