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# **Strengthening Community Corrections: Evaluation of a Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Staff Training Model in the Swedish Probation and Parole Service**

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# Outline

- Background
- Description of STICS/Krimstics
- Pilot trial and evaluation
- Implementation
- Implementation evaluation
- Summary of findings
- Implications for practice

# Theoretical Background

- Risk-Need-Responsivity model of offender rehabilitation (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990; Bonta & Andrews, 2017)

*Target high risk offenders*



*Treat criminogenic needs*



*Use CBT and match treatment to individual learning styles and abilities*



# Challenges of RNR in practice

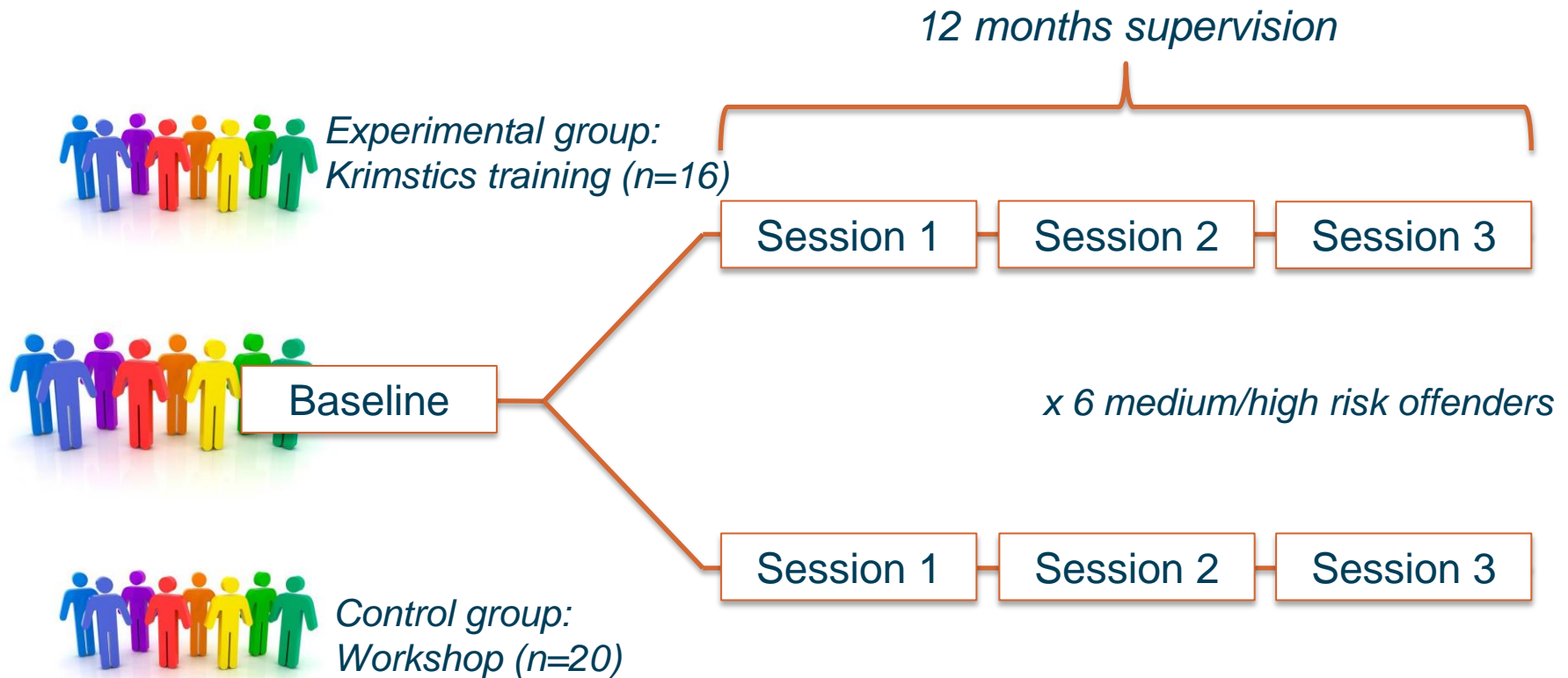
- Lack of trust in structured risk/needs assessments
- Difficulties "letting go" of low risk offenders
- Poor match between treatment needs and treatment plans
- "Exceptions from the rules" (e.g., sexual offenders)
- Organisational challenges:
  - Policy
  - Staff engagement
  - Coaching/clinical support for maintenance

# Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision – STICS/Krimstics

- Model to provide structure and therapeutic content in the supervision of offenders on probation or parole
- Case manager → *change agent*
- Targets criminogenic needs, focuses on procriminal attitudes
- Uses techniques based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Staff training (4 days) and ongoing skill development activities (monthly meetings, formal clinical feedback, refresher course)



# Pilot trial and evaluation (2011-2013)



# Summary of results

- Different focus in the supervision sessions
  - More focused on criminogenic needs
- Increased quality of POs' skills and techniques
  - More structured, relationship-focused, better use of CBT-based techniques
- More therapeutic interactions between POs and clients
  - More focused on problem-solving, reinforcement, personal responsibility

# Results – recidivism

Type of crime	Experimental group (n=89)	Control group (n=90)	<i>p</i>
12 months follow-up			
Any crime	36 (40.9 %)	31 (36 %)	0.51
Violent crime	21 (23.6 %)	17 (19.5 %)	0.51
24 months follow-up			
Any crime	42 (48.8 %)	42 (49.4 %)	0.94
Violent crime	25 (28.7 %)	25 (29.1 %)	0.96



# Implementation 2014-2017

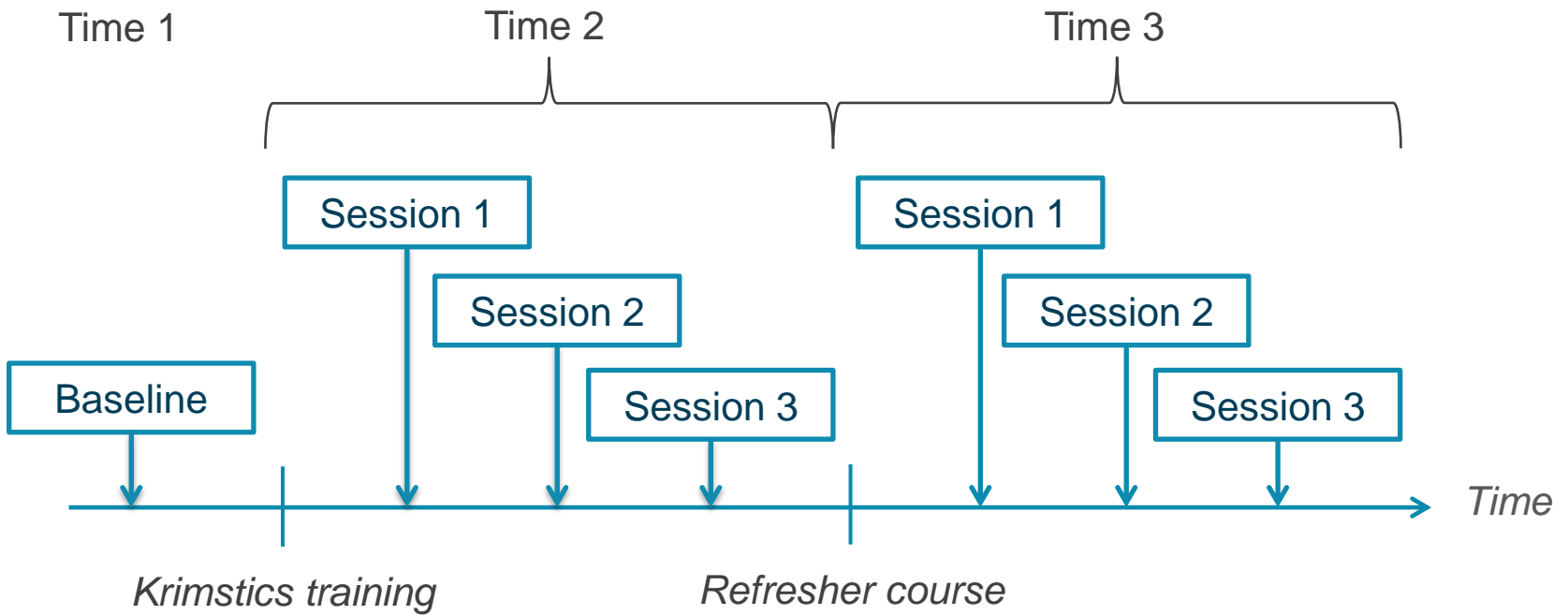
- National implementation of a structured risk/needs assessment, Krimstics, and a new sentence planning/case management system (2013)
- Project organisation was initiated to train and provide clinical support to POs working with supervision of offenders
- Between 2014-2017, over 700 POs from 34 offices were trained
- Local coaches were identified for long term skill maintenance



# Implementation evaluation (2016-2018)

- Mixed methods to evaluate RNR adherence
- Cohort study using audio-recorded supervision sessions (N=545) of POs (N=96) over 2 years (***needs/responsivity principle***)
- Case file reviews were undertaken of low (n=92), medium (n=117) and high (n=96) risk offenders to examine differentiation in contact frequency over 12 months supervision (***risk principle***)

# Implementation evaluation (needs/responsivity)



# Coding of PO skills

- Consensus coding (2 coders) of audio-recorded supervision sessions
- Based on structured coding schedule
  - Content of session (criminogenic vs. non-criminogenic needs)
  - POs' use of skills and techniques (structuring skills, relationship building skills, CBT-based techniques)
  - Overall session quality (interactional style, e.g., focused on advice or teaching/learning?)



4. a) Was the PO using good **structuring skills** in this session?  No  Yes

(For example, was the PO leading the session? Was the conversation guided or all over the map? Was it apparent that the PO had a plan? Was the plan appropriate for the circumstances (first session or working session mid-way through probation period?) or context (e.g., acute needs were present). Did it appear that the client knew what to expect from the PO? Finally, to what degree did the session adhere to the recommended 4-part structure: (1) Check-in (5min), (2) Review (5min), (3) Intervention (working on at least one skill/intervention; 15min), and (4) Round-Up/Homework (5min)?)

**If yes, what was the quality of this discussion/intervention?**

1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5  
 6  
 7

Either very little structure, or the structure was evident but in a coercive and/or non-productive manner, without evidence of the relationship factor. No evidence of PO plan, no effort (or very little) by the PO to guide the session.

PO demonstrated the structuring factor, incorporating elements of structure (intro, work time, conclusion) and consistency into the session and with the client (e.g., client knew what to expect), while adhering to the relationship factor as well.



# Results – Content of discussions

Type of need (0-7)	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	<i>p</i>	<i>eta</i> <sup>2</sup>
Criminogenic needs	4.2	5.2	4.5	<0.001	0.14
Non-criminogenic needs	2.9	1.7	2.4	<0.001	0.13

# Results – key skills/techniques

Skill/technique (0-7)	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	<i>p</i>	<i>eta</i> <sup>2</sup>
Structuring skill	3.2	5.0	5.1	<0.001	0.60
Positive relationship	5.5	5.8	5.9	0.002	0.07
Targeting attitudes	0.1	1.2	1.2	<0.001	0.26
Prosocial modelling	5.6	5.8	6.0	0.02	0.05
Effective reinforcement	2.7	3.6	3.7	<0.001	0.10

# Results – overall session quality

Dimension (1-9)	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	<i>p</i>	<i>eta</i> <sup>2</sup>
Assessment-Therapeutic	5.2	7.1	7.3	<0.001	0.51
Advice-Teaching*	4.9	6.6	6.9	<0.001	0.54
Punishment-Reinforcement*	5.6	6.3	6.7	<0.001	0.19
External-Internal focus*	3.9	6.3	6.7	<0.001	0.66
External-Internal causes	5.3	6.2	6.2	<0.001	0.30



# Implementation evaluation (risk)

- Retrospective review of case file notes for 12 months supervision to identify and categorise contact between offender and probation/parole service
- Face-to-face meetings for low, medium, and high risk offenders
  - Supervision session, treatment session, third-party meetings etc.
  - Absence from/rescheduling of planned meetings, treatment program participation, contract treatment, probation/parole violations, lay/community PO, community service, type of supervision etc.



# Results – contact frequency

Type of contact	Risk level			<i>p</i>
	Low	Medium	High	
All face-to-face meetings	20.3	20.5	19.9	0.93
Supervision sessions	12.3	13.4	15.3	0.01

# Summary of findings

- Needs/responsivity principle
  - Large and consistent changes in POs' skills and techniques
  - Overall, high levels of structuring and relationship building skills
  - Positive development of quality of PO-offender interactions over time
  - Enhanced focus on criminogenic needs → short-term effect (clinical support?)
- Risk principle
  - Contact frequency was not matched with offenders' risk level (some match between risk level and frequency of supervision sessions)
  - Contact frequency overall was low, especially for medium-to-high-risk offenders (compare with 200-300 hrs of treatment; Bourgon & Armstrong, 2005; Makarios, Sperber, & Latessa, 2014)
  - Need to strengthen parallel rehabilitative services

# Summary of findings cont.

- Recidivism
  - No effect found on recidivism rates, but...
  - Adherence to the risk principle?
  - High levels of structuring and relationship skills at baseline
  - Low quality of key CBT-based techniques

# Implications for practice

- Adherence to the risk principle
  - Efforts to better differentiate contact frequency
  - Treatment program participation
  - Collaboration with third parties
- Skill development/maintenance
  - Staff training
  - Addressing challenges through clinical support
  - Handbooks/guidelines





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