

What Works

Effective Recidivism Reduction and Risk-Focused Prevention Programs

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What Works Report

- Commission is primary audience
- Purpose is to provide members with an up-to-date information resource
- Identifies what works to reduce recidivism and prevent the onset of criminal behavior

Section 1

Introduction

- Summarizes prison population growth and the associated costs in Colorado
- Discusses the importance of recidivism reduction and crime prevention
 - Unprecedented number of prisoners returning to communities
 - Offender reentry is a key public safety challenge
 - Prevention works, but value is often overlooked

Section 2

Evidence-Based Concept

- Defines evidence-based; discusses origin and importance of the concept
 - Science-based
 - Many intervention and prevention efforts are not currently evidence-based
- Explains how trustworthy evidence is derived
 - Quality and consistency must be considered
 - Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
 - Economic considerations: cost-benefit analysis

Section 3

Methods Used to Develop the Report

- Comprehensive review of research
- Focus on:
 - Systematic reviews and meta-analyses
 - Criminal behavior outcomes
- Return on investment reported when available
- Selected Colorado studies summarized

Section 4

Incarceration and Crime

- Presents brief overview of prison population growth in Colorado
- Summarizes research on the impact of incarceration
- Summarizes research on desistance from crime – transition from criminal to non-criminal conduct

Incarceration and Crime

- Crimes are prevented by incarceration
 - On average, each additional prisoner leads to a reduction of about 15 crimes per year; most are property crimes
- Impact of incarceration on crime rates
 - Relationship is highly complex
 - 10% increase in the incarceration rate has produced 2% - 4% reduction in the crime rate
 - Drop in crime in recent years is primarily due to factors other than incarceration

Incarceration and Crime

Other Factors

- Diminishing returns
- Impact at neighborhood level
 - Over time, high rates of incarceration can weaken a community and lead to an increase in crime
- Impact on children of incarcerated parents
 - Children suffer many negative consequences
 - Research is needed to determine how best to meet their needs

Desistance from Crime

- Time period immediately following release from prison is riskiest
- Work and marriage are important factors in desistance
- Research underscores the need for evidence-based recidivism reduction programs both in prisons and the community

Section 5

Recidivism Reduction Programs

- Summarizes research on the efficacy of rehabilitation
- Describes principles of effective intervention
- Identifies programs that work and presents supporting empirical evidence

Effective Recidivism Reduction Programs

- Education and vocational training
- Substance abuse treatment
 - Time in treatment and aftercare are important
- Drug courts
 - 10 key elements of drug courts
- Certain types of sex offender treatment
 - Cognitive behavioral/relapse prevention; modified therapeutic communities

Effective Recidivism Reduction Programs

- Programs for offenders with mental illness
 - Diversion, treatment and aftercare are needed
 - Treatment is highly effective
- Cognitive-behavioral interventions
 - ART, MRT, R&R, RPT
- Evidence-based programs for juveniles, particularly those that focus on families and multiple causes of delinquency
 - FFT, MST, MTFC

Section 6

Early Prevention Programs

- Discusses risk factors for delinquency
 - Risk factors are known
 - They help explain differences in long term criminal potential
- Describes concept of risk-focused crime prevention
 - Counteracts risk factors
 - Delivered early in life, before criminal conduct begins
- Identifies risk-focused, early prevention programs that work and presents supporting evidence

Effective Early Prevention Programs

- Nurse visitation during infancy
 - Nurse Family Partnership
- Preschool intellectual enrichment
 - High/Scope model; Chicago Child Parent Center
- Parent Management Training (PMT)
 - Oregon model; Incredible Years
- Child social skills training

Effective Early Prevention Programs

- School-based programs that focus on the school environment or self-control and social competency
 - RiPP, LST, Olweus Bullying Prevention, CASASTART
- High-quality after school and mentoring programs that promote positive youth development
 - Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters

Section 7

Implementation Issues

- Programs must be delivered with fidelity and integrity to be effective
- Adaptation can degrade program effectiveness
- Support and buy-in needs to be cultivated
 - Organizational development
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is essential

Section 8

Summary

- There are effective programs at every stage of a child's development
- There are effective programs for addressing the criminogenic needs of offenders
- Investing in evidence-based programs can reduce victimization and increase public safety while curbing correctional costs
- Collaboration and cooperation are keys to success