Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)

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Overview

• Rationale for the EPICS model
• Description of EPICS
• The EPICS training and coaching process
• Results of the EPICS model
Rationale for EPICS Training

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION?

- Decrease criminal behavior
- Ensure public safety
- Provide accountability
- Monitor compliance to court orders
- Broker services
Rationale for EPICS Training

HAS COMMUNITY SUPERVISION ACHIEVED THESE GOALS?

• A meta-analytic review of approximately 25 studies indicated that probation is no more effective than other community-based sanctions such as fines, community service, etc.

Rationale for EPICS Training

HAS COMMUNITY SUPERVISION ACHIEVED THESE GOALS?

• A study on case management practices in Manitoba probation found that the development of supervision plans were based on court-mandated conditions and not assessment results.

• Even when criminogenic needs were identified by a standardized risk/needs assessment, they were not discussed in the majority of cases.

• ↑ probation officer focused on conditions or probation, ↑ in recidivism.

Rationale for the EPICS Model

DESIGN

• Applies the RNR framework to community supervision

• Trains officers on core correctional practices

• Trains officers to intervene where the offender is deficient in making decisions (Behavior Chain)

• Includes measures of fidelity and coaching sessions
“What Works” in Correctional Rehabilitation: A Reminder

- Risk Principle
  - Assessment
  - Matching

- Needs Principle
  - Central 8; Big 4

- Responsivity Principle
  - General & specific

- Core Correctional Practices
  - Effective use of authority
  - Prosocial modeling
  - Effective reinforcement and disapproval
  - Problem solving
  - Relationship skills
  - Structured skill building
Rationale for EPICS Training

Elements of Effective Correctional Practice and Recidivism

Applying RNR to Community Supervision: Development of EPICS

- Chris Trotter – (Australia, mid-1990s) trained officers on core correctional practices

- STICS (Strategic Training in Community Supervision – Canadian model, developed 2009) Applied RNR to community supervision

- STARR (Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Re-arrest – Federal Probation model)

- EPICS (Effective Practices in Community Supervision – University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute model)
EPICS Session Structure

SESSION OVERVIEW

Each session should be structured in the following way:

1. Check-In
2. Review
3. Intervention
4. Homework
EPICS Session Structure

CHECK-IN

CHECK-IN is an opportunity to:

1. To determine if client has any acute needs/crises
2. Build rapport
3. Discuss compliance issues
EPICS Session Structure

REVIEW

The REVIEW portion of the session should focus on:

1. The skills discussed in the prior session
2. The application of those skills
3. Review of homework assignments
4. Short- and long-term client goals
5. Participation in community agency referrals
EPICS Session Structure

INTERVENTION

For the INTERVENTION, the staff should:

1. Identify continued areas of need
2. Identify trends in problems that the offender experiences
3. Teach relevant skills
4. Target problematic thinking (or “tapes”)

Rationale for the EPICS Model

**Behavior Chain**

**SITUATION**
- Restrict their situations in the community
- AND
- Teach clients to recognize high-risk situations

**THOUGHTS**
- Restructure their antisocial thoughts

**FEELINGS**
- Teach emotional regulation skills

**CONSEQUENCES**
- + Reinforce positive behavior
- — Sanction negative behavior

**ACTIONS**
- Teach alternative behaviors
EPICS Session Structure

HOMEWORK

For HOMEWORK, staff should:

1. Assign the client homework targeting a criminogenic need and focusing on skill application
2. Assign homework that helps the client generalize the skill taught to other situations
3. Give the client instructions that should follow before the next visit
EPICS Model

CORE CORRECTIONAL SKILLS

• Relationship Skills
  - Active Listening/Giving Feedback
  - Role Clarification

• Reinforcement and Punishment
  - Effective Social Reinforcement
  - Effective Disapproval
  - Effective Use of Authority
EPICS Model

CORE CORRECTIONAL SKILLS

• Cognitive Restructuring
  - Behavior Chain
  - Identification of “Tapes” and “Counters”

• Structured Skill Building/Problem Solving
  - Teach, Model and Practice
Implementation Process

TRAINING AND COACHING

• Pre-training conference call one month before training
  – All stakeholders involved

• 3-day classroom training

• 6-month coaching process
  – Ongoing feedback and practice
Implementation Process

KEY PEOPLE IN THE MODEL

• UC trainers and coach

• Agency administration

• Supervisors/mid-level managers “internal coaches”

• Staff who are using the model in the field
Implementation Process

PRE-TRAINING CONFERENCE CALL

• UC coach facilitates call 1 month before training
• Call lasts 1.5 hours
• Participants include supervisors and administrators
• Discuss logistics of training and coaching process
• Troubleshoot implementation issues upfront
  – Prepare staff for training/coaching
Implementation Process

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

• Three-day training for community supervision staff and internal coaches.

• The maximum number of participants for this training is 30 people, including internal coaches.

• Training is interactive and hands-on. Participants practice the new skills they are learning.
Implementation Process

ONGOING COACHING SESSIONS

• Officers submit monthly audio tapes

• UC researchers review the audio tapes for use of the principles of effective intervention and core correctional practices

• UC work with agency to provide feedback individual and group feedback on use of the model

• Internal coaches review feedback and audio with each officer
Implementation Process

ONGOING COACHING SESSIONS

• Five video conference sessions occur after the training
  – Sessions 1-2: UC staff facilitates coaching session
  – Session 3-4: Internal coaches will partner with UC coach to conduct the review and coaching
  – Session 5: Internal coaches will conduct the session, with UC coaches providing support and feedback
Implementation Process

CONTENT OF COACHING SESSIONS

• Group feedback is provided on use of the model
• Skills are reviewed, modeled, and practiced
• Support is provided to internal coaches regarding implementation and on-going coaching
EPICS Implementation

KEY COMPONENTS

• Requires spending more time with higher risk offenders (have to realign workloads)

• Officers need to learn and practice new skills (need training and coaching)

• Internal coaches need to be part of process (trained on model and as “coaches”)

EPICS Implementation

CHALLENGES FROM THE OFFICER PERSPECTIVE

• Increased time commitment
  – Evidence in the pilot project that time decreased slightly as officers became more proficient in the model.

• Model is difficult to implement in the field
  – It can be difficult to conduct sessions with parents, siblings, and other distractions in the house

• Officers have developed their own styles
EPICS Implementation

SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION OF EPICS MODEL

• Development of an Implementation Team
  – Lead preparation
  – On-going implementation

• Managers participate by carrying a caseload and actively participating in the learning process with the officers

• Monthly booster sessions for all staff implementing the model
Results of the EPICS Model

EPICS PILOT PROJECT

• The original EPICS pilot project was conducted in Grant County, IN.

• 6 probation participants were selected to be trained on the EPICS model; 4 probation participants were assigned to the control group

• Both adult and juvenile participants were trained
Results of the EPICS Model

Trained participants were more likely to spend time discussing criminogenic needs

% of audiotapes

- Trained
- Untrained
Trained participants were far more likely to identify antisocial thinking.

Results of the EPICS Model

% of audiotapes

Trained
Untrained

Session 1  Session 2  Session 3  Total
Results of the EPICS Model

Trained participants struggled with strategies to challenge (or replace) these antisocial cognitions
Findings from the STICS Model

Two Year Recidivism Results from Bonta (2010)

Results of the EPICS Model

RESULTS OF PROGRAM BASED ON EPICS

• Strategic Techniques Aimed at Reducing Re-Arrest (STARR)

• Results indicated that the application of core correctional practices and adherence to RNR model can be an effective method in improving offender outcomes.
Findings from STARR: Federal Probation Sample

Results of the EPICS model

EPICS OUTCOME STUDY

• Conducted between 2010 and 2012 across 3 county probation departments and 3 Ohio DRC parole sites

• Sample of 41 officers and 272 offenders
  – 21 trained officers supervising 141 offenders
  – 20 untrained officers supervising 131 offenders
Results of the EPICS model

**EPICS OUTCOME STUDY**

- Intermediary results:
  - Trained officers adhered to EPICS model 50%; untrained 20%

- Outcome measures:
  - In total sample, no recidivism difference between clients of trained and untrained officers
  - High-fidelity officers reduced recidivism slightly more than low fidelity officers
  - High-fidelity officers had more of an impact with high-risk offenders: reduced re-incarceration by 12% compared to low-fidelity officers
Rationale for EPICS Training

EPICS RESEARCH

Latessa et al. (2013)
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