



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Understanding the Expanded Risk-Need-Responsivity Model

Supervision, Programming, and Dosage

April 13, 2023 | David A. D'Amora, MS, LPC, CCFC

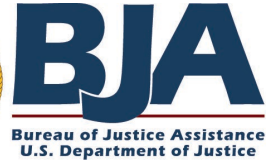
Presentation Outline

- I. Introductions of Presenters and Organizations
- II. Overarching Principles of the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model
- III. Overview of Criminogenic Risk, Need, and Responsivity
- IV. The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for RNR Assessments
- V. Questions and Answers

Today's Presenters

- David A. D'Amora, *Senior Policy Advisor, The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center*
- Steven Diehl, *Senior Policy Analyst, CSG Justice Center*
- Maria Fryer, *Justice Systems and Mental Health Policy Advisor, Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice*

What is the Office of Justice Programs?



- The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics to the criminal justice community.
- OJP is one of three grant-making components of the Department of Justice along with the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

Office of Justice Programs

BJA - Bureau of Justice Assistance

BJS - Bureau of Justice Statistics

NIJ - National Institute of Justice

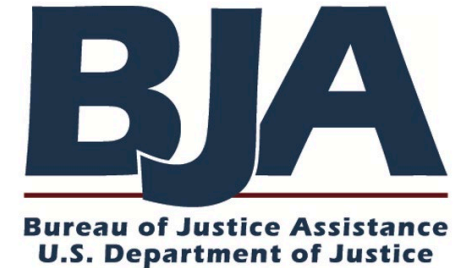
OVC - Office for Victims of Crime

OJJDP - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

SMART - Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking

U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance

Mission: BJA's mission is to provide leadership and services in grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support state, local, and Tribal justice strategies to achieve safer communities. BJA works with communities, governments, and nonprofit organizations to reduce crime, recidivism, and unnecessary confinement, and promote a safe and fair criminal justice system.



www.bja.gov





**BJA Director
Karhlton F. Moore**

Appointed by President Biden in February 2022, Director Moore leads BJA’s programmatic and policy efforts on providing a wide range of resources, including training and technical assistance, to law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, reentry, justice information sharing, and community-based partners to address chronic and emerging criminal justice challenges nationwide.

Policy Office	Programs Office	Operations Office	Public Safety Officer Benefits Office
<p>Provides national leadership to criminal justice organizations that partner with BJA to identify effective program models for replication and infuse data-driven, evidence-based strategies into operational models, practices, and programs.</p>	<p>Administers state, local, Tribal, and territorial grant programs. It acts as BJA’s direct line of communication to states, local jurisdictions, territories, and Tribal governments by providing customer-focused grants management support and careful stewardship over federal funds.</p>	<p>Coordinates all communication, formulates and executes the budget, manages contracts, measures grantees’ performance, and provides administrative support to BJA.</p>	<p>Provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other public safety officers, and disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.</p>

Five Major Strategic Focus Areas



1. Improving public safety through measures that build trust with the community and ensure an effective criminal justice system
2. Reduction in recidivism and prevention of unnecessary confinement and interactions with the criminal justice system
3. Integration of evidence-based, research-driven strategies into the day-to-day operations of BJA and the programs BJA administers and supports
4. Increasing program effectiveness with a renewed emphasis on data analysis, information sharing, and performance management
5. Ensuring organizational excellence through outstanding administration and oversight of all of BJA's strategic investments



Fund – Invest diverse funding streams to accomplish goals.

Educate – Research, develop, and deliver what works.

Equip – Create tools and products to build capacity and improve outcomes.

Partner – Consult, connect, and convene.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center

We are a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that combines the power of a membership association, serving state officials in all three branches of government, with policy and research expertise to develop strategies that increase public safety and strengthen communities.

How We Work

- We bring people together
- We drive the criminal justice field forward with original research
- We build momentum for policy change
- We provide expert assistance

Our Goals

Break the cycle of incarceration

High rates of recidivism increase taxpayer costs, diminish public safety, and tear apart families and communities. We work with partners inside and outside of government to reduce crime and incarceration among youth and adults in contact with the justice system.

Advance health, opportunity, and equity

Efforts to make communities safer and healthier are hampered by insufficient behavioral health services, barriers to economic mobility, homelessness, lack of support for victims, and racial and gender inequity. We bring people from diverse systems and perspectives together to improve policy and practice related to these challenges.

Use data to improve safety and justice

Data holds the power to help us understand and change justice systems for the better. And yet, states and counties still know far too little about how their systems perform. Our work transforms information into meaningful insights for policymakers.

Equity and Inclusion Statement



The Council of State Governments Justice Center is committed to advancing racial equity internally and through our work with states, local communities, and Tribal Nations.



We support efforts to dismantle racial inequities within the criminal and juvenile justice systems by providing rigorous and high-quality research and analysis to decision-makers and helping stakeholders navigate the critical, and at times uncomfortable, issues the data reveal. Beyond empirical data, we rely on stakeholder engagement and other measures to advance equity, provide guidance and technical assistance, and improve outcomes across all touchpoints in the justice, behavioral health, crisis response, and reentry systems.

Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program

The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCPC) promotes innovative cross-system collaboration and provides grants directly to states, local governments, and federally recognized Indian Tribes. It is designed to improve responses to people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system.

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18 Components of the Expanded RNR Model

Overarching Principles

1. Respect for the person
2. Theory
3. Human service
4. Crime prevention

RNR

5. Risk
6. Need
7. Responsivity (general + specific)

Structural Assessment

8. Assess RNR
9. Strengths
10. Breadth
11. Professional discretion

Program Delivery

12. Dosage

Self-Practices

13. Relationship skills
14. Structuring skills

Organizational

15. Community-based
16. Continuity of service
17. Agency management
18. Community linkages

Don Andrews, James Bonta, and Stephen Wormith, "The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model: Does adding the good lives model contribute to effective crime prevention?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 38, no. 7 (2011): 735–755.

Three Overarching Principles of the RNR Model

1. Respect for the person and the normative context
2. Psychological theory
3. General enhancement of crime-prevention services

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 176.

Three Overarching Principles of the RNR Model

1. Respect for the Person and the Normative Context



Services are delivered with respect for the person, including respect for personal autonomy, being humane, ethical, just, legal, and being otherwise normative.



Some norms may vary with the agencies or the particular settings within which services are delivered (e.g., agencies working with youth may be expected to show exceptional attention to education issues and child protection).



Mental health agencies may attend to issues of personal well-being (e.g., agencies working with women may prioritize attending to trauma and/or parenting concerns).

Source: James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 176.

Three Overarching Principles of the RNR Model

2. Psychological Theory



Base programs on an empirically solid psychological theory (e.g., general personality and cognitive social learning).

3. General Enhancement of Crime-Prevention Services



The reduction of victimization may be viewed as a legitimate objective of service agencies, including agencies within and outside of justice and corrections.

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 176

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The RNR Model Is Broken Down into Risk, Need, and Responsivity Principles



RISK: Probability of an event occurring

CRIMINOGENIC RISK: Probability of criminal recidivism; typically, the probability of being arrested for or convicted of any new crime or returned to custody for a technical violation. Match the level of service to the person's risk to reoffend. Provide people at a moderate or high risk of reoffending with cognitive programming. Keep low-risk people out of intensive cognitive services to avoid interfering with existing strengths and/or increasing association with others at a higher risk to reoffend.

RISK does NOT mean harmfulness or seriousness of the event, violence, or dangerousness

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 178–182

The RNR Model Is Broken Down into Risk, Need, and Responsivity Principles



CRIMINOGENIC NEED does not mean risk of violence or dangerousness or factors that are historical and unchangeable.

CRIMINOGENIC NEED: Criminogenic needs are dynamic characteristics that are associated with a person's risk of reoffending. These include procriminal thought patterns, procriminal associates, family and marital relations, and substance use disorders.

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 178–182

The RNR Model Is Broken Down into Risk, Need, and Responsivity Principles



RESPONSIVITY: Clinical syndromes, impairments, or social service needs that usually do not cause crime but can interfere with habilitation. These can include homelessness, serious or persistent mental illness, drug or alcohol cravings/withdrawal, PTSD, or TBI.

RESPONSIVITY: Maximize the person's ability to learn from a habilitative intervention by providing cognitive behavioral treatment and tailoring the intervention to the person's learning style, motivation, abilities, and strengths.

- **General:** Use cognitive, social learning methods to influence behavior.
- **Specific:** Modify strategies in accordance with the strengths, motivations, readiness to change, personality, mental status, learning ability, learning style, circumstances, culture, and demographics of individual cases.

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 178–182

The Major Risk Factors

Static Factors	Major Dynamic Risk Factors
Criminal History Number of arrests Number of convictions Type of offenses	Antisocial personality pattern
	Procriminal attitudes
	Procriminal associates
	Substance use disorder
	Family/marital stressors
	Poor school/work performance
	Few leisure or recreation activities

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 181

The Need Principle: Focus on Dynamic Criminogenic Needs to Create Positive Behavior Change

Major Dynamic Risk Factors	Need
Antisocial personality pattern	Build self-management skills, teach anger management
Procriminal attitudes	Counter rationalizations with prosocial attitudes/build prosocial identity
Procriminal associates	Replace with prosocial friends and associates
Substance use disorder	Reduce use; enhance alternatives to using substances
Family/marital stressors	Teach parenting skills; enhance capacity to care
Poor school/work performance	Enhance work/study skills and nurture interpersonal relationships at school or work
Few leisure or recreation activities	Encourage participation in prosocial activities, hobbies, and sports

James Bonta and D. A. Andrews, *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*, 6th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017), 181.

Structured Risk and Needs Assessment Is Broken Down into Four Steps

- 1. Assess RNR:** Use structured and validated instruments to assess criminogenic risk, need, and responsiveness.
- 2. Strengths:** Assess personal strengths and integrate them into interventions.
- 3. Breadth:** Assess specific risk, need, responsiveness factors, as well as other human service needs that may be barriers to prosocial change, but maintain a focus on the RNR factors.
- 4. Professional Discretion:** Deviate from the RNR principles for specified reasons.

Don Andrews, James Bonta, and Stephen Wormith, "The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model: Does adding the good lives model contribute to effective crime prevention?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 38, no. 7 (2011): 735–755.

Common Risk and Need Assessment Tools

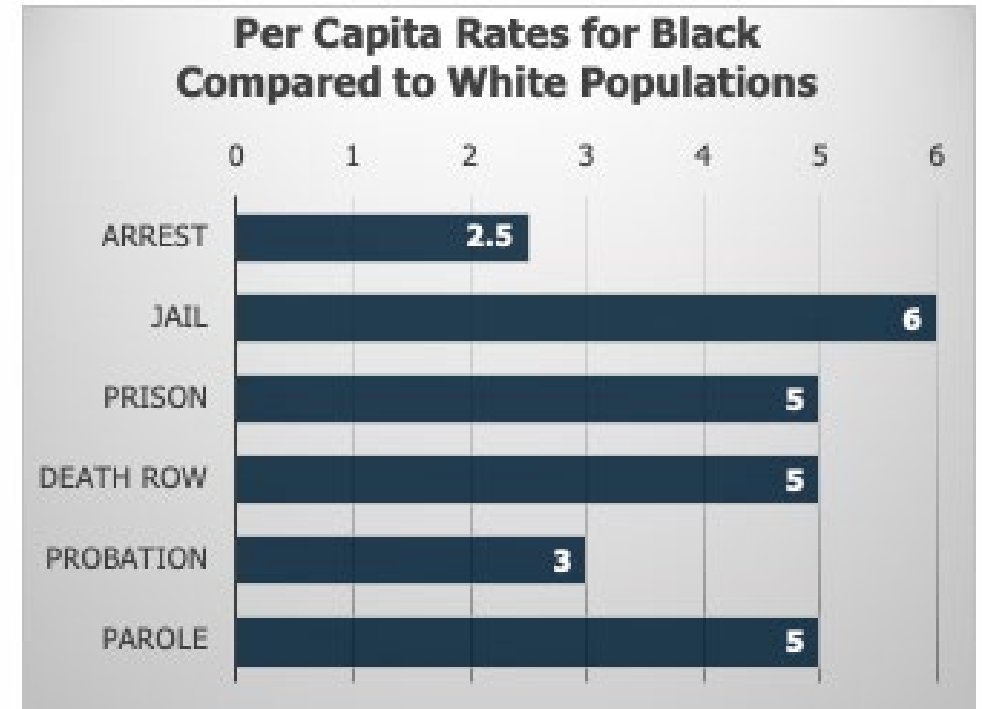
- Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS)
- Federal Post Conviction Risk Assessment (PCRA)
- Inventory of Offender Risk, Needs, and Strengths (IORNS)
- Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI)
- Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R)
- Offender Profile Index (OPI)
- Offender Screening Tool (OST)
- Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS)
- Risk and Needs Triage (RANT)
- Risk Prediction Index (RPI)
- Static Risk and Offender Needs Guide (STRONG)
- Wisconsin Risk and Need Assessment Scale (WRN)

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Introducing some common terms used in discussions of disproportionality across the CJ system

- **Disproportionality:** A racial or ethnic group is overrepresented among people experiencing a certain outcome compared to the group's representation in the overall population
- **Disparity:** Differences in treatment, opportunity, or experience for one racial or ethnic group relative to another group
- **Bias:** Inappropriate consideration of race or ethnicity in deciding with whom and how to intervene
- **Profiling:** Use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed an offense



Source: Hartney, C., *Created equal: Racial and ethnic disparities in the US criminal justice system*. National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2009.

Numbers can't tell us why we see disproportionality—there are many potential causes.

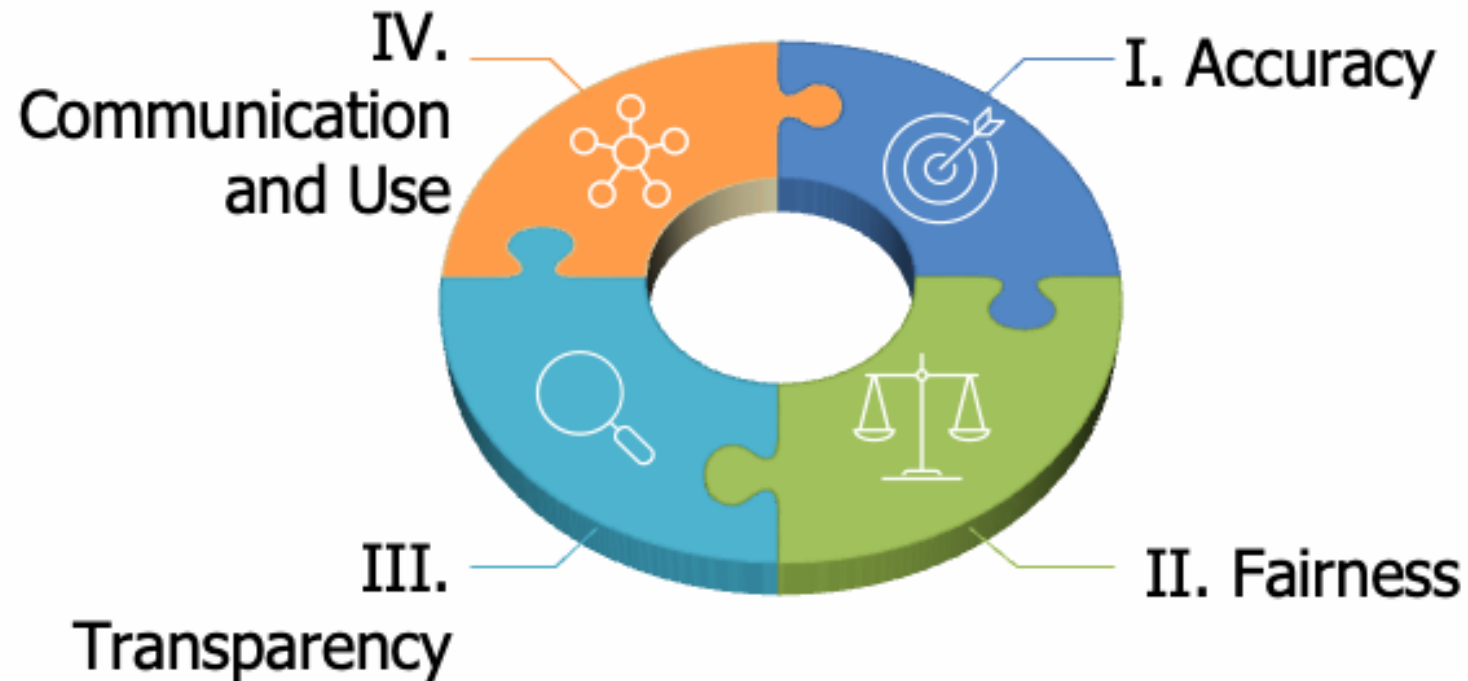
Potential Explanation	Examples
Differences in offending rates by populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk of criminal involvement may be related to educational and economic opportunities• Risk of criminal involvement may be related to neighborhood
Enforcement priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gangs• Gun violence• High risk drug transactions• Public order
Deployment patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public housing• "Hot spots" and "High impact zones"
Systemic bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Differential treatment across criminal justice system actors and agencies• Differential resources to navigate the criminal justice system

Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. *Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/24928>, (2018).

What about Bias and RNR?

- Must distinguish where the problem lies
 - Does the test over-rate risk
 - Is the test accurate, but cultural factors are the cause of the higher risk
 - Aboriginals in Canada
 - African-American, Latino and Hispanic populations in the U.S.
 - Aboriginals in Australia
 - Sub-Saharan Africans in France

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



[Advancing Fairness and Transparency: National Guidelines for Post-Conviction Risk and Needs Assessment](#)

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments

Accuracy

Accuracy refers to the degree to which assessment results predict the recidivism outcomes they were designed to predict as indicated by the observed rate and severity of criminal behavior, as well as the identification of individuals at greater and lesser risk of recidivism.

Determining accuracy also involves considering whether the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instruments are completed and used as intended to inform case decisions and planning within facilities and in the community.

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Accuracy Guidelines

1. Conduct a local evaluation of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument to ensure that the instrument is suitable for the agency's population;
2. Meet minimum performance thresholds of post-conviction risk and needs assessments completed in the field according to statistical standards;
3. Use a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process to ensure successful implementation of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument; and
4. Use a multi-step approach to assess risk and needs over time.

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Fairness

Fairness is the degree to which assessment results have the same meanings and applications across groups defined by race, ethnicity, gender, or other characteristics such as mental illness. Fairness should be considered in the development, validation, and implementation of post-conviction risk and needs assessment instruments.

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Fairness Guidelines

5. Examine the results of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument for predictive bias and disparate impact across groups;
6. Apply the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument results to individual cases in keeping with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principles; and
7. Adopt agencywide strategies to minimize the potential that local implementation of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument promotes disparities.

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Transparency

Transparency refers to how information about the content, structure, and application of these instruments is disseminated to stakeholders.

Transparency is relevant in both the development and implementation of risk and needs assessment instruments and requires a proactive communication strategy.

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Transparency Guidelines

8. Provide system stakeholders with relevant information on the development, intended use, and validation of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument;
9. Develop a written policy that guides the local use of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instrument; and
10. Communicate the strengths and the limitations of post-conviction risk and needs assessment instruments to the general public.

The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Communication and Use

The manner in which individual assessment results are communicated and used can greatly affect their impact on decision-making and, consequently, their effectiveness.

Improper communication of individual assessment results can undermine efforts to promote accuracy, fairness, and transparency in the use of post-conviction risk and needs assessment instruments and should be a key consideration in their implementation.

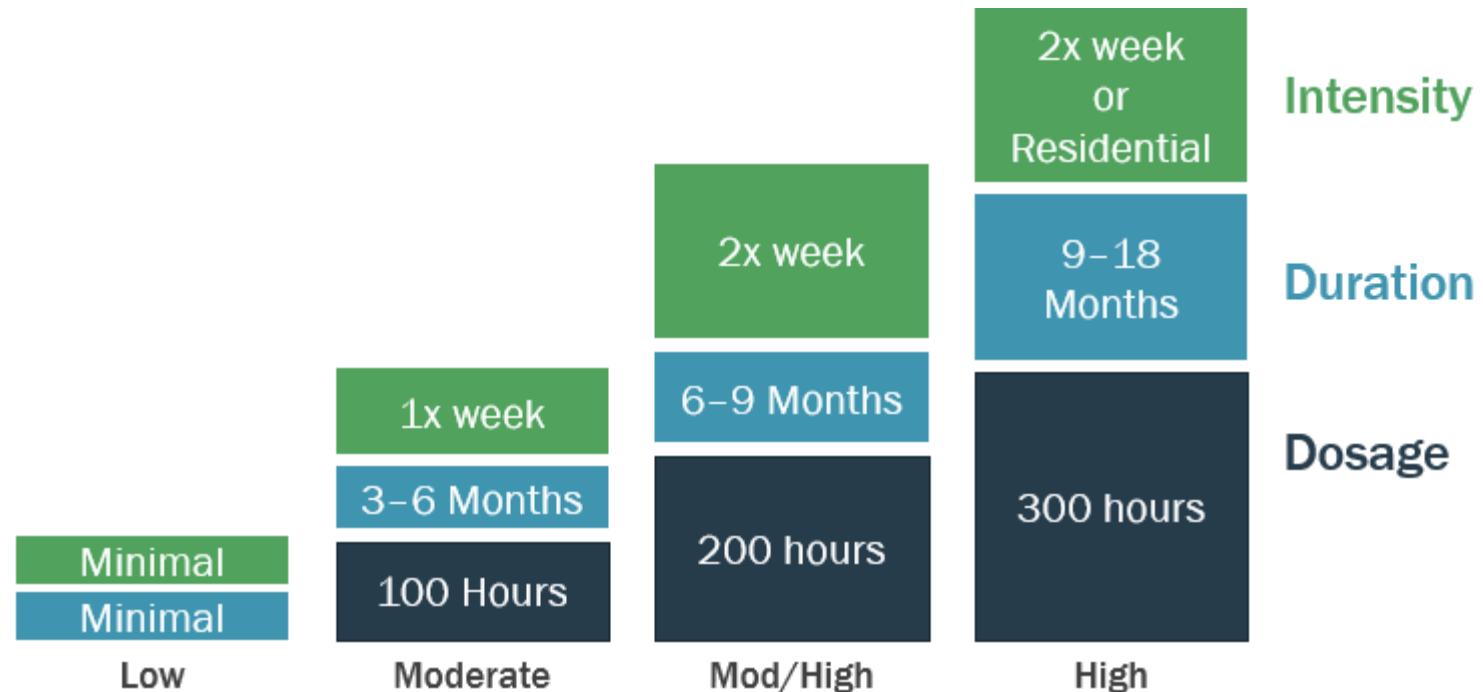
The CSG Justice Center's National Guidelines for Accurate, Fair, and Transparent Risk and Need Assessments



Communication and Use Guidelines

11. Anchor communication of assessment results in the RNR principles;
12. Contextualize the results of the post-conviction risk and needs assessment instruments; and
13. Develop a template for communicating individual results of post-conviction risk and needs assessment instruments to all relevant stakeholders, including the person being assessed.

Intervention Dosage Provided Should Match the Level of the Person's Risk of Recidivism



National Institute of Corrections, "A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems: Starter Kit" (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections), http://info.nicic.gov/ebdm/sites/info.nicic.gov/ebdm/files/docs/3c_Appendix_2.pdf.

Treatment Staff Practices Include Relationship and Structuring Skills

Relationship Skills: Includes warmth, respect, and being collaborative

Structuring Skills: Includes modeling, reinforcement, skill building, problem solving, cognitive restructuring, and other validated structuring strategies

Don Andrews, James Bonta, and Stephen Wormith, "The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model: Does adding the good lives model contribute to effective crime prevention?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 38, no. 7 (2011): 735–755.

Organizational Components of Treatment Programs Include Factors Such as Setting and Management

Community-Based

Services that adhere to RNR are more effective when delivered in the community, although institutional or residential services that adhere to RNR can also reduce recidivism.

Continuity of Service

Provide services and ongoing monitoring of progress.

Agency Management

Managers select and train staff according to their interpersonal and facilitation skills; provide clinical supervision according to RNR; and ensure that there are organizational mechanisms to maintain the monitoring, evaluation, and integrity of assessments and programs.

Community Linkages

The agency where the program is housed will maintain positive relationships with other agencies and organizations.

Don Andrews, James Bonta, and Stephen Wormith, "The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model: Does adding the good lives model contribute to effective crime prevention?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 38, no. 7 (2011): 735–755.

Ignoring Assessment Results and RNR Can Result in Over-Supervision and Over-Programming

Multiple studies across the country have shown that supervision staff practices are often misaligned with research on RNR and associated agency trainings.



The problem is not that officers use the assessments to make case planning decisions, but that they ignore or override the results, which leads to overrating the potential for recidivism and over-responding to client needs through over-supervision, focusing on the wrong needs, or making unnecessary program referrals.

Ignoring the assessment results creates greater disparity in responses compared to following the recommendations of a correctly validated tool that is used on the intended population for the intended reason the tool was developed.

Jill Viglione, "The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model: How Do Probation Officers Implement the Principles of Effective Intervention?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 46, no. 5 (2019): 655–673.

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Questions and Answers

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For more information, please contact Ethan Kelly at ekelly@csg.org

This project was supported by Grant No. 15PBJA-22-GK-03573-MENT awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. To learn more about the Bureau of Justice Assistance, please visit bja.gov.

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