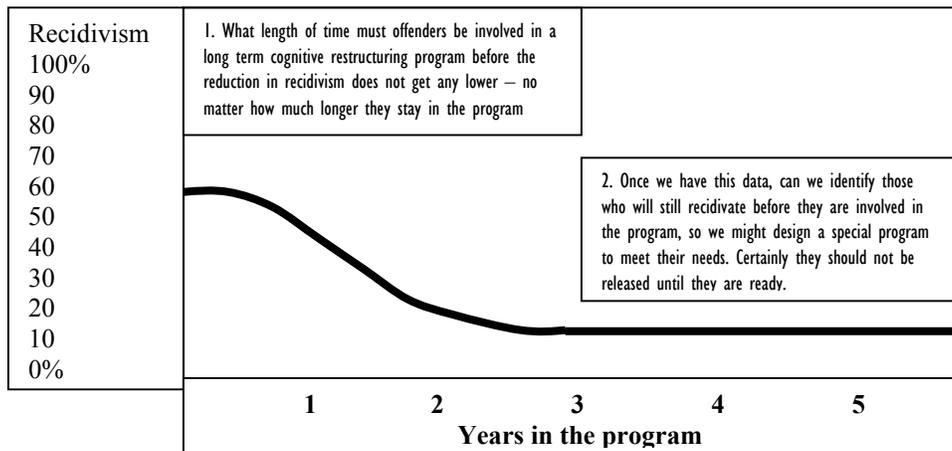


In this century, more than in all the previous centuries combined,

we are refining the technology that equips people to apply precepts and concepts learned from studying the subject of “MENTAL FITNESS”

We are significantly reducing crime and lowering the recidivism rate of offenders!

Two questions we posed to ourselves, and our prediction of the results this new and innovative program would produce are depicted as a black line on the graph.



Based on the longitudinal hard data we have now generated,
We are confident less than 10% recidivism is a realizable goal.

This would save taxpayers
millions of dollars.

LONGITUDINAL RESULTS

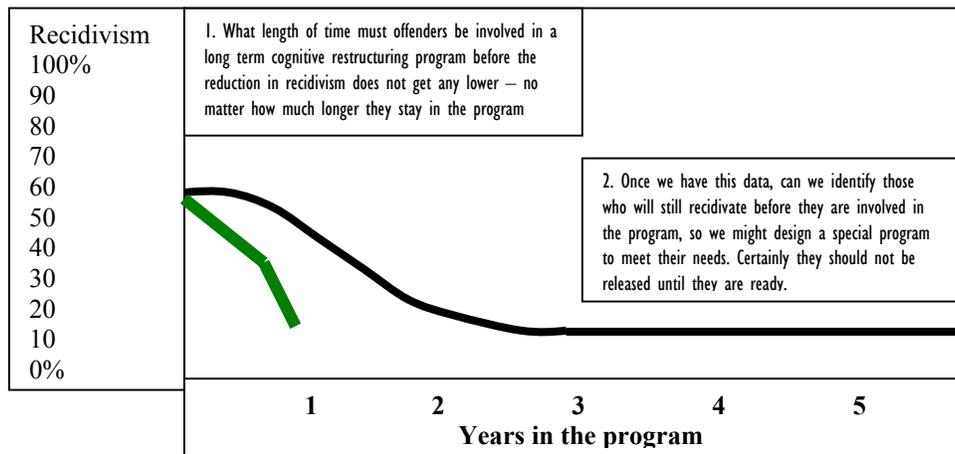
In September of 2000, the Oregon Department of Corrections (ORDOC) researched their records to determine the recidivism rates for 798 offenders who participated in the “NXChange” Program.

They found that 237 lacked valid SID (State Identification Numbers), and therefore were not included in the results, 190 are still incarcerated, 19 died before being released, and 76 of those released have not yet been out for more than 3 years (the standard waiting period for evaluating recidivism).

They were able to obtain recidivism rate for 277 inmates who had completed the Skill Building Course (SBC) and 79 who completed both the SBC and Intermediate Class A (ICA) courses.

The remaining courses did not have enough inmates released long enough to form a valid recidivism analysis – the minimum number being at least 30.

They reported the following recidivism rates – the same chart shows a black line of our expectation while the green line indicates the actual results of the research completed by the Oregon Department of Corrections:



- 1.) By the end of the first year some offenders would be taking one regular program course, attending a facilitator training course, and be helping to facilitate the SBC Class. Many of the enrollees reflected in the ORDOC research took the SBC and ICA more than one time.
- 2.) Each Course is one college semester in length. Once the SBC (5-day intensive course) is completed, offenders participated in one 3-hour class period per week with an addition 6-9 hours of outside work.
- 3.) This information does not take into consideration the influence on recidivism rates of other programs in which inmates may have been involved – such as job skills training, etc. The most significant proof of success of the program itself is the difference in those completing both segments as compared to just one.

Further research will focus on improving the technology to decrease the amount of time it takes to reduce recidivism. We should find a way to identify early those individuals most likely to recidivate regardless of how much time they spend in a mental fitness program. Certainly we can develop a special program to address these individuals. We have already experienced success running this program in the Special Management Unit (inmates with more severe psychological problems).

We are confident we will be able to shorten the time it takes to reduce recidivism as we increase the quality of the videos, use the computer to assist students in learning the material, increase the hours of contact each week from 3 to 6 or even more, and involve many other change agents and educators in helping improve the technology of the program.

It will be more interesting to do the research to determine the effectiveness of the NXChange program when it is used as a Jail Alternative Program in the community.

INTRODUCTION

Anyone having read extensively about crime and criminals will likely be familiar with the many studies and research conducted in an effort to identify why crimes are committed and why some individuals become criminals. **With few exceptions, all of the most noted writers have come to the same basic conclusion – that it is what criminals believe** (or, as more commonly stated, their “Thinking Errors) that cause them to commit the greatest amount of crime and engage in criminal behavior. Each of these writers urged the justice system to develop and implement a program to correct these erroneous beliefs.

After all that has been written about the need for an effective program, there is still no comprehensive networking program having Order, Continuity, and providing a Cumulative change experience (OCC) anywhere in the judicial system. As offenders move from jail to prison they encounter vastly different programs. Offenders often move before they can complete anything.

Although most offenders walk away from their first offense without having to do any time at all, the technology is now available for individuals convicted of their first offenses to be sentenced to a very long term ‘*cognitive restructuring*’ program in their own community. They are confined to their homes (with electronic bracelets, if needed) and are only permitted out of their home to work or attend change program classes. This allows them to continue to support their families, to pay restitution to their victims, and avoids the cost of incarceration and welfare payments while still providing punishment for their crime.

Offenders would even be required to pay the very low cost of the program. Ideally, the program will last a minimum of 1-3 years – as a short 30-hour anger management course or program that does not focus on changing basic conclusions just isn’t adequate to permanently effect enough change in a person’s belief system.

If this program were available, judges could sentence an offender to a Jail Alternative Sentence Option Program (JASOP) in the community as an alternative to incarceration. The building of more and more new prisons, when we do not have a single jail alternative program in place, seems a wasteful expenditure of the taxpayer’s hard earned dollars.

History of the program

In 1972 Jim Campbell was asked to design, develop, and implement the first drug/alcohol program for the U.S. Army in Europe. After a week of frustrating discussions, with the psychiatrists, psychologists, profession and nonprofessional counselors, attempting to agree on why people take drugs, Jim asked them to explore the other direction – why do people NOT take drugs. They agreed quickly that people who do not take drugs have “too much going for them”, they have greater self-respect, self control and self esteem.

With that in mind, Jim developed a program that focused on developing greater self-esteem. He had the expectation that if we could find ways to build the supporting beliefs, the program would be successful. The program became so successful it was selected by the U.S. Senate Committee for Drug and Alcohol Abuse as one of the ten best programs in the world. Over the past 25 years, that program has evolved into what we call the subject of “Mental Fitness.”

“Mental Fitness” is a LEARNED set of beliefs that enables a person to respond more appropriately

The problem is there are no Universities presently with curriculums that certify teachers to teach the subject of “Mental Fitness” in our schools – and so no one has been taught this new subject.

The new technology of “how” to teach the subject of Mental Fitness will make individual old fashioned “Counseling” obsolete – just as learning how to use word processing makes using a typewriter obsolete. As the subject of Mental Fitness evolves, we are gaining the latest technology in how to effect “change” in people – especially with offenders.

NEW TECHNOLOGY:

The world of corrections has worked through many different emerging therapies until we now have the term “cognitive restructuring” as our buzzword.

We believe many of the terms used in the past will change in the future. For example, the term “Life Skills”, according to curriculum specialists in the educational world, means teaching how to balance a checkbook, ride the transit system, or fill out a job application. “Thinking Skills” means how to play better chess, think more sequentially, process problems in a more orderly fashion. When Dr. Yochelson coined the term ‘*thinking error*,’ he would have been more accurate if he had called it a ‘*belief error*’. A belief error has more to do with one’s conclusions, attitudes, and values. Everyone is struggling with what cognitive restructuring means and what the subject material is. Mental Fitness, as a subject, makes things more clear and gives us the material to use in the process – the answers. Attempting to permanently modify behavior without changing the belief system does not work.

NX – the first erroneous belief that has to change is what we call the NX conclusion. N stands for inNternal response and the X stands for eXternal reaction. We can tell when people unknowingly use the X conclusion. They say things like: You make me mad; you hurt my feelings; that car made me angry; whatever. They unknowingly believe that the outside or external world controls their emotions, happiness, success, and lives. They rationalize and justify their errant behavior by blaming people and situations – things outside themselves. When people finally understand the concept that (regardless of what happens to them from outside or externally) they live in the negative emotions, they experience the negative consequence, they unknowingly hold others responsible for their disabled condition, their behavior impacts adversely on everyone around them, and they LOSE big time, that is when they stop rationalizing and justifying their blaming behavior and choose to respond appropriately instead of react emotionally. Knowledge and awareness of this change in paradigm is gained during the first course. However, it may take a while before the “breakthrough” comes and the individual owns it.

PB – The second erroneous belief that has to change is what we call the PB conclusion. There is a difference in **Personhood and Beliefs**. Personhood is the permanent part of who you are, ... while beliefs form the transient operating system you inherited from culture. Beliefs can change while personhood (who you are) remains more constant. In personhood we have no color, age difference, sexual scripting, great need for power and position or other erroneous beliefs that lead to prejudice, discrimination and war. In personhood we are OK. We learn that our beliefs, however, are not OK. Offenders come to realize they are being punished for their behavior and not for who they are. You are not just simply what you believe.

EV – The course teaches the concept of **EQUAL VALUE**. Participants learn anger and depression (Related to dominant and submissive behaviors) are dynamically identical strategies they have unknowingly learned to use in attempting to get what they want. They learn why these strategies are self-defeating. Offenders become able to identify even their most subtle unequal value thoughts and behavioral patterns. They learn what and how to make appropriate changes. They learn how to become assertive instead of aggressive.

IB – Participants learn that **I**ntending to be a good person is of no consequence in reviewing the process of how they interact with others. They are accountable for the **B**ehavior – regardless of their intent. We examine only their current and past behaviors to determine what faulty conclusion they are really using to operate with – increase their awareness. We look at what they are doing, and how it works – regardless of their intention. Other people form their perception about us based on our behavior. We form our

perception about ourselves based primarily on our intent. *Often our behavior unknowingly works directly opposite our intent.* Other people's perception of us is 100% accurate – but only for them. Our perception of ourselves is also 100% accurate – but only for us. This is also what creates what is called a *distortion gap* in perceptions – intention vs. behaviors.

Presenting these kind of precepts and concepts in a classroom learning environment equips a person to use the learned material to self correct instead of being “straightened out” by someone. It is less threatening than being thrown into a therapy group where a change agent like to “Attack” through all forms of confrontation of “get in their face.” That strategy is always more destructive than helpful. When the change agent is equipped with the new technology, the change agent stops the destructive methodology and their work becomes more effective.

The program provides a **Cognitive** (to know), **Affective** (to do), and **Effective** (to be) learning experience. Because you learn something does not mean you can do it to the required level of proficiency. All 3 different learning environments are deliberately engineered into the program.

The **first year** of the program is primarily classes – *they learn to know*. During the **second year** participants engage in a permanent group setting which allows them to share their previous years learned concepts and turn them into a personal plan to change their decisions and behaviors. The group helps the individual to see if he or she has truly identified all of his or her self-defeating conclusions that might cause recidivism. – *They learn to do*. Once the plan is formed, it is reviewed quarterly to determine the individual's progress toward closure. In the **third year**, as they continue in a permanent group, we have them learn how to facilitate the program – *they learn to be*. We believe people learn better when they are helping others by having to share the paradigms – than when they just learn them in class. Some facilitate courses and others tutor slower learners or those with reading or language difficulties to keep them up with their group. Everyone participates in an effective learning experience.

The program has **ORDER** (each class period has specific measurable behavioral learning objectives that are checked to assure learning occurred). Second, the program has **CONTINUITY** (each class period builds on all previous class periods and each semester course builds on all previous courses), and third, the program provides a **CUMULATIVE** (the longer a person participates in the program, the greater is the amount of change) learning experience.

The program is designed with an initial **24 hour accelerator program** that achieves three objectives: **(1)** provides an exciting insight into the world of mental fitness; **(2)** traumatically conditions offenders to being more open to information that can help them; **(3)** strongly motivates them to want to continue in the program. Regardless of what *extrinsic* motivation it takes to get a person started in the program, we have found the end of the accelerator program consistently intrinsically motivates them – they want to participate.

COMMENTARIES:

First, the inmates:

RON HANSON, PCF (Permanent Chartered Facilitator)
Inmate released – SOC Facilitator

For me, the most beneficial part of the Skills Of Communication Program was gaining an understanding of the concept of EQUAL VALUE. SOC taught me and then helped me develop and demonstrate empathy and compassion for others – no matter who they were or what their relationship was to me.

The EQUAL VALUE concept also helped me to accept myself for killing three people, a mother and two children, in a drunken driving crash. I was able to find a value within myself. I was able to realize that, although I could never fully right the wrong I had done, I could work with others to help make changes in my community.

Due to the skills I gained in SOC, today I work with judges, district attorneys, crime victims, ex-offenders, police officers, medical examiners, firemen, etc. I speak at high schools, and DUII victim impact panels.

Without SOC I would not have had the courage to attempt to do this or interact with these people and to change my life... Ron Hanson. Counselor, Alcohol & Drug Treatment Center.

BRAD VOLLMER, PCF

Inmate, 5000+ hours in the program.

FACING THE TRUTH ABOUT MYSELF AND THE WORLD AROUND ME, I DECIDED I NEEDED TO CHANGE!

In the not too distant past the beliefs I held were, in my mind, absolute and not subject to challenge or modification.

It's amazing how, once an idea or belief became true for me, I would filter incoming information to fit what I already held to be true. At times I would even fight to maintain my belief and declared to any and all who disagreed with me that they were either liars or fools. I tended to deny the possibility that I might be the one who was mistaken. I would rather see someone else as mistaken or in error than to see the error in myself.

Then one day I had a startling realization. I began to see some of what I once held to be true as false. At first this was very frightening. For, if some of what I believed was false, it stood to reason that all of what I thought and believed could also be false.

Fortunately, when this realization occurred, I was in a "Mental Fitness" program called Skills Of Communication – or more commonly SOC. This is where I learned about thinking errors and how everyone has them. In the SOC program I learned how my conclusions (thoughts, ideas, beliefs) influenced my behavior. My behavior, in turn, controlled the results – the outcome of my behavior.

Once the above concepts sank in, I set out to overhaul my belief system by examining each of my old conclusions to check their validity. This took some time and effort because most of my old conclusions were covered with years of reinforcement – especially the conclusions I held concerning myself.

The Skills Of Communication Program has helped me gain a clear understanding of how others see me as well as the way that I view others, myself, and the world around me.

I now work daily to improve myself physically, mentally, and spiritually. I no longer consider myself to be a victim of circumstances. My self-esteem is richer and healthier than ever before. I feel comfortable being totally responsible for my thoughts, behaviors, and the results.

At times I still have my moments of doubt and frustration. But now I know how to deal with problems and can respond to situations in a positive and constructive fashion instead of reacting to them as I have in the past... Bradley Scott Vollmer, August 1993.

FREDDIE McGEE, PCF

Inmate released 5 years – Inmate Facilitator, 5,000+ hours in the program

Life presents many challenges. The appropriate response is crucial – and life often requires an instantaneous response.

I am now the husband of an amazing lady, father of 2 precious children, and a behavioral science graduate. I respect substance abuse, environmental, and chemical dependency. My response to life's challenges directly effects the direction of the human lives with whom I work.

The S.O.C. Program has provided me with real skills that enable me to effectively relate to the needs of others while meaningfully expressing the life concerns that are important to me.

I have intimately involved my energies with S.O.C. for over a decade. I was involved in the program from the basic Skill Building Course (SBC) all the way through facilitating the classes for several years. The effect of that experience has been greatly rewarding to me. S.O.C. has tremendously improved my awareness of humanity and how to resolve it's many complexities.

In the early 1980's I met Jim Campbell. I experienced, for the first time in my life, an individual with a program that challenged (without force) the "way" I thought, felt, and "what" I said and did. This experience began in the Oregon State Penitentiary where I was incarcerated for a decade for my inappropriate responses to life's challenges. This experience continues to this day.

Now I make contributions to society as a tax paying and very concerned member. I am no longer a tax burden... Freddie McGee, October 2000

GERALD BATTY, PCF

Inmate, 5000+ hours in the program

Before my exposure to the Skills Of Communication Program I would have honestly told you that I have no problems at all. I was pretty near perfect and nothing needed to be changed. I was convinced I was happy with the circumstances and myself. The decisions that controlled my behavior were based upon conclusions that I believed to be valid based upon my upbringing, my environment, and my experiences in life. I believed these conclusions needed no examination.

However, as I progressed through the program, I began to question some of my basic beliefs and conclusions. It was alarming to discover how inaccurate my belief system was. I became aware that I had many thinking errors. It was helpful to me to discover that I have the power to change my thinking and replace the errors with rational thinking – which is not only pro-social but also effective. I was often confronted with my old reinforced responses and the forgone behaviors I had put to use in my life. I consciously unpracticed every behavior many times over four years before my new conclusions became automatic responses.

Looking back, I realize how self-defeating my old conclusions were. Today, I question everything I ever believed in and examine every aspect of my behavior. I no longer react to a situation but respond in a positive and constructive manner. I have learned to see myself as others see me. I have also gained a clear understanding that I am not a victim and that I am responsible for all my actions and choices. I continue working on a daily basis to improve my mental fitness. I am building healthy and effective conclusions that enable me to have a quality of life that I never thought possible. It is now an enjoyable process for me.

I would recommend this program to others looking to improve their life and free themselves of their self-defeating conclusions, behaviors, and results they generate... Gerald Batty, October 2000

SCOTT TEAGUE

Inmate, 5000+ hours in the program

During my incarceration at Oregon State Penitentiary I have completed many educational and mental health programs from college courses to group therapy. However, there is one program, in my belief, that stands above the others. This program has an application that specifically addresses mental fitness.

The specific areas in which this program, "Skills Of Communication," targets are thinking skills, thinking errors, and applying the new concepts effectively through a thought process first, then effectively acting upon these new social skills. And to validate these changes and ensure truthfulness among the students, Mr. Jim Campbell, the founder and Director of Research & Development for Skills Of Communication, has created a permanent group that allows students to examine their specific thinking errors. This particular section of the program was monumental in my personal growth.

Through the years, here at O.S.P., I have been blessed by and through facilitating the Skills Of Communication program. I have witnessed many men, including myself; make life-changing improvements in their communication and social skills. These individuals are committed to enriching their lives through this life long study of mental fitness. I applaud them for their effort... Scott Teague, October 2000.

Second, the Staff

MARYCHRIS MILLER, M.A., PCF - 5,000+ hours in the program
Department of Corrections staff in Special Management Unit and Education Center

Approximately ten years ago, I was assigned to teach in the psychiatric ward at Oregon State Penitentiary Maximum Security Institution for male felons. I discovered that academics were not necessarily the important lesson that needed to be learned. The inmates they needed social skills.

I searched around and discovered the Skills Of Communication program by Jim Campbell. After a few months, correctional officers and medical staff began reporting the positive difference and growth in inmates. A few years later, I was reassigned to general population and I continue to use this program in my classes with tremendous success.

I recommend this program to everyone who wants to improve his or her relationships.

GUIDO M. LISTELLA, Psychologist, PCF 5,000+ hours in the program

The vast majority of inmates at the Oregon State Penitentiary are not able to effectively communicate with others due to faulty thinking errors. Thinking precedes communications. Communication, or lack of it, precedes behavior. Learned thinking errors result in a variety of angry, impulsive, and often dangerous behaviors.

Skills Of Communication (SOC) groups are designed to help inmates, during the course of many sessions, to discover their thinking errors. Once these are identified, inmates learn just how their thinking errors are "messing up their lives" on the streets as well as in prison.

The SOC program requires that participants work through a variety of techniques to accomplish the goal. It includes written lesson plans, homework, group discussions, and most important, through a series of group role-playing activities.

My role, as a pro-bono psychologist, is to act as a resource person and to occasionally help in difficult situations. I have personally witnessed many inmates change. They become more relaxed, mellow, and trusting of self and others. They are also more effectively able to handle anger and other negative behaviors directed at them.

My many years at OSP have been rewarding.... Guido Listella, October 2000

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR:



Mr. Furlton Burns has worked as a Parole & Probation Supervisor for the State of Oregon, on the Correctional Staff at Oregon State Correctional Institution, a Deputy Superintendent for the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, a military police officer and confinement facility commander in the U.S. Army.

He also is serving voluntarily as President of the 7th Step Foundation of Oregon. He has been involved with this program since the research started at Oregon State Penitentiary in 1982.

Furlton is a retired disabled Vietnam Veteran who served 2 years on the National Board of Directors for the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). Furlton serves currently as an Advisory Board Member for the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs

He Is Director for National Projects for Skills Of Communications.

For more information about this program call **(503) 236-7700** or e-mail socnat@earthlink.net