



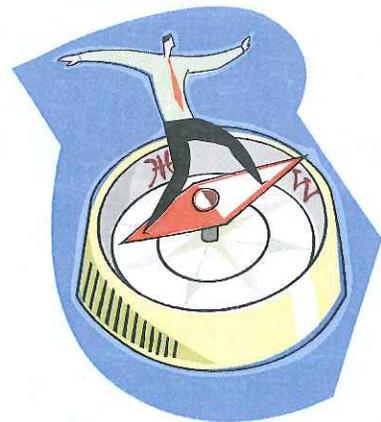
Strategies for Behavior Change

Reinforcing Positive Behaviors; Minimizing Violations

Incarceration is a costly sentencing alternative best reserved for violent and otherwise dangerous offenders. Many individuals who commit crime can be safely supervised in the community, at a lower cost to taxpayers, and with significant potential for positive behavior change. **Strategies for Behavior Change (SBC)** is a process for reinforcing pro-social behaviors and minimizing technical and law violations. Considering risk for recidivism and the level of behavior (ranging from minor to serious or meritorious), SBC guides probation officers in

their responses to their clients' behaviors.

SBC integrates principles supported in the behavior-change literature, emphasizing swiftness and certainty of response as well as proportionality. Responses by probation officers should be commensurate with the seriousness of the behavior and the likelihood the probationer will commit another crime. All the principles designed to encourage pro-social behaviors and minimize anti-social behaviors can be found on page 2.



The Behavior Response Grid is used to guide probation officers in their responses to probationers' positive and violation behaviors. The level of behavior, along with the individual's risk to recidivate, determine the level of response.

Behavior Response Grid

Risk Level	MAX	Low	Medium	High
	MED	Low	Medium	High
	MIN	Low	Low	Medium
		MINOR	MODERATE	SERIOUS/ MERITORIOUS
		Behavior Level		



Behavior Change Principles

Celerity

- Reducing time between behavior & response results in reduced violations
- Respond to violations as quickly as possible

Certainty

- Increasing certainty of a response results in reduced future deviance
- Respond in some way to every violation

Consistency

- Similar decisions in similar circumstances results in increased compliance
- Use decision instruments that produce consistent results

Neutrality

- Processes that are impartial, logical, and fair result in increased adherence to rules
- Inform offenders how responses are determined

Parsimony

- Punishment should not be more intrusive or restrictive than necessary
- Use severity of the violation as a factor in determining the appropriate level of response

Proportionality

- Level of punishment should be commensurate with the severity of the behavior
- Match sanction severity to the severity of the violation

Risk

- Higher risk requires higher intensity of supervision and response to behaviors
- Use risk as a criteria in determining response

Probation strives to achieve public safety through a focus on criminogenic needs and positive behavior change



Goals Of SBC

When chief probation officers and the Division of Probation Services considered how they could improve success rates in probation, they identified responses to technical violations as one important area they could impact. This focus complemented other efforts to achieve longer term behavioral change rather than aiming for shorter-term compliance with supervision. Colorado's Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) considered management of technical violations through the lens

of resource utilization. Based on the collective wisdom of these entities and other stakeholders, the goals of SBC became:

- increase pro-social behaviors and decrease anti-social behaviors and criminogenic needs;
- improve consistency in response to probationers' behaviors;
- safely manage offenders in the community; and
- better utilize tax-funded resources.

Feedback from Probationer Officers & Clients

During a three-month pilot project in 2012, SBC was tested in seven districts. Both probation officers and probationers responded favorably. Importantly, officers reported focusing more on their clients' positive behaviors. Change in behavior is more likely to occur when reinforcements reach a ratio of four positives to every one negative. Officers also reported utilizing a greater variety of responses and although they believed the structure of SBC to be helpful, it needed

to be automated.

Probationers found SBC to be helpful in the following ways:

- expectations were clearer;
- they were better able to work within established parameters;
- smaller steps to behavior change were easier to accomplish; and
- they were more motivated to do the right thing when it was acknowledged by their probation officer.

“When my probationer officer noticed what I was doing right, I wanted to do more of it.”

~Probationer

Coming Up...

With automation nearly complete, a second pilot has been scheduled for the summer of 2013. Two entire districts, one with a specialty court and multiple office locations and one without these characteristics, will test SBC in the automated format. Training and the process for implementation have been updated to enhance skill development, include a

quality assurance component and a number of other practices designed to sustain SBC over the long run. Based on the results of the pilot, SBC will be updated and statewide roll-out is expected to begin in the Fall of 2013. All districts should be trained and utilizing SBC by the end of 2014.



Strategies FOR Behavior Change

- ⇒ Respond to positive and negative behaviors swiftly, consistently and in proportion to the seriousness of the behavior.
- ⇒ Account for the probationer's risk and needs when responding to positive and negative behaviors.
- ⇒ Utilize positive to negative reinforcements on a 4:1 ratio.
- ⇒ Have discussions with probationers about
 - ⇒ how positive and negative behaviors will be incentivized or sanctioned
 - ⇒ what sanctions and incentives are meaningful to the individual client
 - ⇒ the logic behind how employed sanctions and incentives were determined
- ⇒ Focus supervision on criminogenic needs with an emphasis on anti-social:
 - ⇒ behavior; personality; attitudes and cognitions; and companions

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