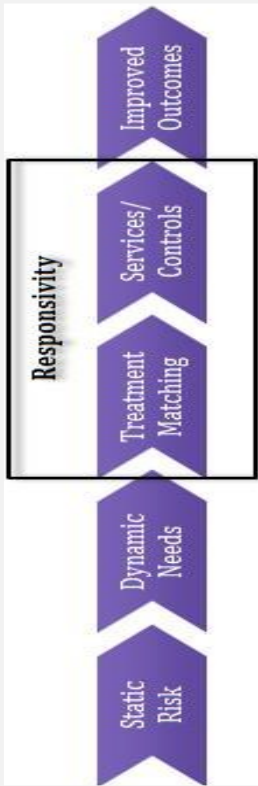


Risk / Needs Assessment 101

Evidence Based Principle #1: Assessing Actuarial Risk & Need



Historically, critical decisions about offender punishment and treatment have been guided by personal experience and professional judgment. Assessment tools have been developed to measure the likelihood of future criminal behavior by offenders.

When used correctly, risk/need assessment tools can help juvenile justice professionals appropriately target interventions to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and engage individuals in effective treatment.

A risk/need assessment measures specific risk factors that research has

shown relate to criminal reoffending.

Criminal risk factors include:

- ◆ Antisocial Personality
- ◆ Procriminal Attitudes
- ◆ Social Supports for Crime
- ◆ Substance Abuse
- ◆ Poor Family Relationships
- ◆ School/Work Failure
- ◆ Lack of Prosocial Recreational Activities

Risk level is an important piece to ensuring the best treatment services are matched to a specific individual because research has shown that certain programs work

very well with specific population groups.

For example, targeting intensive treatment services for high-risk youth is effective; however, placing a low-risk youth in the same program is harmful.

Risk/need assessments have become a primary component of effective practice.

However, because individual risk and need factors are dynamic and change over time, it is imperative to reassess individuals periodically to ensure appropriate services are being used and to maximize resources.

Source:

PEW Center on the States. (2011). Risk/Needs Assessment 101: Science reveals new tools to manage offenders. *Public Safety Performance Project*.

