

Best Practice Treatment Approach, Focus and Objectives

Utilization of the Risk, Need, and Responsivity Model in Sex-Specific Treatment

A holistic approach to treatment should also demonstrate an understanding that the majority of any recidivism issues are criminal misconduct in nature, so there is a need to understand and integrate the elements of the Risk, Need, Responsivity Model (RNR) (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). The premise of this theoretical model supports the NOJOS position of levels of treatment based on risk to avoid the contagion effect of mixing risk levels of youth. By understanding the *risk principle* or the specific risk level a youth is to re-offend helps us delivered more treatment services to those youth of higher risk levels. The *need principle* focuses on clinicians/providers understanding the major dynamic risk/need factors that may lead to further criminal (sexual and non-sexual) recidivism. The main focus is then, through treatment, developing these into strengths and protective factors, thus reducing risk. By targeting these in conjunction with sex-specific treatment goals gives a common language amongst professionals, provides targeted treatment for issues most likely to be involved in criminal recidivism, and support the concept of “holistic treatment. Although individual “treatment needs/targets” may vary, they can be found within the general domains of school, use of free time, employment, relationships, current living arrangements, alcohol/drugs, mental health, attitudes/behaviors, and skills. Often these areas closely match the human goods focus of the Good Life’s Model, Yates and Prescott, 2011.

Lastly, the *responsivity principle* focuses on two primary targets: 1) General Responsivity, or the use of cognitive-behavioral, behavioral, and social learning interventions including modeling, role playing, and skill building; and 2) Specific Responsivity, which targets the individual client’s personal factors or characteristics that need to be taken into consideration as interventions are tailored to these factors so help them engage in the treatment process or respond to the treatment process more favorably. (i.e. - age, maturity, interests, learning style, need for structure, or provider qualities like patience, being firm but fair, etc.)

As detailed above, use of the RNR Model helps provide a conceptual framework to conceptualize treatment needs, provides a focused common language and targets for treatment in conjunction with sex- specific interventions, and ultimately better holistic treatment and outcomes for youth. In summary, while we respond to risk and needs, a focus on the response of clients should include a focus on their strengths and building of protective factors. (Andrews, D.A.; Bonta, J. The Psychology of Criminal Conduct, 5th Edition, Anderson Publishing, 2010).