



FACT SHEET

Criminogenic Needs

The Risk principle states that the level of services should be matched to the risk level of the offender. The Need principle states that the targets for intervention should be factors related to offending - these factors that contribute to reoffending are known as criminogenic needs.

Although the assessment of risk will inform selection of participants and intensity of service delivery, assessment of needs will inform program target and content

Criminogenic needs V non-criminogenic needs

Criminogenic needs are dynamic attributes of an offender that, when changed, are associated with the possibility of recidivism. Non-criminogenic needs are also dynamic and changeable, but these changes are not necessarily associated with the probability of recidivism (McGuire, 2005).

Based on tests of the Need principle, successfully addressing criminogenic needs is associated with an average 19% difference in recidivism whilst treatments that focus on non-criminogenic needs are associated with a slight increase (about 1%) in recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2006).

LSI-R needs

The Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R) is the Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW) primary risk/need assessment and is used to identify factors associated with an offender's criminal behaviour. The needs examined by the LSI-R are:

Education/Employment – deficits, stability or rewards provided by schooling and work

Financial – measures financial stress and/or stability and self sufficiency

Family/Marital – pro-social or antisocial family history and their influences on the offender

Accommodation – lack of secure housing and prosocial bonds can lead to increased risk

Leisure/Recreation –opportunities for community integration through leisure activities

Companions – extent of peer relationships being pro or antisocial

Alcohol/Drug Problems – drug/alcohol abuse history and negative effects

Emotional/Personal – personal difficulties and stressors related to offending

Attitude/Orientation – measures conventional or criminal attitudes held by offenders

Why Needs are important to address

The adherence to the Need principle has a significant impact on the effectiveness of treatment.

For treatment to be effective in reducing recidivism, intervention targets should be matched with criminogenic needs, sequenced in the right order and involve the offender in the decision making process. It is important to remember that there is no “one size fit all” program and offenders’ treatment readiness should be considered to enhance their level of engagement. Correctional staff’s knowledge in the Risk, Need and Responsivity principles, ability to apply them in their day to day work and awareness of available resources plays a critical role in ensuring interventions are effective in reducing recidivism.