

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE-BASED CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM CHECKLIST- GROUP ASSESSMENT (CPC-GA)

The Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist- Group Assessment (CPC-GA) is a tool we developed for assessing groups offered to offenders,¹ and is used to ascertain how closely groups offered in a correctional setting meet known principles of effective intervention. Several recent studies conducted by the University of Cincinnati on both adult and juvenile programs were used to develop and validate the indicators on the CPC-GA. These studies found strong correlations with outcome between both domain areas and individual items (Holsinger, 1999; Lowenkamp and Latessa, 2003, Lowenkamp, 2003; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005a; Lowenkamp and Latessa, 2005b). We have also conducted over 500 program assessments across the country and have developed a large database on correctional intervention programs.²

The CPC-GA is designed to examine multiple types of groups within a correctional setting. This tool is divided into two basic areas; content and capacity. The capacity area is designed to measure whether the group/agency has the capability to deliver evidence-based group interventions for offender. There are two domains in the capacity area: 1) Program Staff and Support and 2) Quality Assurance. The content area focuses on the extent to which the groups meet the principles of risk, need, responsivity and treatment also includes two domains: 1) Offender Assessment and 2) Treatment. The treatment domain is designed to mainly measure core correctional practices and is divided into seven components: 1) Group Target and Process; 2) Effective Reinforcement; 3) Effective Disapproval; 4) Structured Skill Building; 5) Relationship Skills; 6) Cognitive Restructuring; and 7) Relapse Prevention.

The CPC-GA tool includes 48 indicators, worth 50 total points that are scored during the assessment. Each area and all domains are scored and rated as either "highly effective" (65% or higher); "effective" (56% to 64%); "needs improvement" (46% to 55%); or "ineffective" (45% or less). The scores in all domains are totaled and the same scale is used for the overall assessment score. It should be noted that not all of the domains are given equal weight, and some items may be considered "not applicable," in which case they are not included in the scoring.

Data are mainly collected through structured interviews with selected program staff and program participants and observation of groups and services. Other sources of information include policy and procedure manuals, schedules, treatment materials, manuals, curriculums, a review of a sample of case files, and other selected program materials. Once the information is gathered and reviewed the program is scored, and a report is generated which highlights the strengths, areas that need improvement, and recommendations for each of the areas.

¹ The CPC-GA is modeled after the Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC). The CPC is modeled after the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI) developed by Gendreau and Andrews.

² Several versions of the CPAI and CPC were used prior to the development of the CPC-GA. Scores and averages have been adjusted as needed.

There are several advantages to the CPC-GA. First, it allows us to get inside the “black box” of treatment service. By doing so we can go beyond descriptive indicators and measure the degree to which the program is meeting evidence-based standards. Second, the CPC-GA allows us to “quantify” the quality of a program through a scoring process. This allows comparisons across programs, as well as benchmarking. Third, the entire process can be completed relatively quickly. Usually we gather the information within one to two days and can provide a report within a few weeks. Finally it is designed to improve program effectiveness and the integrity of treatment.

References

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