Effective Practices for Community Supervision (EPICS): The Application of Science to Supervision Practices

University of Cincinnati
Corrections Institute
RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE: FOUNDATION FOR THE MODEL
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

- There are more than 40 published meta-analyses of the correctional treatment literature.

- Results have been replicated with remarkable consistency; there is considerable support for the RNR framework across quantitative reviews of the literature.

Smith et al. (2009)
Adhere to the Principles of Effective Intervention

RISK
- WHO
  - Deliver more intense intervention to higher risk clients

NEED
- WHAT
  - Target criminogenic needs to reduce risk for recidivism

RESPONSIVITY
- HOW
  - Use CBT approaches
  - Match mode/style of service to offender

FIDELITY
- HOW WELL
  - Deliver treatment services as designed
EPICS MODEL AND CORE SKILLS

Why EPICS?
Rationale for EPICS Training

A meta-analytic review of the supervision research revealed:

- The development of supervision plans were based on court-mandated conditions and not assessment results

- Even when criminogenic needs were identified, they were not discussed in the majority of cases

- ↑ probation officer focused on conditions of probation, ↑ in recidivism

EPICS Model

PURPOSE

• This model strives to fully utilize the time that officers spend with clients and ensure clients 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 clients
  - 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
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 Model

INDIVIDUAL SESSION OVERVIEW

Each contact session should be structured in the following way:
EPICS Model

CHECK-IN

• Check-in is an opportunity to:
  – Promote a collaborative relationship with offender
  – Assess for crises/acute needs
  – Assess for compliance with conditions
EPICS Model

REVIEW

• 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 client
EPICS Model

INTERVENTION

• 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
Cost-Benefit Analysis

PURPOSE

• Weighs both short-term and long-term costs and benefits of antisocial target behavior and an alternative prosocial behavior

• Helps build motivation towards changing problem behaviors
Behavior: Risky

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Cost-Benefit Analysis

Behavior: *Alternative prosocial*

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Behavior Chain

PURPOSE

• Helps offenders learn the thought-behavior link

• Helps offenders identify their antisocial thinking in risky situations
People, places or things that can lead to trouble

Triggers
Invitations
Activating
Events
Antecedents

Ways we interpret the situations
What we tell ourselves
Present-tense
Drive feelings and behaviors

Emotions that are influenced by thoughts
They influence our behavior

Increases likelihood a behavior will occur again

Decreases likelihood a behavior will occur again

Influenced by thoughts & feelings
What we choose to do

Present-tense

Influenced by thoughts & feelings
What we choose to do
Old friend approaches me and asks me to get high

“Smoking sounds really good right now”

“I miss getting high”

“It’s only one time”

“I wanna have a good time with my friend”

Get high with friend

Eager

Anxious

Get high

Have fun with friend

Relapse

Disappoint Family

Jail

Violation
Cognitive Restructuring

GOAL: Change behavior

TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR:

IDENTIFY ANTISOCIAL THINKING → CHALLENGE ANTISOCIAL THINKING → REPLACE WITH PROSOCIAL THINKING
Old friend approaches me and asks me to get high

“I’m going to get caught if I smoke”

“I don’t want to lose everything I’ve worked so hard for”

“It’s really not worth it”

Tell friend no and go home

Stay sober
No problem with supervision
Feel proud/gain confidence
Old friend gets mad
Don’t get relief from getting high
Structured Skill Building

PURPOSE

• Used when problem behavior is likely being caused by a skill deficit

• Teaches prosocial behavioral responses to high risk situations
Structured Skill Building

STEPS OF STRUCTURED SKILL BUILDING

1. Introduce the skill
2. Obtain offender buy-in
3. Teach the skill following the concrete steps
4. Model the skill
5. Role play the skill
6. Provide feedback to the offender
Problem Solving

STEPS OF PROBLEM SOLVING

1. Identify your problem and goal:
   Have the offender state their problem objectively. Determine what exactly the offender wants to happen in the situation and what is best for him/her and everyone involved.

2. Brainstorm options and choose the best one:
   Brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. Review all the alternatives generated and discuss the short-term and long-term consequences of the solutions.

3. Plan and try your solution:
   Develop concrete action steps in this stage and role play the plan. The offender will then use this plan to solve the problem.
HOMEWORK

- Homework is an opportunity to:
  - Generalize learning to new situations
  - Assign appropriate homework
    - Assign homework directly related to the intervention
    - Give client clear expectations
    - Encourage client 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
Why EPICS?

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)
Why EPICS?

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)
Rationale for EPICS Training

Trained staff were more likely to spend time discussing criminogenic needs

% of audiotapes

- Trained
- Untrained
Rationale for EPICS Training

Trained staff were more likely to make effective use of social reinforcement

% of audiotapes

- Trained
- Untrained
Rationale for EPICS Training

Trained staff were far more likely to identify antisocial thinking

% of audiotapes

- Trained
- Untrained
Why EPICS?

EPICS RESEARCH

Latessa et al. (2013)
EPICS TRAINING AND COACHING PROCESSES
EPICS and EBP

**RISK**
- **WHO**
  - EPICS with Moderate and High Risk Clients

**NEED**
- **WHAT**
  - Target a Criminogenic Need During an EPICS Session

**RESPONSIVITY**
- **HOW**
  - Use EPICS Interventions Keep in Mind Specific Responsivity

**FIDELITY**
- **HOW WELL**
  - EPICS Coaching
Model Fidelity

FIDELITY PRINCIPLE

• Implementing the intervention as closely as possible to the way it was designed

• Every major study shows a strong relationship between fidelity and recidivism

• Poor fidelity can lead to null effects or unforeseen consequences (increasing recidivism)
Rationale for Coaching

• Coaching helps:
  – Reinforce material learned in training
  – Breaks down material into smaller pieces
  – Helps with long-term sustainability and initial skill acquisition; with continued maintenance of skill use

• Drastically increases **model fidelity** and **sustainability** of the model
How to Increase Fidelity: Coaching

- Training often provides participants with information and skills

- Still, there are challenges to transferring this information into practice
  - Less than 10% of material covered is retained

- Training focused solely on knowledge transfer without follow-ups or skill practices, do not lead to changes in daily practices

Taxman, 2013; Alexander et al., 2013
Importance of Fidelity

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.*
Importance of Fidelity for EPICS

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 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

• 5 initial follow-up, coaching sessions
  – Continued maintenance and remedial group and individual coaching sessions
EPICS Coaching Process

• Written individual feedback is provided on use of the model

• Support is provided to supervisors regarding implementation and on-going coaching

• Helps increase fidelity to the EPICS Model, continued troubleshooting of the model, practice, and refreshers/boosters
EPICS Coaching Process

- Participates in Coaching Calls
- Conducts EPICS Sessions

Participants

EPICS Project Director
- Implementation Support & Guidance

Internal Coaches
- Codes EPICS Sessions
- Participates in Coaching Calls
- Coaches Mentees
- Conducts EPICS Sessions

UCCI Coach
- Conducts Coaching Calls
- Works Closely with Internal Coaches
- Monitors Use of Model
EPICS Coaching Process

• Each coaching session includes two different calls/webinars
  – 1\textsuperscript{st} call of each session is with UCCI coach and internal coaches
  – 2\textsuperscript{nd} call of each session is with UCCI coach and all participants

• Internal coaches call
  – How to code EPICS sessions
  – How to coach individuals in EPICS

• Coaching call
  – Group feedback on use of model
  – Skills/interventions are reviewed, modeled and practiced
Thank You

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