The Risk-Needs-Responsivity Model of Assessment and Treatment

The Risk-Needs-Responsivity model of assessment and treatment of criminal offenders is widely considered the premier model of supervision for correctional agencies around the world.[1] Although many corrections practitioners are aware of and even utilize the Risk Principle, the Need Principle, and the Responsivity Principle, they may not be aware that those three guiding principles of practice are best viewed as manifestations of the broader General Personality and Cognitive Social Learning theory of Change.[2] An understanding and apperception of the RNR model is at the core of all other central correctional practices.[3]

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Fast Facts

- GPSCL (General Personality and Cognitive Social Learning theory) assumes that all behavior, including criminal behavior, is learned.[2]
- When and how often rewards and cost occur can have a tremendous effect on behavior. In GPCSL, this is called the *density* of rewards and costs.[2]
- Criminogenic needs can be defined as dynamic predictors of criminal conduct.[2]
- Non-criminogenic factors such as self-esteem, fear of punishment, physical conditioning, understanding one's culture or history, and creative abilities will not have much effect on recidivism rates.[4]
- The Risk Principle states:
    - As the number of risk/needs factors increase, the effort to modify them must increase.
    - Match level of treatment services to risk level.
- The Needs Principle states:
    - Not all needs are causally related to criminal conduct.
    - Target criminogenic needs in treatment.
- The Responsivity Principle states:
    - Use cognitive-behavioral interventions in targeting criminogenic needs.
    - Tailor delivery of services based on the individual characteristics of the offender.
- The Level or Service/RNR instrument has been shown to have predictive validity for mentally disordered offenders, as well as young offenders and female offenders.[5]

References

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