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, CASA

• 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