

Adapting CBT for Justice-Involved Clients: Part 1

Assessment and Case Formulation

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Program Outline

Part 1: Why Case Formulation Matters for Community Corrections Practitioners

Part 2: Hallmarks of Risk-Based Formulations

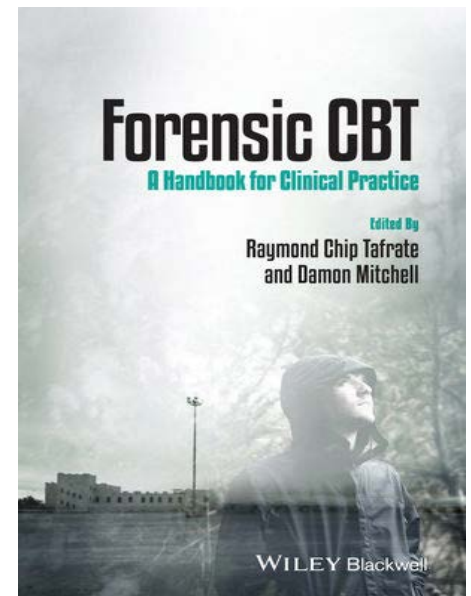
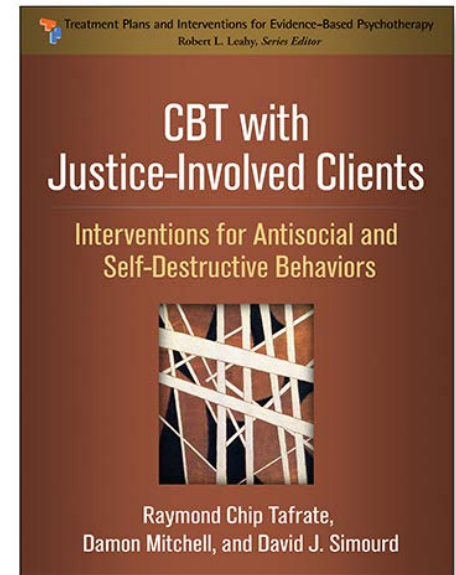
Part 3: Assessing Criminal Events

Part 4: Live Practice: Prioritizing Targets for Supervision and Treatment

Based on:

Tafrate, R.C., Mitchell, D., & Simourd, D.J. (2018). *CBT with justice-involved clients: Interventions for antisocial and self-destructive behaviors*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tafrate, R.C., & Mitchell, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Forensic CBT: A handbook for clinical practice*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley.



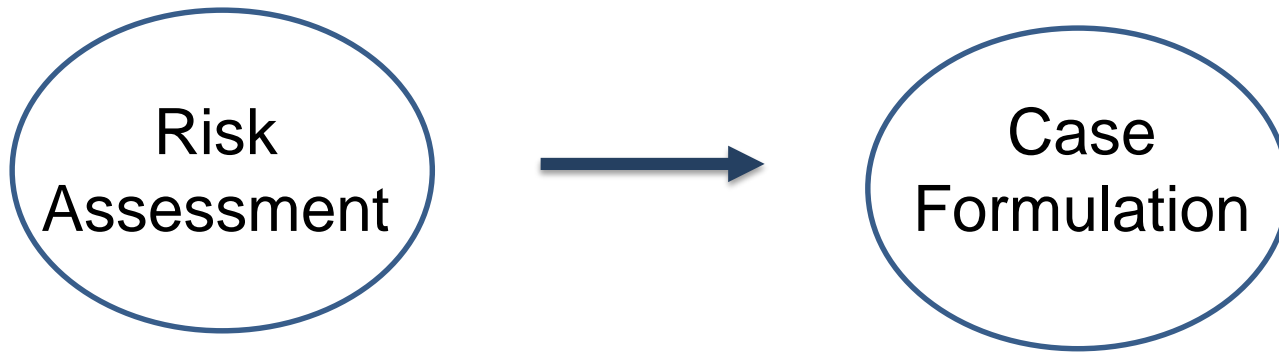
CASE FORMULATION is the process of integrating assessment information and forming opinions about the causes and maintenance of criminal/antisocial behavior.

Case formulations provide a rich perspective about client functioning and allow you to advance a supervision plan and form realistic expectations about potential improvement.

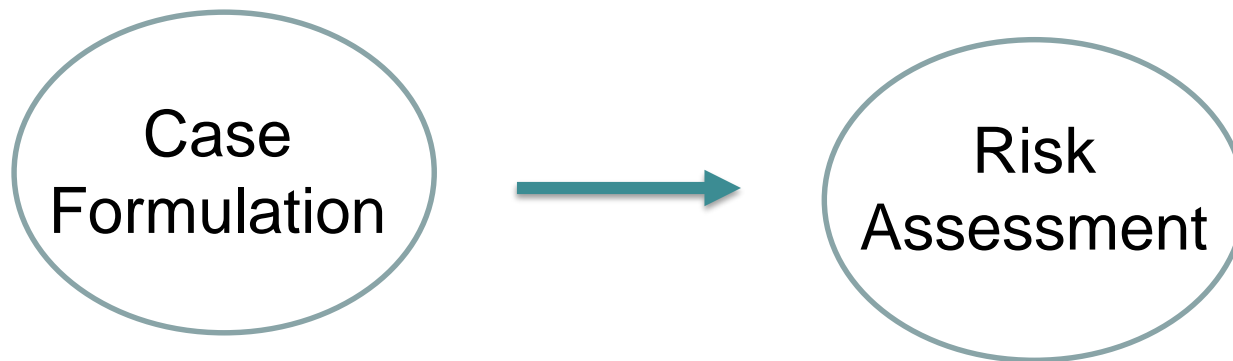
Case formulations guide supervision activities and inform community referrals.

RISK ASSESSMENT is the is the prediction of reoffending using probability estimates derived from a validated risk instruments and standardization groups.

An Education and Training Conundrum



As a Field we have it backwards . . .



Teach Case Formulation First

Two Questions to Ask Community Corrections Practitioners to Foster a Case Formulation Mindset

What's behind the box?



Where's the criminal risk?



Moving Toward Risk-Based Formulation: A Different Way of Thinking



- Family history of heart disease
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Obesity
- Poor diet
- Increased age
- Lack of physical activity

Hallmarks of Risk-Based Formulations

Client awareness of a problem is not assumed: minimal symptoms and lack of subjective distress are common; lifestyle disorder that develops over time; people may remain relatively unaware of the nature of their problems

Optimistic outlook: majority of risk factors are changeable

Preventative: goal is to reduce the risk profile for a particular client in order to avoid a more serious outcome

Synergistic: risk factors interact in ways that can amplify or reduce each other

Individually tailored: address the unique constellation of risk factors for each case to improve the outcome

Defines the area of expertise: risk domains become a primary focus during professional interactions

Criminal Risk Domains

History of criminal/
antisocial behavior

Lack of connection to
work/ school

Criminogenic thinking/
antisocial orientation

Substance abuse/ misuse

Antisocial companions

Dysfunctional family/
romantic relationships

Anger dysregulation

Maladaptive leisure time

* See Handout for description

A Word About Terminology

Although the Central Eight are commonly referred to as risk factors (or criminogenic needs), for CBT assessment and case formulation purposes they are better conceptualized as risk domains. The term risk factor implies a single characteristic about a person that is linked with a negative outcome (e.g., high cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease), whereas each of the Central Eight encompasses the client's history, thinking, and behavior in a broad life area.

Secondary Criminal Risk Domains

For some cases, additional factors, beyond the key criminal risk domains, may need to be considered in case formulation. These factors can emerge as acute symptoms related to mental health problems, transient life circumstances, intellectual or physical disabilities, and poor motivation.

* See Handout for description

Practice Developing a Case Formulation Mindset

Apply the criminal risk model to people you know in your life.

A personal example . . .

A Focus on Mental Health Symptoms is Not the Solution

An emerging body of research indicates that reducing future criminality has little to do with reducing mental health symptoms. Only a small percentage of criminal behavior can be linked to symptoms.

Even among mental-health-disordered clients, symptoms (e.g., psychosis & mood disorders) are rarely related to recidivism, whereas criminal risk domains consistently predict general and violent re-offending.

Addressing lifestyle issues (e.g., routines, relationships, and destructive habits) most associated with criminal behavior produces larger reductions in future criminality.

2 Mistakes to Avoid in Case Formulation

Mistake #1: Assuming that addressing mental health symptoms will improve the client's criminal/antisocial behavior.

Mistake #2: Assuming mental health problems are unimportant or should not be addressed in supervision/forensic treatment.

Conclusion: Addressing mental health problems is sometimes necessary to help the client focus, attend, and participate fully in the interventions that target their criminal risk domains.

Try This Personal Experiment

Since few people have a pristine life, think of a recent example where you did something that was potentially harmful and destructive to someone else (and maybe yourself). If you need prompting to come up with an example consider these general scenarios:

Lied or told a half-truth to someone, used work time for personal business, got “creative” with your tax return, “borrowed” office supplies for personal use, drove a car after having a few drinks, failed to meet an obligation or come through for someone, flirted with someone who was not your partner, attempted to manipulate a situation for personal gain, or broke a promise.

Now ask yourself, *to what extent was your “bad” behavior driven by worry or sadness versus an array of more complicated contextual, historical, and dispositional factors* (e.g., reinforcement history, attitudes, social influences)? Of course, this is an analog experiment and specific factors will vary from person to person, but the point is that mental health symptoms are not as central to antisocial behavior as many practitioners may believe.

Overview of Criminal Risk Domains



History of Criminal/ Antisocial Behavior

Formulation Considerations



In some ways, history of criminal/ antisocial behavior can be likened to the “chief complaint” or “history of presenting problem” in a traditional mental health assessment, which means it is a useful starting point for discussion.

The nature of the client’s prior criminal involvements should be explored; it is not enough to simply obtain a list of charges and convictions.

Begin with criminal history because it is perhaps the only area where reasonable corroborating information (i.e., through files) exists that can serve as a modest check for honesty and openness, and establish a base-line of self-report reliability.

Antisocial Companions

Formulation Considerations



Explore to what extent the overall pattern of antisocial behavior occurring in the presence of friends (10%, 50%, 80%).

Understand how are friends influencing antisocial behaviors.

As a general rule, current friendships are more important than those in the past.

The goal is to understand the extent (i.e., size of social circle), relative risk (i.e., prosocial vs antisocial), and degree of exposure (i.e., proportion of time spent with prosocial & antisocial influences) related to various companions.

Anger Dysregulation Formulation Considerations



How often does the client experience anger?

How intense and how long does it last?

What does the client do when angry?

To what extent is anger associated with negative outcomes? (Look for family conflict, aggressive/out-of-control behavior, school/work problems, and connection to substance misuse.)

Consider acute risk (i.e., high emotional arousal and plans for revenge).

Lack of Connection to Work/School

Formulation Considerations



Education and job skills create a path to steady employment and a career; in turn, a good job provides the foundation for self-sufficiency and economic survival.

Work and school also help to organize daily routines and create a social context that generally reinforces non-criminal attitudes and behaviors.

Explore negative or unrealistic attitudes and expectations toward employment or school, difficulties with supervisors/ co-workers or teachers/ other students, behavioral problems at work or school, and low levels of satisfaction related to work or school.

Substance Abuse/ Misuse Formulation Considerations



Rates of substance use problems tend to be high in forensic populations.

Determine the type of substance use (i.e., alcohol, drugs -- including prescription medications, or both) and its impact on functioning.

Understand the degree to which substance use is part of the client's lifestyle. Look for reliance on substances for coping.

Most importantly, determine the precise role substances have played in recent offending behaviors.

Dysfunctional Family/ Romantic Relationships

Formulation Considerations



The family lives of forensic clients tend to be particularly messy and fraught with criminality, mental health problems, substance abuse, and significant intra-family conflict.

Assessing the family/ marital/ romantic domain includes exploration of both family-of-origin, current romantic attachments, and parental relationships.

Identify which current relationships are prosocial and which are antisocial, and how these relationships contribute to, or lower risk for, criminal behavior.

Maladaptive Leisure Time Formulation Considerations



There are a total of 168 hours in a week and knowing how clients spend that time is essential for supervision/treatment success.

Look for low levels of involvement in prosocial activities and high involvement in risky/ antisocial activities.

Leisure activities require planning and intention, which means they represents a partial proxy for general life management.

Excessive free-time, or an aimless use of free time, increases the likelihood of criminal behavior related to other risk domains.

Criminogenic Thinking and Antisocial Orientation Formulation Considerations



Look for Patterns of thinking that facilitate antisocial and self-destructive behaviors.

Patterns may be found in how clients. . .

- perceive themselves: *“I can’t get caught. I’m smarter than the police.”*
- perceive others: *“I can’t worry about other people. It’s a dog eat dog world.”*
- approach and react their environment: *“Nobody tells me what to do. I tell other people what to do.”*

| Criminal Thinking Scales | # of subscales |
|---|----------------|
| Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS; Walters, 1995) | 8 |
| Criminal Sentiments Scale-Modified (CSS-M; Simourd, 1997) | 5 |
| Measure of Criminal Attitudes & Associates (MCAA; Mills, Kroner, & Hemmati, 1999) | 4 |
| Texas Christian University Criminal Thinking Scales (TCU CTS; Knight et al., 2006) | 6 |
| Measure of Offender Thinking Styles (MOTS; Mandracchia and associates, 2007) | 3 |
| Criminogenic Cognitions Scale (CCS; Tangney and associates, 2012) | 5 |
| Criminogenic Thinking Profile (CTP; Mitchell & Tafrate, 2012) | 8 |

Overview of Criminogenic Thinking Patterns

Beliefs Related to Self and Others

Identifying with Antisocial companions

Disregard for Others

Emotionally Disengaged

Hostility for CJ Personnel

Grandiosity & Entitlement

Power & Control

Beliefs Related to Interacting with the Environment

Demand for Excitement

Exploit

Hostility for Law and Order

Justifying & Minimizing

Path of Least Resistance

Inability to Cope

Underestimating

* See Handout for description

** The afternoon session focuses on criminal thinking

A Two Pronged Approach to Case Formulation

- 1) Identify the most salient criminal risk domains related to recent incidents of criminal behavior. This is accomplished through a *criminal event analysis*.
- 2) Identify criminal risk domains that impact general life functioning and serve as overall drivers of criminal behavior. This can be done through an assessment interview (e.g., lifestyle snapshot) or a formal risk assessment.

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Criminal Event Analysis

The purpose of a Criminal Event Analysis is to understand how specific criminal risk domains, as well as secondary domains, contributed to recent incidents(s) of criminal behavior at the time of the offense(s), and whether these factors are still active, dormant, or extinguished.

Criminal Event Analysis

This type of analysis can be done on the offense that triggered justice-involvement, the most recent offense, rearrests, specific violations of conditions, or any criminal incidents clients have been involved with in the recent past. As a general rule, the more events analyzed, the greater the likelihood that patterns related to criminal behavior will become evident. |

* See Handout

Example Criminal Event Analyses

Score a few samples



As a group answer the following questions:

What's behind the box?



Where's the criminal risk?



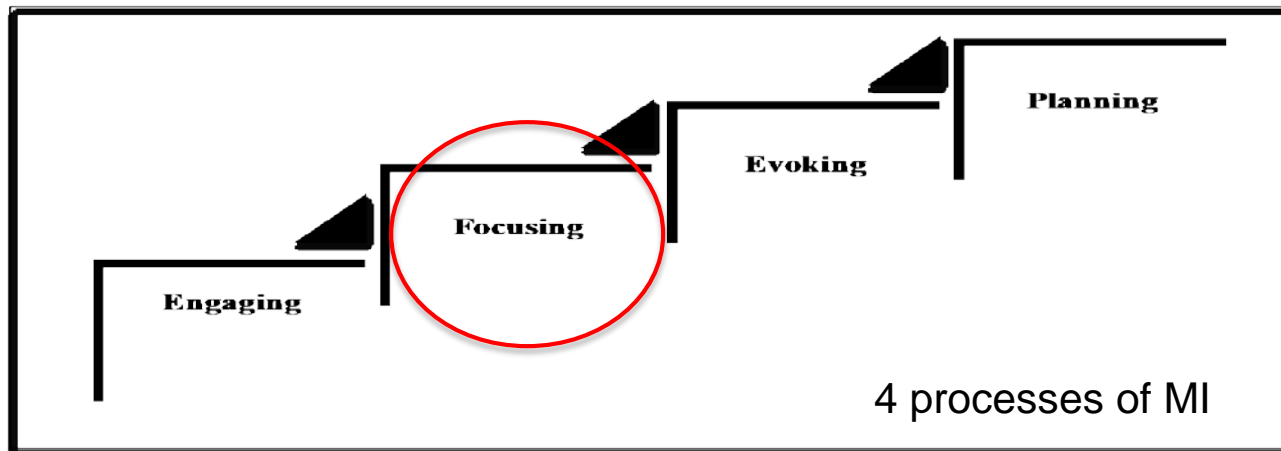
Based on your analysis, identify and prioritize your top three supervision and treatment targets

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Where Does Motivational Interviewing Fit?

The OARS skills provide a foundation that aids officers in establishing rapport, conducting assessments, identifying collaborative goals, and guiding conversations in helpful, productive directions.

We advocate a integration of MI and CBT skills with a heavy focus on criminal risk domains, and evoking client change talk.



Focusing on What Matters Most

Focusing is the process of establishing agreement with clients about supervision and treatment goals and clarifying a general strategic direction regarding the topics that will be discussed in supervision.

A collaborative agreement, to work on one or more criminal risk domains, can usually be established with the majority of clients.

Case Example: Jackie

Jackie is a 24-year-old woman on probation for criminal mischief and trespassing. The arrest occurred when Jackie and two older male co-workers were found trying the doors of cars at an auto dealership late at night, hoping to find one that was unlocked.

Jackie has a 4-year-old son who spends half of his time with her and half with his father, with whom she has a contentious relationship. In the year prior to Jackie's arrest, her mother became disabled after a car accident and struggled with her health. Jackie decided that she would work full-time in order to help with the family's expenses, and she obtained employment at a car wash. As a result of her recent arrest, Jackie was fired from her job.

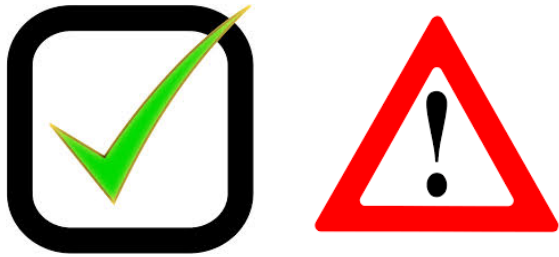
During this past year, Jackie's social network primarily consisted of the two friends with whom she was arrested. She met them when she started working at the car wash, which was adjacent to the auto dealership. The two men took Jackie "under their wing," and invited her to hang out after work, which often involved aimlessly driving around and occasionally selling small amounts of marijuana to acquaintances.

Before she began working full-time, Jackie had several friendships with men and women close to her age who had more conventional lifestyles; however, she unintentionally allowed these friendships to drift away.

Jackie also seems to suffer from a moderate level of depression, but it is unclear to what extent Jackie's mood symptoms are causes versus results of her current criminal justice problems.

Interview: Jackie

Each group will get to ask questions to evoke the relevant information needed to complete the Criminal Event Analysis



Based on your analysis, identify and prioritize your top three supervision and treatment targets

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

* See Handout: Guidelines and Questions for Conducting a Criminal Event Analysis

Questions, Comments,
Thoughts. . .?

