

# Treatment of Offenders in Institutions: Theories, Research, & Implications

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# Presentation Overview

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# The Risk-Needs-Responsivity Model of Correctional Intervention

Edward Latessa, Ph.D.

Professor

# Understanding the Risk Need Responsivity Model

- **The Risk Principle:** (Who to Target) As a general rule treatment effects are stronger if we target higher risk offenders, and harm can be done to low risk offenders
- **The Need Principle:** (What to Target) assess and target criminogenic needs (dynamic risk factors) to reduce the probability of recidivism. These include, attitudes, values and beliefs, peers, personal traits, substance abuse, lack of educational, vocational and financial achievement, etc.)
- **Responsivity:** (How to Target) **General** - Most people respond to programs that are based on *cognitive behavioral/social learning* theories and **Specific** - People learn differently and have certain barriers that should be addressed so that they are more likely to succeed in programs

# Why is RNR Important to Design?

- Dominant approach to offender rehabilitation
- More facilities are separating higher risk from lower risk
- Need flexible space for programming
- Used to reduce reliance on segregation units

# **The Relevance of Prison Architecture for Reducing Inmate Crime and Victimization**

John Wooldredge, Ph.D.

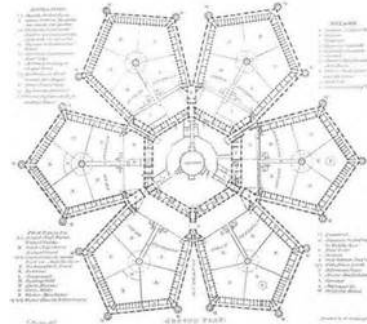
Professor

# **Influence of Design on Inmate Perceptions and Behavior**

- Crime and victimization rates are shaped primarily by the composition of the inmates; however, physical layout is also important.
- The challenge is in placing offenders in the least restrictive environment possible, given their risk for behaving badly. Architecture can shape inmates' perceptions of a non-coercive environment, even in facilities of the same security level.

# Influence of Design on Inmate Perceptions and Behavior

- Prison architecture is central to the daily operations of any prison.
- A handful of styles dominate: “linear”, “podular”, and campus style.
  - Higher assault rates in facilities with linear designs and more “blind spots” relative to podular designs, controlling for security level.
  - Higher theft rates in medium security facilities with dormitories versus single or double cells.





- Victimization may be explained by situations that reduce guardianship over vulnerable targets and allow offenders to be “successful” in their pursuits (i.e., “routine activities theory”; Cohen and Felson, 1979).
- Prisons necessarily place large numbers of offenders in close proximity.
- The close proximity of prisoners breeds familiarity, providing most anyone with knowledge of the more “vulnerable” targets.
- Prison architecture is important for shaping “guardianship” over self and property, either increasing or decreasing opportunities for victimization.
- Prison architecture can also influence anxiety and stress felt by inmates in addition to their perceptions of vulnerability to violence. Podular designs are useful in this regard because they divide an inmate population into smaller groups and increase perceptions of privacy and safety.
- Reducing fear is also important for increasing the legitimate authority of prison administrators and staff, and for reducing post-release criminality.



# Juvenile Offenders

Paula Smith, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

# “What Works”

- The **principles of effective intervention** are also applicable to juvenile offenders.
- Most youth are **adolescent-limited** offenders (versus life-course persistent offenders).
- Youth of color are disproportionately represented in criminal justice system.
  - Ensure policies and practices are culturally competent.

# “What Works”

- Avoid treating adolescents as adults; it undermines public safety.
  - Recent studies demonstrate that juvenile offenders sentenced to the adult criminal justice system have higher recidivism rates.
- The most effective interventions involve the **family** and are **community-based**.

# Adolescent Development

- In comparison with adults, youth are less able to assess risk, control impulsive behavior, and engage in moral reasoning due to anatomical differences in the adolescent brain.
  - Development of pre-frontal cortex
  - Dopamine levels
  - Reward-deficiency syndrome
  - Environmental stress

# Designing Facilities

- Operational and design issues significantly influence the quality of residential services to youth.
  - Analysis of Need
  - Safety, Security and Management Priorities
  - Environmental Character
  - Daily Programming Activities and Opportunities
  - Staffing Efficiency

# Designing Facilities

- A **normative, therapeutic environment** prompts positive behavior, encourages cooperation with staff and promotes program participation.
  - Open interior spaces, views to the outside and natural lighting to reduce perception of crowding
  - Access to outdoor spaces
  - Light colors and changing decorative accents that permit some sense of personalization
  - Movable furnishings
  - Spatial variety throughout the day
  - Sound absorbing materials
  - Familiar and variable construction materials
  - Access to varying program activities

# Female Offenders

Valerie Anderson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor



# Female Offenders

- Increasing proportion of girls and women in the juvenile and criminal justice systems
  - Largely due to policy shifts
- Prior experiences of trauma and abuse
  - Mental health, substance abuse, physical health care needs
- Relationships
  - Families, parenting, romantic partners, peers
- Advocating for **gender-responsive** approaches for girls and women
  - Correctional policies usually developed without considering their unique supervision & rehabilitative needs

# Gender-Responsive Approaches

- Correctional **content**-related factors
  - “What Works” – addressing criminogenic risk and need factors
  - Relational focus
  - Trauma-informed
- Correctional **context**-related factors
  - Prioritize safety in the environment
    - Privacy considerations when designing spaces for female offenders
    - Family visitation

# Important Design Considerations

- Families and relationships
  - Nurseries, family visitation
- Access to **therapeutic services** while incarcerated
  - Wide variety of mental, physical, and reproductive health care needs
- Gender-responsive, trauma-informed architectural design choices to promote safety and wellbeing
  - Natural lighting, outdoor spaces/nature, better acoustics, areas for exercise and recreation, etc.

# Offenders with Mental Illness and Addiction

Sarah M. Manchak, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

# Prevalence in Prisons and Jails

- Mental Illness
  - ~35-75% “any”
  - ~12-20% serious mental illness
- Addiction
  - ~70%
- High Co-occurrence



# Treatment and Management

## **Mental Illness**

- Disruptiveness
- Safety
  - Self-Harm
  - Victimization
- Symptoms and surveillance

## **Addiction**

- Health care needs
- Detoxification facilities
- Access routes to substances

## **Shared**

- Medication management
- “Therapeutic” settings
- Structure and stability