Program Integrity Matters: An Outcome Evaluation of a Gender-Responsive, Cognitive Behavioral Program for Female Offenders

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Overview of Presentation

- Presentation will focus on evaluation of Moving On, a cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) program designed for female offenders
  - Study was published last year in *Criminology & Public Policy* and is also posted on DOC website
- Importance of program integrity and what previous research has found
- How Moving On has been implemented in Minnesota
- How we evaluated Moving On
- Impact of Moving On regarding recidivism outcomes
- Implications of evaluation results for correctional policy and practice
Importance of Program Integrity

• Widely accepted that program integrity is a key piece of effective correctional programs

• Program integrity = operation of program is relatively consistent with how it was designed
  • Doesn’t deviate from evidence-based program elements

• Program failure is often attributable to:
  • “Correctional quackery” = program not rooted in sound criminological theory
  • Lack of therapeutic integrity
    • Some have speculated that variation in effectiveness among meta-analyses of correctional programs likely stems from lack of program integrity (Cullen, 2002; Gendreau, 1996)
Prior Research on Program Integrity

- Evaluability assessments created to assess design and implementation of correctional programs
  - Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI)
  - Correctional Program Checklist (CPC)
- But only a few studies have examined relationship between program integrity and recidivism outcomes
  - Nesovick (2003) = second-hand CPAI assessments of adult and juvenile correctional programs
    - Found that programs with higher CPAI scores were associated with larger recidivism effects
  - Lowenkamp et al. (2006) used CPAI to examine relationship between program integrity and recidivism among halfway houses
    - Higher CPAI scores (more program integrity) were associated with larger recidivism reductions
Evaluating Program Integrity for Moving On

• Moving On is a gender-responsive, cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT) program designed for female offenders
  • Multiple meta-analyses have found CBT’s are generally effective in reducing recidivism

• Developed by Van Dieten, Moving On focuses on improving communication skills, building healthy relationships, and expressing emotions in healthy, constructive manner

• Moving On program includes
  • Group and one-on-one discussions
  • Self assessments
  • Writing exercises
  • Role-playing and modeling activities
  • Curriculum is nearly 50 hours delivered over 26 sessions
Prior Evaluation of Moving On

- Gehring et al. (2010) evaluated Moving On among female probationers in Iowa
- Found that Moving On participants generally had better recidivism outcomes than a comparison group
- Results are encouraging but study had two key limitations
  - Limited number of controls used to match Moving On and comparison group offenders
  - Multivariate analyses were not used to control for effects of other potential variables on recidivism outcomes
Moving On in Minnesota, 2001-2010

• Moving On began to be offered to female prisoners at the Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)-Shakopee (main prison for females) in 2001
• Risk/needs assessments not used to identify participants
• Participation was voluntary
  • Often during last half of confinement period
• Program lasted approximately 12 weeks
  • Participants in class 4 hours/week for a total of 48 hours
  • Class sizes were relatively small (5-10 per class)
Moving On in Minnesota, 2011-2013

• Big changes to administration of Moving On beginning in 2011
  • Due to concerns over perceived conflicts in scheduling offenders for programming and work assignments

• Risk/needs assessments not used to identify participants

• Participation was mandatory
  • Moved up to time of intake

• Program lasted approximately 3 weeks
  • Participants in class 10 hours/week for a total of 30 hours
  • Class sizes were large (40-50 per class)
  • Removal of role-playing exercises
### “High Fidelity” vs. “Low Fidelity”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence-Based Practice Strategies</th>
<th>High (2001-2010)</th>
<th>Low (2011-2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Facilitator Qualifications</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNR model used to target participants</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target higher-risk offenders</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program targets criminogenic needs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses evidence-based approach</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program length between 3-9 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group size ranges between 5-10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of reinforcers and punishers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion criteria and rate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill modeling and training with practice</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of EBP strategies</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moving On Evaluation in Minnesota

- Attempted to address two main questions:
  - Is Moving On effective in reducing recidivism?
  - Does program integrity have an impact on recidivism?
- Population contained 4,101 female offenders released from MN prisons between 2003 and 2013
  - 216 participated in Moving On during 2001-2010 period
  - 864 participated during 2011-2013 period
  - Remaining offenders did not participate
- Used a retrospective quasi-experimental design with 3 sets of comparisons
  1. High fidelity Moving On vs. contemporary comparison
  2. Low fidelity Moving On vs. historical comparison
  3. High fidelity Moving On vs. Low fidelity Moving On
Propensity Score Matching and Controls

• Used propensity score matching to create comparison groups for each comparison
  • Low fidelity was comparison group for comparison #3
• Used following controls in propensity and outcome estimation models
  • Age
  • Sentence length/length of stay
  • Race
  • Twin Cities metro-area commit
  • Prior supervision failures
  • Total convictions
  • Total felonies
  • Offense type
  • Admission type
  • Prison misconduct
  • Suicidal tendencies
  • Visited in prison
  • Educational degree
  • Chemical dependency treatment in prison
  • EMPLOY—employment reentry program
  • Challenge Incarceration Program—correctional boot camp
  • Work Release
  • Intensive Supervised Release
  • Discharge (no supervision at release)
  • Post-release revocations and reincarcerations
Recidivism and Outcome Analyses

- Used 4 measures to assess recidivism
  - Rearrest
  - Reconviction
  - New Offense Reincarceration
  - Reincarceration for technical violation revocation

- Recidivism data collected through June 2014
  - Follow-up period ranged from 6 months to 11 years

- Used Cox regression to analyze impact of Moving On and program integrity on recidivism
  - Due to varying lengths of follow-up periods
  - Can handle censored observations
## Recidivism Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison #1</th>
<th>Rearrest</th>
<th>Reconviction</th>
<th>New Offense Reincarceration</th>
<th>Technical Viol. Revocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-2011 Moving On</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemp. Comparison</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison #2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-2013 Moving On</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Comparison</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-adjusted rate</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Comparison #3</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-2011 Moving On</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-adjusted rate</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2013 Moving On</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cox Regression Results: Comparisons #1 and #2

- **Comparison #1**
  - Pre-2011 Moving On significantly reduced 2 of the 4 recidivism outcomes
  - Significantly reduced risk by
    - 31 percent for rearrest
    - 33 percent for reconviction
  - Moving On did not have a significant effect on either reincarceration measure
    - Hazard ratios were in negative direction

- **Comparison #2**
  - 2011-2013 Moving On did not have a significant effect on any of the 4 recidivism measures

- **Comparison #3**
  - Similar to comparison #1
  - Compared to participants from 2011-2013 Moving On, the pre-2011 Moving On significantly reduced risk by
    - 44 percent for rearrest
    - 47 percent for reconviction
  - No significant effects for either reincarceration measure
So What Do These Results Mean?

• Summary
  • “High fidelity” Moving On (pre-2011) was generally effective in reducing recidivism
  • “Low fidelity” Moving On (2011-2013) did not have an impact on any of the recidivism measures
  • Recidivism outcomes for “High fidelity” Moving On were significantly better when compared with “Low fidelity” Moving On

• Results imply that Moving On can be an effective program for female offenders
• Results also imply program integrity matters
  • Effectiveness hinged on whether it was delivered with fidelity
  • As quality of intervention was diluted, so was its beneficial effect on recidivism
Caveats

- Results may not be generalizable outside MN
- Had to rely on historical comparisons
  - Weaker than contemporaneous ones
- Unable to determine which program integrity components made the difference
  - Class sizes?
  - Removal of role-playing exercises?
  - Timing as to when programming was provided?
- Could not control for volunteerism/motivation
  - Pre-2011 = voluntary
  - 2011-2013 = mandatory
  - Evidence on importance of volunteerism for recidivism is somewhat mixed
Implications for Correctional Policy and Practice

• Provides additional evidence that CBT’s are effective in reducing recidivism for offenders

• Also provides evidence that Moving On can be effective in lowering recidivism for female offenders
  • Results are generally consistent with the lone prior evaluation by Gehring et al. (2010)
Implications for Correctional Policy and Practice

- Provides additional—although qualified—support for idea that program integrity matters
- Evaluation highlights importance of accounting for program integrity
  - "Black box" evaluation of Moving On during 2011-2013 = erroneous conclusion it doesn’t work
  - Also important to look inside the box to determine why programs succeed or fail
Implications for Correctional Policy and Practice

- Correctional staff can make an effective program ineffective
- Evaluation is a cautionary tale for practitioners who modify a program
  - “Enhancing” it
  - Offering the “light” version to cut corners or reduce costs
- Local program innovation can, and should, occur, but...
  - Should take place within context of controlled experimentation
  - Does the “enhancement” actually enhance recidivism outcomes?
Implications for Correctional Policy and Practice

• Correctional practitioners have increasingly embraced idea of evidence-based practices
  • Use EBP to increase public safety by reducing recidivism
• But reduction will be elusive if EB interventions are not delivered with integrity
  • EBP nothing more than lip service
• Ensuring program integrity is critical to efficient use of successful interventions that deliver on promise of reduced recidivism
Parting Thoughts

• In late 2013, MnDOC switched Moving On back to pre-2011 version
  • Risk assessment now being used to identify higher-risk offenders
• Study was published last year in Criminology & Public Policy and is also posted on DOC website
  • Duwe, Grant and Valerie Clark (2015). The Importance of Program Integrity: An Outcome Evaluation of a Gender-Responsive, Cognitive-Behavioral Program for Female Offenders. Criminology & Public Policy.
References


