

Building Blocks for Behavior Change



According to Freud,
"Change is the process
of going from the small
to the overwhelming."

NCTI believes that
without proper support,
even the smallest change
can seem overwhelming.

NCTI's Building Blocks
provide the foundation of
our curricula and delivery
design.

Evidence-Based
Curricula & Facilitator
Certification Training
from NCTI in
Partnership with APPA.

National Curriculum &
Training Institute®, Inc.

800-622-1644
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Evidence-based research has shown that successful programs focus on changing anti-social attitudes, feelings, peer associations, and include training in self-control and self-management. These programs also incorporate the principles of cognitive behavioral theory. The research indicates that a positive, supportive environment that reinforces and models appropriate behavior is far more successful than a punitive approach. Over the last three decades, NCTI has developed the following seven Building Blocks for Behavior Change. In keeping with evidence-based research, they are the foundation of our curriculum and delivery process.

Building Blocks for Behavior Change (in no particular order):

1. Development of an individualized understanding of the relationship between values, attitudes and behaviors as they relate to the decision making process.
2. The art of asking open-ended questions that elicit information from participants is the pathway to an intrinsic commitment to change.
3. Establishment of a supportive environment, based on trust, that allows for trial and error.
4. Use of an interactive learning process to ensure that each individual's learning style is addressed.
5. Providing opportunities to practice newly acquired skills.
6. Use of a cognitive behavioral based curriculum that directs the learning process and ensures consistency of information and delivery.
7. Utilization of the Real Colors personality system to enhance communication and understanding.

NCTI looks forward to empowering you to achieve the positive results these proven methods bring.



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1. Values, Attitudes and Behaviors

An important step in the behavior change process is the development of an individualized understanding of the relationship between values, attitudes and behaviors as they relate to the decision making process. Most people do not understand the difference between values and attitudes and behaviors and the impact they have on behavioral choices. To change behavior, therefore, people must begin to understand that negative behaviors are more often influenced by temporary attitude shifts rather than a change in values.

NCTI uses a Values Discrepancy Model, which is at the core of all of our curricula. A visual is used to show how a discrepancy between values and behavior results in a dissonance that needs to be resolved.

2. Intrinsic Commitment to Change

The art of asking open-ended questions that elicit information is the pathway to uncovering an intrinsic commitment to change. Once individuals understand the relationship between negative behavior and personal values, and realize they have the power to direct their own destiny - something exciting begins to happen. This realization comes from the understanding that if behavior is dictated by positive values rather than temporary negative attitudes, the outcome is usually positive and rewarding.

Leading individuals to this new and exciting level of understanding requires skill and patience. The use of open-ended questions is an integral part of the success of this delicate trip. Facilitators construct soul searching, eye-opening questions that assist individuals in reaching that intrinsic desire to direct their own life in a constant, improving pattern.

3. Supportive Environment

Establishing a supportive environment based on trust that allows for trial and error is a necessary element for skill development. Other elements necessary to foster human growth are acceptance, support, respect for individuality, honesty, open communication and enthusiasm.

Within a carefully maintained setting, individuals feel free to experiment with new ways of thinking and acting without fear of reprisal. Ideas can be discussed, concepts tested, beliefs investigated and new behavior practiced in the safety of a supportive environment. The reward for trying new things in this atmosphere outweighs any fear of failure.

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4. Interactive Learning Process

The use of an interactive learning process ensures that each individual's learning style is addressed. What's more, how an idea is presented is as important as the concept itself. NCTI's philosophy includes four basic learning styles:

Visual Learners

Auditory Learners

Kinesthetic Learners

Combination Learners

NCTI cognitive behavior change curricula, supported by the latest research, is presented in a group process format. This has proven to be one of the most effective ways to change behavior. Instead of merely being an observer, individuals are totally involved in the skill building process. The entire program is conducted in an interactive format that includes carefully sequenced questions, pairing and small group discussion, role playing, brainstorming, simulation, reflection and situation-based application of skills.

A facilitator guides the group of participants through the curriculum. Unlike a teacher whose basic concern is the presentation of content, this process demands that the facilitator be more concerned with the interaction through which concepts are delivered and received. The facilitator guides the participants in a supportive manner, allowing them to contribute their ideas and feelings and to commit to changing their behavior.

This learning process is dynamic in nature, changing to fit the specific needs of each group – it allows the facilitator to individualize the curriculum so that it is applicable for each participant. The process fosters the discovery and practice of new skills, as well as providing constant support and feedback.



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5. Providing Opportunities to Practice New Acquired Skills

Learning information should not be mistaken for changing behavior. Learning involves the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to respond with that knowledge when prompted. True behavior change requires the practice of skills, as well as acquisition and comprehension of new information.

To behave differently, one must DO things differently. When the focus is on "doing" rather than "knowing," success is more likely to be achieved. Some of the skills necessary in this process are resisting negative peer pressure, setting goals, managing self, being in control, responding appropriately to social cues, openly communicating, effectively solving and sharing concerns and feelings.

A key distinction between learning knowledge and learning a skill is that the former is acquired with memory, while the latter is mastered with practice. The skill acquisition process must be oriented toward finding answers to questions, applying developmental skills and practicing through role-playing. An individual does not own a new behavior until it can be demonstrated. Once the desired behavior has been exhibited and reinforced in a supportive group, the likelihood that the behavior will be generalized outside the group is greatly increased.

The curriculum provides several opportunities for participants to learn new information, then turn around, and immediately apply that information in practice. Facilitators learn to take every opportunity to allow participants time to apply new information. This may be done using an existing activity included in the curricula, by setting up an impromptu role-play during the session, or even by assigning the practice as a homework assignment. In every case, it is imperative to process the outcome of the practice by asking questions like: "What worked for you?", "What could you do better next time?", and "How was this helpful to you?"



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6. Standardized Cognitive-Behavioral Based Curricula

The use of a cognitive-behavioral based curriculum that directs the learning process and ensures consistency of information and delivery is essential to a successful program. NCTI has developed a series of offense-specific, cognitive-behavioral curricula that aligns with evidence-based research. The curricula follow a precise sequence that leads participants from a general level of discussion to a specific behavioral commitment. This is known as the *Funnel Approach to Curriculum Design*.

The general-to-specific movement of the curricula accomplishes five important goals:

- 1) enables participants to see the process as relevant to them and their particular situation;
- 2) adapts the process to the participant's own learning style by including lively, responsibility-oriented exercises that require full participation and involvement;
- 3) expands personal comfort zones and expectations;
- 4) internalizes information and allows participants to practice new skills; and
- 5) enhances the opportunity for personal discovery. The standard process to teach a concept using this approach is shown below.

These cognitive-based curricula clearly align with Best Practices and evidence-based models that research has proven to be effective in reducing recidivism.



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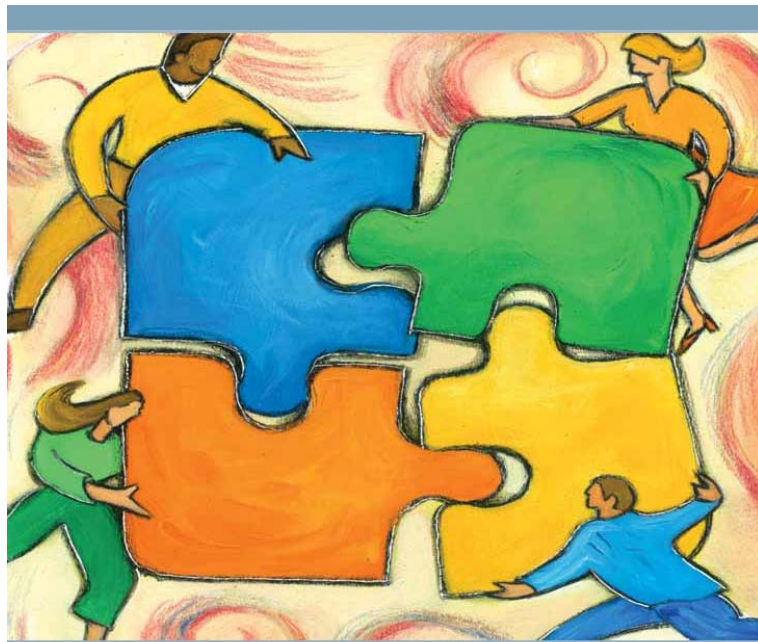


A Temperament Instrument

NCTI's Real Colors® Temperament Instrument is grounded in the theory of Carl Jung and validated in the research of Myers-Briggs and Keirsey-Bates. It combines experience and research into an exciting approach that is extremely accurate, understandable and easy to apply in everyday life.

Real Colors quickly provides a common ground for communication between participants and facilitators. In a very short time, participants begin to understand their own temperament style and how their style effects communication with other people in their lives. Additionally, it allows the facilitator to address the participants as individuals, which is the "specific responsivity" component of evidence-based research.

Real Colors is an integral part of NCTI's wide assortment of criminal justice curricula and training programs. Real Colors provides understanding that, if applied, improves interpersonal relationships in all aspects of life.





Cognitive Behavioral Programs

Reviews that examine the effectiveness of correctional interventions consistently report that cognitive-behavioral programs (CBP) are effective at reducing recidivism. As the name implies, cognitive-behavioral programming integrates the principles of cognitive theory and behavioral theory. In practice, attempts are made to change both unwanted behaviors and the internal thought processes that lead to them.

According to the National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists (NACBT), CBP refers to “a classification of therapies with similarities” more so than a “distinct therapeutic technique.” The following characteristics are among those found in CBP programs:

1. Based on the premise that thoughts cause feelings and behaviors. Thought processes can change, and therefore feelings and behaviors can also change.
2. Based on time-limited and relatively brief sessions.
3. Highly structured. Each group session has a specific agenda and focus.
4. Partly educational. It is designed to help offenders/juveniles learn new ways of thinking and behaving. It helps offenders/juveniles uncover distortions in thinking and irrational assumptions about situations that can lead to inappropriate behavior.
5. Mandated that offenders/juveniles do homework as a way to practice and reinforce newly acquired skills and techniques.

NCTI curricula and philosophy are inclusive of every common trait identified by the NACBT.



Cognitive Behavioral Programs

Over the past few decades, CBP has been used to treat a wide variety of problems and disorders, including substance abuse and criminal conduct. In a review of CBP programs for criminal offenders/juveniles, Lipsey and his colleagues (2007) found that CBP programs have been used with adult offenders and juveniles, delivered in institutional and community settings, and administered independently or as part of a multi-component intervention. CBP programs used with criminal offenders/juveniles are designed to change criminal thinking and behavior while also providing the offender with problem solving, interpersonal and social skills that facilitate long-term pro-social behavior change.

Studies consistently show that CBP programs work. Pearson et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies that examined both CBP and behavioral interventions and found that CBP programs were effective at reducing recidivism. Wilson et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis of 20 studies and Aos et al.'s (2006) meta-analysis of 25 CBP programs both found positive program outcomes. Lipsey and his colleagues (2007) reported that, "several well conducted meta-analyses have identified CBP as a particularly effective intervention for reducing the recidivism of juveniles and adult offenders." A meta-analysis of 58 studies, conducted by the NACBT, found that CBP programs on average cut one-year recidivism rates by 25%. Consistent with the principles of effective intervention, effects were greater for high-risk offenders/juveniles.



Evidence-Based Practices and Crossroads

Data-Driven Decision Making

The criminal justice system and the field of community corrections have undertaken dramatic transformation over the course of the last several decades. There is now extensive research from which we can distill the critical elements on what works in our efforts to reduce recidivism. This body of research is referred to as “Evidence-based Practices” (EBP).

EBP supports the objective of focusing our efforts on assessing the needs of offenders/juveniles and responding to those needs in proportional and effective ways of reducing recidivism, improving lives of offenders/juveniles, better allocation of resources, and enhancing public safety – all based on information-driven approaches. Evidence-based practices, through rigorous testing, now show practitioners in community corrections exactly what factors to focus on to reduce recidivism.

The “Big 4” risk/needs areas that must be addressed (according to Evidence-based Research) when working with offenders/juveniles in making pro-social changes in their lives include: (1) Criminal attitude, (2) Criminal behavior, (3) Anti-social peers/associates and family, and (4) Temperament/Personality. Thus the focus of NCTI’s Crossroads curricula is placed squarely on these four dynamic factors.



Evidence-Based Practices and Crossroads

Evidence-based Practices Include the Following:

1. Assessing offender's risk and need level with an objective actuarial risk and need assessment;
2. Target higher-level treatment or supervision interventions (i) to offenders/juveniles with a higher risk of recidivism and (ii) to their dynamic (amenable to change) criminogenic needs such as anti-social attitudes, education, anti-social peers, and substance abuse. Interventions targeted at low-risk offenders/juveniles do not result in reduced recidivism and may actually increase recidivism;
3. Deliver services that (a) employ cognitive behavioral techniques; (b) actively support and recruit the offender's natural community and pro-social supports; (c) use case management and treatment services that are responsive to the learning styles, motivations, strengths, temperaments and demographics of the offenders/juveniles served; (d) emphasize offender's strengths rather than deficits; (e) prioritize positive reinforcement over negative;
4. Prioritize the quality of the curricula, the training level of the staff, and the fidelity of the program's implementation; and
5. Measure relevant outcomes and provide feedback on progress.





Evidence-Based Practices and Crossroads

How NCTI Aligns with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC)

Principles of Effective Interventions

1) Address the Actuarial Risk/Needs of the Offender

When available, NCTI uses Risk/Needs data found to be essential for the critical program implementation principles of best practices in criminal justice. These principles include Risk, Need, and Responsivity. NCTI supports the use of actuarial assessment tools that focus on both dynamic and static factors, provide a criminogenic need profile, and have been validated on similar populations. Such information provides substantial opportunity to better address the individual offender/juvenile. NCTI encourages agencies to address the Risk/Needs of the offender when providing implementation assistance.

2) Enhance Intrinsic Motivation

For lasting behavior change to happen, the offender/juvenile must experience intrinsic motivation. NCTI curricula use a values discrepancy model with the assistance of motivational interviewing techniques to enhance the possibility of the intrinsic desire taking place.

3) Target Interventions

Risk Principle: NCTI curricula are primarily designed for medium and high-risk offenders/juveniles.

Need Principle: NCTI curricula target specific interventions toward reducing criminogenic needs of offenders/juveniles.

Responsivity Principle: NCTI curricula and certified facilitators are sensitive to temperament, learning style, level of motivation, gender, and culture of offenders/juveniles.

Dosage: NCTI curricula are designed to be delivered in two-hour increments and encourage program designs of two 2-hour sessions per week.

Treatment Principle: NCTI curricula are written using a cognitive-behavioral approach and NCTI believes such treatment is an integral part of the behavior change process.



Evidence-Based Practices and Crossroads

4) Use a Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment Model

NCTI's curricula are written based on a cognitive-behavioral treatment model as well as a cognitive dissonance model. NCTI uses a number of techniques such as: role-play, personal awareness journaling, skill practice and behavior modeling. Within a dynamic group setting, offenders/juveniles begin to make positive behavior changes by learning how to think and act in increasingly positive, pro-social ways.

5) Increase Positive Reinforcement

Creating a sustained behavior change process includes increasing the amount of positive reinforcements an offender/juvenile receives. NCTI facilitators are instructed in techniques for encouraging offenders/juveniles with positive reinforcement while maintaining clear and consistently applied rules/agreements.

6) Engage On-going Support in Natural Communities

Active engagement of offender pro-social support during the treatment process allows for greater offender/juvenile success. NCTI curricula encourage and provide opportunities for the offender/juvenile to practice positive behavior change within their own environment.

7) Measure Relevant Processes/Practices

NCTI routinely assesses the changes in offenders'/juveniles' cognitive and pro-social skill development. NCTI has pre and post tests available for each curriculum. This test data is collected and used to ensure facilitator and programmatic fidelity. Our curricula have been used in hundreds of locations throughout the United States, in programs that have successfully replicated reduced recidivism. NCTI's five day Facilitator Certification Training teaches facilitators to deliver a standardized model, regardless of location.

8) Provide Measurement Feedback

Facilitator evaluation tool is used to provide feedback to referring agencies. Pre and post test data, will provide an additional method for obtaining feedback and monitoring on-going processes. Feedback is provided to offenders/juveniles, facilitators, and NCTI staff in a variety of ways in order to ensure increased accountability and program integrity.