

Risk and Criminogenic Needs

Andrews and Bonta (2010, p. 58-60) have identified eight criminogenic risk and need factors. Risk factors should be used to determine the level of treatment and criminogenic needs should be the focus of treatment where the goal is to reduce the risk of future criminal behavior and involvement in the criminal/juvenile justice system. These risk and need factors are often labeled the 'Central Eight,' with the first four, or 'Big Four,' having the greatest impact on recidivism, and the second four, or 'Moderate Four,' have a slightly less, but still impactful relationship with future criminal behavior.

Risk and Need Factors

1. History of Antisocial Behavior. For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is "building on new noncriminal behaviors in high-risk situations and build self-efficacy for beliefs supporting reform." *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Learning and identifying high-risk situations that lead to illegal behavior.
 - b. Writing 'high-risk avoidance plan' and practice plan.
 - c. Learn and practice (to habit) new skills, behaviors to use in high-risk situations.
2. Antisocial Personality Pattern. This is described as "impulsive, adventurous pleasure-seeking, generalized trouble (multiple persons, multiple settings), restless aggressive, callous disregard for others." For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is "weak self-control, weak anger management skills, and poor problem solving skills." *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Teach and practice (role-play to habit) self-control strategies (awareness, motivation, plan, reward, practice to habit, depletion, delay gratification).
 - b. Teach and practice (role-play to habit) anger control (handout).
 - c. Teach and practice (role-play to habit) social skills (i.e., keeping out of fights).
3. Antisocial Cognition. This includes, "attitudes, values, beliefs, rationalizations, and a personal identity that is favorable to crime." For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is, "reduction of antisocial thinking and feeling and through building and practicing less risky thought and feelings." *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Teaching commonly used thinking errors (self-centered, minimizing/mislabeling, assuming the worst, blaming others).
 - b. Teach and practice (to habit) how to identify and correct thinking errors.
 - c. Teach and practice correction (role-play to habit) of hostile interpretations.
4. Antisocial Associates. This includes "both association with procriminal others and relative isolation from anticriminal others." For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is, "reduce association with procriminal others and enhance association and [prosocial] others." *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Motivational Interviewing (MI) skills to increase desire to avoid antisocial peers.
 - b. Increase time spend in prosocial structured & supervised activities (clubs, sports).
 - c. Use behavior contracting and monitoring to reduce contact with antisocial peers.

5. Family/marital circumstances. This includes, “poor-quality relationships in combination with neutral expectations with regard to crime and procriminal expectations. For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is, “Strong nurturance and caring in combination with strong monitoring and supervision.” *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Practice parental modeling of prosocial attitudes and behaviors.
 - b. Create behavioral plan that includes frequent rewards (and consequences) for complying with parent requests, chores, homework, etc.
 - c. Improve family relationships (Think attachment! Decrease negative comments & increase positive, increase touch and connectedness, identify positives).
 - d. Teach and practice (role-play to habit) social skills (i.e., making a complaint, understanding the feelings of others, dealing w/ someone else’s anger, expressing affection, etc). Plan and increase frequency of family leisure activities.
6. School/Work. This includes “low levels of performance and involvement and low levels of rewards and satisfactions.” For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is, “Enhance performance, involvement, and rewards and satisfactions.” *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Identify deficits (for accommodations) & increase & focus on strengths.
 - b. Assist in identifying & encourage enrollment (empower family) in training.
 - c. Teach and practice (role-play to habit) social skills needed at work (i.e., getting ready for a difficult conversation, dealing with accusations, etc.)
7. Leisure/Recreation. This includes, “Low levels of involvement and satisfactory in anticriminal leisure pursuits.” For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is, “Enhance involvement and rewards and satisfactions.” *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Use MI skills enhance motivation/desire to engage in prosocial activities.
 - b. Identify and encourage participation to engage in prosocial activities.
 - c. Teach and practice (role-play to habit) skills needed to engage in these activities.
8. Substance Abuse (SA). This includes “problems with alcohol and/or drugs. For this risk factor, the dynamic need to be targeted is, “Reducing SA, reduce personal and interpersonal supports for substance-oriented behavior, enhance alternatives to SA.” *Example interventions include:*
 - a. Use MI skills enhance motivation/desire to abstain from SA.
 - b. Identify high-risk circumstances and teach avoidance strategies as well as teach and practice (role-play to the point of habit) new behavioral and coping skills to use when high-risk situations cannot be avoided.
 - c. Refer to SA treatment if necessary.

Reference:

Andrews, D., & Bonta, J. (Eds.). (2010). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct* (5th Edition ed.). New Providence, NJ: Matthew Bender & Company, Inc., LexisNexis Group.