

COMPAS Presentation
DCC Region 5 Courts
Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility

Northpointe Institute for Public Management, Inc.
 May 9, 2011

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National Institute of Corrections Eight Principles of Effective Intervention

COMPAS

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EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM:
 Implications for State Juvenile Courts

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COMPAS

Recommendations:

"Effective recidivism-reduction programs must target moderate- and high-risk offenders, i.e., those more likely to reoffend."

"Recidivism among low-risk offenders increases when they are included in programs with higher-risk offenders."

"Effective programs must also target criminogenic needs; those values, attitudes, or behaviors of the offender that are most closely associated with the likelihood of committing crime."

Findings Regarding Assessment:

"An accurate assessment of an offender's level of risk and criminogenic needs requires both sound professional judgment and an actuarial tool that includes assessment of static and dynamic risk and criminogenic need factors—dynamic factors being those that are subject to change."

"An accurate assessment of an offender's level of risk and criminogenic needs is important in determining the offender's suitability for diversion or probation, the kind of treatment and behavioral controls to be provided, and appropriate conditions of probation to be imposed."

Offenders in treatment also require positive support, especially from the persons closest to them: family members, friends, religious institutions, and supportive others in their communities.

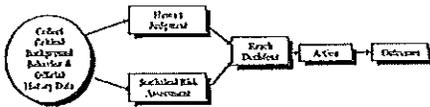
Findings Regarding Sentencing:
The sentencing process matters as much as the specifics of the sentencing decision. All communications with the offender in connection with sentencing, especially by the judge, should be conducted in a manner to achieve a mutual goal of the court and the offender—the offender's voluntary compliance with all conditions of probation.

The judge, like the probation officer, should act as a change agent to reinforce the importance of the offender's voluntary compliance, not merely to enforce compliance.
Motivation to change on the part of the offender is a critical precondition for behavioral change.
The more that offenders feel that they have been treated fairly, the more likely they will be to obey the law in the future.

Additional Domains of COMPAS

- Substance Abuse (drug and alcohol)
- Work/Educational Failure (low social captol)
- Family Risk Factors (parenting failure, etc.)
- Environmental Factors (community, stress, etc.)

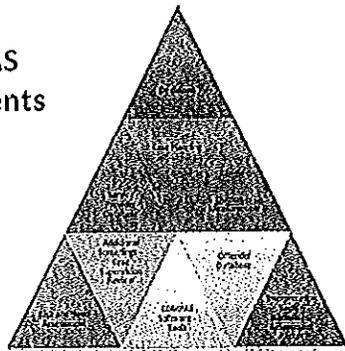
Joint Use of Professional Judgment and Actuarial Risk Assessment



Two Kinds of Errors:
 1. Over Classification
 2. Under Classification

Harris, P., 2008, What Community Supervision Officers Need to Know About Actuarial Risk Assessment and Critical Judgment, Federal Probation, Vol 72, No. 2

COMPAS Components



COMPAS Scoring

1. COMPAS Scales use a COMMON METRIC
 - Percentile scores: 1 through 10
 - Rank ordered from Low to High; 10% slices
2. Easy to understand and Interpret.
3. Remember: Average = 5-6
4. Shows "how" an person compares to others in overall population
5. Easily converted to traditional levels: Low, Med, High, e.g. 1-4; 5-7; 8-10

What COMPAS Isn't...

- COMPAS is NOT intended to determine need for (or length of) incarceration.
- COMPAS does not replace judicial discretion.
- COMPAS is not perfect predictor of future criminality. All actuarial tools have a margin of error.
- COMPAS can't predict the likelihood of a given defendant committing a give offense.

What COMPAS Is...

- A decision-support tool at sentencing.
- A predictor of risk, intended to inform an appropriate level of community supervision response.
- A diagnostic tool that assesses a level of need for services, so that resources can be appropriately targeted to maximize a positive outcome for the defendant and the community.
