

Evidence-Based Sentencing to Improve Public Safety and Reduce Recidivism A Model Curriculum for Judges

Glossary of Terms

Criminogenic	Offender characteristics that affect the likelihood of future criminality
Dynamic risk factors	Characteristics of an offender that affect the likelihood of recidivism and that are subject to change through appropriate intervention.
Interventions	Planned activities with an offender for the purpose of reducing the risk of the offender’s recidivism, including treatment programs, probation supervision strategies, and professional interactions
Meta-analysis/meta-study	An “analysis of analyses” or “study of research studies” in which all of the research (sometimes including previously unpublished research) on a certain topic is pulled together and analyzed to determine the existence of any consistent and significant findings based on a preponderance of all of the evidence resulting from those research studies that meet high professional research standards.
Negative Reinforcement	Withdrawal of a sanction as reinforcement or reward for pro-social behavior
Recidivism	In measuring sentencing effectiveness, recidivism is defined as a subsequent criminal arrest or conviction within a specified period of time. There is variation, often dependent on the availability of data, regarding whether all offenses or only felony offenses are considered, and the periods of time considered.
Responsivity	Matching the characteristics of the intervention and provider to certain characteristics of the individual offender
Responsivity Factors	Those offender characteristics that need to be “matched” to characteristics of the intervention and provider in order to obtain effective interventions, including, age, gender, culture, learning style, intelligence, literacy, mental health, change readiness, and motivation.
Risk Factors	Those characteristics of an offender that effect the likelihood of recidivism
Static risk factors	Characteristics of an offender that effect the likelihood of recidivism and that are constant or historical and cannot be changed, e.g., factors such as age, gender, number of prior arrests, prior convictions, age at first arrest, and alcohol/ substance abuse history.
Target/targeting	Focus/focusing interventions on certain offenders and offender characteristics