Reducing recidivism among youthful offenders: Evidence-based practice strategies

Kate Shade, PhD, RN
Samuel Merritt University
Oakland CA USA
Learning objectives

• The learner will be able to list four evidence-based treatment modalities aimed at reducing recidivism among youthful offenders

• The learner will be able to define each treatment approach
Background

- United States incarcerates more youth than any other country in the world.
- Juvenile system began as model of rehabilitation. 1980s brought punishment, more youth incarcerated, mandatory sentencing. U.S. is slowly returning to a rehabilitative philosophy.
Who commits crimes as juveniles in the U.S.?

- Children from neighborhoods, schools, and communities with few resources, high crime rates, exposure to pollutants, drugs, gangs and involvement in underground economy
- Families with substance abuse, mental health problems, violence
Peer and individual factors

- Hegemonic masculinity/misogyny
- Mental health disorders
- Learning disabilities
- Exposures to traumatic events
- Antisocial peers
- Thinking that supports aggressive and criminal actions
Family interventions

- Functional family therapy (FFT)
  - 29% non-significant—84%
- Multidimensional treatment foster care (MTFC)
  - 45%—79%
- Brief strategic family therapy (BSFT)
  - 38%—46%
- Multisystemic therapy (MST)
  - 24% non-significant—93%
Family interventions

• FFT
  • Based on stages of change model

• MTFC
  • Placement in foster family, biological and foster parent provided support

• BSFT
  • Planned, problem-focused, practical

• MST
  • Intensive, 24/7 multisystem treatment
Cognitive-behavioral treatment

- Based on cognitive-behavioral and social learning theories
- Manualized programs reduce recidivism by ~50% when implemented with fidelity
- Most effective with highest risk youth
- Aggression Replacement Training (ART) most well-researched
Cognitive-behavioral treatment

• Addresses attitudes, values, thoughts that support criminal behaviors
• Teaches social skills to communicate assertively, increase association with positive peers
• Practices behavioral skills to manage anger/stress
Trauma—focused treatment

- 1 in 4 youth in U.S. experience a traumatic event
- Include child maltreatment, sexual assault, exposure to family and community violence, natural disasters
- Youth who experience multiple traumatic events more likely to perpetrate violence against others
Trauma—focused treatment

- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET-A)
  - 54% decrease in incidents of behavior problem
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy – Corrections Modified (DBT-CM)
  - 19% non-significant
Gender—informed care

- 1988-1998 saw 65% increase in girls in detention, 34% increase in boys
- 1985-2002 case loads increased 92% for girls, decreased 29% for boys
- Staff who work with girls in system say their behaviors are more challenging than boys
  - “Criers, liars, and manipulators”

Gender—informed care

- Limited programs
- More research needed
  - Gender-specific CBT for girls
    - Facilitate group support
  - Gender-specific CBT for boys
    - Challenge restrictive masculine views of boys and men
References


References