

A photograph showing a pair of hands in silhouette, reaching upwards towards a bright, multi-paned window. The light from the window creates a strong contrast, highlighting the outlines of the hands against the dark background. The window panes are visible as a grid of light and dark squares.

What Works in Offender Rehabilitation

An Evidence-Based Approach to
Assessment and Treatment

Edited by Leam A. Craig, Louise Dixon, and Theresa A. Gannon

What Works in Offender Rehabilitation

LEAM A. CRAIG: *For the love of my family.*

LOUISE DIXON: *To my parents, Dot and Jim, and big brother, Ian, for
their continual love and support.*

THERESA A. GANNON: *For my colleagues at CORE-FP.*

What Works in Offender Rehabilitation

*An Evidence-Based Approach to Assessment
and Treatment*

Edited by

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rehabilitation of sexual offenders. Theresa is Lead Editor of several books, including *Aggressive Offenders' Cognition: Theory, Research, and Treatment* (John Wiley & Sons) along with Professor Tony Ward, Professor Anthony Beech and Dr Dawn Fisher, and *Female Sexual Offenders: Theory, Assessment and Treatment* (Wiley-Blackwell) along with Franca Cortoni. She serves on the editorial boards of *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *British Journal of Forensic Practice*, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, is Associate Editor of *Journal of Sexual Aggression* and Editor of *Psychology, Crime & Law*.

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Foreword

The Heart of Offender Rehabilitation: Values, Knowledge, and Capabilities

Politicians, professionals and laypeople all have opinions on the issue of offender rehabilitation and its place within the criminal justice system. For example, the relationship between rehabilitation and punishment, whether offenders are individuals like us or moral strangers, or whether they deserve the chance at better lives are topics enthusiastically discussed in universities, criminal justice agencies, bars and homes. It seems that there is no end to the expertise of the community concerning the technical and ethical aspects of correctional rehabilitation. A puzzling feature of the public interest in criminal justice matters is the confidence with which judgements are pronounced and the expectation that crime and its prevention is legitimately a community matter not to be left to professionals. This degree of intrusion is rarely observed in other disciplines such as physics or biology. People have opinions to be sure, but they do not claim the right to adjudicate on the content and nature of scientific projects the way they do when it comes to crime initiatives. How do we account for individuals' interest in, and confidence in, the validity of their attitudes concerning crime management?

In a recent paper, McNeill (2012) argues that there are ethical, social, legal and psychological forms of rehabilitation discernable in the professional literature and lay discourse, and that they all have legitimate claims to our attention. This position is echoed by theorists such as Laws and Ward (2010) who point to the inherent normativeness of offender rehabilitation alongside its capability-building aspects. That is, at the heart of any rehabilitation initiative is the attempt to persuade individuals to reorientate (and at times replace) their core values and the way these values are instantiated in their lifestyles. It is simply not enough to target criminogenic needs and levels of risk when designing intervention programmes. The provision of psychological and social resources in the absence of clear goals and the underlying values they embody is likely to result in poorly motivated offenders and a hit-or-miss approach to treatment. There is no question that we know a lot about psychological treatment and its delivery for offenders (Andrews and Bonta, 2010; Polaschek, 2012), but when it comes to the other three forms of rehabilitation (i.e., ethical, social and legal) we are not so sure footed. Because crime involves the infliction of unjustified, significant harm on individuals and the community, it is necessarily an ethical, social and legal issue. And as such, all members of the

moral community are entitled to participate in decisions concerning the treatment of offenders – decisions that arguably affect them both directly and indirectly. The attempt to assist offenders to design and live socially acceptable and personally fulfilling lives is clearly a value-laden enterprise. Successful intervention requires the availability of social supports, resources and an opportunity for redemption (Ward and Maruna, 2007). These factors all involve legal, social and moral norms and institutions that exemplify them and create pathways from incarceration to community reintegration.

What follows from these observations? Well, for one thing it is simply not sufficient to ask what types of programmes work or what interventions reliably reduce reoffending rates. Alongside these questions, it is also necessary to inquire about the values at stake and whether or not the entitlements and interests of all key stakeholders have been considered – offenders and members of the community alike. Crime is a public matter and while researchers and clinicians are experts in what specific techniques best reduce recidivism, they are not *the* experts in ethical, social and legal issues. We need to cast a much wider net. Ours is a practical activity that draws from cultural, ethical, legal and social understandings as well as scientific knowledge.

In my view, *What Works in Offender Rehabilitation: An Evidence-Based Approach to Assessment and Treatment*, edited by Leam Craig, Louise Dixon and Theresa Gannon, does exactly that. It is a comprehensive and deep book whose 25 chapters cover numerous offender types and, encouragingly, deal with the ethical, legal, social and psychological components of offender rehabilitation. There are chapters on the technical aspects of risk assessment and treatment, and others that touch upon public attitudes towards punishment and rehabilitation. Many of the chapters seamlessly integrate social, legal and ethical issues in their discussion of assessment and treatment approaches towards offenders. Another impressive feature of the book is the sheer diversity of theoretical perspectives evident. There is a common acceptance of the necessity to evaluate treatment programmes and perspectives empirically, but there is also a recognition that empirical adequacy on its own provides an overly thin measure of a programme's value. Finally, the editors are to be congratulated for bringing together both established and young researchers and clinicians – an exciting combination of theoretical freshness and intellectual experience. What this book offers is a picture of current best practice while pointing the way to future developments. I think it will prove to be a landmark volume likely to be adopted by universities training clinicians, and it should prove extremely valuable as a resource for practitioners already working in the field. In short, it is an excellent book.

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Part I
Introduction

1

Overview and Structure of the Book

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Introduction

The concept and public perception of offender rehabilitation has had a chequered history, influenced by the social and political climate of the day. From the early introduction of penitentiary, public and government opinion has had to strike a balance between punishment and rehabilitation (see Reynolds, Craig and Boer, 2009). Early research suggests there is a ‘duality’ to the public’s sanctioning ideology – ‘although citizens clearly want offenders punished, they continue to believe that offenders should be rehabilitated’ (Cullen, Cullen and Wozniak, 1988, p. 305). The public juxtaposition is one of getting tough on crime and that punishment should be accompanied by rehabilitation, that treatment can work and that prison inmates should be given the opportunity to reform themselves. This two-pronged finding, support for the ‘just deserts’ theory of punishment along with the ‘need for rehabilitation’, suggests that public attitudes towards crime are not one-dimensional. Instead, underlying the need for retribution is an element of optimism for offenders to reform and become participating members of society.

However, the concept of change and rehabilitation took a blow during the 1970s following the publication of Martinson’s (1974) much-cited review in which he believed education or therapeutic intervention programmes cannot overcome the tendency for offenders to continue to engage in criminal behaviour. This was followed by the work of Lipton, Martinson and Wilks (1975) and Brody (1976) who suggested, due to poor methodologies and research designs, that the evidence for offender rehabilitation cannot be relied upon.

In response to the assumption that ‘nothing works’ in rehabilitation and reducing tendencies in offenders to continue criminal behaviour, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a resurgence of research activity into offender assessment and treatment, and a number of theoretical advances have been made progressing our understanding of offender rehabilitation. New techniques such as meta-analyses marked a turning point in the understanding of reducing reoffending

(Andrews *et al.*, 1990). This methodology allowed for the analysis of data from multiple studies identifying significant factors associated with offending from which treatment targets could be identified.

Addressing the methodological concerns raised by Lipton, Martinson and Wilks (1975) and Brody (1976), research into offender rehabilitation has culminated in a ‘what works’ research literature – *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct* (Andrews and Bonta, 1994, 1998, 2003, 2006, 2010), *What Works: Reducing Reoffending* (McGuire, 1995), *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment: Effective Programmes and Policies to Reduce Reoffending* (McGuire, 2002), *Offender Rehabilitation in Practice: Implementing and Evaluating Effective Programmes* (Bernfield, Farrington and Leschied, 2001) and *Offending Behaviour Programmes: Development, Application and Controversies* (Hollin and Palmer, 2006) – the emphasis of which was evidence-based practice and empirical rigour.

Evaluating Offender Rehabilitation

‘Rehabilitation’ means literally ‘re-enabling’ or ‘making fit again’ (from the Latin *rehabilitare*). Some argue that it is, in part, the definitional ambiguities of the concept of ‘rehabilitation’ which have contributed to the difficulties faced in criminal justice settings. As McNeill (2012) highlights, rehabilitation in the work of eighteenth-century Classicists (e.g., Beccaria, 1764[1963]) who argued for the use of punishment as a way of ‘requalifying individuals’ (p. 22) suggests a *utilitarian* concept of rehabilitation.

The term ‘rehabilitation’, we suggest, in the prison context means readying prisoners to rejoin society, as useful and law-abiding members of the wider community. With an ever-expanding prison population, the successful rehabilitation of offenders is often considered the ‘holy grail’ of criminal justice systems around the world. The number of offenders in prison in England and Wales reached a record high of 88 179 prisoners on 2 December 2011, approximately 1100 places below the useable operational capacity of the prison estate (Berman, 2012). The number of people in Scottish prisons passed 8000 for the first time in August 2008 and reached its record level of 8301 on 7 November 2011 (Berman, 2012).

As part of the push towards reducing reoffending and offender rehabilitation, a number of countries have begun to introduce structured intervention programmes in prison and probation services. The introduction of programmes has been accompanied by an ‘accreditation’ process to select the programmes thought most likely to achieve good results, and an elaborate system of monitoring standards of delivery and evaluating outcomes has been developed.

With the American Psychological Association (APA), Chambless and colleagues (Chambless and Hollon, 1998; Chambless and Ollendick, 2001; Chambless *et al.*, 1998) developed a methodology of examining the quality of evidence from outcome studies on the effectiveness of psychological therapy. One outcome of the APA criteria was that treatment should be supported by a manual to ensure consistency and standardization across sites.

In a report to the US Congress, Sharman *et al.* (1997) developed a ‘levels’ system for reviewing the quality of evidence supporting any given intervention in the field of criminal behaviour. They developed and employed the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods ranking each study from Level I (weakest) to Level V (strongest) on overall internal validity. Level I represents correlation between a crime prevention programme and a measure of crime, or crime risk factors, at a single point in time. Level II represents a temporal sequence between the programme and the crime or risk outcome clearly observed, or the presence of a comparison