

Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist-Group
Assessment (CPC-GA)

**MONTANA STATE PRISON – ‘THINKING FOR
A CHANGE’**

Final Report

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CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Research in the field of corrections suggests that cognitive-behavioral and social learning models of treatment for offenders are associated with considerable reductions in recidivism, whereas more “traditional approaches” (e.g., incarceration, boot camps, 12-step programs) are not (Gendreau, 1996; Smith, Goggin and Gendreau, 2002). The assessment is being conducted to evaluate Thinking for a Change (T4C) groups using the Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist-Group Assessment (CPC-GA). The objective of this assessment is to conduct a detailed review of T4C groups at this location and to compare the delivery of this intervention with the research literature on best practices in corrections. The following report will provide a summary of the program, procedures used to assess the program, and CPC-GA findings with recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the T4C groups. This CPC-GA was conducted as part of a training initiative in which four Montana Department of Corrections (MT DOC) staff conducted this assessment with the assistance of a University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute representative (UCCI). As such, this assessment is one that was conducted in a training context.

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

On June 5, 2019, as part of a training, the above listed team assessed the Montana State Prison (MSP) Thinking for a Change[®] (T4C) group. The assessment was conducted using the Evidence-based Correctional Program Checklist-Group Assessment (CPC-GA). The objective of this assessment is to conduct a detailed review of the T4C group and to compare the delivery of this intervention with the research literature on best practices in corrections. The following report will provide a summary of the program, procedures used to assess the program, and CPC-GA findings with recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the MSP T4C group.

MSP is the state prison for adult males (18 and older) located in Powell County, Montana. MSP has been in existence for over 100 years and serves state residents. MSP has capacity for up to 1600 inmates, with a population of 1600 inmates at the time of the assessment. Inmates are sentenced to the prison by the courts or revocation process throughout the state of Montana.

MSP has offered T4C groups for approximately 1.5 years. Each T4C group runs for 10 weeks, meeting two times per week for an hour and a half duration. A typical group size is between 8-10 inmates. Currently, MSP has 10-12 staff trained in the T4C curriculum including the Program Director who is a trained trainer. A couple of the staff members trained are mental health staff and have not facilitated since being trained. MSP has just been approved to send two teams, four staff, to Colorado for the next T4C train the trainer by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). There have been over 20 staff trained in T4C, but attrition has reduced that number significantly.

This assessment is part of a statewide initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of correctional intervention programs/groups offered in our facilities and in the community to ascertain how closely groups meet known principles of effective intervention. In the course of this assessment, staff conducted a review of the MSP T4C program and compared its practices with current research findings on best practices in corrections. The following report will provide a summary of the

program, procedures used to assess the program, and CPC-GA findings with recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the service.

This report is not a program evaluation or a contract compliance review. The CPC-GA looks at specific program characteristics and examines the way a program operates to see if it uses evidence-based practices. These are approaches that have been shown by research to reduce the likelihood of new criminal behavior by those who go through the program.

The CPC-GA is based on the premise that the operations within the program provide a safe and secure environment for the inmates.

Assessment Process

The assessment process consisted of a series of structured interviews with five staff members involved with delivery of the T4C group, as well as interviews with four program participants. Interviews took place on May 5, 2019. Relevant program materials were also collected and reviewed. In addition, assessors observed two T4C group sessions. Data from the various sources were used to determine a consensus CPC-GA score and to provide the feedback contained in this report.

PROCEDURES

Description of the Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist-Group Assessment (CPC-GA)

The Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) is a tool designed to assess correctional intervention programs.¹ It is used to ascertain how closely correctional programs meet known principles of effective intervention. Several recent studies conducted by UCCI on both adult and juvenile programs were used to develop and validate the indicators on the CPC.² These studies yielded strong correlations with outcome between overall scores, domain areas, and individual items, (Holsinger, 1999; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2003, Lowenkamp, 2003; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005a; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005b).

The CPC-GA is a program evaluation tool adapted from the CPC to more closely examine the extent to which correctional group interventions meet the principles of effective intervention. This tool was designed to more closely examine Core Correctional Practices (CCP) within a group context. Hence, this tool can be used for correctional agencies or contractors that provide a free-standing group to examine the quality of that intervention.

The CPC-GA is divided into two basic areas: 1) Capacity, and 2) Content. The Capacity area is designed to measure whether or not a correctional program has the capability to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders. There are two domains in this area: 1) *Program Staff and Support*, and 2) *Quality Assurance*. The Content area focuses on the substantive aspects of the group and also includes two domains: 1) *Offender Assessment* and 2) *Treatment*. The treatment area is designed to measure mostly CCP and is divided into seven components: 1) Group Target and Process; 2) Effective Reinforcement; 3) Effective Disapproval; 4) Structured Skill Building; 5) Relationship Skills; 6) Cognitive Restructuring; and 7) Relapse Prevention.

The CPC-GA tool includes 54 indicators, worth 56 total points. Each area and all domains are scored and rated as either Very High Adherence to EBP (65% to 100%); High Adherence to EBP (55% to 64%); Moderate Adherence to EBP (45% to 54%); or Low Adherence to EBP (less than 45%).³ The scores in all domains are then totaled and the same scale is used for the overall assessment score. It should be noted that not all of the domains are given equal weight, and some items may be considered not applicable, in which case they are not included in the scoring.

There are several limitations to the CPC-GA that should be discussed. First, the instrument is based on an “ideal” group. The criteria have been developed from a large body of research and knowledge that combine the best practices from the empirical literature on “what works” in reducing recidivism. Hence, the achievement of meeting all indicators on the assessment is unlikely. Second, as with all applied research, objectivity and reliability are important considerations. Although steps are taken to ensure that the information that is gathered is accurate and reliable, decisions about the information and data gathered are invariably made by the assessors given the nature of the process. Third, the process is time-specific; that is, the results describe the group at the time of the assessment. Changes or modifications may be under development, but only those activities and processes that are present at the time of the review are scored. Fourth, the process does not take into account all system issues that can affect the integrity of the group. Lastly, the process does not address why a problem exists within a group.

Despite these limitations, there are a number of advantages to this process. First, the criteria are based on empirically derived principles of effective intervention. Second, the process provides a measure of program integrity and quality; in other words, it provides insight into the “black box” of the group, and this is something that an outcome study alone does not provide. Third, the results can be ascertained relatively quickly. Fourth, it identifies both the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention. It provides the program with feedback regarding what it is doing that is consistent with the research on effective interventions, as well as those areas that need improvement. Finally, it generates some useful recommendations for improvement. Since integrity and quality can change over time, it allows a program to reassess its progress at a later date.

FINDINGS

Program Staff and Support

The first sub-component of this section examines staff qualifications and training, as well as involvement of the program coordinator (i.e. the individual from the host agency responsible for overseeing implementation of the program). Effective programs have adequate oversight by the program coordinator, including selection of staff based on skills and values consistent with offender rehabilitation and use of staff meetings or some other means of direct supervision of the program. Facilitators should be qualified, have adequate training and follow guidelines for ethical program delivery. Finally, the program should be supported by stakeholders.

Strengths:

Roey Pfisterer is the Chief of Case Management at MSP. He supervises the case managers who facilitate T4C. Some of Roey’s other duties include selecting and approving case management staff.

He participates in the entire process from reviewing the application through the behavioral based interview to hiring the successful candidate. On an ongoing basis, he provides oversight and feedback to group facilitators to ensure they are proficient and maintaining fidelity to the program. He is a trained trainer in the T4C curriculum, and both trains all new facilitators as well as provides back-up services for his staff, if needed.

Roey has a degree in Criminal Justice and has been working in corrections for 11 years in a variety of capacities. He has worked in both community settings as well as the prison and has been conducting groups for approximately four years. He is familiar with the personality traits that are necessary for staff to have in order to effectively facilitate groups. When choosing new staff for hire, these specific personality characteristics are favored and considered crucial for the case management position. Some of these characteristics are whether the candidate is open minded, has experience working with the offender/inmate population and want to make a change in people's lives.

The Montana Department of Corrections (MDOC) has policies that support strong ethical guidelines. Staff were consistently aware of the agency policy.

Finally, staff consistently reported positive support from stakeholders. In hearings, the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) verbalize changes they recognize in offender behavior as a result of this program and offer parole upon completion of the program as they value the information and skills learned in T4C. DOC central office and the community probation and parole officers were also reported to be supportive by way of funding and recognition of program completion.

Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations:

Staff selected to facilitate the T4C groups did not consistently meet the minimum educational requirements. All staff who facilitate groups should hold an Associate's degree or higher in a helping profession.

- ***Recommendation:*** All facilitator staff should have an Associate's degree or higher in a helping profession. Multiple staff are actively working towards their educational goals and should be supported in their endeavors. With regards to future hires, priority should be given to those applicants who already have a minimum of an Associate's degree in a helping profession.

Staff selected as case managers and thus group facilitators did not consistently have a minimum of two years' experience working in a treatment program with offenders. Facilitator staff who have worked in treatment programs for at least two years are found to be more effective in their communication and modeling of material and skills.

- ***Recommendation:*** When hiring new staff for case management position, preference should be given to those individuals who have worked for a minimum of two years in a treatment program with offenders. Staff who currently hold a case management position will eventually meet this standard once they have been in their current position for a minimum of two years. In the interim, it would be beneficial for the program coordinator to provide additional facilitator feedback as well as training opportunities.

Case Managers reported attending and participating in staff meetings at least two times a month. The content of these meetings ranges from a review of general institutional policy such as the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), staff coverage, parole reports, risk assessments, and progress of groups currently being facilitated. Staff who regularly meet and discuss new intakes, case reviews, problems, progress reports and terminations specific to the T4C groups have better results.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to meet on regular basis but emphasize the content of the meetings to have time set aside to focus more closely on T4C group facilitation and inmate participation. Opportunities to openly discuss progress and issues on an ongoing basis will assist both the staff and offender in their program. By providing an agenda staff will know expectations and discussion points during staff meetings. Also, by having each staff member review 20% of their group members at each meeting, all inmates will be reviewed quarterly.

While all group facilitators did receive the mandatory 40 hours of initial T4C training, they do not receive a sufficient number of ongoing training hours. Staff should be receiving a minimum of 40 hours per year of formal training (e.g., workshops, courses, in-service, or conferences) relevant to the program and service delivery. Research has shown that programs which ensure staff receive a minimum of 40 hours of ongoing training per year see greater reductions in recidivism among offenders. Examples include training in effective interventions, assessment instruments and Core Correctional Practices (CCP). Training on facility practices and safety procedures such as PREA, CPR, restraint safety, etc., do not qualify under this category.

- **Recommendation:** All staff should be required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of training per year. Staff training should relate directly to the T4C curriculum and service delivery topics, which will assist staff to work more effectively with offenders. Staff training should also include a review of the principles of effective interventions, behavioral strategies, application of reinforcement (both negative and positive), group facilitation, treatment planning, risk and need factors related to criminal conduct, and the use and interpretation of assessment instruments.

Offender Assessments

The extent to which participants are appropriate for the services provided and the use of proven assessment methods is critical to effective correctional programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsivity of participants, and then provide services and interventions accordingly. The Offender Assessment domain examines the participant selection process and type of offenders targeted for the intervention as well as the assessment of risk, need, and personal characteristics of the participant.

Strengths:

The T4C program at MSP includes established exclusion criteria, thus resulting in the majority of offenders served to be appropriate for this type of programming. MSP assesses all offenders using the Prison Screening Tool (PST) at intake. The PST is a short survey that provides validated indicators to determine if an offender is high, moderate, or low risk of reoffending, based on criminogenic domains. Offenders that screen as high or moderate on a PST are then reassessed using

the Prison Intake Tool (PIT). PIT has additional assessment material enabling staff to determine offender treatment needs. For an offender to be referred and accepted into the T4C program, they must score as high or moderate on the PST. Finally, the offender must score high or moderate within the criminal thinking domain of the PIT. This process ensures only offenders scoring at moderate to high risk and needs, specifically in the component of criminal attitudes, thinking and behaviors are allowed into the T4C program. Programs that have established exclusionary criteria like T4C at MSP are shown to be much more effective programs.

Programs that utilize validated risk assessments on all offenders that enter a program have better results than programs that do not. T4C at MSP is utilizing the Montana Offender Reentry and Risk Assessment (MORRA). All offenders that enter the program have scored high or moderate using the MORRA or they would not be in the program. MSP staff store the MORRA results inside the Department's Offender Management Information System (OMIS). Further, the MORRA is not only a validated assessment tool, it also includes scoring of specific needs such as criminal beliefs and attitudes. Not only do offenders need to score high on both a PST and PIT, the offender must also score as high or moderately high in the domain specific criminal attitudes section. Programs like T4C at MSP have been proven to be more effective because they screen for domain specific needs before placing offenders in specific programming.

Groups that mix low risk offenders and high-risk population may do more harm than good. The T4C program at MSP is not mixing high risk or low risk populations as they will screen out and disallow any offender that scores as low risk on the MORRA, specifically, only offenders that score high risk on the PST and PIT, and score high risk in the domain specific criminal needs section are allowed to enter the program.

Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations

Programs that assess responsivity factors, such as readiness to change and ability to read are more effective reducing criminal behavior than programs that do not assess responsivity. Case management staff at MSP that facilitate the T4C program do not do any responsivity screening or they do not have access or knowledge of other clinical staff that may perform such test.

- ***Recommendation:*** Case management staff at MSP should begin to do secondary assessments on offenders that enter the T4C program. Some tests, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) or the Texas Cristian University (TCU) mapping, provide insight into areas offenders may struggle with such as the ability to read and write, (a requirement of T4C) or lack motivation or willingness to change. If a secondary assessment is done case management staff facilitating T4C could respond and target specific needs of each offender so they will improve their ability to positively complete the programming leading to an overall increase in the successful outcomes of MSP's T4C program.

Treatment

This domain of the CPC-GA is most extensive. It measures core correctional practices, including the following areas: Group Target and Process, Effective Reinforcement, Effective Disapproval,

Structured Skill Building, Relationship Skills, Cognitive Restructuring and Relapse Prevention. Effective correctional interventions use a cognitive behavior approach to target criminogenic behaviors. Furthermore, they provide structured treatment using effective group practice techniques, including use of good relationship skills. Successful programs also effectively use positive reinforcement and punishment as well as structured skill building and cognitive restructuring to change offender behavior. Finally, the use of relapse prevention strategies designed to assist the offender in anticipating and coping with problem situations should be incorporated.

Strengths:

The T4C program effectively works towards targeting criminogenic needs. During the group session that was observed, inmates worked on changing their attitudes towards law and/or institutional rule violations, improving interpersonal conflict resolution skills, and promoting more self-control, self-management and problem-solving skills. The group structure is set to discuss, role-play and examine other criminogenic needs through other topics and material within the T4C curriculum.

The T4C program uses an evidence-based approach of cognitive-behavioral therapy to assist the clients with problem solving strategies. The T4C program uses a “thinking chain” technique to guide the inmates’ step by step through their thought process and options to change their thinking towards more positive attitudes.

MSP is a prison facility for males only, therefore the T4C group does not mix male and female participants, as the group consists of only male inmates.

The lead facilitators were skillful at encouraging all the group members to participate throughout the group process. The facilitator accomplished this by discussing the expectation that all group participants present an assignment or participate in role play exercises that center on skill building.

Groups are always conducted by staff, with one staff being the lead facilitator and the other staff assisting with running the group.

Homework is regularly assigned and reviewed as part of the T4C group. Additionally, the homework is expected to be completed on the living unit prior to entering group and practiced with other inmates. This helps to hold the inmates accountable for their work and provides extra practice outside of the group setting to work on a skill. Additionally, the group is structured so that inmates work on the same assignments so they can assist each other if they are struggling to complete their homework.

Group norms were established and followed. Participants are clear in the group’s expectations and group participation. The inmates are aware that each of them must participate during the course of the group and develop role plays to practice the new skill that they learn.

The group facilitators consistently followed the T4C curriculum. The manual includes exercises, activities and homework assignments, which were used throughout the course of the group session. The facilitators appeared very knowledgeable of the material.

The group size is typically 12 participants; however, it is the norm for this number to go down over the course of the 12 weeks because of institutional issues. The group that was observed was down

four participants for that group session; this is normal as inmates whom do not participate and/or whom get into disciplinary are removed from the group. Group size is appropriate for two facilitators and easily managed.

The program facilitators appear to have developed professional rapport with the participants in the group. Both facilitators appeared friendly and approachable. Facilitators used self-disclosure in a brief and appropriate manner when discussing new skills. Facilitators did not engage in antisocial discussions with participants, thus avoiding any resistance or off-topic discussions. Facilitators used redirection as a technique to avoid arguments. Participants gave favorable impressions of the facilitators during individual interviews.

Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations:

The T4C groups did not operate in the allotted time. The group is scheduled for two hours, however the two groups observed were completed within 90 minutes. Additionally, offenders attend group twice a week for a scheduled 2 hours for each session and must attend at least 23 sessions of the 25 sessions; if they do not meet the attendance criteria the inmate is removed from the group.

- ***Recommendation:*** Length of time in the program is insufficient to affect the target behavior of improving the cognitive patterns of the offenders. Only one of the sessions observed went the entire allotted time. To meet the dosage that T4C is designed to deliver, the group needs to go for the full 2 hours. Additional role modeling between the instructors or role playing between the offenders could help fill this time.

Co-facilitators were willing to facilitate; however, there may have been a differential between facilitators when it came to experience. This did appear to impact the ability of the co-facilitator to be fully involved and active in delivery of the curriculum. Both facilitators should be more active with the group.

- ***Recommendation:*** With more experience and time the co-facilitators will progress to the level of the lead facilitator.
- ***Recommendation:*** A booster training and/or other type of training to help all facilitators is appropriate. Ensuring the group runs the entire allotted time will help the facilitators be more active.

When addressing responsivity instructors seem to excel at pulling inmates to the side or keeping them after class to discuss their individual needs and struggles grasping the curriculum. However as addressed earlier, responsivity assessments should be completed which will help facilitators to know prior to the beginning of group if there are areas of concern with offenders in the group.

- ***Recommendation:*** Please refer to the recommendations regarding responsivity assessments in the Offender Assessment section above. If responsivity assessments are adopted (related to motivation, learning ability, IQ, mental health, trauma, etc.), results should be used to help individualize facilitator intervention style to meet the offender

learning style/needs. The facilitators will then be able to take this information and be effective at addressing different learning styles or barriers of the participants being served. The facilitator will be able to ensure that other group members understand these barriers and that it is important to work as a group to learn the skills together.

Programs that maintain appropriate systems within groups that facilitators may choose from to reward and reinforce positive offender behavior, have better program outcomes. While case managers at MSP commonly reward offenders using verbal praise, they do not have any other identified process to reward positive offender behavior and actions. Additionally, staff used verbal praise in situations that it either was not warranted or was inappropriate.

- **Recommendation:** Case management at MSP should develop a system of incentive and rewards to positively demonstrate to offenders identified positive behaviors and actions. Some possible systems MSP could establish are points systems, token systems, or even reductions in time. While verbal praise, which is used at MSP, should be included in this range, it should only be used when it is the appropriate model and not be the only tool available.

MSP staff do not maintain and ensure the use of four rewards for every one punisher provided. Further, case managers are not explaining to each offender what behaviors they performed that is being rewarded and why the behavior demonstrated is a positive action deserving reward. Staff at MSP are providing verbal approval in the form of “good job” commonly, however, this praise is not always the best reward to use, and at times it was not provided in the appropriate situation. This process is not found in any policy or procedure. However, staff at MSP are currently working on drafting this language so all staff that facilitate T4C at MSP will know this requirement and it will be taught to all that facilitate the program.

- **Recommendation:** Case managers at MSP’s T4C program should use a ratio of 4 positive reinforcements and rewards to every 1 punisher used. This 4:1 ratio should be codified in policy or procedure so all staff will understand and be trained. For positive reinforcement to be used most effectively it should be used as soon as possible after witnessing the pro-social statement of behavior. Staff should provide verbal praise most often as it is the easiest and most effective in a group setting, however, it should not be the only type available.
- **Recommendation:** Rewards should be applied consistently by the case managers. Staff should explain why the action taken by the offender is worthy of praise and explain how this behavior may be used in the community. Finally, staff should not provide rewards to an entire group when only a single or couple of offenders deserved the reward.

Program staff at MSP do not incorporate the appropriate use of punishers into the facilitation of the T4C program. Like positive reinforcers, case managers need a formalized range of punishers to use to target and attempt to eliminate anti-social thinking and behavior to appropriately respond to offender behavior that is antisocial or criminal in expression. The use of the punisher needs to stop the undesired behavior and demonstrate to the offender why the thought or action is inappropriate, T4C program staff must also ensure the offender understands that inappropriate behaviors will have

consequences. After the use of a punisher the program facilitator must teach and demonstrate an appropriate behavior the offender should use to avoid falling back on antisocial thoughts.

- **Recommendation:** MSP staff need to create a system of effective punishers, such as, the loss of rewards, good time or other incentives that can demonstrate to an offender consequence of antisocial or criminal expressions and extinguish such behaviors and thoughts.
- **Recommendation:** MSP staff must provide offenders with an example, and preferably a demonstration, of a prosocial behavior to used instead of the antisocial behavior that was demonstrated by the offender. The facilitator must recognize offender anti-social statements or attitudes. They must then immediately and consistently use the range of punishers to eliminate the behavior and ensure the punisher is clearly matched to the demonstrated negative behavior. The facilitator must explain and use examples of why the offender's behavior is being punished and corrected. The facilitator must match the intensity of the punisher with the intensity of the anti-social thought or behavior. Finally, MSP staff should follow up with the offender by explaining both the short- and long-term consequences of continuing with the negative behavior. Staff should drop the issue once the punishment has been implemented, explained, and the desired outcome gained.

As noted previously, case managers at MSP do not have a range of tool to use to punish or correct negative offender behavior. Staff at MSP stated they are currently working to create a range of punisher they may utilize. MSP is also lacking and should include in their new plan or policy, that after the use of the punisher, the facilitator must teach and demonstrate an appropriate behavior the offender should use to avoid falling back on antisocial thoughts.

- **Recommendation:** After staff at MSP use a punisher from their range of available punishers, T4C facilitators should explain and demonstrate appropriate responses to the situation that led to the use of the punisher. Finally, T4C facilitators should receive training allowing them to detect negative consequences or unattended negative effects in offender behavior as a result of the punisher.

The T4C program has structured role modeling and role play activities that are built into lessons. Facilitators were observed demonstrating new skills to participants, followed by participant role plays. The facilitators also assign homework to practice any new skills between groups to provide graduated practice to all participants.

While the structure of modeling, role play, and homework are in place generally, the execution during group is not meeting T4C standards. T4C facilitators did not offer benefits for the offenders when discussing new skills. The skills were presented with the steps needed, but very little discussion occurred concerning situations to use the skill or the benefits that would come from the skill.

T4C facilitators did not offer corrective feedback to offenders during the rehearsal portion of the groups. Offenders presented a role play with minimal feedback, even when the offenders were not using the skill being taught in a pro-social manner. Most feedback observed centered around thanking offenders for participating.

- **Recommendation:** Facilitators' models should include information to explain the benefits to all participants. T4C facilitators should receive training, or boosters, on how to "sell" new skills being taught to offenders by explaining the advantages of learning the new skill or behavior. This should include benefits that will be derived from using the new skills.

T4C facilitators should also offer corrective feedback to participants concerning homework, skills training, and graduated practice. It may be beneficial if facilitators had a specific booster session focusing on responding to a variety of situations, they may encounter during role plays including offenders using antisocial comments, using inappropriate situations that are unrelated to the skill being taught, or when offenders are not understanding the skill.

The T4C curriculum includes modules focusing on identifying underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs. The homework assigned, including Thinking Reports, also offers a chance to identify underlying thoughts and values.

Group facilitators did not offer corrective feedback to offenders, specifically when offenders demonstrated anti-social thoughts and beliefs. Facilitators allowed offenders to express antisocial beliefs, values, and thoughts without attempting to offer more prosocial interpretations.

- **Recommendation:** Offenders should identify underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs. Techniques include the use of thinking reports, functional analysis, cost-benefit analysis, or other appropriate techniques to help offenders recognize distorted/antisocial thinking. The facilitator could consistently work with each offender to confront antisocial thoughts and values. Facilitators should be trained on appropriate techniques to challenge unhealthy belief systems. Finally, offenders should be taught how to replace antisocial thinking with appropriate prosocial thoughts. The facilitator could regularly work with the offenders to identify the risk and consequences of antisocial thoughts and values and then to replace them with prosocial thoughts and values.

Offenders did not develop risk or relapse prevention plans. Risk or relapse prevention plans would allow offenders to identify skills they may use in any future high-risk situations. These plans could include additional areas that offenders may need to address, including aftercare programming.

- **Recommendation:** Some of the group sessions should be devoted to developing risk or relapse prevention plans, and offenders should routinely plan and rehearse the plans and relapse prevention *techniques*. Plans should be individualized and should include strategies and scripts for responding to risky situations, people, and places. The T4C program should build in post testing where offenders are asked to put together homework to model the skills learned.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

This CPC domain centers on the quality assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the program is functioning. This section examines the type of feedback, assessments, and

evaluations used to monitor the program. Effective programs should include regular group observation and feedback. Offender input should be solicited via satisfaction surveys and pre/post testing should be used to measure offender change. Finally, completion criteria should be behaviorally based, and discharge summaries developed to review program progress and unmet needs.

Strengths:

The program is aware that quality assurance (QA) systems are needed and the program coordinator articulated plans for future implementation of QA practices. This included group observation times, booster trainings, and obtaining feedback from facilitators and participants on program effectiveness.

Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations:

The program coordinator should play a more active role in developing and refining the skills of staff in their roles as group facilitators. Montana State Prison does not have consistent means to offer feedback and ongoing training to group facilitators.

- ***Recommendation:*** The program coordinator should observe staff during treatment and provide feedback and coaching to staff that will improve service delivery. Each facilitator should be observed once per group cycle or quarterly if group has no defined cycle. Observations should rotate between the high and low side groups as well as between different days to ensure that all groups are eventually observed. Additional and more frequent coaching and practice will develop facilitator skills and ability to manage and conduct groups, as well as ensure the fidelity with which they apply curricula and evidence-based models.

T4C does not survey or interview participants for satisfaction.

- ***Recommendation:*** The client surveys should be completed by all offenders, and the results should be reviewed and discussed with facilitators. The results can serve to reinforce the positives from the group and to educate on areas needing improvement. Client surveys, even when confidential, can be a tool to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a provider to help plan future groups and positively influence facilitation practices.

T4C groups do not include a pre/post-test portion.

- ***Recommendation:*** The program coordinator should work with facilitators to include a pre-test and post-test routine for all participants. These tests should focus on target behaviors that are presented during the groups.

T4C participants were not provided with clearly outlined criteria for completion. Staff interviewed gave various answers as to what completion means, ranging from attending all groups to missing no more than four groups. Participants who were removed from the program were done so without standard expectations. Some participants were removed for lack of participation, without documentation to provide context or any information on prior sanctions or attempts to address behaviors.

- **Recommendation:** The program coordinator should develop defined objectives for completion or removal from the program. These objectives should be defined by progress in acquiring pro-social behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs while in the program. Ideally these would include performance measures that include changes in attitudes, acquisition of new knowledge and insight, and demonstration of new skills or behaviors.

T4C provides a discharge report that includes number of sessions attended, whether homework was completed, and whether the facilitator felt the offender participated. A small summary was also provided, but did not include any recommendations, goals, or testing results.

- **Recommendation:** The program coordinator should develop a formal discharge summary that includes personalized recommendations regarding areas that need continued work, a summary of progress made in meeting target behaviors, and any testing results.

OVERALL PROGRAM RATING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MSP's T4C group received an overall score of 48.9 percent on the CPC-GA. This falls into the Moderate Adherence to EBP range on the CPC-GA. The overall Capacity score designed to measure whether the program has the *capability* to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders is 40 percent, which falls into the Low Adherence to EBP category. The overall Content score, which focuses on the *substantive* domains of assessment and treatment, is 52.9 percent, which falls into the Moderate Adherence to EBP category.

CONCLUSION

Recommendations have been made in each of the four CPC-GA domains. These recommendations should assist MSP's T4C with making necessary changes to increase program effectiveness. Certainly, care should be taken not to attempt to address all "areas needing improvement" at once. Programs that find the assessment process most useful are those that prioritize need areas and develop action plans to systematically address such needs. Once the program has had sufficient time to implement changes, it is often helpful to have the program re-assessed to determine whether the program has been successful at either sustaining the great work currently being done or implementing the recommended changes. MDOC Quality Assurance Office is available to work closely with the program to assist with action planning and to provide technical assistance in these areas and all other areas, as needed.

¹ The CPC is modeled after the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory developed by Gendreau and Andrews; however, the CPC includes a number of items not contained in the CPAI. In addition, items that were not found to be positively correlated with recidivism were deleted.

² These studies involved over 40,000 offenders (both adult and juvenile), and over 400 correctional programs, ranging from institutional to community based. All of the studies are available on our web site (www.uc.edu/criminaljustice). A large part of this research involved the identification of program characteristics that were correlated with outcome.

³ Complete Alignment with EBP=Highly Effective; Partial Alignment with EBP=Effective; Developing Alignment with EBP=Needs Improvement; Realignment with EBP Necessary=Ineffective

Figure 1: Montana State Prison Thinking for a Change CPC-GA Scores

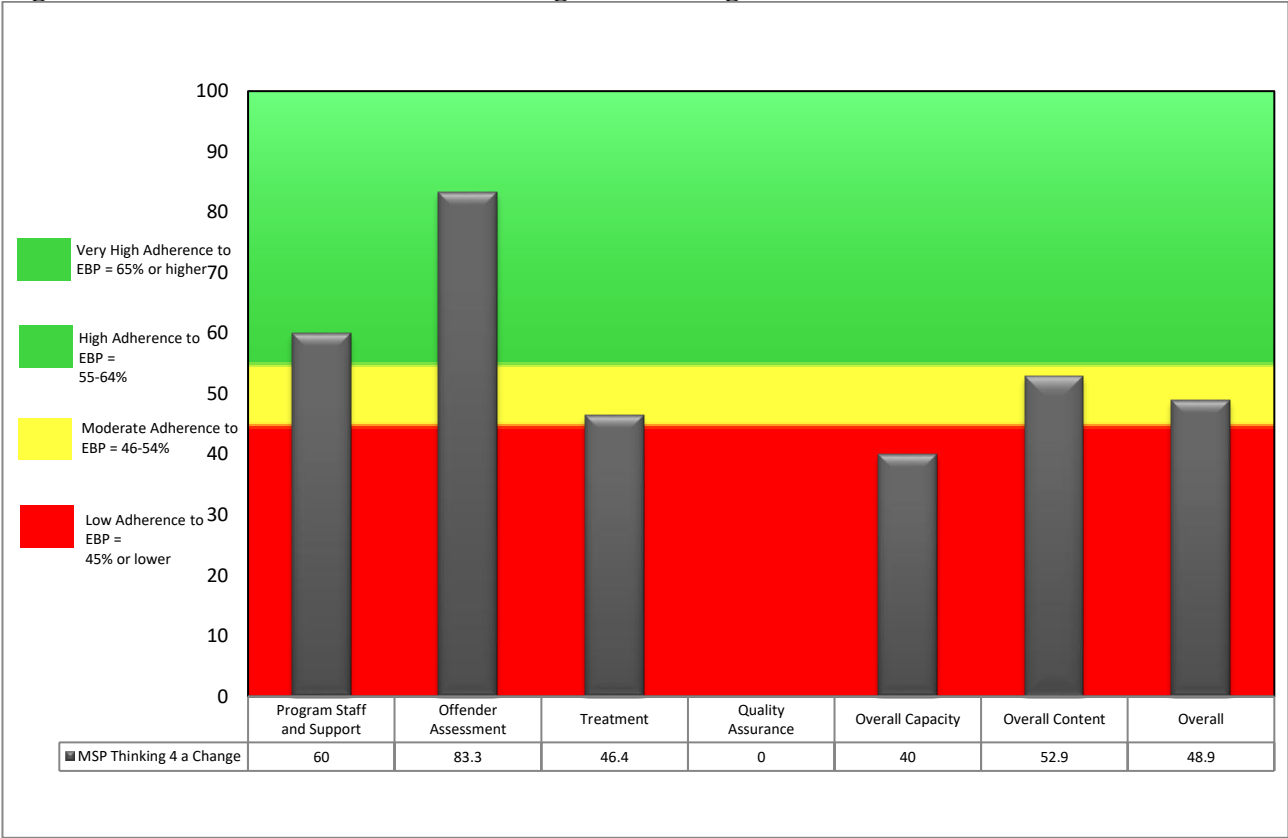
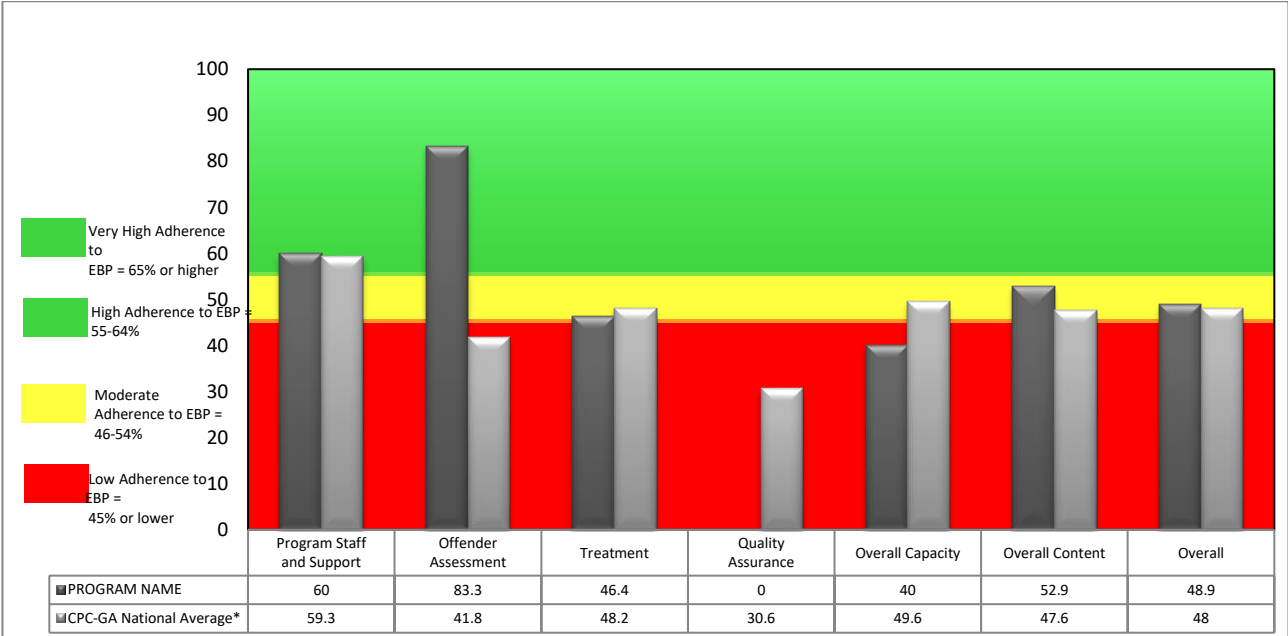


Figure 2: Montana State Prison Thinking for a Change CPC-GA Scores vs. National Average



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