



Comprehensive Support Services

What are Comprehensive Support Services? Comprehensive support or treatment services are those services, offered in-house or by contract with community providers, that address the needs of the offender. Research shows that it is most cost effective, and least likely to damage low risk offenders, if services target the criminogenic needs of medium and high risk offenders. Criminogenic needs are those that cause recidivism or new criminal behavior such as:

- Antisocial behavior, personality, cognition and attitudes;
- Family or marital discord;
- Poor school or work performance;
- Few leisure or recreational activities; and
- Substance abuse.

Examples of comprehensive support or treatment services that address these needs include:

- Cognitive behavior therapy;
- Drug and alcohol treatment;
- Mental health treatment;
- Basic life skills classes;
- Education and employment training; and
- Job and housing placement.

If a person has a serious mental health or substance *addiction* (as opposed to abuse) problem these needs should be addressed first. If the person is homeless or has other immediate survival needs these also must be the focus of immediate attention.

Treatment and support services can harm offenders if the services are of poor quality or not matched to the person and his/her unique needs and learning style. It is critical that the services be:

- Evidenced-based or best practices, unless designed as a pilot program with an evaluation to determine efficacy;
- Targeted at medium to high risk offenders,
- Culturally appropriate and respectful of each person;
- Free of institutional bias based on race and ethnicity, income level or disability (physical, cognitive or mental);
- Selected to be most effective with particular racial groups;
- Offered so that different risk categories and different genders are not mixed;
- Provided on sliding scale for fees and costs, with a process for alternative ways to retire the debt, e.g. community service or completion of treatment goals;

- Staffed by high-quality program professionals who engage in on-going team training; and
- Regularly evaluated to ensure that the services are reducing recidivism, lowering costs, and improving the psycho-social functioning of the offender.

What are Spokane City and County Doing Now? The City and County use a number of in-house and community programs to provide support services or treatment to offenders. Some require the offender to pay for the service and some do not.

How Can Spokane City and County Improve? Spokane needs a broad array of services and treatment programs available for referral of offenders by the courts and pretrial services/probation officers. All of the current programs and new programs should be evaluated to ensure that they satisfy the important criteria listed above and are reducing recidivism, lowering costs and improving the psycho-social functioning of the offender.

How will Spokane City and County Benefit by Implementing these Changes?

- Cost savings: If medium and high risk offenders' criminogenic needs are addressed in high-quality support and treatment services the offenders' recidivism will be reduced thus saving the system future criminal justice costs. In addition, support and treatment services offered in the community while the offender is supervised will reduce the need for housing the offender in jail and save approximately \$120 per day.
- Public Safety: Public safety will be enhanced as recidivism rates are reduced.
- Changed lives: Offenders will be integrated into their families and the community as healthy and productive members.

Sources of Information:

Fred Osher, M.D. and Faye S. Taxman, Ph.D., "Understanding Criminogenic Needs: Untangling the Role of Mental Health and Substance Abuse," Making the Most of Second Chances, February 24, 2011, http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/0999/Taxman_Osher.pdf (9.27.12).

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"Best Practices In Drug Courts and Reentry Courts," September 12, 2012, presentation to Federal STEP Reentry Court, Spokane, WA .

"Evidence-Based Sentencing for Drug Offenders," September 13, 2012, presentation to Spokane Municipal Courts, Spokane, WA.

"A Criminal Justice System that Works," September 13, 2012, Community presentation, Spokane, WA.

"Research-Based Smarter Sentencing, Training for Prosecutors, Public Defenders, Judges and Community Corrections Professionals," September 28-29, 2012, presentation by Frank Domurad and M. Elaine Nugent-Borakove to Spokane City and County, Spokane, WA.

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