

# **Assessing the Influence of Probation Officer Fidelity to MI and CBT Skills on Offender Recidivism: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation**

Ryan M. Labrecque, M.S., A.B.D.

Jennifer D. Luther, M.A.

Myrinda Schweitzer, M.A., A.B.D.

Paula Smith, Ph.D.

# Community Supervision

- Widely used sanction in criminal justice
- “Traditional” supervision
  - Monitoring compliance with court-ordered conditions
  - Referring out for services
- These services may perform less than optimally in reducing recidivism
  - Bonta et al. (2008)
  - Solomon (2006)

# The Principles of Effective Intervention: The RNR Framework

## RISK

### WHO

Deliver more intense  
intervention to higher  
risk offenders

## NEED

### WHAT

Target criminogenic  
needs to reduce risk for  
recidivism

## RESPONSIVITY

### HOW

Use CBT approaches  
Match mode/style of  
service to offender

# Improving Community Supervision

- Expanding the focus of probation
- Integrating the RNR framework
- Implementation of evidence-based strategies
- Generating research
- Creating quality assurance mechanisms

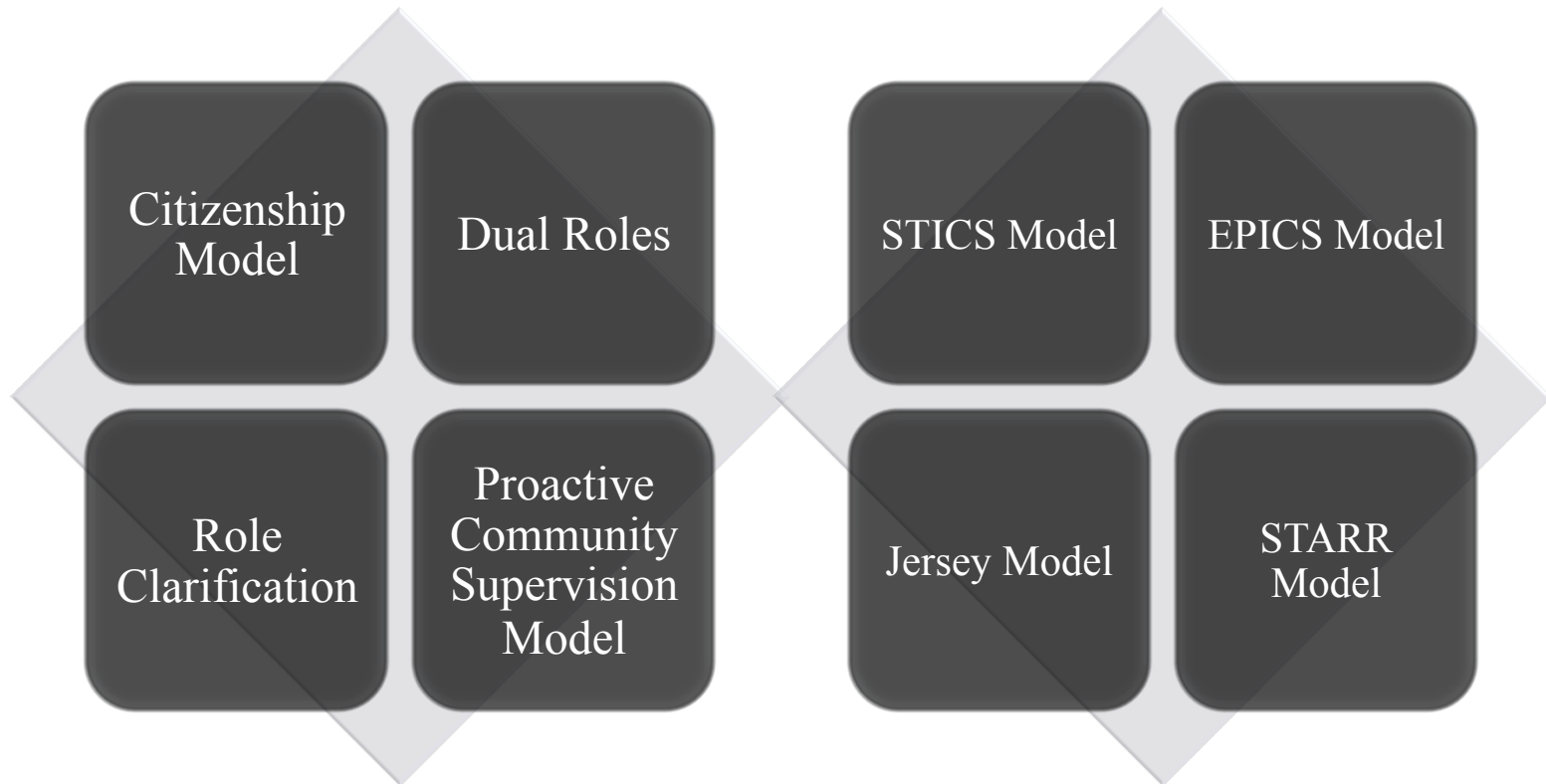
# Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- Common for officers to be trained in MI
- Focus of MI
  - Improving the relationship with offender
  - Motivating the offender to engage, focus, evoke, and plan in change process

# Evaluations of MI

- Wide range of benefits (McMurrin, 2009)
  - Improved retention in treatment
  - Enhanced motivation for change
  - Increased compliance with conditions
  - Enhanced reinforcement value of therapist praise and approval
  - Reduced recidivism

# Integrating the RNR Framework into Community Supervision



# Evaluations of CBT Models

- Several jurisdictions
  - U.S., Canada, U.K., and Australia
- Wide range of positive results
  - Increased time spent on criminogenic needs
  - Improved offender-officer relationships
  - Increased officer use of CCPs
  - Improved offender attitudes
  - Reduced recidivism



## MI and CBT Models

- Theoretically, these two models are complimentary (Tafrate & Luther, 2014)
- Preliminary evidence suggests CBT plus MI is more effective than just CBT alone in reducing recidivism (Lowenkamp et al., in press)
- It's been widely recognized that a collaborative working relationship is a “necessary, but not a sufficient condition for successful treatment” (Spiegler & Guevremont, 2010)

# The Importance of Fidelity

- *Trained versus untrained* officers
- Less is known about what role fidelity to MI and CBT plays in reducing recidivism
- From both a theoretical and practical standpoint, this is an important question

# Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS)

- Initial 3-day training
- Five coaching sessions
- Four components to interactions
  - Check-in
  - Review
  - Intervention
  - Homework

# Current EPICS Project

Four phases:

- I. MI/CBT fidelity study
- II. Measuring MI/CBT skills
- III. Revised EPICS curriculum
- IV. Prospective study

## Phase I: MI/CBT Fidelity Study

- Quantifies officer fidelity to MI and a CBT model
- Empirically tests if skill competency has an effect on recidivism
- Examines if high-fidelity skill usage in these two areas leads to improved outcomes over using either skill alone proficiently, or using both with low-fidelity

# Method

- 10 probation officers in Ohio
- All had previously been trained in MI
- Trained in the EPICS model
- Officers enrolled moderate and high-risk probationers

## Probation Officers (N = 10)

- 30% male
- 100% white
- Average of 9 years experience
- Enrolled 102 probationers
  - Average of 10 offenders per officer
  - Range 8-12

## Probationers (N = 102)

- 87.3% male
- 36.3% white
- 52.0% high-risk
- 48.0% moderate-risk
- Mean age 32.1



# Audio-Recordings

- Officers were asked to submit audio-recordings of interactions with offenders
- Audiotapes were scored by research staff from the University of Cincinnati
- 214 total audiotapes received
  - Average 2.1 tapes per offender (range = 1-3)
  - Average length 24 minutes

## CBT Fidelity Score

- EPICS Officer Rating Form (33 items)
- Items were scored as:
  - 0.0 = had the opportunity, but did not use skill
  - 0.5 = used skill, but missed some steps
  - 1.0 = proficient use of the skill
- Scores were standardized to have values between 0.0 and 1.0

## EPICS CBT Fidelity Scores

	Total CBT Score
Officer 1	.22
Officer 2	.36
Officer 3	.38
Officer 4	.40
Officer 5	.40
Officer 6	.44
Officer 7	.54
Officer 8	.60
Officer 9	.69
Officer 10	.72
Mean (SD)	.48 (.16)

# MI Fidelity Score

- Each officer had 3 tapes selected at random
- Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity 3.1.1 (MITI 3.1.1; Moyers et al., 2010)
- Assesses how well practitioner uses MI skills
- Measures 5 global dimensions
- Scores were standardized to have values between 0.0 and 1.0

## MI Fidelity Scores

	Total MITI Global Score
Officer 1	.44
Officer 2	.49
Officer 3	.57
Officer 4	.60
Officer 5	.64
Officer 6	.77
Officer 7	.78
Officer 8	.80
Officer 9	.81
Officer 10	.88
Mean (SD)	.68 (.15)

# Officer Category by Fidelity to MI and CBT

	Low-CBT	High-CBT
Low-MI	6	1
High-MI	1	2

# Recidivism

- Any arrest for a new crime
  - Excludes probation violations
- 36 total arrests (35.3% of sample)
- Mean length of follow-up = 379 days

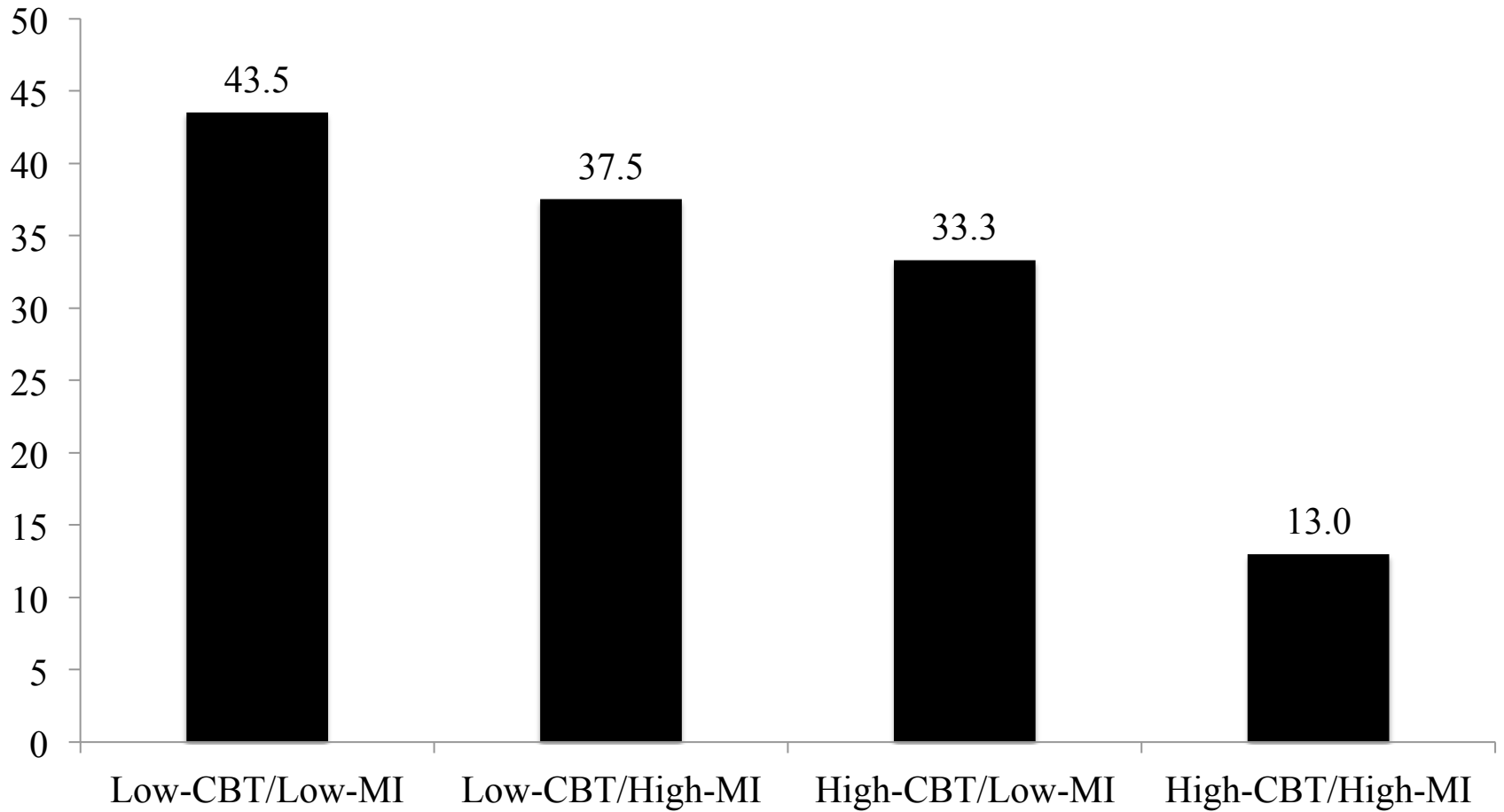
## Offender Recidivism by Officer Category (N = 102)

	Low-CBT		High-CBT	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Low-MI	43.5	27	33.3	3
High-MI	37.5	3	13.0	3

$\chi^2 = 6.89, df = 3, p = .076$



# **% Recidivism by Officer Skill Category**



## Study Summary

- These findings add support to the notion that these new community supervision strategies can help reduce recidivism
- Underscores the importance of both MI and CBT strategies as CCPs
- Suggests CBT models of community supervision should also include MI techniques

## Phase II: Measuring MI/CBT Skills

- Can MI and CBT skills be measured accurately and efficiently by UC coders and practitioner supervisors?
- EPICS Officer Rating Form was modified
  - Relationship skills (RS) items were added to assess officer use of MI skills

## Method

- 10 probation officers in Oregon
- All had previously been trained in EPICS
- Were trained and coached in MI
- Officers submitted tapes of interactions with moderate and high-risk probationers

## Probation Officers (N = 10)

- 40% male
- 90% white
- Average of 14 years experience
- 40 total audiotapes submitted
  - 4 tapes per officer
  - Average length 35 minutes

## MI Fidelity Scores

	Total MITI Global Score
Officer 1	.58
Officer 2	.59
Officer 3	.61
Officer 4	.64
Officer 5	.68
Officer 6	.70
Officer 7	.75
Officer 8	.78
Officer 9	.83
Officer 10	.85
Mean (SD)	.70 (.10)

## EPICS CBT and RS Fidelity Scores

	Total CBT Score	Total RS Score
Officer 1	.37	.70
Officer 2	.44	.77
Officer 3	.47	.77
Officer 4	.56	.74
Officer 5	.59	.71
Officer 6	.40	.80
Officer 7	.64	.75
Officer 8	.73	.73
Officer 9	.76	.73
Officer 10	.77	.81
Mean (SD)	.57 (.15)	.75 (.04)

# Officer Category by Fidelity to MI and CBT

	Low-CBT	High-CBT
Low-MI	5	3
High-MI	1	1



# Measuring MI Fidelity

- New EPICS Officer Rating Form was redesigned to quantify MI skills
- Pearson correlation  $r$  between MITI Global score and EPICS RS score = .66

# Officer Category by Fidelity to RS and CBT

	Low-CBT	High-CBT
Low-RS	5	3
High-RS	1	1

# Study Summary

Preliminary evidence the EPICS rating form:

- Can be used to reliably measure officer use of MI and CBT skills
- Can also be used by university students and probation supervisors
- Added minimal time to the coding process
- Average completion time for a 20 minute tape is 40 minutes

## Phase III: Revised Curriculum

### Redesigned EPICS training

- More coherent integration of model to enhance collaborative relationship and engagement
- Integration of MI Skills with role clarification
- Uses the Elicit-Provide-Elicit framework to structure the delivery of skills

## Phase IV: Prospective Study

### Indiana EPICS study

- 20 cohorts of 30 officers will be trained throughout the state ( $\approx 600$  officers)
- Trained in new version of EPICS
- Uses new EPICS rating form
- Uses pre-training audiotapes to establish baseline skills
  - (pre-training audios:  $3 \times 600 \approx 1,800$  tapes)
  - (post-training audios:  $5 \times 600 \approx 3,000$  tapes)
- Officer-level recidivism data (pre and post)

# Conclusion

- Fidelity to MI and CBT influences recidivism
  - More research is needed to assess for the moderating effect of offender risk level
- MI and CBT skills can be quantified
- We expect better results in the future because the new version of EPICS integrates MI
- The forthcoming Indiana study will contribute to the growing research on MI and CBT

## Contact Information

Ryan M. Labrecque, M.S., A.B.D.

Doctoral Candidate and Research Assistant

School of Criminal Justice

University of Cincinnati

P.O. Box 210389

Cincinnati, OH 45221-0389

E-mail: [ryan.labrecque@uc.edu](mailto:ryan.labrecque@uc.edu)