

# **FINAL REPORT**

## **EVIDENCE-BASED CORRECTIONAL PROGRAM CHECKLIST GROUP ASSESSMENT 2.0 (CPC-GA)**

### **Montana Women's Prison**

701 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Billings, MT 59101

### **Thinking for a Change (T4C)**

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*The Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist – Group Assessment (CPC-GA) was developed and copyrighted by the University of Cincinnati. The commentaries and recommendations included in this report are those of the CPC-GA assessors.*

## INTRODUCTION

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). Montana Women’s Prison Thinking for a Change (T4C) groups are being assessed 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 groups at this location and to compare them to best practices within the juvenile/criminal justice and correctional treatment literature. The following report provides 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 three Montana Department of Corrections staff conducted this assessment with the assistance of a University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI) certified CPC trainers. As such, this assessment is one that was conducted in a training context.

## CPC-GA BACKGROUND

The Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist – Group Assessment (CPC-GA) is a program evaluation tool developed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI)<sup>i</sup> for assessing limited scope treatment programs and stand-alone treatment groups offered to justice involved participants. Examples of programs and groups appropriate for CPC-GA assessment include an outpatient service targeting one need area (e.g., outpatient substance abuse treatment), a program that only offers case management or individual services, a single service at an agency or facility that offers a variety services, or a stand-alone group like Cognitive Behavioral Interventions – Substance Use (CBI-SU).<sup>ii</sup>

The CPC-GA is designed to evaluate the extent to which correctional intervention programs adhere to evidence-based practices (EBP) including the principles of effective interventions. Data from three studies<sup>iii</sup> conducted by UCCI on both adult and youth programs were used to develop and validate the CPC-GA indicators. These studies produced strong correlations between outcome (i.e., recidivism) and CPC-GA scores. One independent study<sup>iv</sup> has confirmed that CPC-GA scores are correlated with recidivism and a body of research exists that supports the indicators on the CPC-GA.<sup>v</sup> To continue to align with updates in the field of offender rehabilitation, the CPC-GA was revised in 2020. Throughout this document, all references to the CPC-GA are a direct reference to the revised CPC-GA 2.0 version of the assessment tool.

The CPC-GA is divided into two basic areas: content and capacity. Capacity measures whether a program has the capability to deliver evidence-based interventions for justice involved participants. There are two domains in the capacity area: Program Staff and Support and Quality Assurance. The content area includes the Offender Assessment and Treatment Characteristics domains. This area focuses on the extent to which the program meets certain elements of the principles of effective interventions and the Treatment Characteristics domain specifically

measures the program's use of core correctional practices. The CPC-GA is comprised of 49 indicators, worth up to 54 possible points. Each domain, each area, and the overall score are summed and rated as either **Very High Adherence to EBP (65% to 100%); High Adherence to EBP (55% to 64%); Moderate Adherence to EBP (46% to 54%); or Low Adherence to EBP (45% or less)**. It should be noted that not all of the domains are given equal weight, and some items may be considered "not applicable" in the evaluation process.

The CPC-GA assessment process requires a site visit to collect various program traces. These include but are not limited to: interviews with executive staff (e.g., program coordinator), direct service delivery staff (e.g., group facilitators, case managers), and participants; observation of direct services; and review of relevant program materials (e.g., offender files, program policies and procedures, treatment curricula, client handbook). Once the information is gathered and reviewed, the scores are calculated. When the program has met a CPC-GA indicator, it is considered a strength of the program. When the program has not met an indicator, it is considered an area in need of improvement. For each indicator in need of improvement, the evaluators construct a recommendation to assist the program's efforts to increase adherence to research and data-driven practices.

There are several limitations to the CPC-GA that should be noted. First, the instrument is based upon an "ideal" program; that is, the criteria have been developed from a large body of research and knowledge that combines the best practices from the empirical literature on "what works" in reducing recidivism. As such, it is highly unlikely that a program will score 100% on the CPC-GA. Second, as with any interpretive review process, reliability may be an issue. Although steps are taken to ensure that the information gathered is reliable and accurate, given the nature of the process, decisions about the information and data gathered are made by the assessors. Third, the process is time-specific. Changes or modifications may be planned for the future or may be under consideration; however, only those activities and processes that are present at the time of the review are considered for scoring. Fourth, the process does not take into account all of the "system" issues that can affect the integrity of the program. Finally, the process does not address the reasons why certain practices do or do not take place. Rather, the process is designed to determine the overall integrity of the program.

Despite these limitations, there are a number of advantages to this process. First, it is applicable to a wide range of programs and groups. Second, the indicators included in the CPC-GA have been found to be correlated with reductions in recidivism. Third, the process provides a measure of program integrity and quality; it provides insight into the "black box" of a program, something an outcome study alone does not provide. Fourth, the results can be obtained relatively quickly; usually the site visit process takes a day and a report is generated within two to three months. Fifth, it identifies the strengths and areas for improvement for a program, as well as specific recommendations that will bring the program closer in adherence to EBPs. Finally, it allows for benchmarking. Comparisons with other programs that have been assessed using the same criteria are provided. Since program integrity and quality can change over time, it also allows a program to reassess its adherence to EBPs.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM**

On April 11, 2023, as part of a training, the above listed team assessed the Montana Women's Prison (MWP) 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 MWP T4C group.

MWP is the state prison for adult females (18 and older) located in Yellowstone County, Montana. MWP has been in existence for over 30 years and serves state residents. MWP has capacity for up to 250 inmates. At the time of the assessment, MWP had a population of 250 inmates. Inmates are sentenced to prison by the courts or revocation process throughout the state of Montana.

MWP has offered T4C groups for approximately 7 years. Each T4C group runs for approximately 16 weeks, meeting one or two times per week for a scheduled two hours. A typical group size is between 10-20 inmates. Currently, MWP has two (2) staff trained in the T4C curriculum.

## **CPC-GA ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The assessment process consisted of a series of structured interviews with two staff members involved with delivery of the T4C group, as well as interviews with three program participants. Interviews took place on April 11, 2023. Relevant program materials were also collected and reviewed. In addition, assessors observed one T4C group session. Data from the various sources were used to determine a consensus CPC-GA score and to provide the feedback contained in this report.

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 MWP 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 and 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.

## FINDINGS

### Program Staff and Support

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). Associate Warden Michael Moorman was identified as the program coordinator for T4C at MWP. 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. Group facilitators should be qualified, have adequate training and follow guidelines for ethical program delivery. Finally, the T4C program should be supported by stakeholders.

#### *Program Staff and Support: Strengths*

Associate Warden Moorman is the program coordinator at Montana Women's Prison for T4C. He has overall responsibility for oversight and management of the program and is directly involved in hiring staff that deliver T4C services. Staff are selected based on key skills and values, including a belief in offender change. Current staff providing T4C services meet the experience standards set forth on the CPC-GA.

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

The MWP identified the Board of Pardons and Parole, court system, and DOC as supportive stakeholders for the T4C program. Successful programs have support from their criminal justice stakeholders.

#### *Program Staff and Support: Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations*

Programs that are effective in reducing recidivism receive ongoing professional training for group facilitators. This component is important for facilitators to continue to hone their skills and education even after receiving their initial training in the curriculum.

- **Recommendation:** All facilitators and co-facilitators of the T4C group have been formally trained in the curriculum to ensure fidelity to the model for best client outcomes; however, no continuing training is conducted to ensure fidelity to program curricula. MWP should require ongoing training for professional service delivery staff for approximately 40 hours of training each year on topics such as effective interventions, assessment tools, booster sessions on the curriculum, clinically relevant issues, and/or group process and facilitation skills.

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 they 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.

Direct Delivery staff report attending and participating in staff meetings on a monthly basis. The content of these meetings includes any issues related to the T4C group; however, each participant is not staffed on any regular basis.

- **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.

MWP program director Associate Warden Moorman has an Associate's Degree in welding and did not take any classes specific to corrections or a helping field. Programs that succeed have program directors that have a degree in a helping field such as social work, psychology, corrections, or education and have coursework specific to corrections.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should ensure that in the future they hire a program manager that has a degree in an identified helping field and has completed specific coursework in corrections courses.

MWP staff receive an annual performance evaluation relative to their position. While these evaluations do cover many areas, the evaluations do not include specific direct service delivery skills for groups.

- **Recommendation:** Each staff member facilitating T4C at MWP should receive an annual evaluation that includes a summary of direct service delivery skills. The current evaluation forms should be supplemented to incorporate service delivery skills such as knowledge of the treatment intervention model and effective interventions, assessment skills and interpretation of assessment results, modeling of new behaviors, behavioral reinforcements and sanctions, group facilitation skills, and the ability to build positive working relationships with the participants.

### **Offender Assessment**

The extent to which offenders are appropriate for the services provided and the use of proven assessment methods are critical to effective treatment programs. Effective programs assess the risk, need, and responsivity of offenders, and then provide services and treatment accordingly. The Offender Assessment domain examines three areas regarding assessment: selection of offenders;

the assessment of risk, need, and personal characteristics of the offender; and the manner in which these characteristics are assessed.

### ***Offender Assessment: Strengths***

The Thinking for a Change Program at MWP utilizes the Women's Risk & Needs Assessment (WRNA) to measure actuarial risk for reoffending and to prioritize treatment targets. Both risk for recidivism and criminogenic needs are categorized as low, moderate, medium, or high. The WRNA also provides information about the dynamic needs of offenders related to general criminal recidivism.

### ***Offender Assessment: Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations***

It is important that there are exclusionary criteria for offenders being referred to the T4C program. MWP does not have written policy entailing when and why an offender should be excluded from the program. By having criteria in place, MWP will be able to determine which offenders are not appropriate for the program.

- ***Recommendation:*** MWP should develop a written exclusionary criteria policy for what type of offenders are not appropriate for T4C. Staff should know these criteria to ensure offenders in the T4C program are appropriate for the treatment.

Successful programs measure both offender risk and need with a validated, standardized and objective assessment instrument. The WRNA measures risk and need, however, the need measurements offered by the WRNA are not considered domain specific.

***Recommendation:*** MWP should utilize an assessment tool that assesses an offender's risk for criminal thinking such as the TCU Criminal Thinking Scales and Criminal Sentiments Scale – Modified.

Responsivity tools assess the needs of an offender that might impede an offender's success in the program, such as mental health, motivation, reading level, or personality factors. Having knowledge of offenders' responsivity factors can help facilitators tailor the program to the needs of an offender. MWP currently utilizes the WRNA, however there was no indication that the WRNA was used to address responsivity of group participants. The CPC-GA requires offenders to be assessed regarding a minimum of two responsivity characteristics to ensure that individual-level factors that can interfere with interventions are identified.

- ***Recommendation:*** The program should measure two or more responsivity factors (e.g., motivation, readiness to change, intelligence, maturity, reading level, mental health, depression) for all offenders in the program. MWP should utilize the WRNA or consider adopting assessments to assist in identifying key responsivity factors that may affect an offender's ability to interact in the T4C group specifically. Examples of such instruments include the Adult Reading History Questionnaire (ARHQ) to identify reading deficiencies and the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment (URICA) to assess an offender's

readiness for change. Once incorporated, this information can be used to determine who might need some motivation engagement prior to group placement or those who need accommodations for comprehension deficits.

T4C groups should be reserved for moderate- and high-risk offenders. Upon review of offender WRNA scores in MWP records, it was observed that program participants included a mix of low and moderate risk levels.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should review risk levels in an effort to provide separate treatment groups or make alternative *recommendations* for low-risk offenders. Offenders with low risk for recidivism should be separated from their moderate- to high-risk counterparts.

Further, group interventions and curriculum should target offenders with higher domain-specific needs. For example, for a T4C group, offenders should have moderate- to high-level needs in one or more area.

- **Recommendation:** Reviewing the domain specific needs of program participants will allow T4C facilitators to prioritize referrals with higher needs for the T4C intervention. Furthermore, offenders without a high need for this service should be excluded from services and this area can be included on the exclusionary policy recommended above. If exceptions are made, there should be written documentation identifying when and why there is an exception to this rule.

### **Treatment Characteristics**

This domain of the CPC-GA is the 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 behavioral approach to target criminogenic behaviors. Furthermore, effective interventions 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.

#### ***Treatment Characteristics: Strengths***

T4C is an integrated cognitive behavioral change program that incorporates research from cognitive restructuring theory, social skills development, and the learning and use of problem-solving skills. The T4C program effectively works towards targeting criminogenic needs. During the group session that was observed, offenders worked on the skill of ‘Knowing Your Feelings.’ There are 25 individual lessons covering a wide variety of topics. The group structure is set to review homework, discuss the new skill, watch a role model by the facilitators, role-play, receive feedback on the participants role play, and then assign homework. This treatment duration is found to be sufficient to affect the target behaviors.

Groups are always conducted by staff. Each facilitator is knowledgeable about the material

covered. Both facilitators were skillful at encouraging all the group members to participate throughout the group process. Each participant was engaged in the group and required to present homework and participate in conducting a role play.

Group norms were established and followed. Offenders are clear in the group's expectations and group participation. Group norms and expectations were printed out and given to the offenders to keep in their group folders. New group rules were reviewed and documented.

T4C has a detailed program manual that specifies the outline and all major aspects of the program. The program manual was followed by staff during the group observation. Additionally, it was found that the manual is followed for every lesson. Trained delivery staff monitor every group from beginning to end.

Both facilitators were skilled with delivering the material while maintaining a good rapport with offenders. There was friendly banter, good natured humor, and genuine interest between the facilitators and the offenders. The group facilitator also has a nice mix of facilitation skills, i.e., a high degree of interest for the topic material and ability to manage and stay on task.

Group facilitators demonstrated effective authority with the group, commanding respect in a quiet, non-authoritarian way. Both did a nice job of directing or guiding the group to stay on task.

There are several tools used during a T4C group to assist the offenders with identifying their underlying attitudes, values and beliefs. Staff teaching skill of 'Knowing Your Feelings' pointed out that benefits to using this skill in future T4C lessons as well as in their personal experiences. Because facilitators follow the T4C manual, there are numerous opportunities for offenders to identify their underlying thoughts and values as well as many opportunities for offenders to be taught how to replace their anti-social thoughts with new pro-social thinking patterns.

T4C incorporates modeling throughout its program. The facilitators modeled the skill of 'Knowing Your Feelings' prior to the participants practicing the skill. It was evident that modeling is a routine part of the program. Furthermore, practicing of the skills was found to be completed during the observed group. Skill practice is a regular part of T4C. Group participants also reported that they practice the skills during each session.

### ***Treatment Characteristics: Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations***

T4C groups regularly begin on time but do not last the entire time allotted. Effective programs fully utilize the length of group as outlined in the schedule to ensure offenders are receiving the appropriate amount of dosage.

- ***Recommendation:*** Facilitators should ensure all T4C groups meet for the allotted time. If all material of the session is covered, additional role play between offenders or modeling by the facilitator can be presented. Also, homework can be started in the group.

Homework was found to be regularly assigned and reviewed, but it was not shown that the facilitators clearly provided structured constructive feedback to the participants.

- **Recommendation:** Facilitators should provide constructive feedback to each participants' homework review. This can be done either verbally or written. Feedback should be provided each time participants submit or present homework.

Treatment/intervention groups should not exceed 8 to 10 offenders per facilitator unless specifically noted in the curricula. T4C curriculum is intended for groups of 8 to 12 participants even with two trained facilitators. The group observed had 14 participants present and one participant absent.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should ensure the T4C groups have no more than 12 participants per group as that is the maximum allowed group size per curriculum.

Effective programs have facilitators who address different learning styles or barriers of the offenders being served. For example, offenders who struggle with language barriers could be given time to clearly explain themselves and work through the skills being taught in the group. Facilitators were shown to address barriers they identified with participants in the group. Barriers should be assessed using validated responsivity assessments prior to group placement to determine the specific needs of each participant.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should incorporate the responsivity assessments into the delivery of the material presented to offenders in the T4C group. Facilitators should use the assessments to adapt to each participant's needs regarding their barriers. Knowing specific responsivity issues allows the facilitator(s) to clarify concepts for each offender so they are better understood.

Effective programs use a variety of reinforcers or rewards to support offenders practicing and using pro-social or positive behavior within the confines of the group sessions. The group facilitators used verbal praise throughout the lesson. Using only verbal praise does not provide the needed variety.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should develop and implement a list of positive reinforcers that can be used by group facilitators. Examples include earning additional privileges, advancement on level systems, points/tokens redeemable for tangible rewards, graduation ceremonies with probation officers, judges or family members included, and/or certificates of completion.

Effective programs deliver reinforcers/rewards to offenders in a way that maximizes the reward. Programs should always deliver more rewards than punishers and all rewards should immediately follow desired behavior with an explanation about why the reward is being administered. Lastly, the reward should clearly be tied to the pro-social behavior.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should develop a policy on the effective use of reinforcers/rewards by facilitators that address the required following components: 1) ratio of more rewards to punishers, 2) reinforcers/rewards applied immediately after the desired behavior, 3) that facilitators provide an explanation about why their behavior was

appropriate, and 4) that rewards are only given to offenders who perform the desired behavior (i.e., not to the whole group).

Successful programs use effective disapproval and punishers to extinguish antisocial expressions and promote behavior change by showing offenders that behavior has consequences. Just as a single reward is not enough to change behavior, facilitators should draw from a range of punishers. Facilitators should also make all attempts to deal with inappropriate behaviors as they arise.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should develop and implement a list of appropriate punishers that can be used by group facilitators. Examples include verbal disapproval, response cost, loss of privileges/points/levels, or extra homework. As a last resort, if an offender is disruptive, they should be removed from the group, but follow up conversation about the disruptive behavior should be discussed at a team meeting. Conversations center on the behavior that was displayed and what social skills the offender can use in the future to avoid consequential behavior. The offender could then be asked to practice several social skills within a certain time frame (i.e., before the next canteen date). Shaming techniques should never be used.

Effective programs deliver punishers to offenders in a way that the offender fully understands the problem behavior and why it needs to change. Facilitators should always recognize the antisocial expression, respond appropriately to non-compliance, be consistent in the application of punishers, provide a clear explanation of why the punisher is being delivered, ensure the punisher is delivered with an intensity to extinguish the antisocial behavior, that punishments are immediately terminated after the offender corrects the behavior, and that the facilitator can recognize and deal with any negative effects of the punisher.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should develop a policy on the effective application of punishers by facilitators to address the required following components: 1) the recognition of inappropriate responses and expressions, 2) consistent application of punishers and that antisocial behaviors are not ignored, 3) non-compliance such as being late for group, interrupting, not doing homework is responded to appropriately (e.g. not administering a punishment to the entire group), 4) explanation about why a punisher is being administered and why their behavior was inappropriate, 5) the amount of punisher is sufficient to extinguish the behavior but does not exceed an appropriate amount, 6) that the punisher is immediately terminated once the behavior is corrected, and 7) any negative effects of a punisher is addressed by the facilitator (note: specific training may be needed so facilitators can identify these unwanted negative effects of punishers).

Successful programs teach an alternative to inappropriate behavior after a punisher is administered. For example, a facilitator may demonstrate an appropriate coping response to the problem issue. This can be an effective use of modeling.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should ensure all punishers are followed by teaching or modeling the appropriate response or skill to offenders.

Effective programs build on the basic teaching of skills by offering structured skill building to offenders. There are specific components of structured skill building that are outlined below.

Facilitators should model prosocial skills and explain the benefits of learning new skills. Modeling new skills through demonstration is a current component of the T4C program. However, other skills of increased difficulty should be utilized in a progressive matter outside of the regular group curriculum.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should find ways to have group participants practice their skills in increasingly difficult scenarios. Facilitators could spend additional time in the T4C group explaining the benefits of learning new skills in addition to the existing modeling done by the facilitator. These new skills should be practiced outside of the T4C curriculum in increasingly difficult scenarios, or a separate advanced practice group should be offered.

An important element of long-term behavioral change is developing a success plan. A success plan is the identification of high-risk situations, the participants' prosocial thinking and behaviors during those high-risk situations and practicing those new thinking and behaviors. The program does not include the development and practice of success plans.

- **Recommendation:** Some of the group sessions should be devoted to developing success plans, and participants should routinely rehearse the plans and relapse prevention techniques. Plans should be individualized and include strategies and scripts for responding to risky situations, people, and places. Given that T4C is a set curriculum, we recommend adding these to the end of the group.

Completion criteria should be utilized to determine if a client successfully completes the group. Successful completion should be defined by progress in acquiring target behaviors, acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and demonstration of new knowledge and skills. Completion criteria should be more than attending and completing all sessions of the group.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should establish and adhere to criteria that clearly outline the completion of the group. Examples of this could include a behavioral assessment instrument, a checklist of behavior/attitude criteria, or acquisition of target behaviors.

Effective programs spend time within the group sessions to develop discharge plans or summaries that have techniques offenders can rehearse. This more comprehensive relapse prevention plan should be developed by the end of the treatment group that ties in directly with the new learning and skill acquisition for each participant. This helps to ensure that offenders are able to recognize high-risk situations that lead to anti-social behavior and allows them to have a concrete plan that incorporates the skills taught throughout the program to deal with these situations.

- **Recommendation:** MWP should develop formal individualized discharge plans or summaries for each T4C offender upon the completion of group. Discharge plans or summaries should include progress in meeting target behaviors, testing results, and notes on areas that need continued work. These should be kept in the offenders' file upon completion.

## Quality Assurance

This CPC-GA domain centers on the quality assurance and evaluation processes used to monitor how well the program is functioning. 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.

### ***Quality Assurance: Areas in Need of Improvement and Recommendations***

The program coordinator should play a more active role in developing the skills of staff in their roles as group facilitators.

- ***Recommendation:*** The program coordinator should observe staff delivering group 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. 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.

Successful programs regularly seek feedback from offenders about their satisfaction with the group.

- ***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.

Montana Women's Prison has implemented a post program survey but does not currently utilize the results of the survey to adjust program components. Effective programs measure the extent of offender behavior change of target behaviors by conducting pre and post testing. This is an objective way to measure behavior change and the effectiveness of the T4C curriculum as opposed to subjective measurements by staff.

- ***Recommendation:*** MWP should develop a process by which offenders are assessed at the beginning (a pre-test) and again at the end (a post-test) on target behaviors. An example of a target behavior could be motivation and an assessment that could be used for that behavior is the URICA.

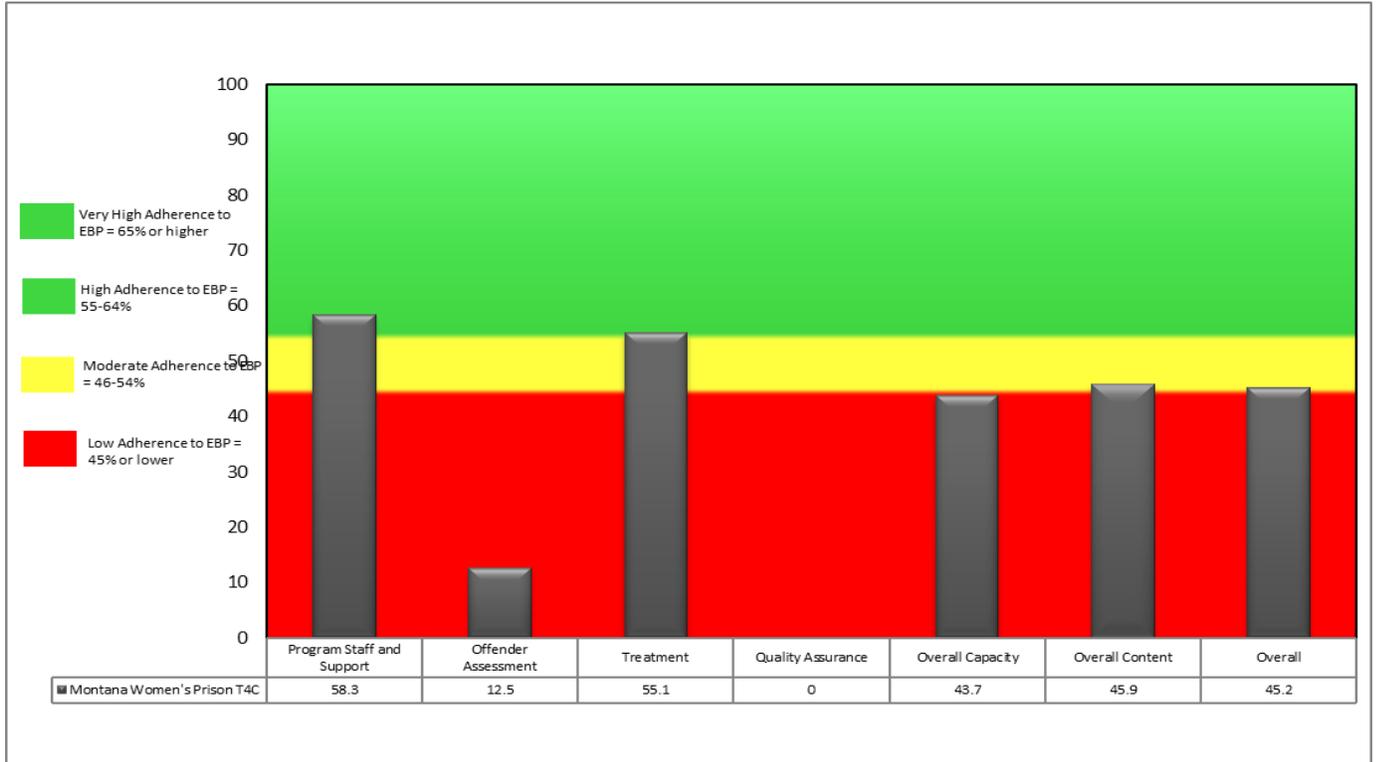
## **OVERALL PROGRAM RATINGS AND CONCLUSION**

MWP's T4C group received an overall score of 45.2 percent on the CPC-GA. This falls into the Low Adherence to EBP range, as shown in Figure 1 below. The overall Capacity score, designed to measure whether the program has the capability to deliver evidence-based interventions and services for offenders, is 43.1 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 45.9 percent, which falls into the Low Adherence to EBP category.

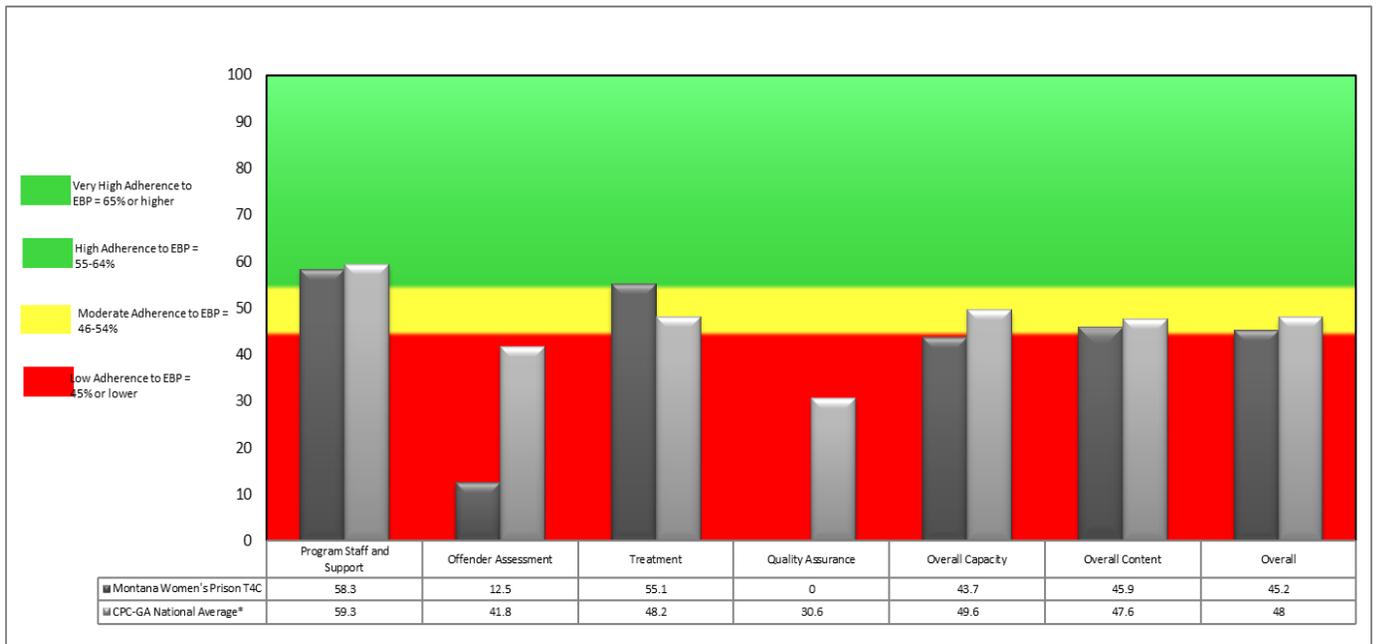
As mentioned above, the CPC-GA represents an ideal program. Based on the assessments conducted to date, programs typically score in the Low and Moderate Adherence to EBP categories (see Figure 2 below). Overall, 15% of the programs assessed with the CPC-GA have been classified as having Very High Adherence to EBP, 17.5% as having High Adherence to EBP, 22.5% as having Moderate Adherence to EBP, and 45% as having Low Adherence to EBP. Research conducted by UCCI indicates that programs that score in the Very High and High Adherence categories look like programs that are able to reduce recidivism.

Recommendations have been made in each of the four CPC-GA domains. These recommendations should assist MWP 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 implementing the recommended changes. MDOC 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. Evaluators note that program staff are open and willing to take steps toward increasing the use of evidence-based practices within the program. This motivation will no doubt help this program implement the changes necessary to bring it further into alignment with effective correctional programming.

**Figure 1: Montana Women’s Prison T4C CPC-GA Scores**



**Figure 2: Montana Women’s Prison T4C CPC-GA Scores vs. National Average**



## REFERENCES

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Smith, P., Gendreau, P., & Goggin, C. (2006). Correctional treatment: Accomplishments and Realities. In P. Van Voorhis, M. Braswell & D. Lester (Eds.), *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation* (Fifth edition). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

## END NOTES

- i. In the past, UCCI has been referred to as the University of Cincinnati (UC), UC School of Criminal Justice, or the UC Center for Criminal Justice Research (CCJR). We now use the UCCI designation.
- ii. Programs that do not fit this description should be assessed with the Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC).
- iii. A large component of this research involved the identification of program characteristics that were correlated with recidivism outcomes. References include:
  1. Lowenkamp, C. T., & Latessa, E. J. (2002). Evaluation of Ohio's community-based correctional facilities and halfway house programs: Final report. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati, Center for Criminal Justice Research, Division of Criminal Justice.
  2. Lowenkamp, C. T., & Latessa, E. J. (2005a). Evaluation of Ohio's CCA funded programs. Final report. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati, Center for Criminal Justice Research, Division of Criminal Justice.
  3. Lowenkamp, C. T., & Latessa, E. J. (2005b). Evaluation of Ohio's RECLAIM funded programs, community corrections facilities, and DYS facilities. Final report. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati, Center for Criminal Justice Research, Division of Criminal Justice.
- iv. Husky & Associates. (2012). Recidivism Study of the Santa Clara County Department of Correction's Inmate Programs Final Report.
- v. Upon request, UCCI can provide the CPC-GA 2.0 Item Reference List which outlines the UCCI and independent research that supports the indicators on the CPC-GA.