

Crime and Punishment: 'What Works'?

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KEY TERMS

celerity • certainty • covert sensitisation • criminogenic needs • deterrence • deterrence theory • directed masturbation • effect size • incapacitation • integrity • meta-analysis • multimodal programmes • olfactory aversive conditioning • penology • programmes • rehabilitation • restoration • retribution • risk factors • risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model • self-management • sentence • severity • tertiary prevention

CHAPTER OUTLINE

SENTENCING 308

Penology 308

The objectives of sentencing 309

The impact of sentencing 312

The effects of criminal sanctions/sentencing 313

Implications for effective practice 317

Examples of effective interventions 318

Psychological contributions to offender assessment
and management 321

SUMMARY 322

ESSAY/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 323

REFERENCES 323

ANNOTATED READING LIST 326

REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR 314

The evidence base 315

Findings of the reviews 315

This chapter approaches the nature and the outcomes of sentencing from a psychological perspective, and outlines the roles that psychologists may play in the different stages of sentencing decisions; though generally with reference to what happens *after* those decisions have been made. Other chapters have addressed earlier stages of the legal process, such as police investigation and the presentation of evidence in court, while Chapters 17 and 18 examine treatment for offenders in more detail.

penology the study of legal punishment and how it is administered.

retribution one of the objectives of sentencing, and an influential theory of the sentencing process, based on the proposal that the harm done by offenders requires society to rectify the imbalance by punishing them appropriately.

incapacitation an objective of sentencing; the use of criminal justice intervention to reduce criminality by removing offenders from crime opportunities.

deterrence one of the objectives of sentencing, based on the premise that adverse consequences (punishment) will make recurrence of offending (criminal recidivism) less likely.

rehabilitation an objective of sentencing and allied criminal justice initiatives, concerned with constructive efforts to provide education, training or other services to enable offenders to become reintegrated in society, and reduce recidivism.

restoration (also *restorative justice*) a relatively recent departure, entailing services through which offenders make reparations to their victims for the harm they have done, sometimes through a carefully managed negotiation and reconciliation process.

sentence the penalty imposed on an individual found guilty of an offence in a court of law; sentencing is the process through which this is decided.

The opening section of this chapter takes us into the field of penology – the study of legal punishments. It outlines what are generally considered to be the main objectives of sentencing, and the rationale underpinning them in each case. These objectives include retribution, incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and restoration.

To the extent that sentencing is intended to achieve certain socially desirable effects, mainly in terms of its impact on those made subject to it, the second section of the chapter reviews research findings relevant to this, examining whether it is possible to reduce rates of recidivism (a pattern of repeated criminality) amongst persistent offenders. Research clearly shows that the nature of a sentence is much less important in this respect than what happens during the course of it. Alongside other professions, psychologists have made significant contributions to this area in a number of ways, for example: in terms of identifying risk factors for recurrent involvement in crime; in designing and implementing methods of working with frequently convicted offenders; and in evaluating the outcomes of psychosocial interventions.

The final section of the chapter considers the somewhat paradoxical situation in which psychology finds itself in relation to the practice of criminal justice.

Note that there is no universally agreed definition of the word 'crime' and present space does not permit discussion of the complexities within this. As used here the term refers simply to the breaking of the criminal law, however that is formulated in a given jurisdiction at a given time. See McGuire (2004) for more extended discussion.

risk factors individual or environmental variables that have been shown through empirical research to be associated with greater likelihood of involvement in criminal activity. Can be *static* (set by past events) or *dynamic* (more immediate).

SENTENCING

Individuals found guilty of committing a crime can expect to be sentenced by the courts. This has been standard practice in many countries for several hundred years. Broadly speaking, there is a rough correspondence between the seriousness of crimes committed and the severity of sentences imposed. Where there are marked departures from this – mainly when sentences are deemed too lenient – controversy often erupts. Centuries of accumulated experience notwithstanding, many aspects of the process remain poorly understood. Until recently some of them had not been very searchingly examined. For the criminal courts, at least at present, the culmination of the legal process is the finding of guilt or innocence and the passing of sentence.

The word 'sentence' derives (via Middle English and Old French) from the Latin word *sententia*, meaning a feeling or opinion communicated by someone to others. This captures something crucial about it: other than in highly exceptional circumstances, sentencing is a public process. Magistrates, judges and others engaged in it are reflecting and embodying the community's distaste, perhaps revulsion, regarding something someone has done. Hence, sentencing is often considered to serve a primarily *expressive* function: it conveys to the offender the public's reaction to his or her conduct in the criminal offence.

Penology

This is the study of sentencing and of how it is administered. This occurs within that segment of criminal justice usually referred to as the *penal system*, a term loosely denoting the arrangement of courts, prisons, probation, youth justice and allied agencies within society. Since these arrangements have developed in stepwise fashion

over very many years, to call the end-product a 'system' may be, as Ashworth (2005) has remarked, 'merely a convenience and an aspiration' (p.67), rather than an accurate description.

Potentially, psychology has a significant contribution to make at numerous places within this system, and although the number of psychologists directly employed within it is still low relative to other professions, it has been steadily expanding in recent years. Since the process of sentencing should entail an understanding of why someone acted as he, or she, did; and that process is also intended to reduce the chances of similar actions recurring, psychology should perhaps be playing a far more influential role than has been the case so far. For arguably, if this does not sound too grandiose, the operation of law is in one sense a form of *applied psychology*.

The objectives of sentencing

Within the criminal law and specifically within penology, sentencing has been conceptualised as serving a number of distinct but interconnected and overlapping purposes. The core of these is the idea of punishment, the signalling of society's displeasure concerning what the offender has done, by the imposition of a penalty. But this apparently straightforward idea conceals a number of underlying complexities. The following outline borrows from several texts addressing this issue (Ashworth, 2005; Duff & Garland, 1994; Easton & Piper, 2005; Miethe & Lu, 2005). Although there is no definitive consensus on these matters, sentencing is currently thought to perform five main kinds of function.

Retribution and (just) deserts

From one perspective, society responds to offenders by punishing them purely and simply because it has to. While there are various nuances within this, the reasoning that underpins the concept of retribution is as follows. There is a fundamental principle at stake when an individual acts against society by breaking its laws. The harm caused by such actions gives society an automatic right, indeed an obligation, to inflict pain on the offender in response. Conversely, so the argument continues, the offender also has a right to be punished. Retributive action corrects an imbalance created by the offences, by rectifying the wrong the offender has done; a concept that informs the familiar notion of *just deserts*.

The origins of this idea can be traced back to ancient Judeo-Christian texts enunciating the 'law of retaliation' or *lex talionis*, where punishment corresponds to the crime both in its severity and its type ('an eye for an eye'). Such a viewpoint underpins practices that are still applied in some countries where pain is inflicted

on the lawbreaker commensurate with that inflicted on the original victims. But the modern conceptual framework for this is usually attributed to the 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who argued that in committing a crime, an offender gains an unfair advantage over those who have adhered to the law. Under the general political obligation that binds individuals to each other and to the state, there is a necessary reciprocity: punishment then restores a proper balance between the offender and the rest of society (Figure 16.1), in that the offender owes and must repay a debt to law-abiding members of the community (Murphy, 1994).

A more recent reformulation of this is contained in the idea of *censure*, or expression and attribution of blame. Sentencing serves a reprobative function, and to be just it should be based on the principle of proportionality between the amount of harm done and the amount of punishment dispensed (von Hirsch, 1994).

Overall, the philosophy of retribution is not concerned with instrumental effects or outcomes. Punishment is viewed as '... intrinsically appropriate' (Garland & Duff, 1994, p.7) and the cycle of crime and official response is, as it were, a closed loop. But as we will see below, the idea of retribution can also be combined with other elements whereby sentences can be designed to accomplish a number of goals simultaneously.



FIGURE 16.1 Under the general political obligation that binds individuals to each other and to the state, there is a necessary reciprocity: punishment then restores a proper balance.

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Sentencing as incapacitation

In almost complete contrast, incapacitation refers to the possibility of crime control by removing offenders from circumstances where they are likely to commit crimes: by restricting their freedom to act. The most palpable means of doing this in contemporary societies is through imprisonment, or detention in other locked-up residential settings (ranging from children's homes to high security hospitals). Thereby, offenders are removed from society and from situations in which they have opportunities to take vehicles, break into houses, sell drugs or get into fights (though unfortunately as we know, some of these activities continue in prison). Apart from physical incarceration, liberty can also be restricted to varying degrees by community penalties. This is achieved, for example, by: night curfews or electronically monitored home confinement; exclusion from a neighbourhood where previous crimes were committed; or a requirement to attend for supervision at specified times. There is wide civic endorsement of the principle that persons who have inflicted serious or repeated harm upon others (or in some instances upon themselves) should be restrained in some way, encapsulated in frequently heard phrases such as 'public protection' and 'community safety'.

But the idea of incapacitation has a similarly ancient history to that of retribution. In the distant past, individuals might have been exiled or banished from their communities. Not so long ago, a parallel of this was practised in the transportation of many thousands of offenders from the UK to Australia (see the National Archives page on the transportation of convicts at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/transportation-australia.htm). In medieval Europe, the use of bodily restraints such as stocks and pillories, and that most durable symbol of penal confinement, the ball and chain, was designed to incapacitate as well as to punish in other ways. While modern methods of doing this are less overtly physical, the net effect is similar in seeking to control the offender's scope for antisocial action.

Sentencing as deterrence

A third declared intention that drives the sentencing process is that it should alter criminal behaviour by attaching negative consequences to it. This is the paradigmatic example of what is entitled the *utilitarian* or *consequentialist* rationale for punishment

deterrence theory in penology, the doctrine that the costs of committing crimes suppress criminal activity. *General deterrence* refers to the effect on the population, *specific deterrence* to the effect on convicted individuals.

as a response to crime (Walker, 1991). It is founded on the idea that legal sanctions will have an impact on individuals made subject to them. This set of expectations is sometimes referred to as deterrence theory (Gibbs, 1986) (or occasionally deterrence doctrine)

and it is probably the most widely taken-for-granted purpose of sentencing.

Deterrent effects can be subdivided with respect to different scales of intended outcomes. One basic, conventional distinction is that between *specific* and *general* deterrence (Stafford & Warr, 1993). The former refers to the impact of punishment on the individual made subject to it: theoretically, when someone is punished for committing a crime, he or she should be less likely to do it again. The latter refers to the wider effect this is expected to have on others, and on the community as a whole. If committing crimes is known to be punished, the public-at-large should be less likely to do it, as they have observed that it will result in unpleasantness for them. These are useful conceptual distinctions, but in everyday reality there is likely to be a complex interplay between specific and general deterrent effects (Stafford & Warr, 1993).

Penologists have recognised that the objective features of sentencing are probably less important to prospective offenders than its subjective or perceptual features (Gibbs, 1986). *Objective* properties are those that might be recorded by the police, or by a government statistician, showing for example rates of detection, arrest, or subsequent imprisonment for different types of crime. *Subjective* or perceptual properties are those that are meaningful to an individual offender, who may be wholly uninformed concerning criminal statistics but is probably conscious of peers who have escaped arrest, or who have been arrested, for specific misdemeanours. The real operative factors in everyday decision-making by anyone considering an offence are likely to be immediate personal knowledge rather than official databases.

There are several features of sentences that may be

considered from either objective or subjective standpoints: certainty, celerity, and severity. **Certainty** refers to the likelihood of legal punishment as a result of committing a crime. Defined objectively, certainty refers to the proportion of crimes of a specific type that result in formal punishment; subjectively, however, it reflects individual offenders' estimates of the chances of being caught. **Celerity** refers to the amount of time that lapses between an offence being committed and an official sanction being imposed. **Severity** refers to the magnitude of a punishment or the estimated amount of pain or discomfort a convicted offender would endure.

certainty in penology, the likelihood of legal punishment as a result of committing a crime. May be assessed objectively (using official statistics) or subjectively (from the experience of individual offenders).

celerity in penology, the amount of time that elapses between an offence being committed and an official sanction being imposed.

severity in penology, the magnitude of a punishment or the estimated amount of pain or discomfort a convicted offender would be likely to endure.

To draw an everyday parallel, just as most people preparing to drive off in their cars think an accident is unlikely to happen to them (though they may be distantly aware of statistics concerning such a risk), so most individuals contemplating a crime tend to discount measured probabilities and focus on the details of their own actions and circumstances. Penologists have discovered that it is changes in the perceived features of sanctions that are more likely to influence the behaviour of individuals who are inclined to break the law (von Hirsch *et al.*, 1999).

Sentencing as rehabilitation

Retribution, incapacitation and deterrence are often in themselves believed to promote a further effect, that of *rehabilitating* the offender. The individual's recognition of how society perceives his or her actions, conjoined with the unpleasantness of losing liberty or enduring other effects of punishment, will encourage him or her to become reformed and to desist from criminal acts. Thus some penologists consider that rehabilitation is integrally achieved through retributive and deterrent effects.

Others, however, take the view that the sentence of the court should incorporate procedures explicitly designed to support rehabilitation. The latter might include, for example: remedial education; employment training; various types of psychotherapy where indicated; developing awareness of victims; or participation in specially designed programmes for the reduction of offending behaviour. Each of these will (potentially) reduce both the alienation that many offenders already experience and the additional stigmatisation induced by the sentencing process, while also enhancing the individual's prospects of becoming a more fully-fledged citizen and a law-abiding member of the community.

It is with reference to this that psychology has perhaps had its farthest-reaching influence on practices in the criminal justice system in recent years. The model that informs such work begins with the observation that some kinds of individual differences are reliably associated with risks of repeated involvement in crime.

These risk factors (see Chapter 17 for more details of risk factors and measures to assess these) derive not from variations in personality traits, as was hypothesised at an earlier stage, but in a range of other variables. They include patterns of criminal associates, antisocial attitudes, a tendency towards impulsiveness, poor emotional self-regulation, and deficits in a number of social, cognitive, and problem-solving skills (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; McGuire, 2004). Identification of these risk factors led to the proposal that if they could be successfully remedied by psychosocial interventions, individuals might be less likely to commit further offences as a result. There is now substantial evidence to support such proposals and

some of the key findings in this area will be described later in this chapter.

Sentencing as restoration and reparation

A fifth and relatively novel perspective on punishment has emerged over approximately the last 25 years, influenced in part by a steadily growing recognition of the rights and needs of crime victims. One application of this in some countries has been the provision to victims of opportunities to make *impact statements* in court that might influence the deliberations of those delivering sentences (Ashworth, 2005).

But the more innovative development has been influenced by approaches to crime taken in some non-Western societies. This has introduced the concept of *restorative justice* (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2006), of attempted reconciliation between offenders and victims, with the former making direct reparations to the latter where possible, as traditionally occurred amongst some indigenous communities in various parts of the world. The fundamental principle here is the repair of the damage done to the victim and community by the commission of the offence. But it takes a quite different direction from the punitive sanctions customary in a retributive approach. It may entail a variety of elements, including the acknowledgement by the offender or his or her responsibility for the offence, the offering of an apology, or making of direct restitution in some manner settled jointly between victims, offenders and other interested parties.

In several jurisdictions an extensive application of restorative models has occurred in which special arrangements have been made to include all relevant parties – the victim, the offender, their families and community representatives – in collective decision-making to agree a response to the offender's actions. From early initiatives in New Zealand and Australia these procedures have been piloted in many other countries, although to date they have remained on the margins of other longer-established sentencing procedures (Leibmann, 2007). Evaluations of such projects have typically shown that they produce higher levels of satisfaction for victims than the more impersonal proceedings of formal court hearings (Graef, 2001).

The various philosophies of punishment just outlined can be combined, so that a single sentence might represent an attempt to achieve several objectives at once. In some circumstances judges may enunciate this, indicating how they arrived at a given sentence by designating portions of it intended to serve different penal purposes (Ashworth, 2005).

The prevailing sentencing framework for England and Wales, the Criminal Justice Act 2003, specifies the purposes of sentencing in a way that makes explicit

the possibility of integrating different judicial purposes in a single sentencing decision (Taylor *et al.*, 2004), in a manner characterised by Ashworth (2005, p.74) as a 'pick-and-mix' approach. Details of the types and severity of sentences that can be applied to different offences are set out in a series of documents produced by the Sentencing Guidelines Council (2008, with respect to magistrates' courts), which also provides advice on clarifying the objectives of sentences (available on the Sentencing Guidelines Council's website at <http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk>). For magistrates' courts, the decision itself, at the final stage of sentencing, should be accompanied by a statement of the reasons why the bench has arrived at the sentence to be imposed.

The legal framework of courts, their sentencing powers, the sentencing options available to them, and many other features of criminal justice, vary considerably between different countries and are subject to change over time. It is advisable for any psychologist working in the penal system to become familiar with the principal features of the context in which he or she is working. Numerous textbooks, websites and other information sources exist to facilitate this in virtually every country and there are also integrative volumes summarising key attributes of criminal justice taking a comparative, international approach (e.g. Newman *et al.*, 2001).

The impact of sentencing

Is it possible to answer the question posed in the title of this chapter, and draw any firm conclusions about the usefulness of sentencing, about whether it 'works'? As suggested earlier, to the extent that sentencing might have a solely retributive or 'non-consequentialist' purpose, its application does not involve an appeal to direct empirical testing, since there is no primary concern with outcome effects. If its purpose is meant to be expressive and symbolic, then as Garland (1990) has argued, those who seek to evaluate its effectiveness have somehow missed the point.

Other declared objectives of sentencing are potentially testable in principle, but there are variations in the extent to which doing so would be feasible in practice. To evaluate general deterrence, for example, societies are scarcely likely to embark on large-scale experiments in which they temporarily suspend their laws for hypothesis-testing purposes. This reluctance may lead us to conclude that it is the existence of criminal sanctions that holds society together; that it is only the general deterrent effect of the portfolio of state punishments that restrains citizens from more or less constantly violating each other's interests.

However, a partial test of general deterrence might be adduced from other sources. One is observation of what occurs when there is a breakdown of law and order in society, for example, during episodes of civil unrest. History is replete with relevant examples, and indeed rates of many crimes often do rise sharply during such episodes. When social order disintegrates, however, so many changes are happening in parallel that it is problematic to attribute the resultant lawlessness to any one of them. In less extreme situations, it can be difficult to discern the role of criminal justice agencies as a component of the observed changes, and their impact appears to be marginal. For example, following the downfall of communism in the then Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the social liberalisation that ensued, there was a 50 per cent rise in crime rates in a period of just two years (Gilinskiy, 2006). (Recorded crimes per 100,000 population rose from 1242 in 1990 to 1856 in 1992.) But this was almost certainly a function of many influences, involving simultaneous economic, political and social change. The network of police and courts continued to operate in the same manner through this period, but had no observable restraining effect on a trend that was driven by other factors.

Perhaps more surprisingly, even when the police are not available to arrest wrongdoers – because they are on strike, for example – there is no convincing evidence of upward surges in crime (Figure 16.2). There was a 'rash of crimes' following a one-day police strike in Montreal in 1969 (Clark, 1977), but apart from this instance other studies of industrial action by police do not support what has been called the 'thin blue line' hypothesis. There were public riots during a longer strike in Boston in 1919, but analysis suggests these events were about to happen in any case, and would have done so whether or not the police had gone on strike (White, 1988). Pfuhl (1983) analysed crime-rate data for police strikes in 11 US cities during the 1970s. Strikes ranged in duration from three to 30 days. While there were increases in rates of some crimes in some locations, in the majority there were no changes at all. Similarly, following a police strike in Finland in 1976 no upsurge in crime nor other social upheaval occurred (Makinen & Takala, 1980). Thus, our predilections notwithstanding, there is no overall pattern supportive of police presence as a major deterrent against crime.

There are other sound reasons for suggesting that the presence of criminal sanctions is not necessarily the fundamental force that holds back a tide of lawbreaking on a daily basis. There are clear 'normative' factors influencing individuals' self-regulation of their own conduct in society. Tyler (2006) has strong evidence to suggest that the everyday law-abiding behaviour of most people is a function of their endorsement of the law and perception



FIGURE 16.2 Even when the police are not available to arrest wrong-doers, there is no convincing evidence of upward surges in crime.

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of its operation as legitimate, rather than their fear of detection and punishment. Tyler conducted a series of structured interviews with a random sample of 1575 respondents in Chicago, 804 of whom were re-interviewed one year later. Participants were asked about their experience and perceptions of the law, the extent of any contacts with the police or courts, and various factors potentially linked to their behaviour. The key influence underpinning most individuals' adherence to lawful behaviour was their commitment to doing so, arising partly from personal morality and partly from beliefs in the appropriateness of laws. Thus, where the law is perceived to have legitimacy, that is, where its rationale is considered sound and its operation perceived as fair, most citizens regularly and willingly act in accordance with it. Where individuals disagree with laws or experience their enactment as unjust, their compliance is weakened; some laws may then be difficult, even impossible to enforce, *despite* the availability of punitive sanctions.

The effects of criminal sanctions/sentencing

Crime and punishment are inextricably linked in our culture and within everyday discourse and public expectations. Notwithstanding the range of penal philosophies reviewed above, the presumed individual deterrent

function of the sentence is arguably pivotal in perceptions of the process as a whole. 'Whichever sentencing principles are used to decide the exact form and amount of punishment, there is a widespread assumption that the resulting punishment *will* deter the convicted offender from re-offending, or potential offenders from offending' (Easton & Piper, 2005, p.101, italics in original). Given the central place allotted to punitive sanctions in the legal systems of the world, does the available evidence justify these ubiquitously held expectations that individuals will be deterred from future offending by the experience of official punishment? Several types of evidence indicate that these expectations are very badly misplaced.

If punitive sanctions reliably achieved individual or specific deterrence, it would be not unreasonable to expect the following. We might expect that there would be a relationship between the experience of punishment and what individuals say in relation to their behaviour as a result. We might expect there to be an association between the severity of sentences and recidivism outcomes, when other variables are held equal, with heavier penalties leading to larger effects. We might anticipate that in specially designed studies where some offenders are dealt with more severely, they would go on to commit fewer crimes. In a pattern that might at first appear counterintuitive, none of these expectations is supported by the evidence that has been collected to date.

The first type of evidence is derived from what individuals say has had an impact on them and has influenced them to change their behaviour (where that occurred) after being arrested for offences such as theft or substance abuse. Klemke (1982) interviewed young people some time after their first arrest to explore levels of subsequent involvement in offending. Individuals who had desisted from offending were very unlikely to attribute this to any deterrent effect of their contacts with the criminal justice system. Of course, some researchers would regard self-report data of this kind as a rather weak form of evidence, given variables such as impression management, fear of arrest, and other factors potentially at work.

A second type of evidence is likely to be regarded as more robust, being based on officially recorded statistics: patterns of re-conviction following different types of sentences, usually involving very large samples. These data are of particular interest as they allow comparisons to be made between *actual* offence rates and those that would be *expected*, based on predictions made by using a specially designed scale to assess risk of reoffending, derived from information on individuals' previous criminal histories.

The Offender Group Reconviction Scale (now in Version 3: Howard *et al.*, 2009; see Chapter 17 for further details of this measure) was developed for this purpose, but when Lloyd *et al.* (1994), and later Kershaw (1999), used it to compare the impact of different types of sentences (e.g. imprisonment versus community penalties), they found that rates of recidivism two years later were virtually identical. Patterns of subsequent criminality appeared wholly unaffected by the type of punishment imposed (see McGuire, 2002). There was no evidence that the more severe sanction had any suppressant or punitive effect. Similarly, in a large-scale review for the Solicitor General of Canada, integrating data from 23 studies, and with an aggregate sample of 68,248, Gendreau *et al.* (1999) found no clear relationship between the lengths of prison sentences and rates of subsequent recidivism, once other differences between samples were taken into account.

But perhaps the strongest kind of test of the deterrence hypothesis comes from specially designed experiments in which the intervention consists of *enhanced* (i.e. harsher) punishments whilst the comparison sample received typical punishments. There have been numerous studies of this type, and they more or less uniformly show that the net effects of dealing with offenders in this way are either absent (the effect size is zero) or actually negative; that is, people got worse and committed more crimes (Gendreau *et al.*, 2001; McGuire, 2004). A particularly stark illustration of this comes from evaluation of the 'three strikes and you're out' policy implemented in some US states since 1994. In California, a recent

comparison found effects that were the reverse of what had been predicted. Those jurisdictions that used the law the *least* experienced larger declines in violent crimes than those counties that used it most (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2008).

If we accept this evidence, and conclude that deterrent effects are very weak, simply non-existent or actually harmful, we may be left with what looks like a paradox. Most people probably assume that the unpleasantness of being punished for doing something is likely to decrease our chances of doing it. Behavioural psychology has demonstrated the power of reinforcement and punishment in shaping patterns of human behaviour (see Chapter 18, for descriptions of behavioural programmes).

But research in that field has also shown that for punishment to work efficiently, certain conditions have to be met. For example, in order to be effective, it should be virtually certain to happen, and should follow swiftly on the problem behaviour to be reduced. These circumstances are rarely if ever met in the criminal justice system, and other evidence suggests that individuals on the verge of committing crimes are unlikely to be thinking in any detailed way about the possible negative consequences of their actions (McGuire, 2004).

REDUCING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

Fortunately there are other approaches to addressing the problem of offender recidivism at the individual level that have emerged as more effective than official sanctions. This field of activity is sometimes denoted as tertiary prevention (Gendreau & Andrews, 1990) as it focuses on adjudicated offenders – those who have been convicted of crimes and duly sentenced. More colloquially, drawing on the title of a journal paper by Martinson (1974), which famously drew negative conclusions regarding early evidence on offender rehabilitation, it is often referred to simply as 'what works'.

(This is sometimes contrasted with *primary prevention*, which is focused on long-term developmental family- and community-based initiatives (see, for example, Farrington & Welsh, 2007) and *secondary prevention*, which focuses on work with groups considered to be already 'at risk' of involvement in delinquency (see, for example, Goldstein, 2002).)

tertiary prevention
systematic attempt to reduce further offence recidivism by work with convicted offenders within the criminal justice system. (Primary prevention has a long-term focus; secondary prevention works with those at risk of delinquency.)

Research in this field took a sizeable stride forward some years ago when several review studies were published based on the application of statistical integration or meta-analysis of research findings (see Chapter 18 for evidence of meta-analyses of treatment for dangerous violent and sexual offenders). Since its initial use in the field of criminal justice in 1985, this approach has been employed in a number of reviews of treatment-outcome studies with offenders (Wilson, 2001). The pace of development was such that by mid-2008, a total of 75 meta-analyses of tertiary-level offender treatment had been published (McGuire, 2008; 2009). While much research remains to be done, the cumulative findings of this work provide some firm indications concerning which approaches to working with offenders are most likely to yield intended outcomes in terms of lowering criminal recidivism.

The evidence base

The majority of the reviews conducted in this field, and the bulk of the primary research on which they are based, originate from North America, although data from many countries are encompassed within them. Several have been conducted in Europe, and these have been reviewed separately, as a validation or generalisability test of the American results (Redondo *et al.*, 2002). Most are published in the English language, but in the largest review so far conducted (Pearson *et al.*, 1997), contacts were made with 14 non-English speaking countries and more than 300 reports were obtained in languages other than English.

The overwhelming majority of the primary studies deals with male offenders, which is unsurprising given that most crimes were committed by men. In one of the largest meta-analyses, carried out by Lipsey (1992; 1995), only 3 per cent of published studies focused exclusively on samples of female offenders. With regard to age, roughly two-thirds of the reviews focus on interventions with adolescent or young adult offenders in the age range 14 to 21 years. This covers the peak age for delinquency in most countries (Farrington & Welsh, 2007). The remaining studies are either concerned exclusively with adults, or include offenders across a wide range of ages. Concerning ethnicity, while many studies provide data on the proportions of offenders from different ethnic groups, the pattern of this is variable and it is not consistently recorded. However, given the over-representation of minority communities under criminal justice jurisdiction in many countries, these findings are based on populations containing a broad mixture in terms of ethnicity.

Findings of the reviews

While some reviews have addressed specific types of offending behaviour (e.g. violence, driving while intoxicated, sexual assault), the focus in most has been on the relative impact of different intervention methods. Reviews have dealt with educational and vocational programmes; with the impact of specially designed socio-therapeutic prison regimes in Germany; and with the effects of therapeutic communities defined in broader terms. There is a meta-analysis on the importance of addressing cognition as a mediating variable in behavioural change, several on the effectiveness of structured cognitive-behavioural programmes, and others of family-based interventions and school-based interventions respectively. Meta-analysis has also been used to synthesise findings from evaluations of restorative justice and victim-offender mediation. Moderator variables, including (as we saw earlier) the impact of age, gender and ethnicity, and the importance of staff skills and other aspects of organisational practices, have also been reviewed in this way.

In meta-analysis, the principal outcome of interest is known as the effect size. This can be represented in various ways, but the function in each case is the same: to provide a measure of the extent of any difference between 'experimental' and 'control' conditions in an intervention study. There are different methods of calculating effect sizes, and given the complexities of meta-analysis, some researchers have been critical of it. McGuire (2004) provides an overview of these issues, and of how effect sizes can be interpreted and compared. Figure 16.3 displays some selected effect sizes for different types of psychosocial interventions compared to no-intervention controls.

The overall finding from these meta-analyses of offender treatment sharply contradicts the once commonly repeated assertion that 'nothing works' with offenders (Hollin, 2001; McGuire, 2004). The impact of psychosocial interventions on criminal recidivism is on average positive, that is, it is associated with a net reduction in reoffending rates in experimental relative to comparison samples. However, the average effect taken across a broad spectrum of different types of treatment or intervention is relatively modest. Expressed as a correlation coefficient, it is estimated on average to be approximately 0.10. This average finding obtained from the meta-analyses corresponds to recidivism rates of 45 per cent for experimental groups and 55 per cent for control groups. Though this figure is low, it is

effect size a statistic used to compare the magnitude of the effect of an independent variable across different studies expressed in standard deviation units. Two commonly reported effect sizes are Cohen's *d* and Pearson's correlation (*r*).

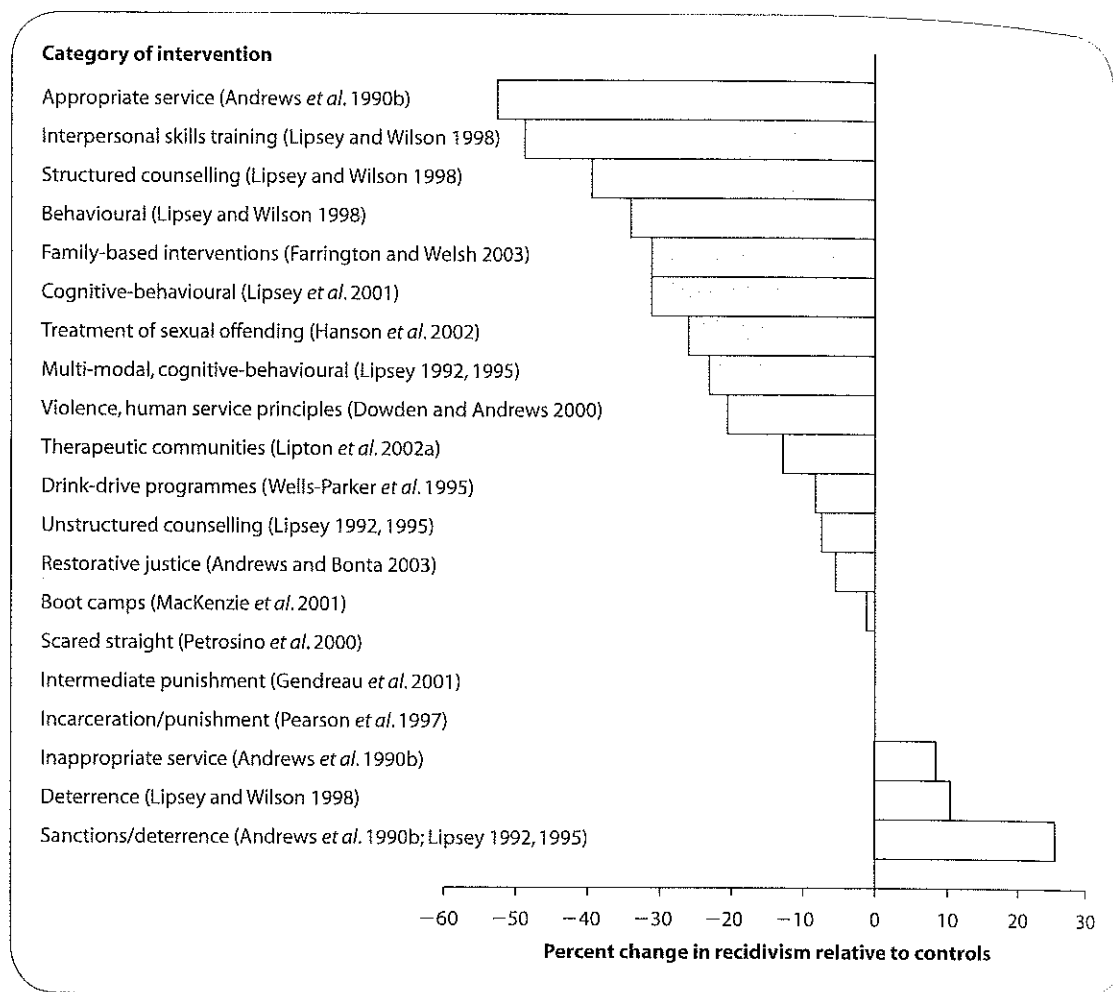


FIGURE 16.3 Illustrative variations in effect sizes.

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statistically significant, and it compares reasonably well with effects found in many other fields. Some healthcare interventions that are generally regarded as producing worthwhile benefits have lower mean treatment effects. But crucially, when different subgroups of studies are compared, the variations between them show some consistent patterns that prove to be much more informative in illuminating aspects of intervention associated with higher rates of success.

A key discovery here, with reference to methods of intervention, is that there are some markedly divergent outcomes. As discussed in the earlier part of this chapter, deterrent sanctions overall have no, or even negative, effects. Hence, counter to what might widely be expected, they are associated with net increases in recidivism. Some interventions have positive but rather weak effects, whereas others have effects that are both statistically and practically meaningful in terms of reductions in rates of reoffending.

There is now a widespread consensus that it is possible to maximise effect sizes by combining a number of elements in offender programmes (Andrews, 2001; Gendreau, 1996; Hollin, 1999). Effective interventions are thought to possess certain common features that Andrews *et al.* (1990), in an early but highly influential review, called 'principles of human service', subsequently formulated as the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model (Andrews *et al.*, 2006). When Andrews and his associates (1990) pinpointed those features that contributed separately to enhancing effect size, they found that the combination of them produced an additive effect. Interventions that possessed these features yielded an average reduction in recidivism rates of 53 per cent. So although the mean effect size across all

risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model a risk management rehabilitation model that seeks to reduce offenders' predisposition to reoffend by strengthening, reducing or controlling personality and/or situational variables as appropriate.

is not especially large, that is partly as a result of negative effects of punishment. When interventions are appropriately designed and delivered it is possible to get positive and much larger effects.

Probably the most widely disseminated innovation coming from the above findings has been the synthesis of methods and materials into a number of specially prepared formats known as programmes. This word

Programmes structure sequences of learning opportunities, set objectives and content planned in advance designed to support and encourage change usually accompanied by a manual or materials.

sounds sinister to some people as it conjures up images of a rigid and insensitive method of working. But strictly defined, a programme consists simply of a planned sequence of learning opportunities (McGuire, 2001). Used in criminal justice settings, its general objective is to reduce participants' subsequent criminal recidivism. Within this context, the typical programme is a pre-arranged set of activities, with clearly stated objectives, entailing a number of elements interconnected according to a planned design, which can be reproduced on successive occasions.

The largest single part played by psychologists in translating research findings into practice has been in designing structured programmes for use in this way (see, for example, Hanson *et al.*, 2009 and Hollin & Palmer, 2006). Most such programmes currently employed in the UK and Canadian criminal justice systems use methods derived from cognitive social learning theory and are known as *cognitive-behavioural* interventions. While this is far from being the only theoretical option available, to date it has been most consistent in yielding positive outcomes. Programmes of this type are usually supported by a specially prepared manual and other supporting materials (see Chapters 17 and 18 for more details about offender programmes).

Implications for effective practice

Expert reviewers agree that there are certain features of criminal justice interventions that maximise the likelihood of securing a practical, meaningful impact in terms of reduced reoffending. The major findings that arise from this are shown in Box 16.1.

BOX 16.1 MAJOR FINDINGS REGARDING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

A clear theory and evidence base

Intervention efforts are more likely to succeed if they are based on a theory of criminal behaviour that is conceptually sound and has good empirical support. This provides a rationale for the methods that are used and it should identify the 'vehicle of change' considered to be at work when an individual participates in and benefits from the programme. This might be accomplished, for example, by learning new skills, changing attitudes, improving ability to communicate, increasing self-knowledge, solving problems, or overcoming bad feelings.

Assessment of risk level

It is generally regarded as good practice to assess risk levels and allocate individuals to different levels of services accordingly. Risk assessment is usually based on information about an individual's criminal history, such as the age at which he or she was first convicted of a crime, and the total number of convictions to date. The most intensive types of intervention should be reserved for those offenders assessed as posing the highest risk of reoffending. Individuals estimated as posing a low risk should not be exposed to such interventions. This has been called the *risk principle* (Andrews & Bonta, 2010) and it has acquired

substantial support from review of the relevant literature (Lowenkamp *et al.*, 2006).

Identifying risk-need factors as targets of change

Research on the emergence of delinquency suggests that certain patterns of social interaction, social or cognitive skills, antisocial attitudes, the influence of delinquent peer-groups and other factors are associated with its onset and maintenance. If working with offenders is to make a difference to their prospects of reoffending, those variables should be its targets of change; they are factors that need to be addressed to alter offending and are therefore entitled *criminogenic needs*. Given their susceptibility to change, they are sometimes called *dynamic risk factors* and there are strong reasons for prioritising them in rehabilitation services.

criminogenic needs
features of individuals associated with the risk of involvement in crime that change over time and are susceptible to change by direct effort, thereby reducing risks of criminal activity. Also known as *dynamic risk factors*.

Use of multiple targets

Given the multiple factors known to contribute to criminal activity, there is virtual unanimity amongst researchers

(Continued)

that more effective interventions will comprise a number of ingredients, addressed at a range of the aforementioned risks. Interventions that successfully do this are called multimodal programmes. For example, working with a group of persistent young offenders might involve training them in social skills, learning self-control of impulses, and providing support for these changes through a mentoring scheme.

multimodal programmes a term used to describe intervention programmes that have more than one target of change (social skills, thinking, substance abuse and so on) or employ more than one method of achieving it.

Responsivity

There are certain methods or approaches that have a superior record in engaging, motivating and helping participants in criminal justice interventions to change (Andrews, 2001; Gendreau & Andrews, 1990; Harkins & Beech, 2007; McMurren, 2002). There are two aspects of this. First, rehabilitative efforts will work better if they have clear, concrete objectives, their contents are structured, and there is a focus on activity and the acquisition of

skills. Personnel involved in providing this should possess high quality interpersonal skills and foster supportive, collaborative relationships within clearly explained boundaries (general responsivity). Second, it is vital to adapt intervention strategies to accommodate diversity amongst participants with respect to age, gender, ethnicity, language, and learning styles (specific responsivity).

(Programme) integrity

Lipsey (1995) and other, more recent, meta-analyses have found that intervention services appear to work better when they are being actively researched. Regular collection of data on how an intervention is delivered sustains its clarity of purpose, and its adherence to the methods it was intended to deploy. This feature is called the integrity or *fidelity* of an intervention (Bernfeld, 2001; Hollin, 1995), and in the best intervention services it is regularly monitored and checked.

integrity the extent to which an intervention is delivered as planned and in accordance with the model of change on which it is based; sometimes called *fidelity*, *programme integrity* or *treatment integrity*.

To provide the most favourable conditions for the delivery of the above kinds of services, many other ingredients should be in place, for example to ensure the validity of the assessment methods used and the thoroughness of monitoring and evaluation procedures, alongside larger-scale strategies for managing the implementation of services within the provider agency (for fuller discussion, see Andrews, 2001).

Examples of effective interventions

(Note that these are descriptions of generic work. For ideas about more specific interventions for offenders see Chapters 17 & 18.)

There are some variations, but also important overlaps, between the kind of interventions shown to have the largest impact on adolescent, and adult, offenders. For young offenders who have committed more serious offences, applying results from his own meta-analyses Lipsey (1995; 2009) recommends that intervention programmes generally need to be provided for a duration of not less than six months, with a minimum of two contacts per week. On the basis of the large-scale reviews, several methods have emerged as more likely to be effective for working with this group (Dowden & Andrews, 1999; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998) as shown in Box 16.2.

BOX 16.2 EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR WORKING WITH ADOLESCENT OFFENDERS

Interpersonal skills training

This consists of a series of exercises designed to improve participants' skills in interacting with others. Working in a small group, individuals identify situations in which they are not sure how to act, or which they sometimes mishandle, for example giving in to pressure applied by others.

Suitable ways of managing the situation are discussed, then tried out using role-play, plus practice and feedback.

Behavioural interventions

In work with offenders this has included contingency contracts, where individual offenders and their supervisors

compose a list of problem behaviours and a system of rewards for progress in modifying them. Behavioural training procedures, such as modelling and graduated practice, form part of many other types of interventions.

Cognitive skills training

There are several programmes of this type. Most consist of a series of structured sessions, each containing exercises designed to help participants acquire or develop their abilities in the domain of thinking about and solving everyday (usually interpersonal) problems. Typical material includes work on putting an everyday problem into words, gathering information about it, generating possible solutions, linking means and ends, anticipating consequences, making decisions, and allied skills.

Structured individual counselling

In its most widely used format, counselling is a relatively unstructured activity, in which the counsellor acts in a person-centred, non-directive manner, allowing the client to take the lead. This can be valuable for a number of

purposes, but it has not emerged as an effective means of reducing offender recidivism. In order for it to work in that context, research suggests it needs to be more directive and structured, and based on a 'reality therapy' or 'problem-solving' framework.

Teaching family homes

These are residential units or group homes in which specially trained adults work in pairs as 'teaching parents'. Their role is to develop positive working alliances with residents, impart a range of social and self-management skills, clarify boundaries, and provide counselling and advocacy services. Young people can continue to attend school and return to their homes of origin at weekends. Some of the largest effect sizes published so far have been obtained from *functional family therapy*, *Parenting Wisely*, family empowerment and similar therapeutic approaches, which involve working with young offenders and their families (Gordon, 2002). The most elaborate approach is *multi-systemic therapy* (MST), which comprises work with the young person, his or her family, and school staff (Henggeler *et al.*, 1998).

For adult offenders, as mentioned earlier average effect sizes are generally lower than for those at the younger age range (indicating less strong results). Nevertheless, the results are meaningful in practice, and comparable patterns emerge in respect of the types of intervention most likely to work. With this age group, with the

exception of intimate partner violence programmes (see Chapter 10 for a discussion of the issues of working with this group), family-based work is uncommon and interventions are almost exclusively conducted with individuals themselves, though often employing a group format. Box 16.3 shows what works with adult offenders.

BOX 16.3 WHAT WORKS WITH ADULT OFFENDERS

'Manualised' cognitive-behavioural programmes focusing on risk factors for criminal recidivism

These are the best-validated and most widely disseminated approaches (Lipsey *et al.*, 2007; Lipton *et al.*, 2002a; Tong & Farrington, 2006; Wilson *et al.*, 2005). Variants of the approach have been well supported primarily for individuals with mixed patterns of offending that may include property, violent, and substance-related crimes (Hollin, 2001; McGuire, 2006; Motiuk & Serin, 2001). These types of programme have also yielded positive results when disseminated on a large scale in probation service settings (Hollin *et al.*, 2008; McGuire *et al.*, 2008; Palmer *et al.*, 2007). Despite initially high drop-out rates, after the delivery process had become better established the level of completion showed substantial improvement (National Offender Management Service, 2008). There is evidence that on two-year follow-up, the actual rate of reconviction

of those attending such programmes is significantly below the expected rate (Hollis, 2007).

Specially designed programmes with additional components

These have been developed for adults who have committed violent offences (Figure 16.4; see Chapter 18 for a fuller description of such programmes). This may include a focus on anger control, modulation of moods, and recognition and self-management of risk (Bush, 1995; Henning & Frueh, 1996). While there have been some very strong findings from anger management programmes, such as those of Dowden *et al.* (1999) who reported an 86 per cent reduction in violent reoffending over a three-year follow-up with high-risk prisoners in Canada, in other instances treatment gains have been very marginal and more research is needed on the appropriateness of allocation to

(Continued)



FIGURE 16.4 *Specially designed programmes with additional components have been developed for adults who have committed violent offences.*

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this type of programme and the related issue of 'readiness to change'. Treatment for sex offenders (see Chapter 18) would include specialised components.

Therapeutic communities

For offenders with lengthy histories of substance abuse, therapeutic communities have been shown to

be beneficial. These may be located in institutions or in the wider community and there are several different models on which they can be based (Lipton *et al.*, 2002b). Other multi-modal, integrated programmes containing several ingredients have also demonstrated good effects for reducing substance misuse (Springer *et al.*, 2003).

The evidence base concerning the usefulness of programmes of some of the above types is sufficiently impressive to have led to their adoption and implementation on a sizeable scale in prison and probation services in England and Wales (Hollin & Palmer, 2006). This became a component of a major government initiative and policy, the *Crime Reduction Programme*, which became operational in 2000. As part of it, an independent panel of experts, the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel (CSAP), was created, as a means of ensuring quality control and monitoring the process of introduction and 'rollout' of the programmes. By 2008, there were no fewer than 27 separate programmes validated for use in custodial settings and 20 for use in probation settings (with some approved for both) (Correctional Services

Accreditation Panel, 2009). Maguire *et al.* (2010) describe the history and work of the accreditation panel from an 'insider' perspective.

Many, probably the majority, of the programmes currently in most widespread use are delivered in a group format. This has potential advantages in terms of including larger numbers of participants, achieving greater cost-efficiency in services, and also in generating additional 'change factors' that can enhance the effects of some of the methods employed (Bieling *et al.*, 2006). However, a large proportion of the work done with many people who have broken the law takes place on an individual basis. Case Studies 16.1 and 16.2 illustrate applications of psychologically-based methods to the reduction of different types of offending behaviour.

CASE STUDY 16.1 TREATMENT FOR THEFT (SHOPLIFTING)

Aust (1987) described working alongside a psychologist in order to help Diane, a young woman given a suspended prison sentence and placed on probation after a series of shoplifting offences. Assessment indicated that she had committed numerous shop thefts and, despite having been arrested and sentenced on several previous occasions, felt unable to control her urges to steal, which had been a feature of her life since the age of 16. She described a cycle of elation and compulsion when in shops but at other times suffered from depressed moods. Diane had two children and was now expecting a third, and was highly distressed by the imminent prospect, should she reoffend, of giving birth

to her child in prison.

covert sensitisation a method developed in behaviour therapy, which applies conditioning principles to induce individuals to associate socially or personally unacceptable feelings and behaviour with an experience of disgust, thereby reducing their potency.

Diane, her probation officer and the psychologist worked out an intervention plan to help her overcome her compulsive stealing. This had two main components. One was covert sensitisation, a behaviour therapy procedure that in Diane's case entailed recording an audiotape in which she told herself the story

of being arrested, with all its dreaded consequences. The power of this was such that she simply had to look at it

rather than listen to it in order for it to have its effects. The second was practice of several techniques of self-management, which included a range of actions such as drawing the attention of staff whenever she went shopping, for example by asking them to show her where an item was; keeping receipts as a record of purchases; avoiding wearing clothes in which she could conceal items; and using a large, transparent carrier bag. While she implemented

self-management a form of cognitive behavioural intervention designed to increase an individual's capacity for exercising internalised control over aspects of their thoughts, feelings or behaviour that are causing difficulty or distress.

these changes she also joined gym sessions, which helped raise her self-esteem and underlying moods, providing an alternative to the 'buzz' of shoplifting. At her subsequent appearance in court, the judge deferred sentence for six months to allow her to work on this plan; at the end of this period, she had successfully avoided shop theft, and gained a new equilibrium in having reduced her impulses and replaced them with new patterns of behaviour. It is interesting to place this study in the context of research carried out by Carroll and Weaver (1986) who found remarkably different patterns of cognitions amongst a group of 'expert' shoplifters as compared with a 'novice' group:

Psychological contributions to offender assessment and management

Forensic psychologists working in prisons, probation or youth justice settings have progressively extended their roles from their previous 'niche', focused more or less exclusively on assessment and allocation, to a broader function in which they now contribute to risk assessment, delivery of interventions at the individual level, design and evaluation of programmes, report-writing, and research on all of these issues.

In recent years the risk-need-responsivity framework has been used to construct a number of more complex, in-depth assessment instruments for prediction of future involvement in crime. Several scales now exist for combined assessment of *static* and *dynamic* risk factors. The former refers to factors that are fixed at a given point in time (for example, an individual's age on first appearance in court). The latter refers to influences that fluctuate over time and are also potentially susceptible to change through intervention (for example, antisocial attitudes, level of self-control,

or problem-solving skills). Probably the best-known example of an assessment combining this spectrum of variables is the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI; Andrews *et al.*, 2004) (see Chapter 17 for a more in-depth description of this measure). However, there are numerous specialised methods of carrying out this work for general case-management purposes (for an overview of basic concepts involved in this, see Hollin, 2002; for a recent review of predictive accuracy of some prominent tools, see Yang *et al.*, 2010).

This type of approach, based on amalgamation of variables, is widely perceived as having more practical value than any single theoretical model. In addition to yielding predictions of the likelihood of reoffending, these approaches also generate information that can be applied in risk management, identifying target areas on which psychologists and other criminal justice staff can focus their efforts with individual offenders.

Psychologically-based research and other approaches in criminology linked to it have made enormous strides

CASE STUDY 16.2 SEX OFFENDER TREATMENT

Marshall (2006) has described a treatment programme carried out with Bill, a 38-year-old lorry driver who had convictions for sexual offences against children. Over a period of 20 years he had molested eight girls aged between 6 and 10 years of age. He was given early release from prison on condition that he attended treatment at a community-based clinic. Bill's history showed a pattern of sexual fantasies concerning younger girls, and of failure in his relationships with females closer to his age, feeling he had been humiliated in these encounters. As an only child who had grown up in an isolated rural area, his development was characterised by very limited social contacts, and more extensive assessment showed negative attitudes towards women, some distortions in his views of children whom he saw as submissive but also as provocative, and an undervaluing of himself. Assessment by *phallometry* (using the *penile plethysmograph* (PPG)) showed a pattern of strongest arousal to children but some evidence of arousal to adult women.

Intervention with Bill involved a multifaceted programme that focused on a series of areas including reduction of his sexual interest in children. This was approached by means of a combination of olfactory

aversion therapy (or olfactory aversive conditioning), in which he learned to associate sexual arousal to children with a foul odour in a series of 40 conditioning trials over a four-week period; and directed masturbation associated with images of adult women. These interventions were accompanied by a separate series of sessions of cognitive restructuring, designed to address attitudes and beliefs he held that were supportive of offending. The treatment programme proved to be effective in altering both Bill's sexual preferences and his habitual thoughts and feelings, and a follow-up over two years indicated that the changes were sustained. By that point in time, he had developed a stable relationship with an adult female partner.

olfactory aversive conditioning a behaviour therapy technique, based on conditioning principles, employed with individuals who have committed sexual offences as a result of socially unacceptable patterns of sexual arousal and associated behaviour.

directed masturbation also called masturbatory reconditioning. A behaviour therapy technique, based on conditioning principles, to help individuals with inappropriate sexual urges or attractions to divert their interests in more socially acceptable or less harmful ways.

over approximately the last two decades, with respect to developing an understanding of the factors that contribute to criminal behaviour, the traditional and entrenched practices that have no impact on it, and methods that can genuinely help reduce the chances of its recurrence. None of this has achieved a state of perfection of course, but the advances made have been significant nonetheless.

Given this accumulated knowledge base, coupled with the level of public and governmental concern over crime, there remains a surprisingly large gap between

this acquired information and everyday practice in many criminal justice agencies. The widespread perception that seeking to understand individual factors in crime implies that psychologists believe those are the *only* operative factors takes a very long time to dissipate. Apart from further research and knowledge accumulation then, a sizeable challenge remains in translating available findings judiciously into practice, and convincing other concerned parties that psychology has something valuable to offer in this field.

SUMMARY

The main areas covered in this chapter are as follows:

- the principal objectives of sentencing in courts of law (retribution/desert, incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and restoration/reparation) and the rationale given for each
- an overview of the effects of penal sentences on recidivism
- a more specific review of the evidence for sanctions and deterrence

- an outline of the evidence concerning the impact of psychosocial interventions on criminal behaviour, including a summary of the findings of 75 meta-analytic reviews and trends amongst the findings within them
- a survey of implications for practice in criminal justice and allied agencies
- illustration of the types of interventions that have been shown to be effective in reducing offending behaviour, including group programmes and individual case studies
- a brief outline of some current psychological contributions to offender assessment and management.

ESSAY/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Summarise the main arguments for the use of punishment as the principal component of society's response to criminal offending. Explain whether, in your view, some approaches to this have a sounder basis than others.
2. Evaluate evidence concerning the extent to which those who have repeatedly broken the criminal law can be 'rehabilitated' using psychosocial interventions. Give your views on whether this evidence might be of interest to policy makers in criminal justice.
3. Psychological research on offending and how to reduce it has tended to focus on serious crimes such as violence and sexual assault, or on the links between crime and mental disorder. What in your view are the reasons for this and on whether such an emphasis is justifiable?
4. Briefly survey current applications of psychological knowledge in the penal system and roles psychologists play within it. Propose possible extensions to these applications and roles, and provide appropriate justifications for them.

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