

REVEALING RESEARCH & EVALUATION (RREV)

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This issue highlights the Violence Prevention Program and the pilot Women's Core Programs offered by B.C. Corrections, including Emotions Management for Women and Relationship Skills for Women. This issue focuses on program activities as well as research and evaluation findings that support long-term success.

CORE PROGRAMS

Cognitive Behavioural pre-treatment programs (known in B.C. Corrections as Core Programs) have been delivered for over a decade by B.C. Corrections. These programs are available to Community Corrections clients and provincial inmates with the objective of reducing reoffending and, in turn, protecting communities.



Core Programs are a Priority for B.C. Corrections

Both Probation Officers and Correctional Officers receive training to facilitate cognitive behavioural pre-treatment programs, life skills, and work programs for inmates and clients. Depending on the assessed risks and needs of Corrections clients, officers match clients to programs to help support pro-social learning and target their specific needs.

CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Violence Prevention
- ◆ Respectful Relationships
- ◆ Relationship Violence
- ◆ Emotional Management for Women
- ◆ Relationship Skills for Women
- ◆ Substance Abuse Management

PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES

B.C. Corrections promotes evidence-based practice, also known as the “What Works” movement. Through consistent monitoring and program evaluations, the Branch strives to promote theoretically sound, well-designed programs that can appreciably reduce recidivism rates.

“What works” is using programs that are proven to lower reoffending

The first step in delivering effective pre-treatment programs is identifying the offenders’ risk to reoffend. Medium to High risk clients are better served by these programs.

Secondly, medium and high risk clients should be enrolled in programs that address their specific needs, such as SAM (Substance Abuse Management) for addicted offenders.

Finally, these programs need to be delivered in a clear way, which is responsive to the learning styles and abilities of the clients using them.

B.C. Corrections is committed to improving programs to meet the best and highest standards as we evolve.

RISK—NEED—RESPONSIVITY (RNR) MODEL

The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model has three core principles:

- 1) the **risk principle**: criminal behaviour can be reliably predicted and the level of service should be matched to the offender’s risk to reoffend.
- 2) the **need principle**: correctional programs should focus on *criminogenic needs*-dynamic (changeable) risk factors that are directly linked to criminal behaviour.
- 3) the **responsivity principle**: maximizing an offender’s ability to learn from an intervention by tailoring the intervention to the offender’s learning style, motivation, abilities, and strengths. There is *general* responsivity and *specific* responsivity. **See RREV issue #3 for more information.**



COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUES (CBT)

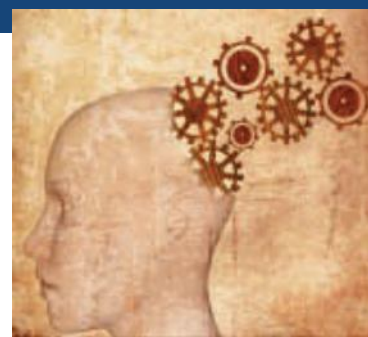
Cognitive Behavioural Technique (CBT) is a psychological treatment that addresses the interactions between how we think, feel, and behave. It follows a structured style of intervention and focuses on the clients' current problems.

CBT is considered one of the more promising methods of rehabilitating offenders and changing behaviour. Offenders have been found to distort cognition, which impairs their ability to correctly read social clues, accept blame, and conduct moral reasoning. This creates a greater sense of entitlement on the part of the offender.

Distorted thought processes can lead individuals to demand instant gratification, confuse wants with needs, or misperceive harmless situations as threats.

CBT is an effective method of learning new reasoning and behavioural skills

CBT helps people to learn new behaviours and new ways of coping with events, often involving the learning of particular skills. The client works with the session leader and group participants to generate and try out new ways to think and



behave. The therapeutic relationship is sometimes seen as one of “coaching”; the practitioner uses his or her expertise to challenge the person’s thinking while guiding them to explore various alternatives. Pre-treatment programs offer opportunities for offenders to develop new skills that they can reinforce in socially acceptable ways (Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002).

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM (VPP)

The Violence Prevention Program (VPP) helps offenders distinguish between anger and violence, analyse sources of anger, and identify non-violent ways of expressing or resolving anger. Participants become aware of their cycle of violence and develop self-management skills to behave in a positive manner. Learning objectives include practicing problem-solving techniques; healthy communication skills and stress management techniques.

VPP first began as a pilot program for male offenders in 1998 at Custody Correctional Centres and in 1999 at a few Community Corrections Offices. By 2000, VPP was implemented across the province in both Adult Custody Division (ACD) centres and Community Corrections and Corporate Programs Division (CCCP) offices.

VPP is a pre-treatment program based on Cognitive Behavioural Techniques, describing how a pattern of thinking leads directly to a pattern of behaviour. VPP is focused on recognizing and modifying this cognitive process. A meta-analysis by Dowden and Andres (2000) highlights the importance of incorporating cognitive-behavioural and social learning strategies into correctional treatment programming for violent offenders.

VPP FOCUSES ON:

- ◆ Attitudes and habits
- ◆ Thinking Errors
- ◆ Stress Management
- ◆ Anger Management
- ◆ Communication Skills
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Goal Setting
- ◆ Lapse and Relapse

The Violence Prevention Model consisted of two cycles:

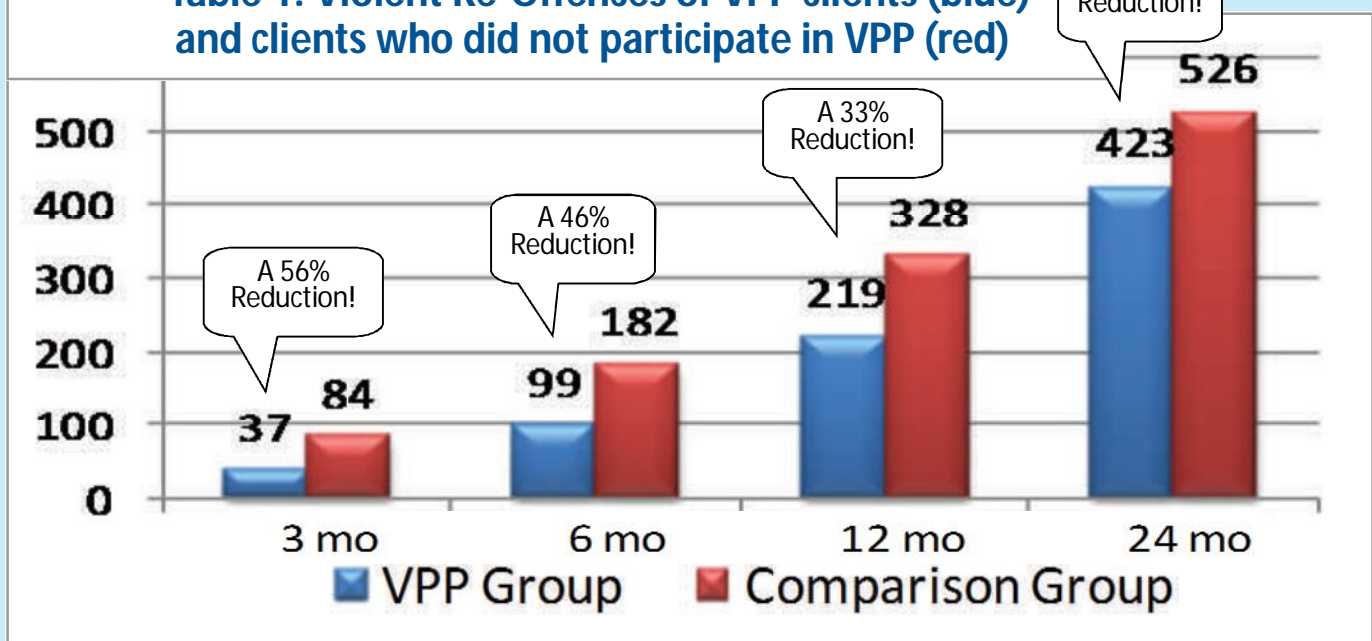
1. *The Violence Cycle*: describes thought processes that lead to angry, aggressive behaviour.
2. *The Self-Management Cycle*: describes thought processes that lead to healthy, appropriate behaviour.

VPP was designed to be delivered in ten, 2.5 hour sessions. Eight to ten participants is the ideal group size, with six being the minimum and twelve the maximum. The sessions are facilitated in correctional centres by trained custody staff and in community offices by trained probation officers. The main learning outcomes of the VPP is twofold:

1. *High Risk Profile*: participants learn to identify the situations in which they are most likely to become violent.
2. *Self-Management Plan*: participants design plans that help them cope with their High-Risk Profile so that they are less likely to become violent.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM (VPP) EVALUATION RESULTS

Table 1: Violent Re-Offences of VPP clients (blue) and clients who did not participate in VPP (red)



2012 VPP EVALUATION

The 2012 analysis looked at 1,518 male VPP participants released from Correctional Centres and 939 male VPP participants admitted to a Community Corrections Offices across the Province between January of 2004 and December of 2008 with appropriate comparison groups.

Table 1 shows that the evaluation revealed significant drops in violent re-offending among the VPP group (blue) versus the comparison group (red). There is a significant difference in violent recidivism incidences in the first 3 months (56%) and 6 months (46%). At 12 months, the VPP group re-offended 33% less than the comparison group, and 20% less at 24 months.

A broader measure of recidivism includes breaches. At twelve months, 14% of the VPP group had either breached or reoffended, compared to 18% of the comparison group. At 24 months, 22% of the VPP group had reoffended, versus 28% of the comparison group. In addition, VPP offenders remained offence-free for, on average, 24 days longer than the comparison group at the 24 month mark.

DOES VPP REDUCE RECIDIVISM? YES!



The results suggest that VPP offers offenders new skills and behavioural techniques that allow them to remain offence-free for longer periods of time than offenders who do not participate in VPP.

The evaluation strongly indicates that low risk clients are no less likely to recidivate following participation in VPP. This reinforces the Risk-Needs-Responsivity principle of program delivery.



Picture of Probation Officer Dale Ginther

PROGRAMS FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Relationship Skills for Women (RSWO) supports female offenders in custody, helping them to engage in healthy relationships and make decisions that will keep them and other people safe. This program is offered at Alouette Correctional Centre for Women and Prince George Regional Correctional Centre.

This Program is offered in 13 sessions, each lasting 2.5 hours. Session topics include:

- ◆ Conflict in Relationships
- ◆ Foundation of Safety & Care
- ◆ Children Who Witness Violence



Picture of Corrections Officer Devon Nicholson

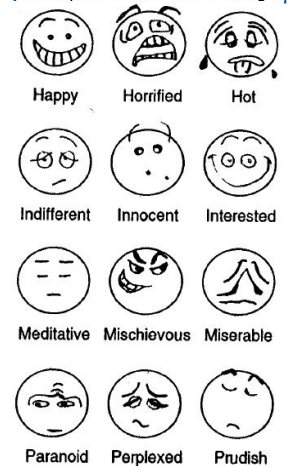
EMOTIONS MANAGEMENT

Emotions Management for Women (EMWO) focuses on the basic skills for managing emotions and achieving healthy outcomes. Course goals include, enhancing self-awareness and self-confidence and making decisions to keep themselves and others safe. This program is offered at Alouette Correctional Centre for Women and Prince George Regional Correctional Centre.

Session topics include:

- ◆ Becoming mindful
- ◆ Problem solving skills
- ◆ Triggers
- ◆ Resolving conflict
- ◆ Dealing with jealousy
- ◆ Dealing with difficult emotions
- ◆ Influence of family & friends

How Do You Feel Today?



UPCOMING REVIEW FOR RWSO AND EMWO

The RSWO and EMWO programs will be reviewed in 2013. Data will be gathered from hundreds of female offenders who have participated in RSWO and EMWO since 2004. This review will focus on re-offence rates, changes in violent incidents, and levels of community supervision breaches of program participants as compared to offenders without RSWO and EMWO experience.



B.C. Corrections is committed to developing programs that meet participant needs, and effectively contribute to reducing re-offending rates throughout the province.

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Evidence-Based Practice - What Works!

<https://collaboration.pssg.gov.bc.ca/Corr/EBP/default.aspx>

