

# Improving Job Readiness and Retention for Higher Risk Populations

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# Speakers

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**Amy Barch**, Director, Turning Leaf Project

- **Delivers** technical assistance (TA) and training for Second Chance Act grantees
- **Advances** the knowledge base of the reentry field
- **Promotes** what works in reentry and successes of grantees
- **Facilitates** peer networks and information exchange
- **Provides** information for people returning to communities and their families

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# Agenda

- ❖ **Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment**
- ❖ Assessing the service capacity of employment programs
- ❖ Integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions in employment programs

# Correctional systems across the country are managing large populations <sup>1</sup>

- ❖ **1 in 38** adults are under correctional control
- ❖ **95%** of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released
- ❖ **68%** will be **rearrested** within 3 years
- ❖ **5 of 6** will be **rearrested** within 9 years



# Having a felony conviction and/or having been in prison can make people less employable <sup>2</sup>

Skill deterioration\*

Lack of access to pro-social networks\*

Employer bias

Legal barriers to employment

*\* For people who spent time in prison*

# Research on the intersection of reentry and employment <sup>3</sup>

Simply connecting someone to a job has not been shown to reduce recidivism.

➡ Address underlying needs related to recidivism

Not every person with a criminal record needs the same interventions.

➡ Assess level of job readiness and likelihood of recidivism

People who are higher risk require cognitive-behavioral interventions, while those services can be detrimental to people who are lower risk.

➡ Match people to interventions based on assessment results



# Risk-needs-responsivity (RNR) model as a guide to best practice

**Risk Principle:** *Match the intensity of a person's intervention to their risk of reoffending.*

**Needs Principle:** *Target criminogenic needs, such as antisocial behavior, substance abuse, antisocial attitudes, and antisocial peers.*

**Responsivity Principle:** *Tailor the intervention to the learning style, motivation, culture, demographics, and abilities of the individual. Address issues that impact responsivity.*

# Major risk/need factors associated with committing future crimes <sup>4</sup>

Risk Factor	Need
1. Presence of Antisocial Behavior	Build alternative behaviors
2. Antisocial Personality Pattern	Problem solving skills, anger management
3. Antisocial Cognition	Develop less risky thinking
4. Antisocial Associates	Reduce association with criminal others
5. Family and/or Marital Stressors	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships
6. Low Levels of Performance and Satisfaction in Work or School	Enhance performance, rewards
7. Lack of Prosocial Leisure Activities	Enhance outside involvement
8. Substance Abuse	Reduce use through integrated treatment

# Common barriers associated with people who are hard to employ <sup>5</sup>

Family, Logistical, and Legal Challenges	Education and Skills Gap	Needs Related to Responsiveness of Interventions
Responsible for child care	Low education level	Mental illness
High-conflict family situation*	Lack of occupation skills	Substance addiction*
Transportation problems	Limited work experience	Learning disability
Lack of stable housing	Lack of "soft" job skills*	Lack of motivation
Legal barriers to employment	Gaps in work experience	Negative attitudes about work*
Lack of proper documentation		Poor physical health

**\*Areas highlighted are also factors associated with committing future crime**

# Why should workforce development professionals care about risk factors?

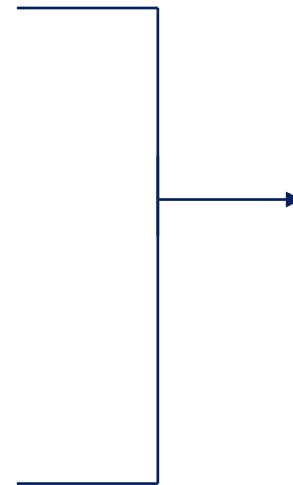
The “Big 4” risk factors affect one’s ability to succeed in the labor market.

Negative attitudes on the job

Unrealistic expectations about work

Lack of self-control/self-regulation

Poor problem-solving or coping skills



**Less likely to  
secure/maintain  
employed**

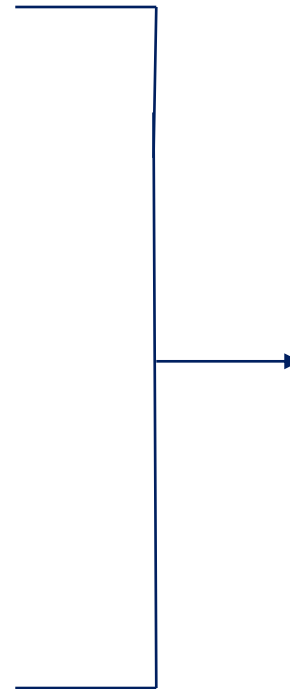
**Takeaway: you need to address the top 4 risk factors to see improvements in employment outcomes.**



# Why should correction/reentry professionals care about employability? 6

People with steady employment and earnings above minimum wage:

- Engage in more pro-social activities
- Engage in fewer risky activities
- Generate income for family which creates-
  - ✓ Stronger positive relationships
  - ✓ Improved mental health
  - ✓ Enhanced self-esteem



**Less likely to reoffend**

# The value of an integrated approach

**Reducing Criminogenic Risk**  
by addressing antisocial attitudes  
and behaviors

- Better attitude on the job
- Greater valuation of work
- Conflict resolution skills
- Problem-solving skills

- Structured time
- Ability to support family
- Prosocial associates
- Job and income stability

**Improving Employment Outcomes**  
through workforce development  
strategies

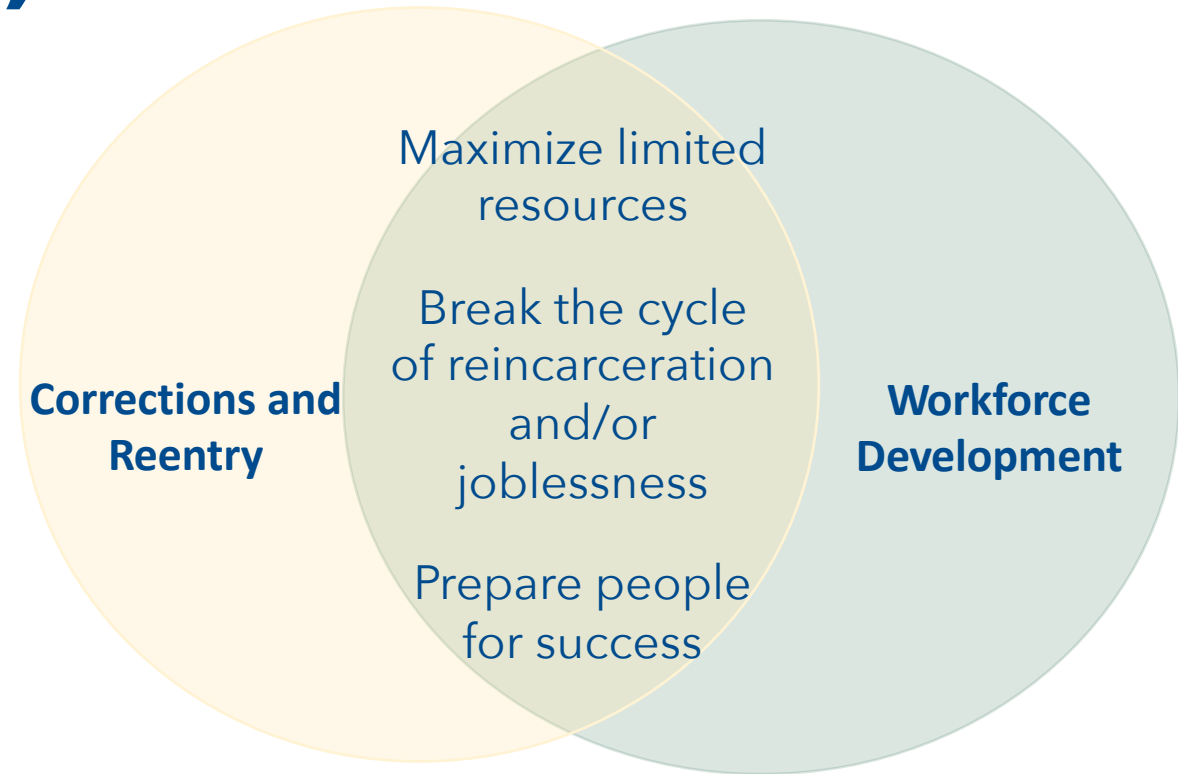
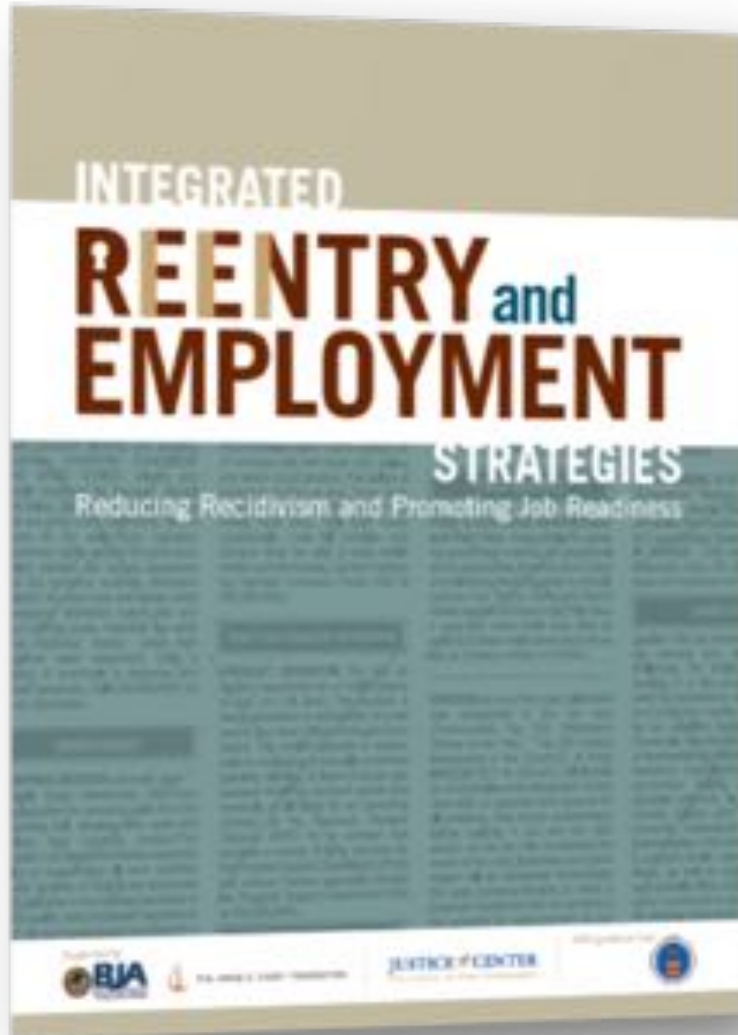
# **Polling question: What is the most significant barrier to employment facing your clients?**

- (A) Limited work experience**
- (B) Legal barriers to employment**
- (C) Lack of occupational skills**
- (D) Lack of “soft job skills”**
- (E) Negative attitudes about work**

# Agenda

- ❖ Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
- ❖ **Assessing the service capacity of employment programs**
- ❖ Integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions in employment programs

# Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) Framework

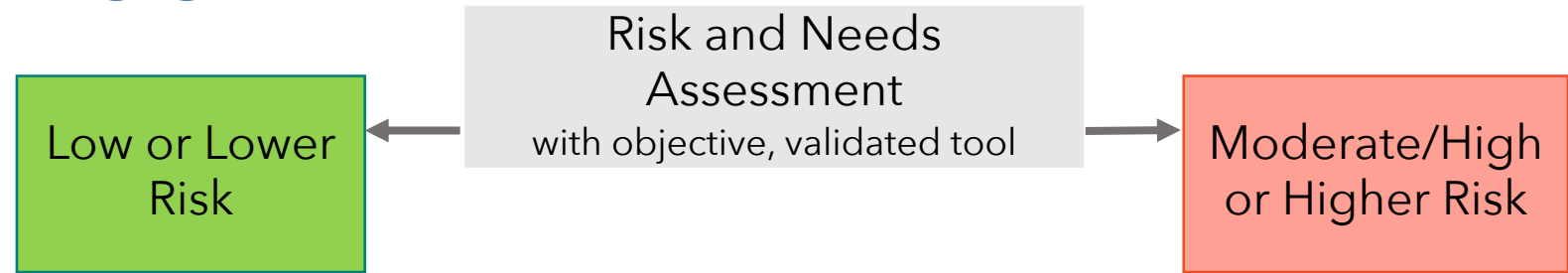


The framework bridges and integrates best practices from the **corrections, reentry, and workforce development** fields

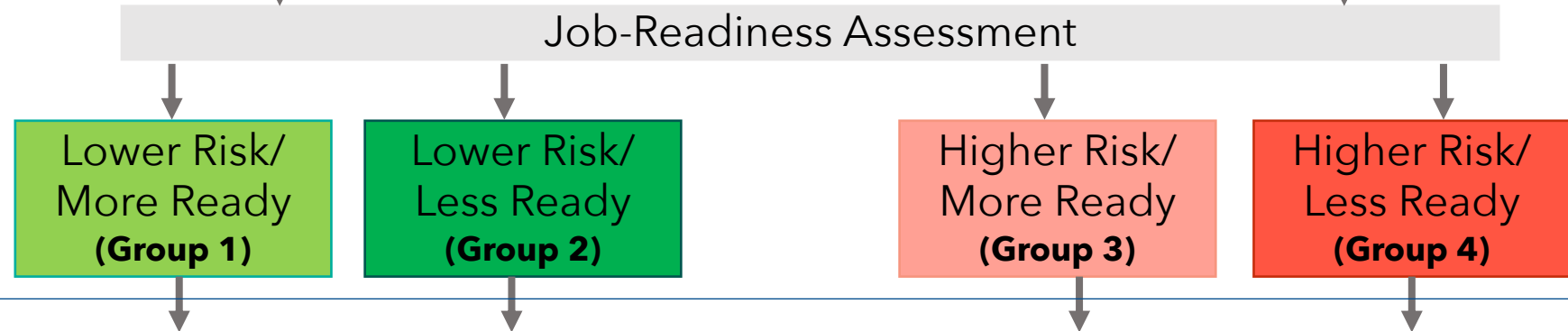


# Resource-Allocation and Service Matching Tool

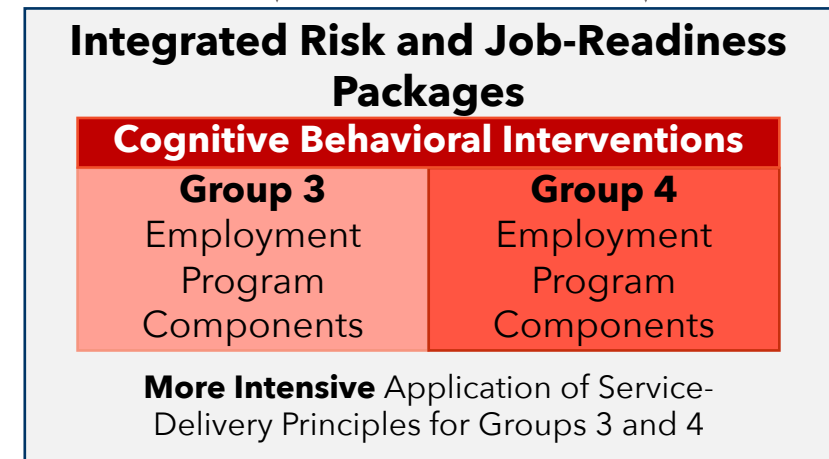
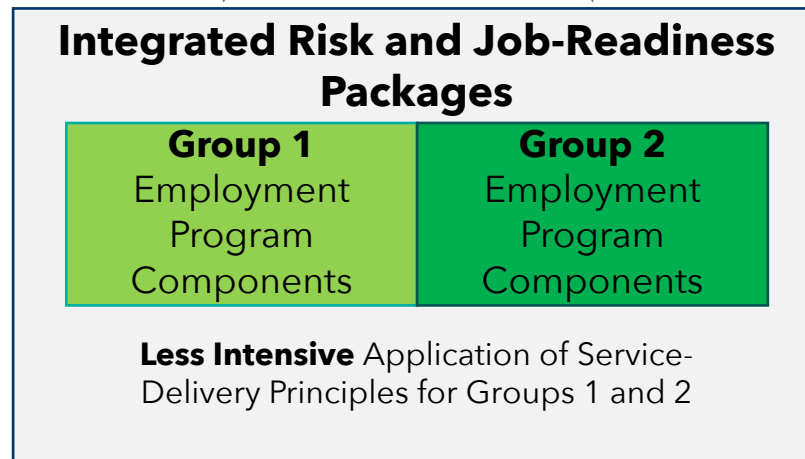
Step 1: Assess Risk & Needs



Step 2: Assess Job Readiness



Step 3: Deliver Targeted Services



# Self-Assessment for Employment-Focused Reentry Programs checklist

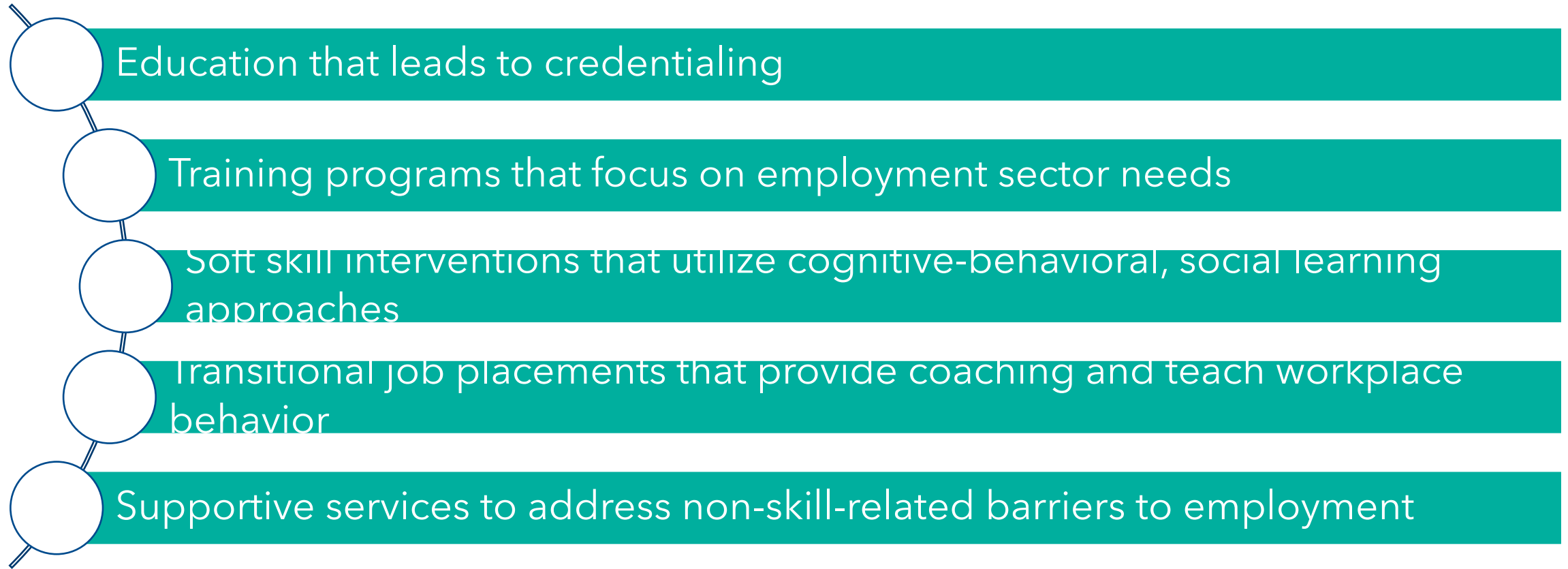


Assesses the extent to which programs are adopting best practices from the **workforce development field** that are shown to improve outcomes for hard-to-employ populations

Evaluates programs' use of service-delivery principles from the **corrections/reentry field** that have shown to reduce recidivism in cost-effective ways

Source: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/publications/self-assessment-for-employment-focused-reentry-programs/>

# Program components to promote job readiness for people **less ready** for employment (*What to do*)



# Program components to assist job finding/retention for people who are **more ready** for employment (*What to do*)

- 
- Non-transitional, subsidized employment opportunities with training and supports
  - Ongoing job coaching and job search guidance
  - Work with local employers to identify job openings
  - Job placement services
  - Participant and employer-facing retention and advancement services
  - Financial work incentives to encourage job retention and advancement

# Assessing employment program components capacity

Retention and advancement services (employer-facing) to mediate workplace issues, facilitate opportunities for advancement, and provide on-site support	<input type="checkbox"/> No retention or advancement services are available to employers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Retention and advancement services are mostly reactive (i.e., when an employer seeks support).	<input type="checkbox"/> Retention and advancement services are proactive and include strong employer-program staff relationships and coordination to identify growth opportunities.
Financial work incentives to encourage job retention and advancement	<input type="checkbox"/> No financial work incentives are available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial work incentives are offered for job acquisition.	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial work incentives are offered for job acquisition, as well as on an ongoing basis to recognize retention milestones.
<p>For each statement selected in the "A" column, add 1 point. For each statement selected in the "B" column, add 2 points. For each statement selected in the "C" column, add 3 points.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> _____</p>			
<p>Based on your score above, determine the current degree to which your program is providing job-retention and advancement services:</p> <p>7-8 points = not providing job retention and advancement services</p> <p>9-16 points = providing some job retention and advancement services</p> <p>17-21 points = providing robust job retention and advancement services</p>			



# Employment service-delivery principles to reduce recidivism *(How to do it)*

## Engagement

Address antisocial thinking and behavior through positive, high-impact staff-participant interactions (e.g., mentoring relationships or cognitive-behavioral interventions).

## Timing

Provide services shortly before or immediately upon release, or at the start of community supervision to address participants' immediate needs and adapt the services to the person's changing needs over time.

# Employment service-delivery principles to reduce recidivism *(How to do it)*

## Incentives

Increase motivation for positive change and improve job performance with measures such as stipends for maintaining employment and peer-supported recognition for program completion.

## Coordination

Collaborate with corrections, workforce development, and reentry professionals as well as other service providers to ensure that interventions are provided in a way that supports recidivism reduction and employment goals.

## Structured Time

Organize individuals' time with effective programming and positive activities to minimize opportunities for criminal actions and time with antisocial peers.

# Assessing service delivery capacity

	A	B	C
Structured programming in planned, prosocial activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Between one and three hours per week of structured programming is available. If more hours of structured programming are available, participation is voluntary.	<input type="checkbox"/> Between four and six hours per week of structured programming is available, and participation is required.	<input type="checkbox"/> More than six hours per week of structured programming is available, and participation is required.
Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programming to provide structured programming	<input type="checkbox"/> Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programs are not available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programs are offered and span between 1 and 20 hours per week.	<input type="checkbox"/> Transitional job or unsubsidized employment programs are offered and span between 20 and 40 hours per week.
<p>For each statement selected in the "A" column, add 1 point. For each statement selected in the "B" column, add 2 points. For each statement selected in the "C" column, add 3 points.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>TOTAL SCORE:</b> _____</p>			
<p>Based on your score above, determine which criminogenic risk and need grouping(s) your program is most appropriate to serve based on the amount of structured time available to participants.</p> <p>2 points = structured time of services is most appropriate for low-risk participants</p> <p>3-4 points = structured time of services is most appropriate for low- or moderate-risk participants</p> <p>5-6 points = structured time of services is most appropriate for high-risk participants</p>			

# Building service capacity

- ❖ Increase knowledge of effective practices for reducing recidivism and improving work outcomes
- ❖ Align employment services with effective practices
- ❖ Develop differentiated service tracks based on a participant's level of job readiness and risk to reoffend
- ❖ Develop formal partnerships with other agencies to provide targeted services

# Agenda

- ❖ Understanding the intersection of reentry and employment
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- ❖ **Integrating cognitive-behavioral interventions in employment programs**



# What are cognitive-behavioral interventions?

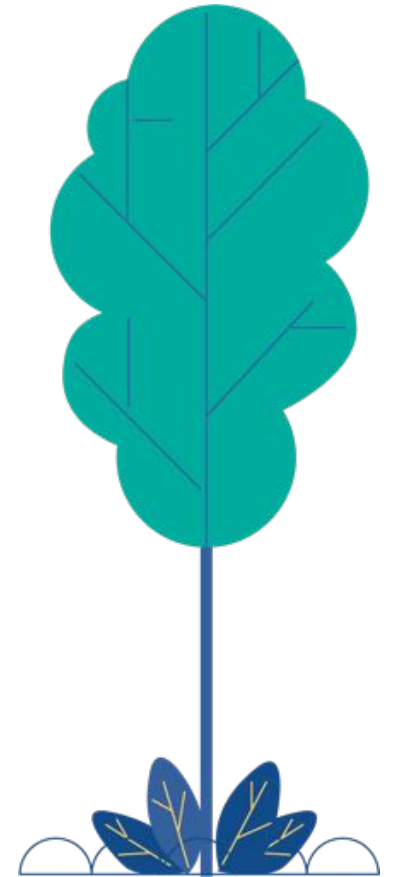
- This type of intervention:
  - ❑ Focuses on changing the individual's thinking patterns in order to change behavior
  - ❑ Can be incorporated into any routine engagement with a participant (e.g., a 15 minute case management meeting)
- Participants practice new behavior patterns and skills with feedback from facilitation/program staff
- Studies estimate between 23-25 percent reduction in recidivism

# READI Chicago (Chicago, IL)

**Engages** men who are at the highest risk of gun violence involvement and connect them to **paid transitional jobs, cognitive behavioral interventions, and support services.**

## WE ARE DRIVEN TO:

- Decrease shootings and homicides
- Create pathways for better life outcomes
- Promote long-term safety and opportunity in Chicago's most impoverished communities



# Turning Leaf Project (Charleston, SC)



[www.turningleafproject.com](http://www.turningleafproject.com)

- Serves men ages 25-50 who were **recently released from incarceration** and assessed at a **medium to high risk of rearrest**
- Helps change participants' **attitudes, thinking, and behavior** so they can complete probation and stay out of prison
- Integrates three hours of daily group CBI (150 hours over 10 weeks) with in-house employment, case management, and job placement.

# Selecting a cognitive-behavioral intervention (CBI) curriculum

Things to consider:

- Staff training
- Cultural competency of material
- Service delivery model
- Participant engagement strategies



# Staff Training

- Training/credentialing and fidelity is more important than the evidence-based curriculum selected
- Training non-CBI facilitators on cognitive-behavioral principles will support reinforcement of new behaviors
- Developing opportunities for booster staff trainings is important to reinforcing fidelity to CBI delivery
- Monitor facilitators delivery and provide feedback for improvements
- Training in facilitation skills and effective communication skills is as important as training in content

# Cultural competency of material used

Consider a curriculum that does not use the term "offender"

Consider material that is holistic/considers the multiple needs of the person

# Service delivery model

Things to consider:

- It is important to have a well-designed classroom behavior management system
- The quality of delivery is just as important as the quantity of delivery/hours of dosage provided
- Delivery should include one-on-one case management sessions



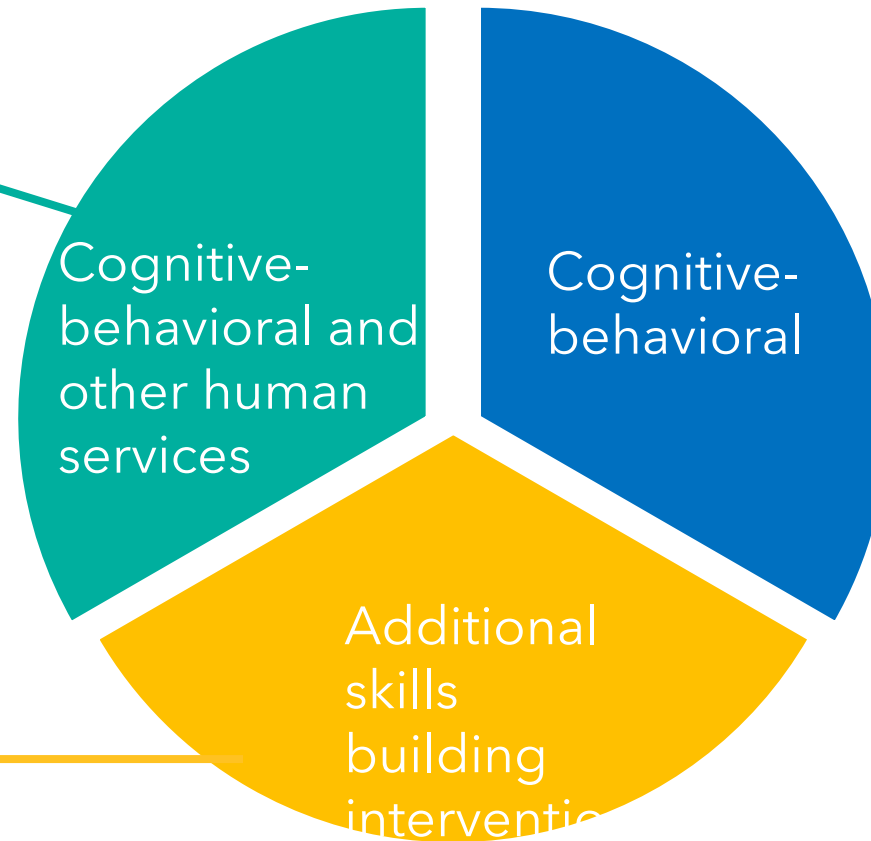
# To reduce the recidivism rate of the high-risk population, programming should include cognitive-behavioral, human service, and additional skills building interventions

## Interventions focus on:

- Substance abuse
- Family and/or marital stressors

## Interventions focus on:

- Low levels of performance and satisfaction in school/work
- Lack of prosocial leisure activities



## Interventions focus on:

- Antisocial behavior
- Antisocial personality patterns
- Antisocial cognitions
- Antisocial associates

*Given the limited research on dosage and recidivism to date, this chart presents a theoretical model to guide interventions for people assessed at a higher risk of recidivism*

# Dosage, intensity, and duration by risk level for adults <sup>7</sup>

Risk	Low	Moderate	Mod/High	High
Dosage	N/A	100	200	300
Duration	Minimal	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-18 months
Intensity	Minimal	1 time/week	2 times/week	2 times/week or residential

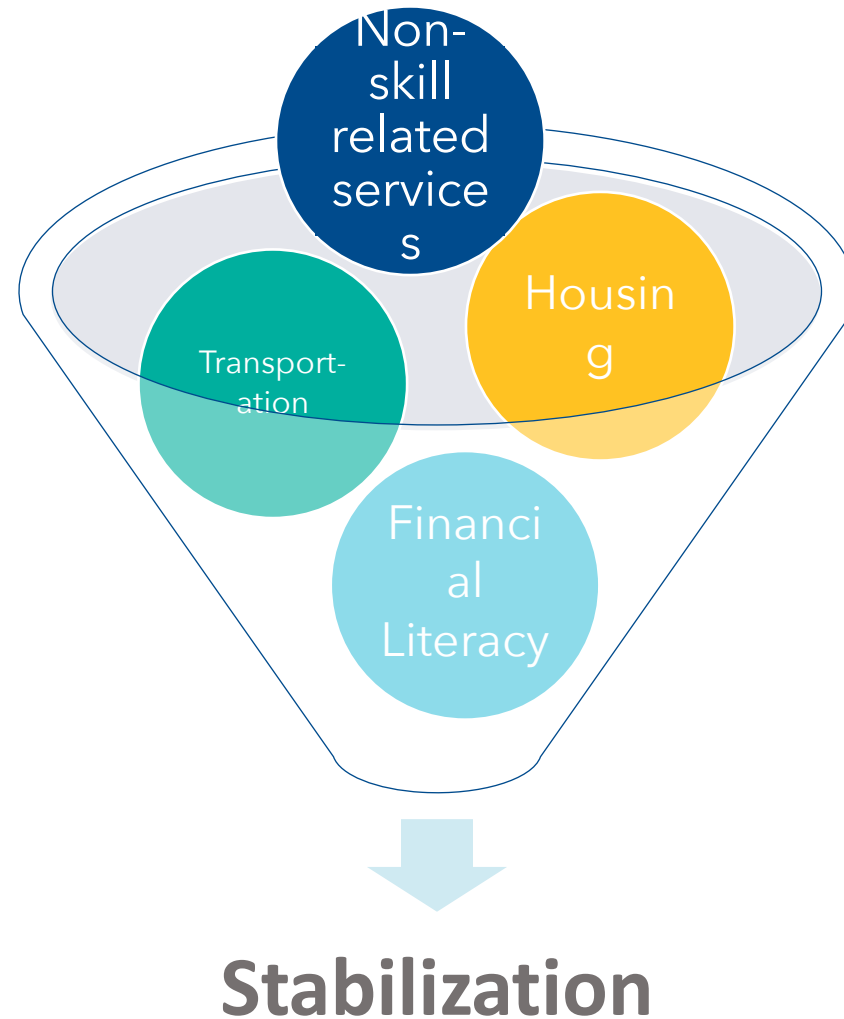
Given the limited research on dosage and recidivism to date, this chart presents a theoretical model to guide interventions for people assessed at a higher risk of recidivism

# Examples of cognitive-behavioral, human service, and additional skills building interventions

<b>A</b> <b>Cognitive-behavioral correctional interventions</b> <b>(provided as the primary response, may or may not be provided concurrently with columns B &amp; C)</b>	<b>B</b> <b>Cognitive-behavioral and other human service treatment interventions (provided as needed in addition to column A. May or may not be provided concurrently with columns A &amp; C)</b>	<b>C</b> <b>Additional skills building interventions as needed (provided in addition to column A. May or may not be provided concurrently with columns A &amp; B)</b>
<b>Cognitive-behavioral intervention that addresses top four criminogenic factors</b> <i>(examples: Thinking for Change, Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions – Core Curriculum, and Reasoning and Rehabilitation)</i>	<b>Substance addition treatment</b> <i>(may be provided before cognitive-behavioral correctional interventions to support physical stabilization or concurrently to support learning new skills)</i>	<b>Job training</b>
<b>Cognitive-behavioral intervention that addresses one of the top four criminogenic factors</b> <i>(examples: Anger Management and Domestic Violence Treatment – validated curriculum)</i>	<b>Mental health treatment</b> <i>(may be provided before cognitive-behavioral correctional interventions to support psychiatric stabilization or concurrently to support learning new skills)</i>	<b>Education services</b>
<b>Change agent for community supervision that address top four criminogenic factors through a cognitive case management model</b> <i>(examples: EPICS, STICS, STARR)</i>	<b>Family reunification services (cognitive-based program where skills are practiced)</b>	<b>Traditional case management</b> <i>(excludes referrals and compliance based models)</i>
	<b>Parenting skills training (cognitive-based program where skills are practiced)</b>	<b>Structured pro-social activities or mentoring services with identified prosocial peers</b>
	<b>Co-occurring disorder treatment</b>	<b>Health services</b>

Given the limited research on dosage and recidivism to date, this chart presents a theoretical model to guide interventions for people assessed at a higher risk of recidivism

# Offer supportive services not directed towards changing criminogenic risk



# Participant engagement strategies

- Use of stipends and incentives
- Well-designed program stages that move participants forward and back based on behavior
- Staff with lived experiences
- Employment as a motivation factor

# **Integrating CBI with subsidized and unsubsidized job placement**

# Integrating CBI with subsidized and unsubsidized job placement

## READI Chicago

- ❖ Integrates CBI and transitional jobs
  - ❑ Offers participants an opportunity to learn and practice new behaviors and techniques that can aid in job retention
  - ❑ Incorporates 18 months of paid work
  - ❑ Includes extensive outreach and reengagement
- ❖ Staff work with participants to address discrimination and collateral consequences to support long-term employment



# Integrating CBI with in-house employment and unsubsidized job placement

## Turning Leaf Project

- ❖ CBI is integrated with social enterprise programs and in-house employment daily for 3-5 months
- ❖ Completion of CBI and in-house employment experience results in job placement with local government or a private company
- ❖ Specific set of criteria determines whether a company is appropriate as a job placement site
- ❖ Ongoing career advisement and connections to other agencies for more specialized job training supports long term employment

# **Questions and answers**

# References

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3. Edward Latessa, "Why work is important and how to improve the effectiveness of correctional reentry programs that target employment," *Criminology and Public Policy* 11, no. 1 (2012).
4. D.A. Andrews, J. Bonta, and J.S. Wormith, "The Recent Past and Near Future of Risk and/or Need Assessment," *Crime and Delinquency*, 52 no. 1 (2006).
5. Le'Ann Duran, Martha Plotkin, Phoebe Potter and Henry Rosen, *Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness* (New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2013).
6. Graffam et al., "Variables affecting successful reintegration as perceived by offenders and professionals," *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 40 no. 1-2 (2004): 147-171; Visser et al. *Employment after prison: A longitudinal study of releases in three states*. (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 2008); Sampson, Robert J., and John H. Laub. *Crime in the making: Pathways and turning points through life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
7. National Institute of Corrections, "A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems: Starter Kit" (n.d.). Retrieved August 28, 2019 from [http://info.nicic.gov/ebdm/sites/info.nicic.gov/ebdm/files/docs/3c\\_Appendix\\_2.pdf](http://info.nicic.gov/ebdm/sites/info.nicic.gov/ebdm/files/docs/3c_Appendix_2.pdf).

# Resources

- Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Improving Job Readiness: [www.csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Final.Reentry-and-Employment.pp\\_.pdf](http://www.csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Final.Reentry-and-Employment.pp_.pdf)
- Self-Assessment For Employment-Focused Reentry Programs: Measuring Fidelity to the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) Framework: [www.csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/publications/self-assessment-for-employment-focused-reentry-programs/](http://www.csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/publications/self-assessment-for-employment-focused-reentry-programs/)
- National Transitional Jobs Network: [www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives/our-initiatives/national-transitional-jobs/](http://www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives/our-initiatives/national-transitional-jobs/)
- NRRC's Employer Engagement Toolkit: [www.csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/hosting-an-employer-engagement-event/](http://www.csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/hosting-an-employer-engagement-event/)
- Clean Slate Clearinghouse: [www.cleanslateclearinghouse.org](http://www.cleanslateclearinghouse.org)

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