

# **Risk-Need-Responsivity: A Foundation for Evidence-Based Justice Decisions**

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**STARTS WITH**  
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Risk-Needs-  
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Justice  
Decision  
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Diversion  
Supervision  
Treatment  
Services

**CRIME REDUCTION**

**Public Safety  
Reduced Recidivism  
Cost Savings  
Lives Restored**

## What is Risk?

- Risk is the likelihood that an offender will engage in future criminal behavior (recidivate)
- Static risk factors are robust predictors
  - Historical – based on past behavior
  - *Cannot be decreased by intervention*
- Dynamic risk factors are criminogenic
  - Return/relapse to the risk including criminal activity
  - Risk is the likelihood of the intervention failing
  - *Can be decreased by intervention*
- Risk does NOT refer to dangerousness or likelihood of violence

## **Static Risk Factors**

- **Delinquent onset (< 16 years)**
- **Age at first arrest (<25 years)**
- **Substance abuse onset (< 14 years)**
- **History of (violent) convictions**
- **Prior incarcerations**
- **Prior rehabilitation failures**
- **Others?**

## **Dynamic Risk Factors**

- 1. Antisocial attitudes**
- 2. Antisocial friends and peers**
- 3. Antisocial personality pattern**
- 4. Substance abuse**
- 5. Family and/or marital problems**
- 6. Lack of education**
- 7. Poor employment history**
- 8. Lack of prosocial leisure activities**

## Delinquency Factors Correlated with Risk by Gender

Factor	Female	Male
Lower Class Origins	.07	.06
Personal Distress (anxiety, low self-esteem, apathy)	.10	.09
Family Structure/Parent Problems (broken home, martial problems)	.07	.09
Minor Personality Variables (empathy, moral reasoning)	.18	.22
Poor Parent-Child Relations (attachment, supervision)	.20	.22
Educational Difficulties (poor grades, drop out)	.24	.23
Temperament/misconduct/self-control (psychopathy, impulsivity, substance use)	.35	.36
Antisocial Attitudes/Peers	.39	.40



## The R-N-R Framework

- **Risk**
  - \* Who to target
- **Need**
  - \* What to target
- **Responsivity**
  - \* How to target

# R-N-R

## **Evidence-Based Justice Decisions**

### Risk – Who to target

- Prioritize & match services (supervision + treatment) for higher risk offenders to their level of risk of reoffending

# R-N-R

## **Evidence-Based Justice Decisions**

### Risk – Who to target

- Prioritize & match services (supervision + treatment) for higher risk offenders to their level of risk of reoffending

### Need – What to target

- Target criminogenic needs – those dynamic factors that contribute to the likelihood of reoffending

# R-N-R

## Evidence-Based Justice Decisions

### Risk – Who to target

- Prioritize & match services (supervision + treatment) for higher risk offenders to their level of risk of reoffending

### Need – What to target

- Target criminogenic needs – those dynamic factors that contribute to the likelihood of reoffending

### Responsivity – How to target

- Address individuals' barriers to learning in the design of treatment interventions

## The Point of All of This

- **It's not enough to say...**
  - \* He's high risk
  - \* She's low risk
- **You also need to say...**
  - She's high need
  - He's low need

# **Responsivity**

**Identification of specific individual factors that might influence the effectiveness of treatment services**

- **Anxiety**
- **ADHD**
- **Motivation Level**
- **Gender**
- **Reading Level / ESL**
- **Language**

## **Responsivity Strategies**

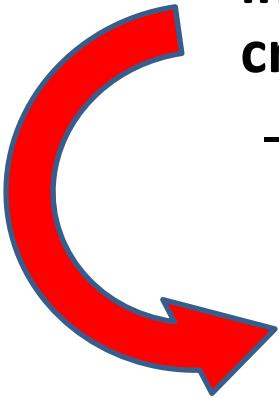
**Strategies to tailor services to help offenders engage in evidence-based interventions that address dynamic risk factors**

- **Mental health treatment**
- **Trauma/PTSD services, gender-specific treatment**
- **Motivational enhancement techniques**
- **Address language and literacy issues**
- **Use of cognitive-behavioral approaches**

## **Mental Illness as a Responsivity Factor**

**Mental illness is not a strong predictor of criminal behavior**

- **Mental health issues can significantly affect an individual's responsivity to interventions targeting criminogenic risk factors.**
  - An effective treatment plan should address responsivity issues that create barriers to successful program participation





## Notes on R-N-R Framework

- **Prioritize and match services (supervision + treatment) to (high risk, high need) offenders so they stop offending**
- **Prioritize services (supervision + treatment) away from lower risk offenders so they do not use limited resources**
- **Harm can result from providing too many services (supervision + treatment) to low risk/low need offenders**
- **Mixing of risk populations is contraindicated**

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