


**ICCA 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Research Conference**  
**Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Offenders Seeking Employment**

University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute  
Center for Criminal Justice Research



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**Objectives**

- Introduce CBI-EMP curriculum
- Review development process
- Provide content overview
- Review pilot progress



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**COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS FOR OFFENDERS SEEKING EMPLOYMENT**



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### CBI-EMP Overview

- Collaboration with MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization and Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)
- Designed to provide an employment-focused cognitive behavioral program



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### CBI-CC Overview

- Heavy emphasis on skill building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development
- Uses a modified closed group format with multiple entry points
- Designed to allow for flexibility across various service settings and intervention lengths



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### Traditional Correctional Approach to Employment

- Refer to vocational program to increase marketable skills or knowledge
- Require individuals to seek or maintain employment
- Measure recidivism



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**Results – Traditional Approach**

- A meta-analysis of employment programs for individuals with criminal records found that overall they did **not** reduce recidivism.

*Studies have not attempted to isolate which particular services are effective for which types of people.*

Visher, C.A., Winterfield, L. & Coggeshall, M.B. (2005). Ex-offender employment programs and recidivism: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 1, 295–315.




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**Attaining vs. Retaining Employment**

- Most studies use official re-arrest or reconviction to measure the success of vocational programs.
- No studies were found that measure the long-term ability of offenders to *retain* employment.
- Attainment of employment may fail to measure whether an individual *kept* employment.

Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., and Miles, J. N. V. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education: a meta-analysis of programs that provide education to incarcerated adults. Rand Corporation.




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**The Missing Link**

**R-N-R**

- “Community-employment programs may be more effective...if the **needs** of individuals can be identified **and linked to specific services**.” (Visher et al. 2005)
- Criminal **attitudes** are a major risk factor **that must be addressed** to expect sustained change, even if employment is attained. (Andrews and Bonta 2010).
  - Offenders who have never held a full-time job may benefit from cognitive training to address their attitude toward employment.

Andrews, D. A. and Bonta, J. (2010). The Psychology of Criminal Conduct (5<sup>th</sup> Providence, NJ: Anderson/LexisNexis.




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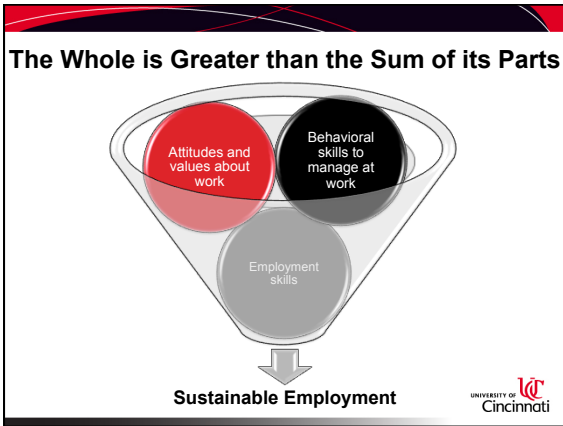
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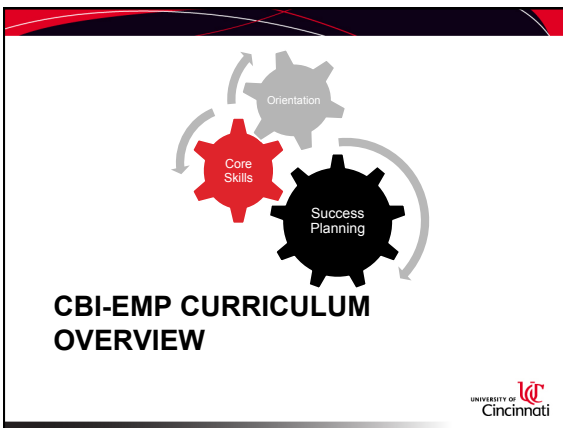
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### Curriculum Overview

<b>Module 1: Getting Ready for Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Motivational Engagement</li></ul>	<b>Thinking Right about Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cognitive Restructuring</li></ul>	<b>Skills for Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Social Skills</li><li>Emotional Regulation</li></ul>
<b>Challenges at Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Problem Solving</li></ul>	<b>Being Successful at Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Success Planning</li></ul>	<b>How to Find Work (Optional)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Basic job seeker skills</li></ul>

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**Module 1 – Motivational Engagement**

**Module Objectives:**

- 4 sessions
- Increase motivation and confidence in gaining and maintaining employment
- Identify attitudinal barriers to employment



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**Module 2 – Cognitive Restructuring**

**Module Objectives:**

- 6 sessions
- Teach participants how to identify cognitive distortions and attitudes/beliefs that hinder employment success
- Teach participants to change risky thoughts when confronted with high risk situations related to employment.



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**Module 3 – Social Skills/Emotional Regulation**

**Module Objectives:**

- 7 sessions
- Teach skills that enhance participant's ability to effectively respond in common workplace situations
- Teach participants to identify and manage uncomfortable, unpleasant, or intense emotions that are common in workplace situations



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### Module 4 – Problem Solving

**Module Objectives:**

- 4 sessions
- Teach three steps to problem-solving and apply to work-related situations



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### Module 5 – Success Planning

**Module Objectives:**

- 7 sessions
- Plan strategies to manage each employment-related high risk factor
- Develop plans for loss of job



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### CBI-EMP Pilot Process

Pilot Site	Location	Program Type	Setting	Gender
Center for Employment Opportunities	New York NY	Employment Services	Community	Men



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## Questions?

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