Evidence of the importance of probation officers being agents of change: The STICS Project

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Reno, Nevada
Community Supervision Effectiveness

What does the research tell us?
## Community Supervision Effectiveness?

*Meta-Analytic Findings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>( \Phi )</th>
<th>( k )</th>
<th>( N )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Recidivism</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Recidivism</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28,523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( k = \) number of effect sizes

Bonta et al. (2008)

- **Minimal impact on recidivism**
What about the RNR principles?  
*Does adherence make a difference?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RNR Adherence</th>
<th>$\phi$</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RNR = 0</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNR = 1</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNR = 2</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNR = 3</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Increase in RNR adherence = Decrease in recidivism
MB Case Management Study:

*Do policies translate into practice “behind closed doors”*?
Manitoba Case Management Study

Jurisdictional policies congruent with RNR but what about “behind closed doors”?

Analysis of 211 audiotapes & file records
From 62 PO on 154 offenders

Questions:

1. Risk: Is PO-client contact related to level of risk?
2. Need: Do PO target criminogenic needs?
3. Responsivity: Do PO use techniques congruent with effective correctional practices?

(Bonta et al., 2004, 2008)
Adherence to the Risk Principle?

- **More face-to-face sessions?**
  - Mean: 1.4 face-to-face/month
  - Modestly related to risk ($r = .19$)

- **Longer sessions?**
  - Mean: 22 min. 34 sec
  - Weakly related to risk ($r = .07$)

➢ **At best, modest adherence to Risk**
Adherence to the Need Principle?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need Area</th>
<th>% Discussed When Need Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family/Marital</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment/Academic</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Problems</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Modest adherence for some
- Minimal for others - especially “Big Four”
# Adherence to Responsivity Principle

## Relationship & Structuring skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>@ Intake</th>
<th>@ 6 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompts/Encourages</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structuring or “Change Agent” Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial reinforcement</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assigned</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procriminal discouragement</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial modeling</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

👉 **Officers positive but “change agent” skills weak**
The Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision:

*Can we improve the work done “behind closed doors”?*
Beyond Policy & Case Management

- Case Management Approach
  - Oversee and monitor compliance with sentence
  - Rehabilitative Efforts include...
    - Assess risk/need factors, develop/manage case (correctional) plan
    - Enhance motivation, address barriers, brokerage of community services, support treatment providers efforts

Programs/Services viewed as primary change agents

- Change Agent Approach
  - Officer takes on the primary responsibility for change
    - Enhance collaborative relationship
    - Use Cognitive-Behavioural interventions to facilitate change
    - Teach new skills and facilitate change in thinking/behaviour
    - Active practice and generalization of new skills
STICS...a change agent approach

- Adds “therapeutic” work
  - Translate RNR to “behind closed doors” work
  - Special attention to responsivity
  - Target procriminal attitudes & cognitions

- Recognizes that it requires skill sets (training)
  - To enhance collaborative relationship
  - To “bring to the table” and work with a CB model
  - To teach & model new skills to facilitate change

- Integrity & Implementation over the long run
  - Initial training & on-going clinical support activities
  - Ongoing evaluation
The Probation Officers
In the Project
STICS: Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision

Random Assignment of PO

Volunteer PO
N = 80

Random Assignment
60:40 Split

Control
N = 29
Submitted Data
N = 19
43 Clients

Drop Outs
N = 10
Benign (3)
No data (7)

STICS
N=51
Submitted Data
N = 33
100 Clients

Drop outs
N = 18
Benign (7)
No data (11)

Each PO was requested to recruit 4 Hi Risk & 2 Mod Risk Clients
## PO Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>STICS (N = 33)</th>
<th>Control (N = 19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male)</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Caucasian)</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNR Knowledge Test Score</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

➢ Groups equivalent but were they equally effective?
Groups equally effective before STICS?

*Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)*

Pre Effectiveness

**STICS vs. Control**

\[ \text{Exp(B)} = 0.900 \]

95\%CI = 0.591 - 1.369

\[ \Delta -3\% \]

2 Year Unadjusted Recidivism

Pre Control = 41.5\%
Pre STICS = 46.7\%
Did STICS Change Officer Behaviour “Behind Closed Doors”?
Assessment of PO Behaviour

- Direct Observations (audiotape)
  - 220 tapes for STICS & 75 for Control
  - Mean length (min): 26:45 (STICS): 24:36 (Control)

- Measures
  - General Session Characteristics
    - Ratings more or less “therapeutic”
  - Topics of Discussion
    - Criminogenic Needs vs. other topics of discussion
  - “Change Agent” Skills
    - Structuring, Relationship Building, Behavioural Techniques and Cognitive Techniques
General Session Characteristics:
More or less “therapeutic”

- Advice-Teaching
- Punish-Reinforce
- Assessment-Therapeutic
- External-Internal

STICS: More “therapeutic” oriented
Topics of Discussion:
The focus of what they talk about

- STICS: Focused on Criminogenic Needs

% of Time During Session
Topic Discussed

- Crim Needs
- Non-Crim
- Conditions

STICS: Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision
Topics of Discussion:
Attitudes/Cognitions & Use of Cognitive Techniques

- STICS: Focus on Attitudes & Use Cognitive Techniques
“Change Agent” Skills:
Skills and intervention techniques used by PO

- Structuring
- Relationship
- Behavioural Techniques
- Cognitive Techniques

STICS: Superior “Change Agent” Skills
What About The Clients Being Supervised?
# Client Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>STICS (N = 100)</th>
<th>Control (N = 43)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male)</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Caucasian)</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Habitation</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Index Offence</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Profile: Low</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

➤ Client samples equivalent
Groups equally effective post STICS?

*Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Cum Survival</th>
<th>Survival length (in days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STICS</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STICS vs. Control**

Exp(B) = 0.683

95%CI = 0.367 - 1.274

Δ -11%

2-yr Unadjusted Recidivism

Control = 40.5%

STICS = 25.3%
Pre vs. Post STICS:
*Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)*

Pre vs. Post STICS

Exp(B) = 0.510
95%CI = 0.319 - 0.816
Δ -18%

2 Year Unadjusted Recidivism
Pre-STICS = 46.7%
Post STICS = 25.3%
Evidence indicates...

STICS resulted in

11% to 18%

difference in recidivism

In line with “Real World” treatment programs adhering to all 3 RNR principles ~ 15%
Was On-Going Clinical Support Important?
Evaluating On-Going Clinical Support

- **Data:**
  - Long-term behaviour: recorded sessions 9 months post-training
  - Compared to Control Group

- **Comparisons:**
  - **Control Group:** (19 PO; 75 tapes)
    - *All tapes – recorded on average 180 days post*
  - **Low On-Going Clinical Support** (13 PO; 36 tapes)
    - *Minimal use of monthly meeting, refresher, & FB*
  - **High On-Going Clinical Support** (10 PO; 40 tapes)
    - *Frequent use of monthly meeting, refresher, & FB*
Control vs. Low Support vs. High Support

Topics discussed in Sessions ≥ 9 months post-training

- High Support superior to Low Support (who are similar to Control)
Control vs. Low Support vs. High Support

*Topics discussed in Sessions > 9 months post-training*

High Support superior to Low Support (who are similar to Control)
Control vs. Low Support vs. High Support

Skills in Sessions > 9 months post-training
Control vs. Low Support vs. High Support

Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)

Low Support:
Exp(B) = .864
95%CI = .433 - 1.724
Δ -4%

Hi Support:
Exp(B) = .500
95%CI = .222 - 1.127
Δ -19%

2 Year Unadjusted Recidivism
Control = 40.5%
STICS Low Supt = 27.7%
STICS High Supt = 21.4%
STICS Hi Support: Pre vs. Post

Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)

High Support PO

Pre vs. Post:

Exp(B) = .300
95%CI = .139 - .645

Δ -32%

2 Year Unadjusted Recidivism
Pre-STICS = 55.0%
Post STICS = 21.4%
Going Beyond Core Correctional Practices:

What is unique about STICS?
STICS: Holistic approach to supervision

- Roadmap for facilitating change
- Emphasis on Responsivity
- Functional cognitive-behavioural model
Roadmap for facilitating change

- **Relationship**
  - Collaborative relationship required
  - Skills and intervention techniques to build it

- **Foundations needed prior to individual work**
  - Common vocabulary
  - Cognitive-Behavioural model of human behaviour

- **Individual work**
  - Application of concepts to individual client
  - Teaching, practice and generalization of skills

- **Community Resources**
  - Viewed as supports not solutions
Emphasis on Responsivity

- What we know about Responsivity…
  - General Responsivity - Cognitive-Behavioural
  - Specific Responsivity – Individual factors

- Re-defining Responsivity…
  - Creating the “maximal” learning environment
  - What we do/how we do it defines Responsivity
    - Includes relationship building activities/behaviours
    - Includes language and methods used
Examples of Responsivity…

- Some vocabulary used for key concepts

  - “Triggers” vs. “Outside Cues”
  - “Thinking Errors” vs. “Tapes”
  - “Reward” vs. “Cookie”
Cognitive-Behavioural

What does “Cognitive-Behavioural” really mean?

What characterizes Cognitive-Behavioural interventions?
## Behavioural vs Cognitive-Behavioural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural Interventions</th>
<th>Cognitive-Behavioural Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on the ABCs</strong></td>
<td><strong>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; change thought then behaviour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antecedents (e.g., Triggers):</strong> Things outside individual are causal</td>
<td><strong>Antecedents (e.g., Outside Cues):</strong> Context not causal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cognitive: (e.g., Inside cues)</strong> Causal for behavior yet self-determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>What:</strong> Content of thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>How:</strong> Process of thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Teach/model new thinking skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour:</strong> New skills to get external consequences</td>
<td><strong>Behaviour:</strong> New thinking aids learning new behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consequences:</strong> External focus are attempts to control outside consequences (others)</td>
<td><strong>Consequences:</strong> External consequences not in our control Self control of internal consequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 4 key characteristics of CB

1. **Demonstrate thought-behaviour link**
   - Show that thinking directs behaviour

2. **Identify procriminal attitudes/thoughts & behaviours**
   - Show their thinking that leads to their procriminal behaviours

3. **Model & teach prosocial cognitive & behavioural skills**
   - What & how to change must be concrete & simple
   - Active (what to do) NOT passive (what not to do)

4. **Practice & help generalize these skills**
   - Rehearsal with feedback here & on street

Not managing reactions to outside stimuli RATHER
Self-creating new thinking and behaviour patterns
Video example...

Melissa:
- Brief background
- When in supervision and when in session

Note: start at 2:42 ... end 9:45
Is the Behaviour Sequence important?

*(ALL PO): Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)*

Exposure to Behaviour Sequence

None vs. Exposure

Exp(B) = .345

95% CI = .159 - .749

\[\Delta -28\%\]
Is the Behaviour Sequence important?

*(STICS PO): Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)*

Exposure to Behaviour Sequence

None vs. Exposure

Exp(B) = 0.330

95%CI = 0.141 - 0.770

Δ -29%
Is the Behaviour Sequence important?

*(Within PO): Cox Regression (control age & LSI-R criminal history)*

Exposure to Behaviour Sequence

None vs. Exposure

\[ \text{Exp(B)} = 0.497 \]

\[ 95\% \text{CI } = 0.161 - 1.535 \]

\[ \Delta -19\% \]

Same PO: has cases with & without exposure

\[ N = 54 \]
Recall...

Overall, STICS showed 11% to 18% difference in recidivism

High Support Use....
19%-29% difference in recidivism

Factor in Cognitive Work...
19% to 29% difference in recidivism
Facing the Nightmare of Full Scale Implementation!

Integrity, Fidelity & Organizational Change
Full Scale STICS Implementation: BC Community Corrections

1. Goal: Train @ 370 PO across 50 offices

2. Build Internal Capacity

3. Implementation Integrity

4. Monitor and Evaluate
1. Training in STICS

Started in September 2011

- December, 2012: 13 offices and 163 officers trained

Monthly meetings (13 per month)

Refreshers (@ 20)
2. Build Capacity

Coaches (office level, 25-30 hours per month)
Roles:
- schedule monthly meetings and assist at refresher courses
- listen to recordings and provide oral feedback (1/2 day/week)

STICS Coordinators (4 Coordinators, all full time)
Roles:
- lead monthly meetings, deliver refresher courses, give *written* feedback
- supervise the coaches

Training of Coaches and Coordinators:
- from STICS research team (special training sessions)
3. Implementation Integrity

1. POs are expected to:
   a) attend a refresher course
   b) participate in at least eight monthly meetings
   c) receive feedback on two recorded sessions

2. Monitor and evaluate
   a) Pre-post design
      - Pre: 4 clients - 1 recording per
      - Post: 6 clients - 3 recordings per
The Pulse at halfway point

Questions:
1. Why the lower # of projected recordings?
2. Are we on the right track?
3. What is the level of commitment to STICS?

Method:
Interviews and questionnaires
Random sample of 92 post-training recordings
Recordings

- @ 19% of offices insufficient flow through

- The plague of technology

- Working out the bugs in recruitment protocol
  - post-training tapes from 65% to 85%
  - baseline tapes from 70%< to 90%
Uptake: Full scale vs. original pilot

More “Therapeutic”

Less “Therapeutic”

Rating

Advice-Teaching*
Punish-Reinforce*
Assessment-Therapeutic*
External-Internal*

Control
STICS
Roll-Out

More “Therapeutic”

Less “Therapeutic”

Rating

Advice-Teaching*
Punish-Reinforce*
Assessment-Therapeutic*
External-Internal*

Control
STICS
Roll-Out
Full scale vs. original pilot

% of Time During Session
Topic Discussed

- Crim Needs
- Non-Crim
- Conditions

- Control
- STICS
- Roll-Out
Full scale vs. original pilot

- STICS: Focus on Attitudes & Use Cognitive Techniques
“Change Agent” Skills: 
Skills and intervention techniques used by PO

➢ Uptake looking positive so far…
## On the Right Track? Mean Scores and Percent Use of STICS Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>2007 STICS Baseline + Control (N = 105)</th>
<th>2012-13 BC Post-Training (N = 92)</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structuring</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>p = .009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Techniques</td>
<td>9.31</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>p = .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Techniques</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Skills</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>37.67</td>
<td>p = .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Cognitive Technique</td>
<td>1/105 = 0.9%</td>
<td>31/92 = 33.7%</td>
<td>p = .000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PO Views: What they say about usefulness of STICS components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role clarification</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active listening</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial modelling</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STICS Behavior Model</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session structure</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective reinforcemnt/disapproval</td>
<td>4.03/3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive restructuring</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N = 63 – 69)
Summary...1

- RNR policy ≠ RNR “behind closed doors” practice
- Can change “behind closed door” practices
  - Evolution from Case Manager to Change Agents
- Professional Development/ Continuing Education
  - Holistic approach is responsive to officers.
  - More than “one shot” training. On-going efforts necessary
  - Maintenance of “less complex” skills
    - Relationship and general structuring/focus
  - Development/Enhancement of “more complex’ skills
    - Cognitive intervention techniques
Summary...2

- Implementation requires enormous efforts
  - Organizational implementation structures and supports are critical – it costs not just $$$!
  - Constant attention to PO, local and senior management, and overall organizational issues...flexibility and adaptability
  - Be prepared: “Dirty Laundry” will be exposed! It is wholesale change to the why, what, and how community supervision operates.
Beyond the “curriculum”…
Understanding important components…

Overall, STICS showed 11% to 18% difference in recidivism

Consider High Ongoing Support…. 19%-29% difference in recidivism

Consider “Responsive” Cognitive Work… 19% to 29% difference in recidivism
Available on the Public Safety Canada Website

www.publicsafety.gc.ca

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Selected References


