

# Offender Management Framework – Achieving the balance

A Summary

Corrections Victoria

The Offender Management Framework was originally developed in 2006. Linked to the “What Works” literature the framework is based on three theories: the Risk and Need approach, the complementary Good Lives Model and Therapeutic Jurisprudence.

Since that time there have been many changes in the correctional system including increases in prisoner and offender numbers, advances in the understanding of offending and its causes and treatment, and the legislative framework within which we operate.

As we change our practices to meet these challenges, it is timely that we reflect on current best practice. This has allowed us to confirm that the Offender Management Framework remains consistent with best practice because it is embedded in evidence-based theory.

The Offender Management Framework aims to

- Maintain a safe and secure community
- Motivate offenders to engage in and continue with programs and services
- Identify and monitor offenders risk's and needs
- Based on these risks and needs coordinate and prioritise offender access to appropriate programs, services and activities.

A fundamental part of achieving this is to effectively engage and motivate offenders, whilst in our custody or under our supervision in the community, to address their level of risk and criminogenic needs.

I trust that all Corrections Victoria staff will re-commit to maintaining safety and security, whilst actively participating in the case management of offenders, in order to achieve our overall goal of safer communities by reducing re offending’.



**Jan Shuard PSM**  
Commissioner

# 1

## Practice Principle 1 Maintain System Integrity

### 1.1 Offender management processes are evidence-based and linked to theory

- Offender management practices/processes are evidence-based.
- Correctional staff understand the aims and objectives of offender management practices as directed by the framework, standards and manuals.

### 1.2 Staff are properly trained and supported/mentored

- Training should address the attitudes and skills required by staff for offender management.
- Staff should be provided with mentoring and support to ensure the attitudes and skills acquired in training are maintained and integrated into practice.
- Staff responsible for mentoring should also be provided with support and training in developing their mentoring skills.

### 1.3 Quality assurance processes are in place to ensure offender management processes are monitored to identify areas of achievement and opportunities for improvements

- Quality assurance mechanisms are required for both an individual staff member's practice and overall offender management practices/processes.
- Regular observation of staff members' practices is essential to increasing skill levels as well as ensuring integrity (i.e., drift in practices does not occur).
- Monitoring and communication (within locations and across the system) are essential in ensuring that improvements to processes can be identified and that appropriate strategies can be implemented.

### 1.4 Offender management practices are evaluated

- To ensure that offender management practices remain evidence-based and meet objectives.



## **2** Practice Principle 2 Manage Risk and Target Intervention Needs

### **2.1 Offender management processes are based on accurate and up-to-date information**

- Offender management decisions/processes must be based on accurate information.
- Accurate information means up-to-date information from multiple and relevant sources to ensure that an overall picture is obtained.
- Accurate information requires open communication (verbal and/or written) between Corrections Victoria staff and across agencies as well as obtaining information from files, reports and systems.

### **2.2 Offenders have access to an adequate range of services, programs and activities to accommodate their identified needs**

- Programs, services and activities need to provide for a range of offence-specific, offence-related, reintegration, personal development, cultural, and mental health needs.
- If not available, appropriate strategies need to be developed to accommodate the range of needs exhibited by offenders.

### **2.3 Level of services and programs are matched to level of risk (includes risk of reoffending, to staff, escape, and self-harm)**

- While offenders at all risk/need levels will be managed, the intensity of the services and programs offered will vary according to risk/need level.
- Moderate and high risk/need offenders require more intensive offender management (e.g., more intensive programs, more thorough assessment of needs, increased level of contact to review and assess progress, more intensive handover processes) than low risk/need offenders.
- While risk of reoffending is addressed through receiving a program of the correct intensity it may also be necessary to apply risk management strategies (e.g., being placed at an appropriate security level and developing a specific supervision regime that manages an individual offender's risk factors).

### **2.4 Staff monitor offender's progress on goals**

- To assess progress on goals, all staff must monitor offenders' progress both within formal meetings as well as on a daily basis through direct observation of an offender's behaviour and attitude, to ensure that an overall picture of progress (or lack of) is obtained.
- Offender progress is monitored by direct observation of their behaviour and attitudes, contacting appropriate sources and/or having the offender produce evidence of their achievements and progress.

## **3** Practice Principle 3 Increase Self Responsibility

### **3.1 Staff, services and programs are responsive to offenders' learning styles and abilities**

- Services and programs provided need to be adapted to accommodate a range of learning styles and abilities (including, but not limited to, cognitive impairments, gender and cultural diversity).
- Alternatively, appropriate strategies and protocols are developed to ensure that offenders are able to access programs and services from external agencies that accommodate the range of learning styles and abilities or offenders are able to participate/ utilise available resources with the assistance of community agency support or technology.
- Staff are responsive to offenders' learning styles and abilities. Training and information needs to be provided to assist staff, as well as access to relevant professionals for consultation.

### **3.2 Offenders are assisted to have responsibility for developing and implementing their plans to meet their goals**

- Increases offenders' motivation to change behaviour and sustain change.
- Goals are developed in collaboration with offenders, using motivational interaction techniques.
- Goals developed are to be: individualised; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time framed (SMART); and approach oriented.
- Goals need to be relevant to reducing re-offending, addressing any obstacles to engaging in programs (e.g., anxiety) and increasing well-being (i.e., meeting physical, social and psychological needs aimed at reducing reoffending).

### **3.3 Offender management processes need to be individualised**

- Processes need to be individualised to be able to engage the offender, facilitate learning, motivate and sustain behaviour change.
- Goals/offender management plans need to take into account offender preferences, strengths and abilities, learning styles, environmental context and readiness for change.
- Offender management processes/decisions (e.g., how case conferences are managed, types of rewards granted, how to address non compliance, and whether a specific officer should case manage) also need to be individualised and not prescriptive so that individual differences can be taken into account (including, but not limited to, learning styles and abilities, context, motivation, and offence dynamics).

# 4

## Practice Principle 4 Provide a Constructive Environment

### 4.1 Staff maximise offender opportunity for rehabilitation and reduce risk to the community through the nature of their interactions

- For Corrections Victoria to maximise offender rehabilitation and reduce risk to the community, staff need to:
  - Establish high quality relationships with offenders (i.e., respectful and open working relationships that maintain professional boundaries and encourage offenders to engage in offender management processes)
  - Model and reinforce pro-social behaviour and attitudes
  - Challenge anti-social behaviour and attitudes, while at the same time modelling pro-social behaviour and attitudes
  - Enhance and sustain offenders' motivation to engage in and continue with programs.

### 4.2 Staff ensure expectations of offender management processes are communicated to the offender

- To effectively facilitate offenders adopting pro-social behaviour, offenders need to be given a clear understanding of the expectations of offender management.
- Processes need to be developed to ensure that the expectations of offender management are communicated to offenders and clearly understood (i.e., plain language, written agreement).
- To ensure that the offender can meet the expectations, they need to be realistic and attainable as well as specific, quantified, and explicit. Clear expectations also ensures that the offender cannot claim that they were not aware of the behaviour that was expected of them.
- Staff also need to communicate the benefits of complying with offender management processes, as well as the likely consequences of non-compliance.

### 4.3 Staff deliver a consistent strategy of rewards and sanctions

- The use of sanctions on their own has been found to be ineffective.
- To promote behaviour change and maintain offenders' involvement in programs, services and activities requires both sanctions and rewards.
- To increase effectiveness, strategies developed need to ensure that rewards and sanctions are:
  - Specific, well defined, and administered as quickly as practical to ensure that the specific behaviour is linked to the reward or sanction
  - Consistently delivered against observable behaviour
  - Individualised.
- Offenders still need to be able to consent to participating and remaining in programs and services. Consent means that the offender makes an informed decision and is free to choose.

### 4.4 Processes need to be in place to ensure the offender can access and complete programs

- Corrections Victoria needs to develop, implement and/or support systems, processes and mechanisms that:
  - Balance program needs with security/supervision requirements, industries/community work and placement issues
  - Increase availability of information regarding service and program access, dates and participation details to units and staff involved in decisions about program access or offender movement
  - Encourage appropriate assistance from community-based services to address offenders' needs where they cannot be met at the prison or Community Correctional Services location.

### 4.5 Staff support processes of progression and enhance continuum of care

- Corrections Victoria needs to develop, implement and/or support systems, processes and mechanisms that allow for
  - Accurate, sufficient and timely information to be shared
  - Progression associated with changes in risk (e.g., risk of reoffending, escape, to staff/offenders, and self-harm) and associated with successful completion of programs and services.
- To enhance continuum of care, staff, programs and services also need to have consistent approaches, goals and objectives.

# Offender Management Framework

## “What Works” Theoretical Principles for Effective Offender Management

## Practice Principles for Effective Offender Management

### 1 Integrity

A theory and evidence-based approach to programs, services and activities.

### 2 Risk & Need

More intensive interventions are applied to higher risk offenders and minimal services to lower risk offenders. Areas directly related to offending should be targeted.

### 3 Responsibility Internal

Factors are within the offender such as motivation, learning style, age, gender, culture and various barriers to participation.

### 4 Responsibility External

Factors are the environmental interaction between the offender and the staff and/or setting.

### 1 Maintain System Integrity

Practices that will ensure that what is introduced and delivered remains as it was planned and designed and meets its objectives.

### 2 Manage Risk and Target Intervention Needs

Practices that will accurately identify “risk/needs” and the appropriate intensity of intervention.

### 3 Increase self Responsibility

Practices that facilitate learning in an individual and subsequently lead to behaviour change.

### 4 Provide a constructive environment

Practices that ensure the staff and setting characteristics promote, support and engage offenders in behaviour change.

# Achieving the balance – A Summary

## Three Theories that Underpin the Offender Management Framework

1. The **risk-need approach** is a psychological theory of anti social behaviour which focuses on preventing reoffending and protecting the community (i.e., a risk management approach).
2. The **good lives model** is a broader psychological theory of anti-social behaviour. Its additional focus is on enhancing offender skill to prevent re-offending (i.e., a self management approach). The two approaches are complementary.
3. **Therapeutic jurisprudence** is a legal theory with concern for the well-being of individuals within the criminal justice system. It highlights the importance of correctional staff in engaging offenders in pro-social ways.

Developing services on the basis of these three theories provides a correctional system that can not only protect the community by reducing anti-social behaviour, but also address individual offender needs by increasing pro-social behaviour and well-being.

## Further Reading

**Andrews, D. A.** (2001). Principles of effective correctional programs. *Compendium 2000 on effective correctional programming, Volume 1*. Ministry of Supply and Services, Canada.

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**Wexler, D. B. & Winick, B. J.** (1996). Introduction, (pp. xvii-xx). In D. B. Wexler & B. J. Winick. (Eds.), *The law in a therapeutic key: Developments in therapeutic jurisprudence*. Durham, NC: Carolina University Press.

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