Translating Research into Practice: Implementing RNR in Community Supervision

Myrinda Schweitzer, ABD
Cara Thompson, ABD
Corrections Institute
University of Cincinnati
&
Patrick Schreiner
Multnomah County, OR
Department of Community Justice
Session Objectives

• Review research on the effectiveness of RNR models of community supervision

• Identify the four components of the EPICS model and key skills used within the model

• Develop an understanding of the EPICS training and coaching process

• Review research on the effectiveness of the EPICS model
Section 1

Effectiveness of RNR Models of Community Supervision
Traditional Community Supervision

- Community supervision is one of the most widely used sanctions in the criminal justice system.

- Historically, community supervision was seen as positive because it minimized the criminogenic effects of prison and promoted the community integration of offenders (Abadinsky 2009; Gibbons and Rosecrance 2005).

- However, a growing body of research illustrates that community supervision alone has been ineffective in reducing recidivism (e.g., Petersil lia and Turner 1993; MacKenzie 1997; Bonta et al., 2008).
Traditional Community Supervision

- Why has community supervision not shown reductions in recidivism?
  - Bonta et al. (2008) explored the potential reasons that community supervision has been shown to be ineffective in reducing recidivism
  - The authors found that officers rarely adhered to the principles of effective intervention during contact sessions
  - Instead of focusing on risk, need, and responsivity factors, officers spent most of their contact sessions on compliance with conditions and the law enforcement aspects of their job
Principles of Effective Intervention

• Prior research has demonstrated that correctional services can be effective in reducing recidivism…but not all services are equally effective!

• The most effective services are based on the principles of effective intervention.
Principles of Effective Intervention

RISK

WHO
Deliver more intense intervention to higher risk offenders

NEED

WHAT
Target criminogenic needs to reduce risk for recidivism

RESPONSIVITY

HOW
Use CBT approaches
Match mode/style of service to offender
Translating the RNR Framework to Community Supervision

• **Adhere to the principles of effective intervention:**
  - Assess risk and need levels
  - Target moderate and high risk offenders
  - Target criminogenic needs
  - Use cognitive behavioral interventions

• **Use core correctional practices:**
  - Quality collaborative relationship
  - Reinforcement, Disapproval, Use of Authority
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Structured skill building
  - Problem solving skills
Translating the RNR Framework In Community Supervision

THE WORK OF CHRIS TROTTER

• The use of certain skills by probation staff is related to reductions in recidivism:
  – Developing collaborative relationships
  – Role clarification
  – Targeting criminogenic needs
  – Reinforcing prosocial behavior
  – Prosocial modeling
  – Problem solving

Translating the RNR Framework In Community Supervision

STICS RESEARCH

• Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS)

• Results indicated that trained participants had 12% higher retention rates than untrained participants at six months

Bourgon et al. (2010)
Bonta et al. (2010)
Translating the RNR Framework In Community Supervision

STICS RESEARCH

Bonta et al. (2010)
Section 2

EPICS Model and Core Skills
Purpose of the EPICS Model

- This model strives to more fully utilize staff as agents of change and ensure offenders receive a consistent message throughout the continuum of correctional services.

- The EPICS model is **not** intended to replace more intense cognitive-behavioral treatments that address specific criminogenic needs.
Objectives of the EPICS Model

• Apply the RNR framework to community supervision
  – Focuses effort on moderate to high risk offenders
  – Provides a format to target criminogenic needs in a one-on-one context
  – Encourages identification of specific responsivity factors
  – Uses cognitive and behavioral strategies to change offender behavior

• Train staff on core correctional practices

• Train staff to intervene where the offender is deficient in making decisions

• Include measures of fidelity and coaching sessions
EPICS Session Structure

• Each contact session should be structured in the following way:

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

- **Check-in** is an opportunity to:
  - Promote a collaborative relationship with offender
  - Assess for crises/acute needs
  - Assess for compliance with conditions
EPICS Session Structure

• **Review** is an opportunity to:
  
  – Enhance learning by reviewing previous interventions
  – Review previous homework assignment
  – Discuss community agency referrals
  – Set or review goals with the offender
EPICS Session Structure

• **Intervention** is an opportunity to:

  – Target criminogenic needs using structured cognitive-behavioral techniques:
    • Behavior Chain
    • Cognitive Restructuring
    • Cost-Benefit Analysis
    • Skill Building
    • Problem Solving
    • Graduated Practice

  – Target specific responsivity issues
EPICS Session Structure

• **Homework** is an opportunity to:
  
  – Generalize learning to new situations
  – Assign appropriate homework
    • Assign homework directly related to the intervention
    • Give offender clear expectations
    • Encourage offender to use interventions on risky situations
EPICS Core Skills

Throughout Model

• Relationship skills:
  – Active listening
  – Giving feedback

• Behavioral modification skills:
  – Reinforcement
  – Disapproval
  – Use of authority

Interventions

• Motivational skills:
  – Cost-benefit analysis

• Cognitive behavioral skills:
  – Cognitive restructuring
  – Prosocial modeling
  – Structured skill building
  – Problem solving
EPICS Core Skill Example

- Please listen to the example of a probation officer using *cognitive restructuring* with an offender during the intervention component of the EPICS model
EPICS Core Skill Example

• Please watch the live model of *effective reinforcement* used within the context of an EPICS session.
Section 3

EPICS Training and Coaching Processes
EPICS Training and Coaching Process

- EPICS is a three-day training for officers and supervisors on RNR, core correctional practices, and the session components.

- In order to ensure adherence to the model and to train the supervisors as coaches, monthly coaching sessions are included as part of the training.
EPICS Coaching Process

• Written individual feedback is provided on use of the model

• Group feedback is provided on use of the model

• Skills are reviewed, modeled, and practiced

• Support is provided to supervisors regarding implementation and on-going coaching
In order to ensure adherence to the model and to train the supervisors as coaches, five video conference sessions are included as part of the training:

- **Sessions 1-2**: UC staff will review audio tapes and specific cases with all of the trainees.
- **Session 3-4**: Supervisors will partner with UC staff to conduct the reviews and coaching.
- **Session 5**: Supervisors will conduct the session, with UC staff providing support and coaching.
Section 4

Research Supporting the EPICS Training and Coaching Processes
EPICS PILOT RESEARCH

• Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)

• Results indicated that staff trained in the EPICS model demonstrated more consistent use of core correctional practices

• Trained staff also became more proficient in their use of the skills over time as a result of participation in additional practice sessions

Smith et al. (2012)
EPICS Research

Trained staff were more likely to spend time discussing criminogenic needs

% of audiotapes

- Trained
- Untrained
Trained staff were more likely to make effective use of social reinforcement.
Trained staff were far more likely to identify antisocial thinking
EPICS RESEARCH

- Evaluation of EPICS in Ohio
- Involved 21 trained and 20 untrained staff and 272 offenders
- Staff trained in EPICS outperformed untrained staff in the use of core correctional practices during contact sessions
- High risk offenders assigned to high fidelity staff had significantly lower incarceration rates than high risk offenders assigned to low fidelity staff

Latessa et al. (2013)
EPICS Research

EPICS RESEARCH

Latessa et al. (2013)
EPICS RESEARCH

Incarceration

Percentage

High Fidelity/High Risk
Low Fidelity/High Risk

Latessa et al. (2013)
EPICS Research

EPICS IMPACT ON ANTISOCIAL THINKING

- Recent research has shown that the EPICS model is an effective means to reduce the antisocial thinking patterns of offenders supervised by officers trained in the model
EPICS Research

EPICS INFLUENCE ON RELATIONSHIPS

• Probation staff trained in EPICS who had high fidelity to the model were significantly more likely to be perceived as trusting by the offenders on their caseload

• The study found that as trust increased between the offender and the officer, the odds of being re-arrested are lowered

Labrecque et al. (2013). *Forthcoming.*
Approximately one month after training, staff sent in audiotapes of contact sessions to be coded for adherence to the EPICS model.

Written individual feedback was provided on use of the model.
- Supervisors reviewed feedback and audios with each staff.

Group feedback was provided on use of the model.

Skills were reviewed, modeled, and practiced.
The Importance of Sustainability

• Support was provided to supervisors regarding on-going implementation and coaching
  – Attend 6 EPICS coaching sessions with UCCI
  – Attend 6 pre-coaching session conference calls with UCCI
  – Provided individual feedback to staff
  – Practiced coding using the EPICS Rating Form
  – Hosted internal booster sessions
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Collaborative Relationship

Month 1
84%

Month 6
97%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Cognitive Restructuring

Month 1
35%

Month 6
75%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Structured Skill Building

Month 1
13%

Month 6
64%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Effective Reinforcement

Month 1
2%

Month 6
71%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Effective Disapproval

Month 1
7%

Month 6
71%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Check-In

Month 1  78%

Month 6  95%

January 2013  99%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Review

Month 1
52%

Month 6
75%

January 2013
84%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Intervention

Month 1
49%

Month 6
61%

October 2013
91%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Homework

Month 1
37%

Month 6
71%

October 2013
91%
Officer Proficiency with EPICS Model: Criminogenic Needs

- Month 1: 50%
- Month 6: 85%
- January 2013: 94%
Tips for Successful Implementation

• Form an Implementation Team prior to the training

• Administrative support is critical:
  – Director of agency should provide clear expectations that acquiring this skill set is the number #1 priority over the next 12 months

• Address workload for line staff and first line Managers
  – Plan for the additional time ‘coaching’ requires
Tips for Successful Implementation

• Schedule boosters to follow up on the UCCI Training sessions
  – This will assist in the development of your Coaches

• Continue with boosters when you complete process with UCCI
  – Muscle memory comes from practice, practice, practice!!!

• Develop processes for continued improvement
Importance of Continued Improvement

• Amend Audits and Performance Evaluations
  – Give staff 12 months to learn skills and then amend the review process

• Develop performance measures to measure success and integration:
  – Statewide performance measures on recidivism, retention, abscond rates and reduction of criminogenic needs.
  – Offender survey’s

• Measure submission of tapes quarterly

• Reward and reinforce top performers
  – Tape of the Month
Thank You

• Mindy Schweitzer: UCCI Deputy Director
  – schweiml@ucmail.uc.edu

• Cara Thompson: UCCI EPICS Project Director
  – thompc7@ucmail.uc.edu

• Patrick Schreiner: District Manager, Multnomah Co, DCJ
  – patrick.schreiner@multco.us