

RESEARCH YEAR-IN-REVIEW

2020

SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE



BY CORRECTIONAL RESEARCH BRANCH | PSYCHOLOGICAL
AND CORRECTIONAL REHABILITATION DIVISION



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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to ring in the new year with our second issue of 'Research Year in Review: 2020' by the Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division (PCRD) of Singapore Prison Service (SPS).

2020 posed many challenges for SPS due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the height of which was the two-month lockdown when we had to stop face-to-face sessions and research operations, and staff had to adapt quickly to working from home. This inevitably resulted in some delays to the research studies we could conduct. However, I am proud to say that we adapted successfully to circumvent these obstacles and continued to produce great pieces of research work despite the challenges. We thought of innovative ways to continue research communication touchpoints, and our staff worked hard post-lockdown to catch up on the data collection efforts. PCRD continues to create a difference through conducting innovative research and evaluation studies and using these findings to inform and enhance policies, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts as well as operation work.

This second issue of the year-in-review features a total of 17 research and evaluation studies conducted across the various branches in PCRD. While PCRD has a dedicated group of research officers and evaluation officers in the Correctional Research Branch (CRB) and Programme Design and Evaluation Branch (PDEB), all the individual branches continue to conduct their own practice research studies to deepen their understanding of the population they work with, and to enhance the meaningful work they do with the offenders. I would like to encourage all branches of PCRD to keep up their current efforts of conducting their own research studies in order to foster a better understanding of the offenders they work with and to enhance their rehabilitation journey.

On top of that, we launched our first Yellow Ribbon Webinar series on the topic of 'Desistance: Beyond Recidivism', in conjunction with the CARE Network Year End Appreciation Event, which offered insights into the desistance journey of ex-offenders. This is something that we hope to continue, sharing and acknowledging the good research work done with each and every staff in SPS, with our colleagues from the Ministry of Home Affairs and across ministries, our community partners and with our international counterparts around the world.

It brings me great joy to see more contributions in this Research Year-in-Review and it is my hope that this will continue, in efforts to inspire greater conversations that serve to enhance our rehabilitation and reintegration practices and advance our work beyond the correction setting.



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RESEARCH YEAR-IN-REVIEW



RESEARCH
HIGHLIGHTS

Yellow Ribbon Webinar Series:

Desistance: Beyond Recidivism



The Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-offenders (CARE) is a coalition of various Social Service Agencies (SSAs) and government entities committed to community engagement, aftercare planning and improving service delivery for ex-offenders and their families. In conjunction with the CARE Network Year End Appreciation Event, Singapore Prison Service (SPS) and Yellow Ribbon hosted our very own Yellow Ribbon Webinar series in December. This series aims to share rehabilitation and reintegration efforts with the community, in hopes of generating important conversations as well as shifting perceptions on rehabilitation. Our first webinar of this series, *Desistance: Beyond Recidivism*, explores the personal journey of those with repeated patterns of offending towards abstinence and offers both a professional and personal take on this process.



Prof. Fergus McNeill

Professor of Criminology and Social Work, University of Glasgow

Prof. Fergus McNeill is Professor of Criminology and Social Work at the University of Glasgow. He recently led a pioneering ESRC funded project, 'Discovering Desistance', which developed dialogue between academics, practitioners, and ex-offenders about how criminal justice can better support people in leaving crime behind.

Prof. McNeill outlined the complicated road to reintegration, stressing that desistance is very much a process of personal development. He stressed how multiple factors, such as social bonds, an evolving narrative identity, and daily habits and movements can play a crucial role in successful desistance. Professor McNeill also emphasised how the journey of desistance is a non-linear process, where desistors often undergo lapses and relapses before moving into secure tertiary desistance. He stressed the importance of localised research that can shed light on how the culture in Singapore may influence the journey of desistance here. Professor McNeill also touched upon the different ways that social services and correctional systems can encourage and support desistance, cautioning against purely penal means of responding to offending behaviour. Rather, his research shows the importance of preventative social services that tackle unequal access to education, social capital, and economic capital across society. As for correctional systems, Professor McNeill encouraged correctional officers to help clear the path for desistors so that individual change can be sustained.



Mr. Cheng Xiang Long

Senior Assistant Director (Correctional Research Branch)
Singapore Prison Service (SPS)

Mr. Cheng Xiang Long is the Senior Assistant Director of the Correctional Research Branch at SPS. He oversees a team of psychologists in conducting research to inform the policy and practice of rehabilitation in SPS and has led a number of research studies on desistance.

Mr Cheng described SPS' research journey with desistance, affirming that the Risks-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model that has served SPS well since the early 2000s has improved Singapore's recidivism rate significantly. However, he stressed that gaining more meaningful data on desistance could provide SPS with its next breakthrough in local corrections. Mr Cheng also presented key findings from SPS' recent research on desistance. Desistance is firstly a journey that is very personal, and desistors may experience a significant shift in motivation and a sense of agency from key events in their lives. Consequences of relapsing can also provide motivation and determination to desist. Intentional lifestyle shifts, alongside the retention of prosocial support networks, can be crucial in the path to desistance. Finally, a controlled environment can provide the structure that instils a sense of discipline in desistors. Mr Cheng advised correctional officers to recognise and celebrate the small successes with the desistors they work with, and to move the focus to self-agency, as correctional officers ultimately only facilitate desistors' highly personal desistance journeys.



Mr. Jabez Koh
Founder of Infinite Transports

Mr. Jabez Koh was caught for drug-trafficking in 1997 but has since turned his life around. He now runs his own transport and logistics company, Infinite Transports, and hires former offenders as a way of helping others find their footing in life.

Mr Jabez shared his desistance journey and challenges faced. While incarcerated, his new-found faith, mother's support and grim fate of his friends greatly inspired Mr Jabez to resume his education and choose a different life path. He engaged more actively in prison programmes which he shared, helped him reintegrate. However, the outside world posed its own challenges. Due to his criminal past, he faced numerous job rejections and difficulties re-building trust with his family and bosses. He approached SCORE for help, who secured him a place of employment. Unfortunately, despite trying to prove himself a resource instead of a liability, he was taken advantage of and discriminated against which led to his departure. In his second job, he could not cope with the pace and started feeling frustrated due to the constant stigma and non-acceptance from society. Tempted to return to old habits, Mr Jabez remained resilient and participated in multiple prison programmes where he developed liaising skills. He was hired by SPS as an IT trainer where he harnessed his IT skills and saved money, which allowed him to start his own social enterprise in which he recruits ex-offenders. Mr Jabez is grateful for the support the prison had provided him and is happy to see more rehabilitative programs available now, as well as ex-offenders who are now counsellors. He advocates for education and opines that while prison is doing its best, offenders must also take responsibility for wanting to change and remaining determined to do so. Mr Jabez's advice to ex-offenders facing similar challenges is to not give up hope, occupy their time well and be the best version of themselves.



Mr. Rahman Sanip
Student at LASALLE College of the Arts

Mr. Rahman Sanip, a former drug addict, spent the last 20 years in and out of prison. Motivated by prison officers who saw his potential, he is currently pursuing a fine arts diploma at LASALLE College of the Arts.

Mr Rahman shared how prison helped him discover his passion and move forward on his desistance journey. Having received no prior education, Mr Rahman made it a point to build his portfolio while in prison. He discovered his talent during incarceration which spurred him on to explore it further after he was released. As a result, he approached an officer to find out how he could continue his studies. Mr Rahman began studying at the National Academy of Fine Arts and was subsequently invited by prison to display his artwork at a show. It was here that he met the same officer again, who directed him to another officer who recommended he study at LaSalle. He was successful in his application due to his portfolio which he had built in Visual Hub. Mr Rahman described the help he received from the officers as his turning point, as he appreciated the opportunity it presented him with. Speaking about his challenging desistance journey, Mr Rahman acknowledges the constant triggers around him. He highlights that change is not easy with the presence of negative peers and the lack of family support - with the passing of his mother and hailing from a broken family. Nevertheless, he is grateful for the support he received from prison and continues to remain determined to focus and work diligently on his passion for the arts. Currently, Mr Rahman is pursuing a Diploma in Fine Arts for the past 3 years and has successfully desisted for 20 years. While he is new to technology and online learning, he is happy to acquire new IT skills. Mr Rahman strives for personal growth in efforts to be remembered for who he is today instead of the past, and to prove to his estranged father that he is a changed man.

Research Showcase

LOOKING FORWARD EVALUATION

Research Excellence Award FY2019

Presented at Home Team Research Community of Practice Forum



The annual Home Team Research Community of Practice Forum is a platform for practitioners to showcase their area of research. Shortlisted finalists were invited to present their study. The winning research project is selected based on both the audience's and esteemed judges' votes, chaired by DS/Policy.

**Congratulations on achieving the Merit Award
for Looking Forward Evaluation!**



Researchers: Lenis Loh (Top left), Yasmin Ahamed (Top right), Victoria Neoh (Bottom Left), Lin Liangyu (Bottom right)

As part of the Learning Prison strategy, Looking Forward (LF), a motivational rehabilitative programme, was introduced to all inmates (with exceptions) starting 2019. Conducted by officers, LF is the first programme inmates attend, which aims to increase inmates' treatment readiness for future psychological correctional programmes. As LF is a new programme that is administered on a wide scale, it is necessary to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving its aims, in addition to its impact on institutions' operating structures.

A mixed method approach was used to evaluate LF. Quantitative scales were administered to inmates to evaluate the retention of knowledge (MCQ), treatment readiness (CVTRQ) and quality of inmate-officer relationship (DRI-R). Qualitative data was obtained through focus group discussions with inmates and correctional staff to gather their opinions and experiences of LF.

Quantitative findings revealed a significant increase in knowledge retention and treatment readiness, with a good quality of inmate-officer relationship. The qualitative findings also highlighted inmates' and facilitators' positive experiences as well areas for improvement. Some practical implications include improvising the programme to allow for better integration with the operating context and providing support channels for facilitators.

Research Showcase

PRISON OFFICER'S BURNOUT IN RELATION TO ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY IN PRISON TRANSFORMATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Presented at OCP Mini Research Conference 2020



Khairiyah Bte Kassim
Senior Psychologist
EBSC, SCDF

Ms Khairiyah, former Senior Psychologist with PCRD, conducted her postgraduate thesis to explore the differences in role ambiguity and role conflict between prison officers in emerging and established Transformative Environments (TEs). The study found that while prison officers across both TEs understood their job scopes well and had sufficient work-related support, there is a need to improve the articulation of prison officers' job scopes to other professionals that work closely with them so that prison officers do not face competing demands in their work.

OPERATIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH MEASURES IN PRISONS WHEN DEALING WITH COVID-19

*Presented at IACFP/ICPA Webinar 2020:
"Staff Well-Being and Resilience in Correctional Environments
- During and After a Pandemic"*



Dr Gabriel Ong
Principal Psychologist
& Deputy Director
PCRD, SPS

Dr. Gabriel Ong shared three key operations measures correctional facilities can use to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to inmates and staff:

- (1) **Prevention strategies:** Techniques designed to reduce exposure risk such as removing or limiting non-essential tasks, scheduling split shifts to enforce physical distancing, dedicating efforts to regularly schedule cleaning and disinfection; as well as ascertaining personnel uses appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks.
- (2) **Detection and isolation measures:** Establishing supervised entry and mandatory health inspections, diligently monitoring personnel' and inmates' wellbeing, and isolating new admission inmates for at least 14 days.
- (3) **Managing social responsibility:** Establishing measures that promote staff prioritization on personal health and well-being such as posted reminders for personal cleanliness practices, implementation of distancing regulations, and defaulting to work from home.

To ensure positive mental health of staff during the pandemic, Dr Ong suggested:

- (1) Formulating guides that emphasise mental well-being and resilience for personnel;
- (2) Collaborating with leadership to offer targeted therapeutic approaches and appointing a liaison person to monitor and respond to personnel mental well-being needs; and
- (3) Establishing an online forum to exchange positive and supportive messages among staff.

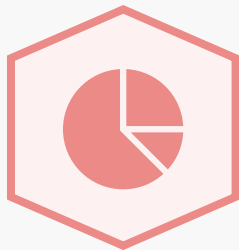
Publication Types

Singapore Prison Service (SPS) adopts an evidence-informed approach to rehabilitation, and its research guides these practices. It conducts a myriad of research studies - all of which explores different areas and populations. As shortly presented in this document, the sample of studies highlight women offenders, drug offenders and evaluation. The following are different publishing types for your reference to guide your understanding of the research studies presented in this document. You may find the corresponding icons on the top right of each synopsis.



LITERATURE REVIEW

A comprehensive summary of previous research findings, theory and methodological contributions on a topic from scholarly articles, books, and other publications.



INFOGRAPHIC

A visual representation of information or data, e.g. as a chart or diagram



RESEARCH REPORT

A full text document detailing the context or background, methodology, analysis, results and a discussion of findings for a given research project.



BOOK CHAPTER

A research publication of chapter length to an edited volume that reports original research and contributes substantially to a defined field of knowledge.

RESEARCH YEAR-IN-REVIEW





WHY LITERATURE REVIEWS ARE FOR YOU

Literature reviews can inform the work that you do.

1 What is a literature review?

The term '**literature**' refers to all the available research and practice information on a particular area or topic.

A **literature review** is an in-depth analysis and summary of existing research on a particular topic of interest.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first **gender-responsive rehabilitation programme in SPS for female drug offenders** was conceptualized based on:



A review of the international literature on gender-specific needs related to drug offending, and

Local research conducted on the gender-specific needs of female drug offenders in SPS.

2 What you can stand to learn from a literature review:



Best practices in your area of work



Knowledge gaps (i.e. problems that remain unsolved)



Emerging trends and approaches in corrections



How **current research** builds upon existing research

3 How to conduct a literature review¹:



Step 1: Search on keywords for relevant articles



Step 2: Evaluate articles for relevance



Step 3: Identify themes, debates and gaps



Step 4: Organize the flow of main points



Step 5: Put together your literature review

You can access research articles on journal databases!
For access to the EBSCO E-Journals Database, please contact:
pris_research_evaluation@pris.gov.sg

For more details, visit:
¹<https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/literature-review/>



SUPPORTING DESISTANCE IN PRISON

By Jeslyn Ng & Shermaine Chionh



Spot a new aspect of desistance?

RELATIONAL DESISTANCE (Tertiary Desistance)

Recognition by others that one has changed
Sense of belonging to a community



Support can come from:

- Prison Staff & Inmates
- Family & Friends
- Community
- Society



Why is relational desistance important for you to know?

International research found that offenders faced **struggles when desisting** and **support from others mattered to them**^{1,2}:



Individuals need a supportive and caring environment to desist

Individuals think and behave according to what we perceive of them

Individuals hope others can recognise their efforts and change

What can we do?



Provide a listening ear and motivate them

Recognise their potential and provide positive appraisals

Affirm the positive changes they made

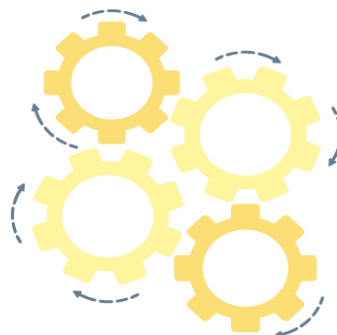
Providing inmates with social support during incarceration plays a crucial part in sustaining their long-term desistance.



How are you supporting relational desistance in your work?

When was the last time your inmates shared with you about challenges they faced?
How did you respond?

What are some positive changes you have seen in your inmates recently?



Where in your daily work can you facilitate opportunities to develop your inmates' potential?

When was the last time you shared a positive appraisal with your inmate?
How did that impact them?

What actions were helpful to support your inmates?

Do share your experiences with your co-workers!



The Research Digest aims to provide regular snapshots of research and evaluation knowledge and findings to promote the use of research in correctional policy and practice. For more information, please email pris_research_evaluation@pris.gov.sg

¹Nugent, B., & Schinkel, M. (2016). The pains of desistance. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 16(5), 568-584.
²Nixon, S. (2019). "I just want to give something back": Peer work in prison. *Prison Service Journal*, (245), 44-53.



DESISTANCE: SUCCESS INDICATORS



How do we define change and success beyond recidivism?

Desistance refers to the stopping of offending behaviours. Desistance research tells us that desistance is a process that often involves many ups and downs, and many individuals reoffend before they fully desist. This suggests the need to consider other information to understand an offender's journey of desistance besides recidivism.

Why is Recidivism Not Enough?



RECIDIVISM FOCUSES ON OUTCOME

Recidivism is a **black-and-white measure**: either a person commits a new crime, or he does not.

Yes

No

Recidivism alone does not tell us...

- What led that individual to reoffend?
- Is that individual's behaviour improving or worsening?
- In what ways are programmes helpful?



DESISTANCE FOCUSES ON THE PROCESS OF CHANGE AND GROWTH How can we better understand this?

Desistance: Indicators of Progress

Reduced severity of reoffending

Reduced frequency of reoffending over time



Longer time spent in the community before re-offending



These indicators tell us that the individual did better even if he/she reoffended

What Can YOU Do?

- Interact** with inmates and **Identify** their indicators of progress
- Acknowledge** where they have done better in
- Encourage** them to further strengthen what they have done well in

Source of Information
Klinge, C. (2019). Measuring Change: From Rates of Recidivism to Markers of Desistance. *J. Crim. L. & Criminology*, 109, 769.

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RESEARCH YEAR-IN-REVIEW





AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON “GREYING” OFFENDERS: WHO ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY OFFEND AT AN OLDER AGE?



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Singapore’s ageing population has been identified as a challenge facing the Home Team and is one of the key considerations of the Home Team Transformation 2025. As elderly offenders will present their own set of challenges in terms of management and unique rehabilitation needs, there is a need to have a better understanding of this growing population.

AIM

This research on the elderly offenders in SPS aims to provide an understanding of the profile and motivations for their offending.

EVALUATION QUESTION

1. Examine trends in elderly offenders within SPS
2. Explore reasons and motivations behind late-onset offending
3. Identify rehabilitation (e.g., mental wellbeing) and reintegration needs (e.g., employment barriers and social support) of elderly offenders

SAMPLE Administrative data of 30,761 elderly offenders released from SPS between 2000 to 2019 was examined for trends.

METHOD 30 elderly offenders with late-onset offending were interviewed to explore the reasons behind their offending behaviour. In addition, questionnaires were administered to 174 elderly offenders to find out more about their specific rehabilitation and reintegration needs.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 Proportion of older offenders has increased gradually in the last 10 years, but those above 65 years old remains low.
- 2 Majority of elderly offenders are lower in risk.
- 3 Elderly offenders presented with mental health concerns.
- 4 Elderly offenders reported concerns in financial needs and barriers to employment.
- 5 Late-onset offenders have low-risk of reoffending and it is the interaction between late life stage circumstances and motivations that lead to their late-onset offending.

The study findings highlight the need for SPS to continue monitoring the trends of elderly offenders in prison and in the community. As part of our rehabilitation efforts for late-onset elderly offenders, it would be beneficial to reduce the length of their physical stay in prisons to mitigate their risk of reoffending. Addressing mental health needs of elderly offenders would also be crucial as these needs pose as responsivity issues that impede our rehabilitation work. Study findings also stress the importance of reinforcing social support for elderly offenders in the community to help buffer against social isolation and mitigate their risk of reoffending. Lastly, empowering elderly offenders to manage their finances and secure employment would enhance their chances of successful reintegration.

WHAT IT MEANS





UNDERSTANDING THE INMATE SUBCULTURE AND ITS EFFECTS ON REHABILITATION



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

A literature review of the characteristics of inmate subcultures, why inmates come to adopt it, and how it affects inmates' willingness for and engagement in rehabilitation. Findings inform a study on inmate subculture in the local context.

Inmate Code and Social Structure

INMATE CODE

The inmate code is an informal set of beliefs and norms adhered to amongst inmates. This includes having a common value system, rules for behaviours (e.g., not adhering to authority, not snitching on other inmates), and a unique language amongst themselves.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The inmate social structure refers to how inmates group themselves and relate to one another. Past studies overseas have found differences between genders in this aspect. Male inmates typically organise themselves such that each inmate has a specific social position with certain status and power. In contrast, female inmates tend to organise themselves in family-like groups, with more emphasis on interpersonal relations.

WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND

Prisonisation

Prisonisation is a process in which inmates assimilate to the inmate subculture and adopt its beliefs and norms. The literature presents two main models of how this process occurs.

DEPRIVATION MODEL

Incarceration leads to perceptions of deprivations and inmates turn to the inmate subculture to cope and adapt. Deprivations comprise the perceived loss of freedom, access to material goods, interpersonal relations, autonomy to make decisions, and personal security.

IMPORTATION MODEL

Individuals' life experiences before incarceration shape how they interact with the community. For example, street gang members bring with them gang values and practices into prison, such as the emphasis on loyalty and use of violence to defend the gang's honour. These in turn influence the inmate and prison gang subculture.



Impact on Behaviour

LABELLING THEORY

Labels (such as prison officers' remarks about inmates) can influence inmates to behave in line with these labels. Labelling an inmate subculture negatively can lead inmates to act accordingly and reinforce negative stereotypes.

LOOKING-GLASS-SELF THEORY

When placed in a new and unfamiliar environment (e.g., prison), people take reference for how to act from how they perceive others around them. Inmates who believe negative stereotypes of the inmate subculture may act accordingly to their idea of how an inmate should behave.

WHAT WE FOUND





UNDERSTANDING ABSCONDMENT FROM COMMUNITY-BASED SUPERVISION



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

To understand what contributes to absconding from community supervision. Findings serve to inform the design of a study about abscondment from Community-Based Programmes (CBP) and Release on Supervision (ROS) in Singapore and areas of need to target in order to mitigate absconding.

Demographics & Criminal History Past studies on abscondment have found that supervisees were more likely to abscond if they were young, male, single, and had a history of drug use, criminal offences, and other supervision violations.

Psychological Factors Psychological factors have seldom been examined in the supervision context. Further research on how they affect absconding could inform ways to enhance supervision practices.

IMPULSIVITY. It is well-documented that impulsivity is a predictor of recidivism. Given the impulsive nature of absconding in the forensic setting, it is worthwhile to examine this further.

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE. Offenders who are treated more fairly have been shown to be more likely to comply with orders. Examining the application in supervision could inform staff practices to increase supervision compliance.

DETERRENCE. Delivering consequences that are certain, severe, and swift has been found to deter negative behaviour. Incorporating these techniques in supervision could deter absconding.

WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND

Socio-Environmental Factors

FAMILY. Lack of support from family and facing relationship problems with family were some reasons cited by absconders for absconding. Running away was a means for them to return to and reconnect with their family.

PEERS. Absconders have reported negative peer influences and temptations to relapse to drugs, commit offences, or being incited to abscond as reasons for absconding.

EMPLOYMENT. Employment could be a protective factor against absconding as it anchors individuals towards societal norms. The work environment also matters whereby challenges such as perceived stigma could pose stress to supervisees and lead them to abscond.

ACCOMMODATION. Unstable living arrangements can contribute to absconding as it reduces the presence of informal social controls (e.g., family, neighbours) that could otherwise deter criminal behaviour.

SUPERVISION STAFF & FACILITY CONDITIONS. Strict supervision rules and conditions could lead supervisees to feel restricted and induce a need to escape to reassert freedom and autonomy. Perceptions of staff as being unresponsive may also deter supervisees from seeking staff support when they face difficulties.



Understanding the factors that contribute to absconding can inform interventions to mitigate absconding from supervision.

WHAT IT MEANS





LEARNING PRISON EVALUATION



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Learning Prison (LP) was implemented in 2019 and aims to enable offenders to take ownership of their change journey from the onset of their imprisonment and enhance their human and social capital. LP also aims to upskill Captains of Lives (COLs) to be more involved in rehabilitative work. Some of these initiatives include Looking Forward (LF), a group motivational programme for offenders that is facilitated by correctional staff, as well as My Action Plan (MAP), a structured engagement guide for staff to use during their routine engagements with offenders.

AIM

To examine preliminary implementation progress based on staff perceptions of LP implementation and provide suggestions for improvements.

EVALUATION QUESTION

What are the perceived barriers and facilitators experienced by staff when implementing the LP initiatives (inclusive of LF & MAP)?

SAMPLE 554 COLs responded to the survey across Clusters A, B and C.

METHOD A 95-item staff survey was administered to COLs between October and November 2019. Staff were required to indicate their responses to measures of level of agreement in each item on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey responses were analysed and main themes were derived to understand the key barriers and facilitators that staff experienced when implementing the LP initiatives.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

1

Positive findings include COLs having improved rapport and engagement with offenders as a result of having opportunities to conduct LF sessions. Additionally, LP rehab initiatives were perceived to be congruent with staff's professional role & identity as COLs.

2

Some key areas for change were noted in the following areas: a) LP rehab initiatives implemented were viewed as an added load on top of current operational demands without integration, b) One-size-fits-all approach limits impact of LP initiatives and c) Ground staff perceive the need for more updates and open discussions.

1

LP implementation is still in the process of stabilizing and it is important to continue to pace the change for staff and prioritize efforts.

2

It is recommended for the operating environment to continue monitoring implementation and remain adaptive to allow smoother facilitation of new LP rehabilitation initiatives.

3

It is also recommended that clear and regular messaging about the initiatives be communicated to the ground on an ongoing basis to maintain staff buy-in and commitment.

WHAT IT MEANS





EVALUATION OF LOOKING FORWARD

WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Motivation has long been identified as a necessary component in an individual's desire to change. To increase treatment readiness for correctional rehabilitation, the Looking Forward (LF) programme, a motivational primer facilitated by prison officers, was introduced to all inmates (with exceptions) from 2019. From the evaluation, analysis of outcome data indicated that LF increased treatment readiness of inmates and improved inmate-officer relationships, allowing for better inmate management within the institutions. Findings from the process evaluation of the programme provided insight on how LF could be revised allowing for better adaptation to the operating context within the housing unit, to achieve increased sustainability of this effort in the long run.

AIMS

1. To understand the effectiveness of LF in terms of treatment readiness and improved inmate-officer relationships.
2. To understand the implementation challenges host institutions face with the adoption of the programme.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What are the changes observed after completion of LF?
2. How was LF implemented?

SAMPLE Quantitative – 568 inmates, Qualitative – 65 inmates & 25 Officers

METHOD Mixed methods approach: Quantitative scales were administered to inmates at pre- and post- programme to evaluate the retention of knowledge (MCQ) and treatment readiness (CVTRQ), and at post-test to measure the quality of inmate-officer relationships (DRI-R). Qualitative data was obtained via focus group discussions conducted with inmates and staff to understand their experiences of LF.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 LF improved understanding of the pro-social skills taught, increased motivation in inmates and improved inmate-officer relationships.
- 2 Officers faced implementation barriers & stressors that affect sustainability of LF in the long run. Specifically, officers had to balance the competing demands of facilitating LF and performing operational duties, which in the long run led to fatigue.

LF has shown promising effects in establishing positive working relationships between inmates and officers and can be better leveraged to facilitate quality engagement and kickstart a positive change environment. To allow for better sustainability of LF, increased support should be provided for officers running LF to reduce the burnout experienced. More emphasis could be placed on allowing for better integration of LF into the operating duties of the housing unit, thus reducing the likelihood of LF being deprioritised from competing operational demands.

WHAT IT MEANS





ENHANCED DRUG REHABILITATION REGIME (EDRR) EVALUATION RESULTS



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

As part of Singapore Prison Service (SPS)'s comprehensive efforts to tackle drug reoffending, the Enhanced Drug Rehabilitation Regime (EDRR) officially commenced in April 2014 to provide a differentiated approach to the rehabilitation of drug offenders, where range and intensity of rehabilitative interventions are aligned to the drug offenders' general risk of re-offending and their level of dependency on drugs. Compulsory aftercare support is also provided to all DRC offenders, particularly step-down aftercare arrangement for the high-risk offenders.

AIM

The current evaluation study is undertaken to examine the impact of the EDRR, especially on the high-risk offenders with higher programming needs.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. To determine the effectiveness of the EDRR regime in reducing recidivism.
2. To understand the strengths of the EDRR and the challenges faced by the EDRR participants for further enhancement of the regime.

SAMPLE 1549 Male EDRR participants (treatment) and 1000 Male pre-EDRR participants (control).

METHOD

1. Statistical analysis of two-year recidivism rates of EDRR and pre-EDRR participants.
2. Quantitative data collection on intermediate outcomes.
3. Corroboration of Qualitative interviews conducted with 23 EDRR high-risk recidivists and past internal process evaluation findings to understand the performance of the EDRR.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 Two-year recidivism rates of EDRR participants were significantly lower than pre-EDRR participants.
- 2 In-care and aftercare components of the EDRR such as revision of the psychology based correctional programmes (PCP) in DRC, positive working relationship with staff and Halfway House (HWH) supervision were found to be helpful for participants' rehabilitation and reintegration.
- 3 However, participants faced challenges in sustainment of employment due to lack of perceived value and low job satisfaction, as well as weak social support in terms of prosocial family and friends.

The EDRR, consisting of targeted in-care rehabilitation efforts and the scaffolding of community reintegration, has shown effectiveness in reducing the two-year recidivism rate. While the rehabilitation initiatives and reintegration efforts to support the DRC offenders should be maintained, increased efforts are currently being taken to strengthen areas such as upscaling employability skills and knowledge and establishing more prosocial connections and practical support to sustain long-term change.

WHAT IT MEANS





PRIMARY GOODS OF MALE DRUG ABUSERS



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Existing research has primarily focused on the general reintegration needs of drug abusers. However, limited research in the area has been done from a strengths perspective. In line with a strength-based approach in SPS's intervention programmes, this study seeks to understand DRC drug abusers' reintegration needs using the Good Lives Model (GLM) which emphasises helping individuals acquire the capabilities to achieve outcomes that are personally meaningful to them. A better understanding of their Primary and Secondary Goods and the support they require to achieve these goods would complement existing research. Exploring the Secondary Goods in relation to Primary Goods would allow better understanding of the specific aspect of the Primary Good that individuals found important and/or require help in attainment.

AIMS

1. Identify the Primary and corresponding Secondary Goods that are important to DRC offenders
2. Assess if DRC offenders require support in attaining Primary Goods that are important to them
3. Understand the kind of support that DRC offenders require to attain the important Primary Goods

SAMPLE 93 high-risk drug abusers in DRC (44 1st/2nd timer, 49 3rd/4th timer) were selected to participate in this study. All participants had completed Unit 19 of High-On-Life (HOL) programme on Values and understood the concept of Primary and Secondary Goods in GLM.

METHOD Survey questionnaires were used to collect data. In the questionnaires, 5 possible Secondary Goods aimed at fulfilling each Primary Good were provided for participants to have a better understanding of the 11 Primary Goods. The 11 Primary Goods and 55 possible Secondary Goods were aligned with Unit 19 of the HOL programme, particularly the Value Card Sort activity. An option 'Others' was provided for participants to add to the list of possible Secondary Goods.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 All 11 Primary Goods were rated as important by the participants.
- 2 Findings indicated that there were still areas in which participants required support in.
- 3 Amongst the 11 Primary Goods, the top 5 Primary Goods in terms of importance and support required were:
Knowledge; Employment; Emotional Peace; Belongingness; and Meaning in Life.
- 4 Within the individual Primary Goods, there were specific Secondary Goods for which participants indicated a need for more support. In brackets are the percentages that indicated they required support in:
Having an education/ skill [68%]; Upgrading myself at work [52%]; Able to cope with stress [37%]; Having basic medical care [35%]; Contributing to society [31%].

This study identified key Primary and Secondary Goods that DRC offenders valued and required additional support in. Subsequent work would involve (1) working with internal stakeholders to understand current service provision and identify possible areas pertaining to the top five Primary Goods to provide additional support and (2) establishing collaboration with community partners to enhance service provision and increase social capital of the DRC population.

WHAT IT MEANS





MALE LONG-TERM DESISTANCE



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Correctional research tends to use the Risk-Need-Responsivity framework (RNR), focusing on offenders' risks and what leads them to commit crime. However, it is also important to look at how ex-offenders cease offending behaviours and their motivations to do so. This study looks at long-term desistance, which involves the ceasing of offending behaviours for 5 years or more.

AIM

To examine factors that support long-term desistance

EVALUATION QUESTION

1. Why do repeat drug abusers relapse?
2. How do drug desistors maintain abstinence for 5 years or more?

SAMPLE A total of 92 offenders were categorised accordingly: 37 Fast relapse (relapsed within 1 year); 25 Slow relapse (relapsed within 2-5 years); 30 Desistors (desisted for 5 years or more)

METHOD Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and thematic analysis with an inductive coding method was used for data analysis.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 Long-term desistors have sustained motivation and sense of agency
- 2 Long-term desistors show more positive shifts in thinking
- 3 Long-term desistors possessed greater social capital
- 4 Long-term desistors made positive lifestyle changes
- 5 The process of desistance starts from a desire to change, and requires a many-hands approach

3 Ps – Programmes, People, Processes – are central to promoting desistance.

PROGRAMMES Continuous improvements critical to increasing motivation and cognitive changes, harnessing the power of transformative environment to kickstart desistance

PEOPLE Enhance social capital through expanding work with family and aftercare services

PROCESSES Facilitate lifestyle changes and sense of agency through the language used with offenders, and aftercare effort to focus on shifting narrative identity

WHAT IT MEANS





FAMILIAL FACTORS RELATED TO THE RECALL OF FEMALE YOUTH OFFENDERS

WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

There has been an increase in youth recallees during community supervision over the past few years. The common reason cited was the presence of family issues which may affect their reintegration and desistance to crime upon release.

AIM

To explore the various factors that female youth offenders perceive as family issues which contribute to their recall.

EVALUATION QUESTION

What are the familial factors that young offenders face which leads to their recall?



SAMPLE 6 female offenders in Singapore Women's Prison, of which 4 had parents with a criminal record. Participants' age ranged between 18 to 25.

METHOD This study adopted a basic qualitative design, and analyses of transcript were guided by the processes which included open coding and thematic analyses. Two rounds of Focused Group Discussion Sessions were conducted.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

1

There are 3 familial factors found which leads to a young offenders' recall. (1) Affected housing arrangement where living arrangements are affected due to parental incarceration or loss of contact with parents leading to unstable housing arrangement. (2) Weak family attachment where female offenders do not have positive or secure attachment with their parents. (3) Weak parenting style where parents are either uninvolved or permissive which leads to a lack of supervision.

2

All three factors are interlinked. For example, weak family attachment may correlate with weak parenting styles, or affected living arrangements may hinder relational attachment, leading to lack of supervision.



To conduct further studies on familial issues and to include finding the correlation or causal relationship for the three factors found. Furthermore, understanding familial issues that women offenders face helps us to tailor our intervention where more emphasis is placed on family work in SPS.

WHAT IT MEANS





UNDERSTANDING WOMEN OFFENDERS' IN-CARE AND AFTER-CARE CHALLENGES

WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Current research has witnessed a dramatic increase in the female offender population which has led to correctional facilities realizing the fundamental differences (such as realities of life and pathways to crime) between female and male offenders. Furthermore, there is limited research about experiences of female offenders in Singapore which is viable for intervention efforts to aid successful reintegration.

AIM

To explore the challenges faced by Singapore's female offenders during incarceration and post-release.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges incarcerated women face in-care?
2. What are the challenges incarcerated women face after-care?

SAMPLE 20 female offenders in Singapore Women's Prison who had prior incarceration. Participants' age ranged from 25 to 52 years old. 17 of these participants are mothers.

METHOD Semi-structured interview questions were crafted with the intention of understanding the challenges faced by incarcerated women in 7 broad domains. (1) Mental Health Issues, (2) Physical Health, (3) Employment/Educational Issues, (4) Social Networks, (5) Unhealthy Intimate Relationships, (6) Lack of Affordable and Safe Housing, (7) Societal Attitudes and Perceptions of Incarcerated Women.

This study adopted a basic qualitative design, and analyses of transcripts were guided by the processes which included open coding and thematic analyses.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 There were challenges from 12 common domains that cut across in-care and after-care. 1) Financial Situation, 2) Education/Vocational Courses, 3) Employment, 4) Physical/Mental Health, 5) Peers, 6) Family, 7) Role of Caregiving, 8) Parental Stress, 9) Housing, 10) Intimate Relationships, 11) Leisure Time, and 12) Individual Factors (i.e. perceived inadequate medical services).
- 2 There were domains that were unique to in-care and after-care challenges respectively. The more salient factors were: 1) In-care: Prison staff and system, and 2) Aftercare: Partner's family.
- 3 Emotional support is identified as paramount to helping female offenders cope with stress from these challenges.

It is critical to build a system of support both in-care and after-care to aid in female offenders' rehabilitation. In light of these areas of help needed, prison and community services need to ensure the following: (1) Incorporate trauma-informed practices, (2) Develop policies, practices, and programs that are relational and promote prosocial relationships with children, family, peers, intimate partners, (3) Provide better and more opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions, (4) Provide housing assistance, and (5) Establish rehabilitative system of community supervision.

WHAT IT MEANS





MANAGING INMATES WITH MENTAL DISORDERS: THE PSYCHIATRIC HOUSING UNIT IN SPS



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Inmates with mental disorders present as a population that requires extensive resources to manage and treat. Furthermore, these individuals tend to commit disciplinary infractions and reoffend at a higher rate than the mainstream incarcerated population. This poses a challenge to correctional facilities all over the world and best practices on the management and treatment of this specialised population are widely sought after. In 2011, the Psychiatric Housing Unit under the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) commenced operations with the admission of inmates with mental disorders into the facility. This article seeks to document the background and key processes within this specialised housing unit, specifically in the management and treatment of inmates with mental disorders.

SAMPLE The Psychiatric Housing Unit within Singapore Prison System.

METHOD Documentation of key processes and features of the Psychiatric Housing Unit.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 The philosophy of PHU is fundamentally based on multi-disciplinary and throughcare approaches.
- 2 Inmates go through different phases of the PHU programme. This includes a triaging and screening phase, interventions phase, and pre-release phase, which includes multi-disciplinary case conferences and engagement with family members as well as other community stakeholders.
- 3 PHU officers go through specialized training specific to improving their skillset in managing inmates with mental health disorders.

Given the challenges that are present, it is vital that the processes and capabilities in management of inmates, who may present with challenging disruptive behaviours and mental health issues, be constantly improved and evaluated. This is to ensure that such inmates in prison can receive adequate and appropriate standards and delivery of healthcare as well (Georgiou & Townsend, 2019). For example, based on a recent systematic review and meta-analysis of outcomes of psychological therapies for prisoners with mental health problems, it was suggested that the provision of specialist, targeted and individualised services should be considered for acute cases (Yoson, Slade & Fazel, 2017). Pertaining to the pre-release phase, research has also documented the need to provide intensive case management and enhanced support system for these inmates who may not have the capabilities to arrange for their own aftercare release plans. Given SPS's efforts in its throughcare and MDT approach within the PHU, it is hopeful that new initiatives will continue to birth henceforth, reducing recidivism rates and improving overall mental well-being of inmates within the PHU.

WHAT IT MEANS





MINDFULNESS-BASED INTERVENTIONS



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

A literature review to examine mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), how they have been applied using the United States' (U.S.) corrections settings as an example, and the effectiveness of MBIs, as well as implications for use in the Singapore Prison Service.

MBIs are interventions that contain techniques or practices of mindfulness. Mindfulness works by establishing a state of mind where one can focus on their thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, become aware of them, and observe the negative thoughts and emotions more objectively without judgement.

CLINICAL SETTING Some MBIs used in the clinical setting include mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and dialectic behaviour therapy (DBT). These interventions work to help participants distance from unhealthy emotions, thoughts and behaviours by perceiving them objectively. Other MBIs include mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) that work to help them disengage from negative thoughts and engage in positive behaviours despite difficult experiences.

RELAPSE PREVENTION Mindfulness-based relapse prevention (MBRP) is an aftercare programme for individuals recovering from addictive behaviours, where mindfulness practices are used to increase participants' awareness of triggers for substance abuse. In addition, acceptance of the challenging thoughts, emotions and sensations is facilitated to decrease their need to engage in substance use to alleviate discomfort.

WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND

Mindfulness-based programmes in correctional settings are most widely observed in the US. Below are some examples of how they are applied.

CURRICULUM-BASED WEEKLY CLASSES

These are secular programmes which combine elements from CBT, socioemotional learning, and mindfulness to train inmates in skills for mindfulness meditation, understanding emotions, communication, conflict resolution, and resilience-building.

NON-CURRICULUM-BASED WEEKLY CLASSES

These are mainly non-secular programmes where volunteers engage and guide inmates in the practice of meditation and yoga.

TRAINING FOR PRISON MINDFULNESS PROGRAMME FACILITATORS

Mindfulness programmes include formal, structured, and accredited training for trainers and volunteers, ensuring consistent standards in programme delivery.



EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MBIS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SPS

EFFECTIVENESS MBIs are useful in targeting risk factors for recidivism: reducing negative affect, stress, substance use, and improving anger management, self-esteem and optimism. They have also been found effective in treating substance addictions – when combined with other active treatments (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy) – and psychiatric disorders like depression, which are relevant to the offender population. MBIs have been found to improve the psychological well-being of inmates and mitigate the negative effects of imprisonment. Finally, MBIs have also shown some effectiveness in reducing organisational stress and burnout in police officers.

LIMITATIONS While MBIs offer these various benefits, the evidence base for them is still developing and not as robust as other existing correctional treatment programmes, such as CBT. More research is needed on the effectiveness of MBIs in the offender population, including its impact on recidivism and the conditions for its effectiveness (e.g. duration and key elements of the programme, applicability to different offender profiles).

IMPLICATIONS Altogether, MBIs show promising positive effects for the correctional population and further research can be done to investigate the literature gaps. If applied in the local context, MBIs would be more appropriately used as a supplement for existing correctional treatment programs such as CBT.

WHAT WE FOUND





CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: FORENSIC ISSUES IN EVIDENCE, IMPACT, AND MANAGEMENT: INTERVENTIONS FOR SEX OFFENDERS WHO TARGET CHILD VICTIMS



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

This chapter provides an overview of the intervention approaches and techniques used in the interventions for sex offenders who target child victims. While most publications have focused on the treatment of sexual offenders from an academic stance, this chapter provides a 'practitioner-oriented' angle based on the clinical experiences of psychologists working with sex offenders in the Singapore Prison Service. This chapter aims to put together a range of interventions that have been used with sex offenders with child victims in a prison setting.

Crucial Components for Effective Interventions:

Earlier versions of sex offender intervention were primarily focused on risk management and relapse prevention. In recent years, there has been an added emphasis on the need to incorporate a strength-based approach to complement the risk management and relapse prevention model of intervention.

The Good Lives Model (GLM; Ward & Gannon, 2006) is one of the more commonly adopted approaches in the field of sex offender rehabilitation. According to the GLM theory, sexual offending occurs when individuals utilize maladaptive means to attain one or more primary goods (Ward & Stewart, 2003). For example, when an offender seeks the company of children to attain relatedness and misinterprets the relationship to be an intimate relationship.

Having collaborative conversations at the early stage of intervention is crucial towards helping the offender identify their areas of strength and work towards constructing a pro-social personal identity. More importantly, the offenders also experience a sense of hope that they can pursue a meaningful life and be motivated to participate in intervention.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

Topics Covered in Interventions:

AWARENESS OF SEX OFFENDING

When providing interventions for an offender, it is imperative that the psychologist firstly helps the offender understand what constitutes sexual offending. This is done by exploring three elements; intention, consent and ability of the victim to provide consent.

ATTACHMENT & INTIMACY

There are many attachment-based theories and models that describe how poor childhood attachment can lead to later intimacy problems and engagement in sexually abusive behaviours.

SELF-REGULATION

Common self-regulation deficits include their poor ability to regulate their emotions, their lack of effective coping strategies and difficulties in managing and regulating their sexual impulses appropriately.

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

Commonly seen cognitive distortions can usually be categorised into three categories; justification, minimising and externalising blame.

RELAPSE PREVENTION PLANNING

RPP is usually done nearing the end of intervention with the sex offender, to consolidate their learnings from all earlier sessions.



Psychological interventions provided for sex offenders are designed to be holistic in nature that would address the risk, different needs and responsivity of the offender. Holistic interventions are approaches that see the offender as a whole person, not just one who has sexually harmed others. There are different techniques and range of topics that can be covered with offenders. Working with offenders can be challenging because of the shame and denial that they bring into sessions. It is important that each offender is viewed in an individual lens as they may present with unique needs. These topics therefore must be tailored to suit the offender's needs and in accordance with their case formulation.

WHAT IT MEANS





ADVANCING CORRECTIONS JOURNAL: HOW DOES “CONTEXT” INFLUENCE RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS – IDEAS AND PRACTICES FROM CORRECTIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS OF SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE

WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Correctional psychologists often adhere to comprehensive instructions of manuals and structured protocols of risk and needs assessment instruments in order to ensure that their assessment findings are accurately reported. In this article, we illustrate and discuss the importance of context using four mini-case studies of risk and needs assessments. Through this article, we hope to encourage fellow practitioners to consider, beyond the usual offender-centric risk and protective factors, the unique contextual factors relevant to each assessment.

Context of Risk and Needs Assessments:

- 1 The first type of context refers to the purpose of the risk and needs assessment. Olver and Wong (2019) summarised the applications of risk and needs assessments into the following contexts:
 - i. Pre-trial assessments to inform bail and remand decisions;
 - ii. Risk assessment to inform sentence options or sentence length;
 - iii. Pre-intervention stage assessment to inform treatment type, intensity, and duration;
 - iv. Pre-release assessment to inform release decision and risk management strategies.
- 2 The second type of context refers to socio-developmental-context of offenders. Specifically, this refers to paying attention to the past, current and future environment, or developmental stage which the offender was, is, and will be in the future, when we conduct the assessment.
- 3 The third type is broader in nature, which includes policy, organisational and resource considerations which need to be considered when conducting assessments.

WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND

Some Recommended Contextual Questions:

WHO

Who is the offender? (past, present, future)
 Who are the users of the assessment?
 Who can provide corroborative information?

WHERE

Where is the risk and needs assessment conducted?
 Where will/may the offender go after the assessment?

WHAT

What do the readers of the report need/want to know?
 What are the direct and indirect/ short- and medium-term use of this assessment?

WHEN

When did the offender commit the offence?
 When were the times the offender stayed offence-free, and why?

WHY

Why is the offender being referred?
 Why is the offender vulnerable to the context factors?

Conclusion

Offender risk and needs assessments involve a series of complex tasks. Often, correctional practitioners fall back to standard protocols to ensure clinical and organizational compliance. We believe that standard protocols are necessary as they ensure consistent practice and support the clinical development of correctional practitioners. However, we also believe it is necessary to consider the contexts of each individual assessment case beyond standard protocols to be mindful of the unique contextual factors of each offender's risk and needs assessment.

WHAT WE FOUND





MANAGING INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE IN REMAND AND AMONG YOUTHS IN PRISON



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

Institutional violence in prisons is a concern due to the burden it can cause on the prison system, and offences are typically disproportionately higher among the youth offender population and the remand population. This literature review explores the intrapersonal and circumstantial reasons for higher rates of institutional violence in both populations, and outlines recommended strategies adopted by other jurisdictions.

Factors for Violence

YOUNG OFFENDERS IN REMAND

The interaction between poor impulse control, violent youth subcultures, and the unique stressors in remand increases the risk of institutional violence

REMANDEES

Unique stressors contribute to institutional violence during remand:

- 1 Overcrowding
- 2 Limited access to programmes and healthcare services
- 3 Lack of structured activities and an abundance of idle time
- 4 Worry about affected dependents and loved ones

YOUNG OFFENDERS

- 1 Deficits in decision-making
- 2 Lower impulse control
- 3 Susceptibility to peer influence
- 4 Increased emotional reactivity all increase the risk of young offenders committing acts of institutional violence.

- 5 Limited contact with loved ones that perpetuates anxiety about their well-being
- 6 Period of transition to unfamiliar environment and situation
- 7 Stress over uncertainty of the outcome of their court proceedings

WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND

Recommendations

- 1 Increase access to social support (e.g., more e-letters quota; increase in visit duration, increase phone call frequency)
- 2 Facilitate structured activities and programmes (e.g., more access to rehabilitation materials; structured yard activities; religious groups)
- 3 Self-help psychoeducational materials that enhance adjustment to incarceration and self-management skills (e.g., conflict resolution and anger management)
- 4 Encourage active staff engagement (e.g. engagement skills, active listening skills)
- 5 Ensure adequate staff to meet demands of remand

The circumstances remandees face in transitioning to an institution pose unique stressors that increase risk of institutional violence. This risk of institutional violence may be amplified in younger remandees, because of their cognitive immaturity and a violent subculture. A multi-pronged approach is needed to mitigate institutional violence in remand, especially among youth offenders.

WHAT IT MEANS





VIRTUAL SESSIONS (ViS)

WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

ViS was fully implemented in Aug 2019 across COMC upon trial completion in December 2018. The post-implementation survey was conducted thereafter to monitor take-up rate. The most recent survey was to follow up on the progress towards 100% take-up rate across COMC Regime Management Team (RMT) staff.

AIM

To understand ViS receptivity across RMT staff and their experience using the technology for their interventions (both joint and individual sessions). Additional suggestions were also captured.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Staff's general demographics
2. Have staff started using ViS for joint and individual sessions respectively & why not?
3. What were the benefits and challenges faced?
4. What are the technical issues or safety concerns faced?
5. General usefulness and continual take-up rate

SAMPLE 128 Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists and Reintegration Officers who used ViS.

METHOD A questionnaire was administered to assess the benefits and costs, technical and safety issues, and effectiveness of ViS.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE FOUND

- 1 All the RMT staff (100%) used ViS.
- 2 ViS was found to be beneficial as it was cost-effective, convenient, and useful for observation purposes.
- 3 Staff generally reported ViS to be useful in complementing their work with supervisee (7.5/10) and expressed a desire to continue using ViS in the future (93%).
- 4 The top 3 challenges of ViS were poor connectivity, lack of human touch, and communication limitations. These challenges compromised the breadth and quality of assessment and intervention.
- 5 Technical issues were faced due to poor connection and mic or audio issues.
- 6 Safety concerns due to supervisees' conduct such as disrespectful comments and improper dressing were raised as well.

Majority of staff saw the benefits of ViS and wanted to continue using this mode of engagement to complement face-to-face sessions. Staff would also like other apps to be used for ViS, and thus Zoom and Webex were considered on top of Whatsapp. The lack of human touch and difficulty to observe non-verbal cues may be addressed through infographic sharing tips regarding virtual engagements. An expansion to other means of media may also provide more options for staff. Safety concerns such as disrespectful comments and improper dressing were addressed through staff's reiteration of the possible consequences on non-compliance.

WHAT IT MEANS





MITIGATING FATIGUE IN CORRECTIONS



WHY WE DID THIS STUDY

To examine fatigue among correctional officers in correctional settings and identify the steps to mitigate fatigue effectively.

Causes of Fatigue

Corrections fatigue represents a collection of negative and inter-related consequences upon the health and functioning of corrections professionals from the exposure to organisational and operational stressors.

ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS

Have their source in the “people” aspects of the job, such as stressors due to rigid organisational hierarchy and structure, role ambiguity, lack of incentives or unsupportive leadership.

OPERATIONAL STRESSORS

Refer to issues common in correctional environments, such as intrinsic job stress (e.g. shift work, inmate overcrowding, low levels of staffing, and low resources available), compassion fatigue (i.e. repeated exposure to traumatic events), perceived danger (i.e. threats in and out of prison), and shift work resulting in lack of sleep.

WHAT WE FOUND



Consequences of Fatigue

- 1 **Dysfunctional Workplace Ideology/Behaviour**
 - Dualistic thinking as exemplified by an “us against them” perspective, Cynicism, Workplace alienation, and Indifference.
- 2 **Negative Personality Changes**
 - Negatively skewed emotional disposition and outlook and Negative emotional outbursts such as shame, guilt, and anger.
- 3 **Declined Health & Functioning**
 - Depressed mood, PTSD, Anxiety, lowered physical health, declined performance on the job, and increased suicide risk.

WHAT WE FOUND



Mitigating Fatigue

The Six-stage intervention model (Denhof et al., 2014) represents a complete model to encapsulate the intervention of fatigue in correctional settings.

- 1 Inform administrators, decision-makers and correctional staff of all disciplines of the need to increase their knowledge, depth of understanding and ability to recognize Corrections Fatigue.
- 2 Assess the extent of Corrections Fatigue within an organizational culture using of a variety of assessment tools that can be quantitative in nature.
- 3 Evaluate using the psychometrically sound assessment results, so that decision-makers can compare identified problem areas to the content and focus of existing programs, structures, and resources. The relative fit of programming to problems should be evaluated which may result in a particular resource requiring modification to address the problem areas identified.
- 4 Plan for the changes once problem areas and their extent are identified.
- 5 Implement the new initiatives such as the roll out of trainings (e.g. resilience-promoting, emotional/social intelligence, and traumatic stress exposure trainings) or other resources such as employee assistance programs (e.g. mental health support services), peer support groups, and self-help resources (e.g. books etc.)
- 6 Re-Assess, the Corrections Fatigue quantitatively, and compare current scores to previously established baseline scores. Re-assessment in this way provides the critical function of accurately monitoring progress.

WHAT WE FOUND



For More Information

We hope you enjoyed the research studies that PCRD have completed in 2020. Stay tuned for more studies in 2021!

If you are interested in conducting a study in SPS, please email us and our friendly researchers will get in touch with you, or you can refer to the website below for more details. For those who are curious about our research and would like to find out more about any studies listed here, feel free to drop us an email provided under Study Requests.

Research Requests



Interested applicants:

SPS_research_requests@pris.gov.sg



More details:

<https://www.sps.gov.sg/links/research-request>

Study Enquiries



General queries and/or queries on research studies listed in this review: PRIS_Research_Evaluation@pris.gov.sg