



The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP): Using Meta-analytic Evidence to Assess Program Effectiveness

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Part 1. Effective Use of Research to Meet the Juvenile Justice Challenge

The juvenile justice challenge

- A high proportion of adult offenders (70-80%) were prior juvenile offenders who appeared in the JJ system
- They were thus on a pathway to continued criminal behavior that effective JJ intervention might have interrupted

But, at the same time:

- A high proportion of the juveniles who come into the juvenile justice system (70-80%) are not on a path to adult crime; they are just afflicted with adolescence
- Over-involvement with the JJ system can make things worse for those juveniles

The juvenile justice challenge

So, the JJ system needs to be able to do three things—

- Distinguish youth at high risk for continued criminal behavior from those at low risk
- Administer supervision and treatment programs to the high risk youth that protect public safety and reduce their risk
- Do no harm to the youth at low risk

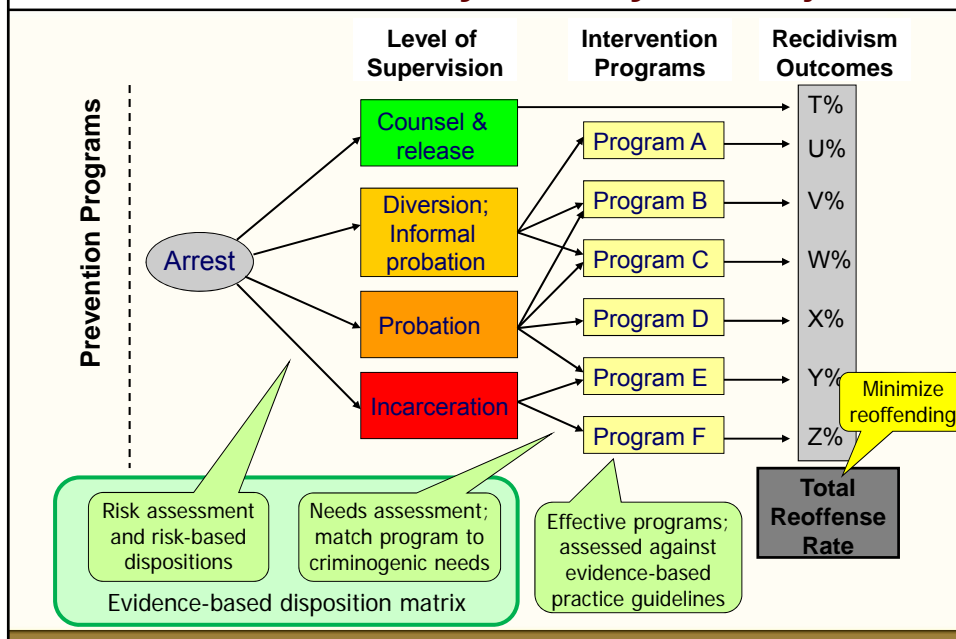
And do all this in a consistent and sustained manner

Guiding evidence-based JJ practice with structured decision support tools

- Risk assessment instruments
 - Provides an estimate of the probability of reoffending
- Disposition matrices
 - Guides risk-based level of supervision and treatment
- Needs assessment instruments
 - Supports matching of programs to criminogenic needs
- Program practice guidelines and assessments
 - Evaluates the expected effectiveness of programs for reducing recidivism; e.g., Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)

The essential platform for use of these tools: Well-developed data systems that track juvenile characteristics, service, and outcomes.

The evidence-based juvenile justice system





Part 2. A Critical Component: Effective Evidence- Based Programs



The prevailing definition of an evidence-based program: A certified “model” program

The *program* part: A ‘brand name’ program, e.g.,

- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring
- Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

The *evidence-based* part: Credible research supporting
that specific program certified by, e.g.,

- Blueprints for Violence Prevention
- OJJDP Model Programs Guide
- CrimeSolutions.gov
- NREPP (National Registry of EB Programs & Practices)



A broader perspective on EBPs: Evidence-based generic program “types”

- Interventions with research on effectiveness can be described by the types of programs they represent rather than their brand names, e.g.,
 - family therapy
 - mentoring
 - cognitive behavioral therapy
- These types include the brand name programs, but also many ‘home grown’ programs as well
- Viewed this way, there are many evidence-based program types familiar to practitioners

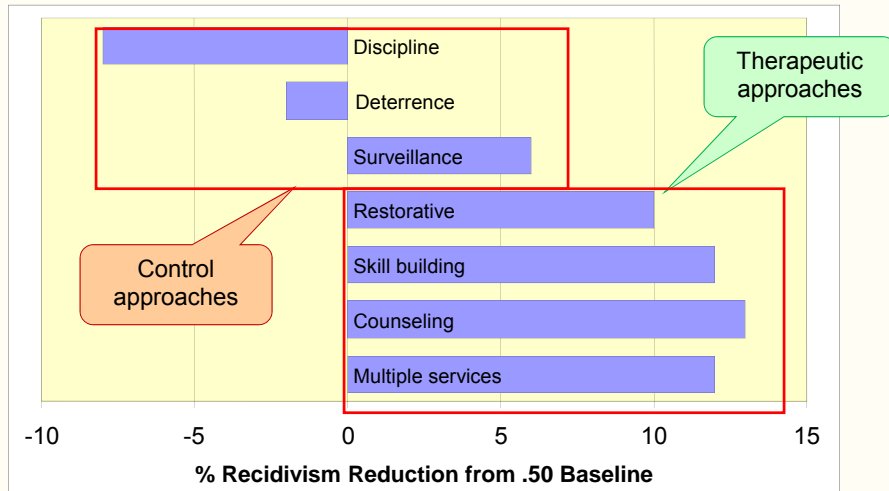


The evidence base: A comprehensive collection of studies of interventions for juvenile offenders

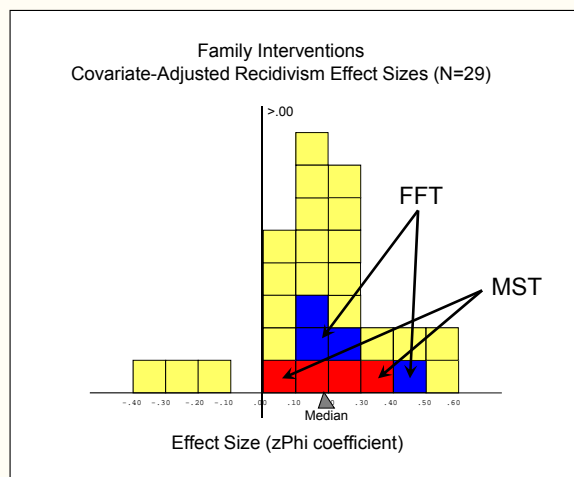
Meta-analysis of delinquency intervention research:

- Studies: 500+ controlled studies of interventions with juvenile offenders
- Outcomes: Focus on the programs’ effects on recidivism (reoffending)

Program types sorted by general approach: Average recidivism effect




Recidivism effects for generic and brand name family therapy programs



Key characteristics of effective programs

- Use a “therapeutic” approach aimed at internalized behavior change (vs. external control, deterrence)
- Within a therapeutic category, some program types are more effective than others (e.g., CBT, mentoring, family therapy)
- For a given program type, service must be delivered in adequate amounts and quality (dose)
- The more effective programs have an explicit treatment protocol and procedures for monitoring adherence
- Effects are largest with high risk cases

 VANDERBILT PEABODY COLLEGE		Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) for Services to Juvenile Offenders® Recalibrated version, 2013	
		Points Possible	Points Received
Instrument for rating how well a program profile matches the guidelines: The Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)			
Primary and Supplemental Service Types <small>[Identified according to definitions derived from the research]</small>			
Primary Service Type for Program Being Rated Group 1 services (5 points) Group 4 services (25 points) Group 2 services (10 points) Group 5 services (30 points) Group 3 services (15 points)		30	
Supplemental Service Type <small>Qualifying supplemental service used: Yes (5 points) No (0 points)</small>		5	
Quality of Service Delivery <small>[Determined from a systematic assessment of the relevant features of the provider and provider organization]</small>			
Rated quality of services delivered: Low (5 points) Medium (10 points) High (20 points)		20	
Amount of Service <small>[Determined from data for the qualifying group of service recipients]</small>			
Duration [Target number of weeks specified for each service type] % of youth who received at least the target weeks of service: 0% (0 points) 60% (6 points) 20% (2 points) 80% (8 points) 40% (4 points) 99% (10 points)		10	
Contact Hours [Target number of hours specified for each service type] % of youth who received at least the target hours of service: 0% (0 points) 60% (6 points) 20% (2 points) 80% (8 points) 40% (4 points) 99% (10 points)		10	
Risk Level of Youth Served <small>[Determined from risk ratings on a valid instrument for the qualifying group of service recipients]</small>			
% of youth with medium or high risk scores (greater than low): 0% (0 points) 75% (7 points) 30% (2 points) 85% (10 points) 50% (5 points) 95% (12 points)		% of youth with high risk scores (greater than medium): 0% (0 points) 25% (8 points) 15% (3 points) 30% (10 points) 20% (5 points) 35% (13 points)	
		25	
Provider's Total SPEP Score		100	(Insert Score)

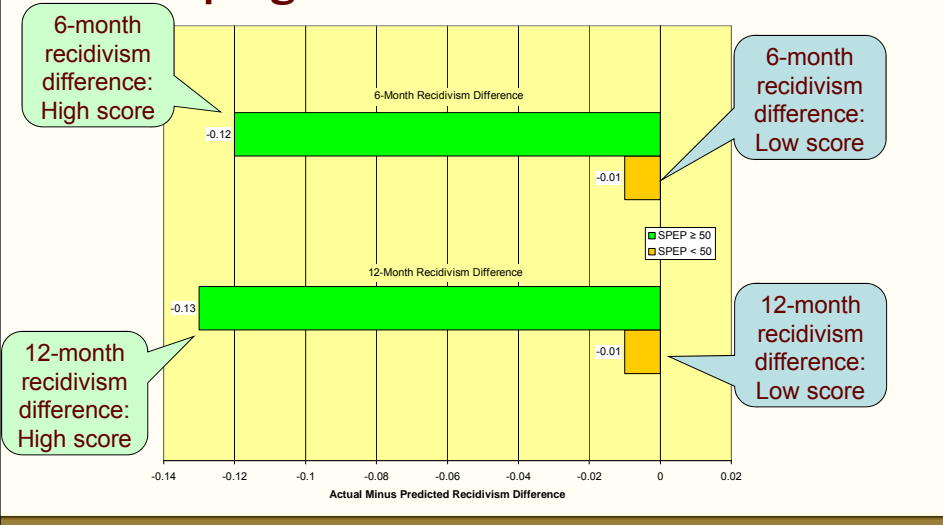
Points assigned proportionate to the contribution of each factor to recidivism reduction

Target values from the meta-analysis (generic) OR program manual (EBP brand name)

Generic program types with sufficient research to support practice guidelines

- Cognitive-behavioral therapy
- Behavioral contracting; contingency management
- Social skills training
- Group counseling
- Family counseling; family crisis counseling
- Individual counseling
- Mentoring
- Challenge programs
- Victim-offender mediation
- Restitution; community service
- Remedial academic programs
- Job-related programs (vocational counseling, training, etc.)

Feedback on outcome improvement with use of SPEP program assessment: Arizona data



OJJDP Juvenile Justice Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (JJRRI)

- Partners
 - Federal: OJJDP, OMB Partnership Fund
 - Implementation TA: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (Georgetown), Peabody Research Institute (Vanderbilt)
 - Evaluation and cost analysis: Justice Policy Center, Urban Institute
- Sites
 - Delaware, Iowa (1st, 3rd and 6th judicial districts), Milwaukee
- Components
 - Implementation
 - Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)
 - Program improvement plans and procedures
 - System alignment: Risk & need assessment, disposition matrices
 - Evaluation / Cost-Benefit Analysis

Goals of the JJRRI

- Short-term outcomes
 - Improved SPEP scores as a result of program improvement plans
 - Improved matching of youth to services based on assessed risk/need
 - Development of practices and policies for system-level decision making based on risk, need, SPEP, and disposition data
- Long-term outcomes
 - Decreased recidivism rates
 - Improved cost effectiveness of juvenile justice services