

27th Conference of Directors of
Prison and Probation Services

Seville, 21-22 of June 2022

What makes a good correctional service ?



Ioan Durnescu

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Marginal gain story

In 110 years no British cyclist had ever won the Tour de France.
Until ... Dave Brailford was hired as the team performance director.

He started to make small adjustments:

- redesigned the bike seats
 - rubbed alcohol on the tyres - better grip
 - asked riders to wear electrically heated overshots - ideal muscle temperature
 - used biofeedback sensors to monitor the riders's response
 - tested different types of massage gel - fastest muscle recovery
 - hired a new surgeon to teach riders the best way to wash their hands - cold prevention
 - determined the best pillow and mattress for each rider - for best sleep
 - painted the team truck in white - to better spot little bits of dust
- other hundreds of other small improvements accumulated
- in 5 years - the British Cycling team dominated the road and track and cycling events at 2008 Olympic Games - Beijing (60% of gold medals).

***Marginal gain
concept***

The concept means the searching for tiny margin of improvement in everything you do.

'...you broke down everything you could think of that goes into riding a bike, and then improve it by 1 percent, you get significant increase when you put them all together'

From 'Atomic Habits', Clear, J. (2018)

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Components of a good correctional service

1. Evidence based interventions
2. Good staff
3. Constructive organizational culture and leadership
4. Effective legislation

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Evidence-based interventions

Based on:

- Risk / Needs / Responsivity model
- Desistance and other strengths based theories (GLM)

Take on board empirical studies on:

- legitimacy
- compliance

Consider 'New rehabilitation' elements:

- victims rights
- restorative justice
- trauma responsive interventions etc.

RNR

Desistance

***Legitimacy
and
Compliance***

Risk / Needs / Responsivity - Andrews and Bonta, 2010

Three main principles:

- risk principle - match the level of intervention, importance of risk assessment
- needs principle - limited or no drift !!! - others only for enhancing motivation or WA
- responsivity principle - match the learning style and other personal characteristics, use CBT

Other important principles:

- multimodal
- strengths
- structured assessment
- use of professional discretion

Central eight	<p>History of antisocial behaviour includes early involvement in offending conduct, early age of onset, history of probation or parole violations, etc.</p> <p>Antisocial personality pattern – being impulsive, adventurous, pleasure-seeking, restless, aggressive, callous disregard for others etc.</p> <p>Antisocial cognition – includes attitudes, values, beliefs, rationalizations and personal identity that are favourable to crime. Cognitive-emotional states associated with crime are anger, resentful and defiant.</p> <p>Antisocial associates – if the person is surrounded by the so-called ‘social support for crime’.</p>
The Moderate Four	<p>Family/marital circumstance – essential to assess the critical parenting variables if juvenile (caring, monitoring, supervising, disciplinary practices, the importance of the parent’s opinion) or the quality of the marital relationship; if adult (mutual caring, respect and interest).</p> <p>School/Work – stress on the quality of the relationship with the school or workplace; the risk is in a low level of performance and involvement, low level of satisfaction and reward.</p> <p>Leisure/Recreation – stress on the low level of involvement in alternative ways of spending time apart from crime.</p> <p>Substance abuse – problems with alcohol and other drugs.</p>

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Desistance and other strengths based approaches

Focus on why people do desist

Emphasize: structure, agency, motivation and subjective identity

Importance of social bonds, strengths and turning points

The importance of the relationships - both WA and relationship with significant others

Practice implications:

- desistance is a zig - zag process
- deeply individualized process
- hope and agency essential - co-production
- importance of practical help - reconstruction of the daily routines
- celebrate small changes!!

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***Legitimacy
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Legitimacy and Compliance

Some observations based on procedural justice literature:

- non-compliance and non-cooperation are often associated with client's negative perception on the correctional service or the supervision process
- clients tend to perceive supervision as legitimate if:
just, fair and reasonable
- more: if they perceive the programmes as useful and understand their logic
- legitimacy is also important for staff motivation

Practice implications:

- 'smart supervision' - not punitive but meaningful
- intermediate measures in case of breach - and explained

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Research evidence for effective reentry

Structured on three stages (adaptation after Taxman, 2004):

- institutional stage
- pre-release stage
- post-release stage

Based on 'gold and bronze standard' (Nagin and Sampson, 2019; Cochrane Collaboration)

***Institutional
Stage***

***Pre-release
stage***

***Post-release
stage***

Institutional stage

- What works – start soon, interventions should start from reliable & standardized assessment and classifications, prison-probation joint assessment, effective relationship (1/3), good staff (synthetic staff, emphatic, fair but firm etc.), encourage hope and agency, therapeutic communities with follow-up (12%), vocational training, drug rehabilitation, multi-modal interventions, sex offenders and violent offenders programs (if scientific, reduction with 11%)
- What doesn't work – increased monitoring, punishment based interventions, confrontational interventions, boot camps etc.
- What is promising (under-researched or not experimental design) - 'end-to-end management', reintegration plans, educational programs, faith based interventions etc.

Research evidence for effective reentry

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***Institutional
Stage***

***Pre-release
stage***

***Post-release
stage***

Pre-release stage

- What works – continuity between in-prison and post-release interventions, mentoring, employment, halfway houses (fewer and less serious offences), targeting the first month after release
- What is promising – comprehensive programs for pre-release (FOR, RRR, Reintegration Guarantee, SVORI)

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***Institutional
Stage***

***Pre-release
stage***

***Post-release
stage***

Post-release stage

- What works – involving staff from minorities (for minorities), interventions in the first month (arrest risk drops with 50% from the first month to the 15th month after release) – frontloaded supervision (Byrne, 2012), employment (still to be confirmed), employment for those over 26, use of informal social networks (family), community development programs
- What doesn't work – financial aid alone
- What is promising – differential criminal record system (France), financial aid but accompanied with other interventions.

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Who works

What is the most efficient staff?

The one that is genuine and cares for people, ready to take an extra step - **especially in reentry !!!**

Fair, reasonable and knowledgeable

Practicing core correctional practices: developing working alliance, problem solving, pro-social modeling, effective use of authority, motivational interviewing and cognitive interventions.

Raynor and colleagues (2010) demonstrated that POs with better skills and clients that reoffend less often.

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Organizational culture

'Culture eats strategy for breakfast!'

It is about rituals, daily routines, work atmosphere, shared meanings - 'how we do things around here'

Important for managers to use pro-social modeling

Ensure staff commitment before making any significant change !!

Grant a certain level of professional discretion to staff

Cultivate an organization around **learning and curiosity** - not a top down hierarchical model

Take serious organizational resilience and burnout.

Be leaders not bosses!!!

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Meaningful legislation

It is a legislation that promotes change and desistance - and not 'hunt them, nail them'

That is flexible enough to allow small deviations - see the breach procedures

That allows people to start fresh - see the criminal record legislation - **especially in reentry!!**

That provides a wide variety of options for the individualization process

That facilitate formers to have access to pro-social opportunities - housing, employment, microloans etc.



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Conclusions

By improving every day 1 percent in any aspect of the correctional practice you could make a huge difference in people's life.

What is your first 1 percent?

Thanks!
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