Piloting a Compressed Version of the Violence Prevention Program - Maintenance with an Offender Serving a Short Sentence

by

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ABSTRACT

Correctional Service of Canada programs such as the Violence Prevention Program - Moderate Intensity (VPP-MI) and Violence Prevention Program - High Intensity (VPP-HI) are known to reduce both general and violent rates of recidivism among violent offenders. After completion of VPP-MI or VPP-HI, graduates are required to take the Violence Prevention Program - Maintenance (VPP-M) over the course of 12 months.

The present study examined the effects of a compressed (i.e., 7 weeks) VPP-M on a male offender who successfully completed the VPP-MI and was soon to be released.

The VPP-M Pre-Post Rating Summaries and VPP: Self-Report Assessment Measures were administered before and after the compressed VPP-M. The results suggest that the participant understood and could demonstrate the skills targeted in training although anger, aggression, and suspicion increased slightly.

This study provides a cautious demonstration of the efficacy of compressed VPP-M. A larger number of participants would be required to determine whether compressed VPP-M serves as an effective way to maintain the skills acquired in VPP-MI and VPP-HI.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..............................................................................................................ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..........................................................................................iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................iv

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................1

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................................3

   Risk, Needs, Responsivity Model .................................................................3
   Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Recidivism .............................................3
   Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Anger Management in Offenders ......4
   Violence Prevention Program and Recidivism ..........................................4
   Punishment and Recidivism ........................................................................5
   Earned Early Release Programs: Prisons vs. Boot Camps ......................6
   Social Therapy and Recidivism .................................................................8
   Transcendental Meditation and Recidivism ..............................................8
   CSC programming Costs-Benefits ...........................................................9
   Summary ..........................................................................................................9

III. METHOD .............................................................................................................10

   Selection Procedure ....................................................................................10
   Informed Consent Procedures .................................................................10
   Assessment Measures ................................................................................10
   General Procedure of Sessions ................................................................11
   Homework Assignments ............................................................................12
   File Review of Criminal History ............................................................12
   File Review of Risk/Needs Assessment Results .....................................13
   Previous Programming ................................................................................14

IV. RESULTS ..........................................................................................................15

   Assessment Results .....................................................................................15
   VPP-M Pre-Post Rating Summaries .........................................................15
   VPP Self-Report Assessment Measures ..................................................15
Attendance, Homework, and Other Observations ........................................ 17
V. CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION ...................................................................... 18
Summary ....................................................................................................... 18
Strengths ...................................................................................................... 19
Limitations .................................................................................................... 19
Multi-Level Challenges to Service Implementation Report ..................... 20
Contributions to the Behavioural Psychology Field .............................. 21
Recommendations for Further Development ........................................... 21
REFERENCES .............................................................................................. 22
APPENDICES ................................................................................................. 25
Appendix A: Thesis Consent Form ............................................................... 26
Appendix B: Assessment Measures ............................................................... 30
Appendix C: Session Summaries ................................................................. 33
Appendix D: Blank Attendance and Completed Homework Log ............. 36
Appendix E: Filled Out Attendance and Completed Homework Log ....... 37
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Correctional Service Canada (CSC) offers a large array of programs that are designed to address certain risk factors for each offender, which will assist each offender with reintegrating into society (Correctional Service Canada, 2009). Overall, the correctional programs used are cost-effective and are successful in reducing offenders' chances of recidivism (McCowan, Garin, & Yates, 2009). Correctional prevention programs use a cognitive-behavioural approach to teach offenders skills that they can use to function in society and to avoid committing new offences. The Violence Prevention Program - Moderate Intensity (VPP-MI) and the Violence Prevention Program - High Intensity (VPP-HI) are programs available in CSC that are designed to help offenders, who are at risk for committing violent recidivism, avoid committing new violent offences after being released into the community (Correctional Service Canada, 2009). The Violence Prevention Program - Maintenance (VPP-M) is used for assisting graduates of VPP-MI and graduates of VPP-HI with reviewing and practising the skills that they learned in those programs.

This thesis looks at the use of a time compressed VPP-M with a male offender who successfully completed VPP-MI. VPP-M is traditionally a 12-month program with 12 sessions in total. The sessions are held once a month and are two hours in length. The VPP-M for this thesis lasted only seven weeks and the sessions were prescribed for twice a week. The sessions were targeted for an hour and a half each. There are usually a maximum of 10 participants in the VPP-M programs, but there was only one participant in the program for this thesis. The program usually takes place in a classroom with one correctional program facilitator (CPO). In this thesis, the program took place in a common room and a placement student and a CPO facilitated each session together. A rating summary was used to assess any gains the participant made in his understanding and ability to use the skills he was taught in VPP-MI. Also, self-report assessments were used to see if the participant made any improvements in his reported suspicion, aggression, anger, and hostility.

During the time the program was implemented, the participant was serving the last two months of his sentence. This made him unable to participate in a full length VPP-M. Therefore, the placement student and the CPO delivered a time-compressed version of VPP-M with the participant. The program was implemented at Kingston Penitentiary (KP), which was in the process of closing at the time. Piloting a time-compressed correctional program was also a means to see if time-compressed programs are effective, as staff-members at KP may not have had time to implement full length programs when the institution was approaching its closing date.

It was hypothesized that the participant would develop a further understanding of the skills reviewed in VPP-M through applying the skills to scenarios, attending sessions, and completing homework. The skill areas that the participant was expected to display development in were as follows: working towards goals, self-management, problem-solving, challenging thinking that supports violence, anger and emotion management, and communication and conflict resolution. It was also expected that the participant would display little improvement in his self-report scores because the program was delivered within a short period of time.
This thesis begins with an in-depth review of the literature on the effectiveness of various treatments that target offender populations. The topics discussed include: the risk, needs, responsivity model; cognitive behaviour therapy and recidivism; cognitive behavioural therapy and anger management in offenders; violence prevention program and recidivism; punishment and recidivism; earned early release programs: prisons vs. boot camps; social therapy and recidivism; transcendental meditation and recidivism; and CSC programming costs to benefits. The method section gives a description of the program’s procedures, the assessment measures, and the participant’s background information. The results section describes the participant’s progress throughout the program and any changes he made in assessment scores. Finally, the discussion section includes a summary of this thesis as well as its strengths and weaknesses.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Risk, Needs, Responsivity Model

CSC programming is based around the risk, needs, responsivity (RNR) model (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). The risk principle asserts that offenders with a higher risk of committing new offences require more intensive programming and offenders with a lower risk of committing new offences require little to no programming. The need principle asserts that treatments are most effective when they deal with offenders’ criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs include antisocial attitudes, antisocial peers, antisocial personality traits, and substance abuse. Criminogenic needs are considered “dynamic” risk factors because they are changeable as opposed to static risk factors which are unchangeable. Some examples of static risk factors are criminal, family, and school history. The responsivity principle includes two sub-principles: general responsibility and specific responsibility. General responsibility refers to the relative efficacy of various models of correctional treatment. Research strongly supports the cognitive behavioural model. Research asserts that programs which use the cognitive behavioural approach and social learning approach will result in the most positive “response” with offenders. Specific responsibility addresses offender traits that affect their success in programs. Offenders with concerns such as low mental functioning, poor mental health, or inadequate educational levels will have more difficulty in benefiting from programs. Although responsibility concerns do not correlate with recidivism as much as criminogenic needs, they still need to be addressed with offenders who have them. This will increase those offenders’ chances of completing correctional programs.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Recidivism

Correctional programs, including VPP, use cognitive skills training, which primarily targets changing offenders’ thinking patterns (Proporino, Fabiano, & Robinson, 1991). Changing offenders’ thinking patterns can help them use more socially appropriate behaviours, which will help them better function in the community. There are several cognitive skills taught in CSC programs that promote socially acceptable and non-criminal behaviours. These skills are listed below: problem-solving, decision-making, identifying and analyzing problems, coming up with non-criminal solutions to problems, looking at the facts of a problematic situation in an unbiased manner, considering the consequences before making choices, looking at situations from others’ perspectives, viewing problems as challenges instead of threats, having a sense of control over one’s behaviours, and understanding that negative thought patterns can lead to the use of criminal behaviour. Proporino et al. conducted a pilot study comparing the differences between outcomes for 40 male offenders who took a cognitive skills program and 23 male offenders who did not take a cognitive skills program. All of the individuals from each group were examined after serving the remainder of their sentences in the community. The average examination period for a participant was 19.7 months after his release in the community was granted. The researchers found that 55% of the people in the group who received cognitive skills training were not readmitted to a correctional institution and 47.9% of the group who did not receive cognitive skills training were not readmitted to a correctional institution. The data suggest that only 20% of individuals in the group who received programming were readmitted with new criminal convictions and 30.4% of the individuals in the group who did not receive programming were
readmitted with new criminal convictions. Finally, the study found that 25% of the individuals in the group who received programming were readmitted without new criminal convictions and 21.7% of the group who did not receive programming were readmitted without new criminal convictions. The above data suggest that offenders who take cognitive skills programs are less likely to recidivate and are less likely to be readmitted to an institution after serving the remainder of their sentences in the community.

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Anger Management in Offenders**

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) has been known to significantly reduce problematic anger in those who participate in CBT, including offenders (Beck & Fernandez, 1998). CBT teaches many techniques for anger management. Participants of CBT learn techniques such as being able to recognize when anger-provoking situations occur and using relaxation skills to prevent inappropriate responses that stem from occurrences of anger. Once participants learn the techniques mentioned above, they practice them through role plays or guided imagery. Beck and Fernandez conducted a meta-analysis to study CBT's effectiveness in managing anger in 1640 participants with anger concerns. Of the sample of participants, 265 were criminal offenders. The results of the meta-analysis suggest that the average participant who was treated with CBT displayed more improvement in anger reduction than 76% of the participants who did not receive CBT. Furthermore, 67% of the participants who received CBT completed their treatment and 33% of the participants who did not receive CBT completed their treatment. This study demonstrates that CBT is an effective means for managing anger in people with anger concerns including offenders. The CBT-oriented techniques mentioned in this paragraph are as well used in VPP.

Some researchers suggest that anger management and violence prevention maintenance sessions help participants further develop their treatment gains and maintain their positive treatment effects over time (Bundy, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2001). Bundy et al. studied the effects of a five-week maintenance program for adolescents who completed an anger-management program six months prior to the study. The program held one, two-hour session per week. There were 37 participants, 20 of whom received the five week maintenance program, while the remaining 17 were assigned to a control group. After the maintenance program was complete, the participants assigned to the maintenance group displayed significantly lower levels of trait anger compared to the participants in the control group. The participants assigned to the maintenance group also displayed more improvement in expressing emotional and cognitive empathy compared to the control group. The gains made by the group who was assigned to the maintenance program suggests that review sessions can assist participants with maintaining what they learned in their initial programs. If anger management maintenance programs are effective in helping adolescents who have anger concerns, then anger management maintenance may be effective in helping adults who have anger concerns.

**Violence Prevention Program and Recidivism**

McCowan et al. (2009) conducted a study using criminal record data to see if a sample of 588 violent male offenders who took a violence prevention program, including VPP-MI or VPP-HI, had lower rates of recidivating upon release compared to a sample of 833 violent male offenders
who did not take violence prevention programs. According to the study, correctional violence prevention programs reduced violent offenders’ risk of committing new offences after release, reduce their favourable attitudes toward violent behaviour, and increase their odds of receiving discretionary releases. When looking at the group that had taken violence prevention programs compared to the control group, the study found that offenders in the treatment group were less likely by 29% to be incarcerated again after being released, less likely by 41% to go back to custody for committing another offence, and less likely by 52% to be incarcerated again for another new violent offence.

Prior to the above study, Cortoni, Nunes, and Latendresse (2006) conducted a study to test the effectiveness of VPP in reducing the rates of recidivism with violent male offenders. The study consisted of three groups: a group of 333 male offenders who completed a VPP; a group of 167 male offenders who took a VPP, but did not complete the program; and a control group of 466 male offenders who met the criteria for VPP, but did not take a VPP. Participants in the control group were matched with the other two groups. They were matched according to their scores on assessments that measure levels of risk and need. They were also matched according to their ages and their number of violent convictions. The experimenters compared the three groups by examining their rates of recidivism over a five year period. The following list is the general recidivism rates for each group: 24.6% for the group of VPP completers, 37.7% for the group of VPP non-completers, and 41% for the control group. The rates of violent recidivism between the three groups are listed as follows: 8.5% for VPP completers, 24.5% for VPP non-completers, and 21.8% for the control group. This study suggests that offenders who complete a VPP are less likely to commit both general and violent recidivism in comparison to non-completers of VPP and those who did not take VPP. However, age may have been a factor in treatment success, as the group of VPP non-completers had a lower average age in comparison to the group of VPP completers. Participants in the control group did not match up with the other two groups in terms of their measured levels of motivation, which may have also been a factor. Finally, although participants in the VPP non-completer group had a lower rate of general recidivism in comparison to the control group, the VPP non-completer group had a slightly higher rate of violent recidivism when compared to the group who did not receive VPP.

Punishment and Recidivism

Some nations, such as the United States, use a more punitive approach in an attempt to reduce recidivism. The United States introduced a more expensive type of institution called the supermax institution (Mears & Bales 2009). A supermax institution is an institution in which inmates are placed in single cells with little to no contact with other inmates. The inmates are also provided with little to no correctional programming, while serving in supermax institutions. Supermax institutions are supposed to function as punishers which would decrease the likelihood of offenders recidivating. Mears and Bales conducted a study to compare the recidivism rates between supermax inmates and non-supermax inmates. Inmates who are placed in supermax institutions tend to differ from inmates in the general U.S. prison population. Supermax inmates tend to have committed more violent crimes, more counts of attempted escape, longer sentences, and more institutional misconduct. In response to this concern, the study compared a sample of supermax inmates (1,241) to non-supermax inmates in the general U.S. Population (57,245), and sample of non-supermax inmates who matched supermax inmates in criminal history and
The study examined the inmates' criminal record data 3 years after the inmates were released. The percentages for general recidivism in all three samples are listed below: 58.8% in the supermax sample, 46.6% in the non-supermax general prison population sample, and 57.6% in the matching non-supermax sample. This means that there was a 1.2% higher general recidivism rate in the supermax sample compared to the matching non-supermax sample. The percentages for violent recidivism in all three samples are listed below: 24.4% in the supermax sample, 10.9% in the non-supermax general prison population sample, and 20.5% in the matching non-supermax sample. This means that there was a 3.9% higher violent recidivism rate in the supermax sample compared to the matching non-supermax sample. The results of this study suggest that the more punitive effects of supermax institutions are less effective, than the already punitive non-supermax institutions, at reducing recidivism.

The punitive effects of simply incarcerating offenders may have an effect on their beliefs about recidivating. Wood (2007) carried out a study that examined inmates' beliefs about how likely they will recidivate upon their releases. The study examined a sample of 726 U.S. inmates across an unspecified number of institutions. Half of the sample consisted of males and the other half consisted of females. The participants as well had a variety of sentence lengths. The participants were provided with a survey, which included a question asking "what are odds that someone like yourself would reoffend". The participants were required to rate their belief of their odds of recidivating on scale from 0-10. A score of 0 meant that the participant believed he or she was not likely at all to reoffend upon release. A score of 10 meant that the participant believed he or she was very likely to reoffend upon release. The results of the study suggest that 55% of the participants gave themselves a rating above 0, which meant that the majority of them believed that they themselves had a chance of recidivating. Of the sample, those participants who had served a higher number of sentences also reported higher average scores for their beliefs towards reoffending. These results suggest that the offenders in this sample, who have served more than one sentence, have a stronger belief towards themselves recidivating in comparison to offenders who have only served one sentence.

**Earned Early Release Programs: Prisons vs. Boot Camps**

The U.S. jurisdictions also use boot camps in an attempt to reduce recidivism and the costs of crime. The use of boot camps is an approach to deter inmates from recidivating and to train them with work skills that they can use in society. Boot camps for inmates are similar to basic military training in which recruits are required on a daily basis to engage in physical activities, drills, marches, and manual labour (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart 2003). These activities are put in place to give inmates very little free time. There are strict rules when it comes to an inmate's behaviour and appearance. Correctional officers are in place as drill instructors and they use verbal aggression in an attempt to break down inmates' positive attitudes towards criminality. Only inmates with non-violent offences are qualified to participate in boot camps. Violent offences, such as homicide, are the most costly crimes in the United States. Yet, the studies below do not assess the effects boot camps would have on violent offenders.

MacKenzie (1994) carried out a study comparing the effectiveness of boot camps, in eight different states, to the effectiveness of prisons. All of the participants in this study were inmates serving sentences for non-violent crimes. The participants were not assigned to boot camps by
the experimenter, as they were already placed in boot camps by the criminal justice system. The rates of recidivism across different boot camps ranged from 23% to 63%. The significant difference of recidivism rates between boot camps could have been due to the fact that the boot camps which produced lower recidivism rates included more intense supervision for post release participants. In addition, boot camps with more rehabilitative programs produced better outcomes over boot camps with less rehabilitative programs. The rehabilitative programs may have been more effective than the setting of the boot camps themselves. There also was not a significant difference in change of antisocial attitudes between participants in the boot camp groups or participants in the prison groups. Participants in both groups both had decreased their antisocial attitudes over time. The main difference between the two types of groups was that those who participated in the boot camp groups had more positive attitudes toward their future. This study suggests that boot camps have some utility in improving inmate attitudes. However, the effectiveness of the boot camps for reducing recidivism is questionable. Also, the study did not provide any data on the sample size or any data on the the rates of recidivism for the prison groups.

The state of Maryland includes an early release program available to inmates with sentences lasting one to five years (Bierie, 2009). This early release program involves substance abuse treatment, educational training, and self-management training. The program also reduces the inmates' sentences to 6 months, if they are successful in completing the program. Bierie conducted a study comparing the effectiveness of running an early release program at a boot camp and at a prison. The study included a sample of 226 participants who were prison inmates: 105 of them participated in an early release program held at a boot camp and 121 of them participated in the same early release program held at a prison. Overall, the results of this study suggest that the early release program held in a boot camp produced lower rates of recidivism and was more cost-effective. Participants assigned to the boot camp had an average of 1.09 arrests after completing the program. Participants in the prison had an average of 1.54 arrests after completing the program. Participants from both programs combined had a total of 102 sentences stemming from their arrests. The boot camp group only had a total 39 sentences, while the prison group had a total of 63 sentences. Despite the different sizes in the groups, the differences in number of sentences are somewhat significant. The boot camp group had an average of 0.37 sentences per inmate and the prison group had an average of 0.52 per inmate. Bierie looked at the average financial cost of each participant from both groups. Bierie examined the average cost of participants to the criminal justice system, victims, and the full cost to benefit. The costs to the justice system included costs associated with arrests, court cases, sentences, and programs. The costs to victims include measurable costs such as medical bills, time taken off work, and stolen money. The full cost-benefit model takes into account the losses mentioned above, plus unmeasurable losses such as distress or suffering. To the criminal justice system, the average cost of a participant in the boot camp group was $52,378 and the average cost of a participant in the prison group was $56,952. This is a $4,574 difference. For victims directly affected by crime, the average cost of a participant in the boot camp group was $54,462 and the average cost of a participant in the prison group was $90,391. This is a $35,929 difference. For the total cost to benefit model, the average cost of a participant in the boot camp group was $61,188 and the average cost of a participant in the prison group was $155,765. This is a $94,577 difference. This study suggests that early release programs held in boot camps are more cost-effective than early release programs held in prisons. However, the estimated costs
provided by the full cost to benefit model may not be accurate, due to the model including unmeasurable costs of crime.

**Social Therapy and Recidivism**

Some countries in Europe, such as Germany, use social therapy to deter offenders from recidivating (Ortmann, 2000). Social therapy is a humanistic-oriented therapy and it is always carried out in groups. Social therapists focus on treating each group as a whole, rather than each person individually. This is because the social therapeutic outlook asserts that all individuals are connected in some way and they all share responsibilities. The approach uses modelling through rehearsals as a means of teaching inmates alternative ways of dealing with problems. Social therapy has been shown to reduce recidivism, but not significantly. Ortmann studied 288 inmates in the German correctional system. Half of the inmates were serving sentences in a non-therapeutic institution and the other half were serving sentences in a social therapy-oriented institution. Within the institutions, the inmates were randomly selected for study. Ortmann looked at the recidivism rates between the two groups in a five year follow up. The group with inmates serving their sentences in the social therapy oriented institution had a recidivism rate of 60.4%. The group with inmates serving their sentences in the non-therapeutic institution had a recidivism rate of 67.9%. Although there was a difference in recidivism rates between the two groups, the difference was not statistically significant, and thus did not warrant the utility of social therapy.

**Transcendental Meditation and Recidivism**

Transcendental meditation (TM) is a procedure that has been tested with prison populations in an attempt to reduce recidivism amongst offenders (Rainforth, Alexander, & Cavanaugh, 2003). The procedure of TM involves one sitting down in a comfortable position, closing his eyes, and focusing on how he feels during that point in time (Maharishi Foundation, 2012). The procedure is supposed to be practiced twice a day and last for 20 minutes at a time. Previous research suggests that TM is effective in reducing recidivism with male offenders. Rainforth et al. carried out a study testing TM’s effectiveness in reducing recidivism with a population of male inmates serving their sentences in a California state prison. The study compared a group of 120 inmates who learned and practiced TM and a group of 128 inmates who did not learn TM. The participants were matched according to their parole dates, ethnic backgrounds, offences, ages, and levels of substance abuse. After the participants were matched, the experimenters examined other variables that the participants may have differed in such as IQ levels, educational levels, employment history, etc. The experimenters found significant differences in their scores on a scale that measures offenders’ risk of reoffending, levels of education achieved, and levels participation in group therapies. After 15 years had passed, the researchers examined the participants’ criminal records to see if there were any differences in recidivism between the two groups. The rate of recidivism for the TM group was 46.7%. For the control group, the rate of recidivism was 66.7%. This significant difference being maintained over a long period of time may suggest that TM is an effective treatment for reducing recidivism. However, all of the participants in the TM group volunteered to learn and practice TM, whereas the participants in the control group did not. Therefore, motivation was a confounding variable in this study. Also,
the groups’ differences in measured risk to reoffend, educational levels, and participation levels in group therapies, further confound the treatment effects.

**CSC programming Costs to Benefits**

In Canada, reductions in recidivism reduce the costs to the criminal justice system (Brown, 2000). It costs the criminal justice system money when an offender is arrested, sentenced, and incarcerated. However, when offenders successfully complete correctional programs, they are less likely to commit crimes. This also makes them less likely to contribute additional costs to the criminal justice system in the future. When offenders do not recidivate, they are likely to have legitimate employment, which in turn results in them contributing more tax money to the government. Reduced recidivism also reduces costs to victims such as the requirement to take time off of work, to seek additional healthcare, to seek mental-health services, and to file insurance claims. Additionally, the costs of correctional programs in Canada produce greater returns than the costs of boot camps and programs with intensive supervision. Therefore, correctional programs are effective in reducing the costs of crime to victims and to society.

**Summary**

In summary, this literature review shows the efficacy of CSC programs in reducing recidivism and benefiting society as a whole. In comparison to other approaches, CSC programs are more effective in reducing recidivism and costs of crime. Correctional programs that follow the RNR model are more effective for treating offenders than programs that use alternative models (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). CSC programs that follow the RNR model incorporate elements cognitive-behaviour therapy and social learning theory. In addition to the reductions in recidivism, correctional programs assist offenders with developing skills to help offenders function in society (Proporino et al., 1991). VPP specifically, is a CSC correctional program which assists offenders with developing skills that will help them function in society and avoid committing new offences (Correctional Service Canada, 2009). VPP-M is useful in helping graduates of VPP-MI and VPP-HI in maintaining and further developing their skills. Therefore, VPP-M was used in this study to assist a graduate of VPP-MI with maintaining and further developing his program skills. Additionally, the VPP-M implemented in this study was time-compressed to compensate for the remainder of the participant's sentence, and offered in individual sessions, rather than the usual group format. The effectiveness of the time-compressed and individual VPP-M was looked at by assessing factors before and after the program. These factors included the participant's knowledge of the program's skills, ability to apply the program's skills, and his attitudes.
CHAPTER III: METHOD

Selection Procedure

This thesis was a case study of one male participant. The participant was selected collaboratively by a correctional program officer (CPO) and the practicum student that the CPO supervised. The participant was required to have already completed VPP-MI or VPP-HI, but not VPP-M. Potential participants were asked face-to-face if they wanted to take part in the study. After a few potential participants were found, The CPO and the practicum student selected the participant based on the CPO's judgement of who would be the most successful in completing the program in the time available.

Informed Consent Procedures

In order to begin research, approval from the St. Lawrence College Research and Ethics Board (REB) was required. The REB must approve a proposal prior to research being carried out to ensure that the research benefits both the participants and the field of psychology. A detailed proposal was submitted for approval to the REB committee for consent to begin research. The REB approved the design of the consent form and then the placement student sat down with the participant to explain the expectations that the participant should have if he signed the form. The student's agency supervisor was present to further explain the conditions of consent to the participant. The consent form that the student explained to the participant was a brief overview of this thesis (Appendix A). After the student explained the form to the participant, the student asked the participant to read over the form and ask any questions if he was unsure about anything. The participant read over each form, signed them, and returned them to the student.

Assessment Measures (Appendix B)

- VPP-M Semi-Structured Interview (Correctional Service Canada, 2009): An interview designed to collect information that aims to clarify a participant's risk factors, path of offending, high risk situations, and self-management plan.
- VPP-M Pre-Post Rating Summaries (Correctional Service Canada, 2009): A scale in which a participant's CPO rates the participant's knowledge and use of skills in practical settings. This assessment was administered briefly after the interview and after the participant completed VPP-M.
- VPP: Self-Report Assessment Measures
  - Antisocial Personality Questionnaire: Paranoid Suspicion subscale (Blackburn & Fawcett, 1999): A subjective self-report scale used to measure the degree in which a participant views others' intentions negatively.
  - Rowe Deceptive Responding Scale- Abridged version (Rowe, 2003): A subjective self-report scale used to measure the degree in which a participant answers questions in a socially desirable manner; the final score determines the validity of the scores on the other two self-report assessments.
  - Aggression Questionnaire Test Summary (Buss & Perry 1992): A subjective self-report scale used to measure a participant's general levels of physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility.
Once the participant was selected, the practicum student reviewed the participant’s file to gather information about the participant’s criminal history, risk/needs assessment results, and the previous programs that he completed. Prior to the implementation of VPP-M, the student and CPO interviewed the selected participant using the VPP-M Semi-Structured Interview. The participant was also provided with his self-management plan, which he came up with during his previous programming. After the interview was finished, the practicum student and the CPO independently filled out the first half of the VPP-M Pre-Post Rating Summary based around the results of the interview. As well, the student and CPO both independently filled out the second half of the summary after the participant completed VPP-M. The scoring on the pre-post rating summary was based around the clinical judgement of the student and the CPO. The results of the summary were compared to see the degree of inter-rater reliability. At the start of the first session, the participant filled out a standardized self-report assessment called the VPP: Self-Report Assessment Measures. The participant filled out the same self-report after he finished the maintenance program. The self-report was scored outside of the sessions. The scores of the self-report assessment were compared to see if there was any difference between the participant's scores before and after participating in a time compressed VPP-M. This means that this section of the thesis used an AB design. The independent variable was the VPP-M program and the dependent variables were the participant's self-report assessment scores. The self-report measures are not typically used in VPP-M. However, they were used in this thesis to assess any changes that occurred over the course of the program.

**General Procedure of Sessions**

VPP-M reviews the skills taught in VPP-MI and VPP-HI. The skills that are reviewed in VPP-M are listed below in order: working towards goals, anger and emotion management, problem solving, challenging one's own thinking, communication and conflict resolution, and communication and perspective taking (Correctional Service Canada, 2009). VPP-M includes a total of 12 sessions, which are each detailed in Appendix C. Sessions 1 and 2 reviewed skills involved with setting and monitoring goals. Sessions 3 and 4 looked at anger and emotion management skills. Session 5 covered problem solving skills. Sessions 6-8 addressed how the participant could challenge his thinking which could lead to the use of violence. Sessions 9-12 reviewed skills for dealing with interpersonal conflicts.

Each session in VPP-M is typically held once a month. In this study, the program ran two sessions per week, but used the same content of the typical VPP-M program. The sessions were scheduled to be one and a half hours in length, but they sometimes went a little longer or a little shorter than scheduled. The participant was provided with a duo-tang to keep handouts, homework sheets, and his self-management plan. The student kept track of the participant’s attendance and homework completion, which he recorded at the start of each session (Appendix D). Each session started out with a self-check. The participant identified whether his mood was categorized as green, yellow, or red. Green represented a good mood, yellow represented an irritable mood, and red represented an angry mood. When the participant identified as being yellow or red, the practicum student and CPO discussed with him what was upsetting him and how to deal with it in a manner that would help calm him down. After the self-check, the skills specific to the session were reviewed and applied to scenarios. The participant also discussed how much he used the skills in the past and in current situations. After the review of the session’s
skills, the facilitators and the participant evaluated the skill area of self-management and how it related to high risk situations. The participant was then required to discuss his own risk factors and how they could lead to him using violence. A goal-check was discussed near the end of each session, which involved the participant briefly discussing his goals. Homework sheets were handed to the participant before at the end of the sessions. His homework was thoroughly reviewed for feedback after session 6 and session 12.

**Homework Assignments**

The homework assignments were developed by CSC and are considered to be part of the standard delivery of VPP-M. Homework assignments included the following: the participant worksheet, weekly self-monitoring form, applied self-management, and personal standards of conduct form. The *participant worksheet* required the participant to discuss the skills reviewed in the most recent session, discuss how to apply the same skills, and review his goals. The *weekly self-monitoring form* required the participant to talk about a difficult situation that he ran into recently, how he dealt with it, and what skills he used to deal with it. The weekly self-monitoring form was a monthly self-monitoring form that was modified to fit the length of the program. The *applied self-management worksheet* required the participant to discuss potential high risk situations that he may have faced and how he would deal with them. The *personal standards of conduct form* lists life areas and personal standards. The participant was required to write what he was and was not going to do to meet those personal standards. The participant was assigned the personal standards of conduct form once and it was assigned in session 7.

**Note:** A few changes were made to the program during its implementation. The program was originally aimed to have two sessions per week for a total of six weeks. However, some weeks only included one session and the program ended up taking seven weeks to complete. This was due to reasons such as the participant’s range not having movement or the CPO being away on training. As well, sessions 11 and 12 were delivered in the same time slot due to time constraints. The participant was also paid for each session that he attended, as all offenders get paid for participating in correctional programs in CSC institutions.

**File Review of Criminal History**

The participant was a first time federal offender in his late 20’s who had concerns with substance abuse and violence. He was around 15 years of age when he committed his first offence, which involved threatening a family member with a weapon. He was sentenced to 12-months probation for this offence. His next few offences were committed during the years of his young adulthood. The second offence involved him punching a fellow student at his school because the student supposedly disrespected him. This resulted in the participant being charged with assault causing bodily harm in which he was sentenced to 18-months probation. About a year later, the participant had an altercation with his ex-girlfriend over her ending their relationship. The altercation resulted in the participant verbally and physically assaulting his ex-girlfriend. He acquired a sentence of 30 days in jail and two years of probation for this offence. After the previously mentioned offence, the participant had not committed an offence for about six years. During the time in which he was not committing any offences, the participant had been living crime free, was abstinent from drug use, and was employed. However, he eventually stopped
working and started getting back into drugs. When this happened, his index offence soon followed. An index offence is the offence in which an offender is institutionalized for committing. The participant’s index offence was a robbery. The robbery involved the participant standing outside of a bank while his friend went inside the bank and stole money to pay the participant a drug debt. Although the participant was not directly involved, he was considered an accessory to the offence. This resulted in the participant being sentenced to two years in a federal correctional institution. During his federal sentence, he completed his high-school diploma, two substance abuse prevention programs, and VPP-MI. Because he was successful in completing these programs and he did not acquire any extra charges during his federal sentence, the participant was granted a statutory release. He was required to be under statutory supervision for eight months. A few months into his statutory release, the participant violated his conditions by not abiding to his curfew and by using drugs. This violation resulted in him returning to a federal institution to serve the remainder of his sentence.

It was reported that the participant had a tendency to spend time with peers that were involved with drugs and other criminal activity. It was also noted that he was more prone to violent behaviour when he was under the influence of drugs. Furthermore, it was mentioned in the participant’s file that he had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Anti-Social Personality Disorder (ASPD), concerns with anxiety, and insomnia. At the time of the study, the offender lived on a range in KP that could hold 39 offenders in total.

File Review of Risk/Needs Assessment Results

Static Risk Factors - the participant committed his first offence during his youth. He committed offences on several occasions after his first offence. He also committed different types of offences. Finally, he has been known to violate conditions.

Dynamic Risk Factors - The participant has had substance abuse concerns in the past and his most recent offence was indirectly related to drugs. He spent time with antisocial peers leading up to the recent offence. The offender as well has had some psychological distress related to anxiety. At the time of his intake, he did not have a high-school diploma and he displayed positive attitudes toward criminal behaviour.

An employee at KP used standardized assessments to estimate the participant’s risk of committing a new offence after his release. The assessments that the employee used are as follows: the Statistical Information on Recidivism - Revised 1 (SIR-R1) scale (Nafekh & Motiuk, 2002), the Self-Appraisal Questionnaire (SAQ) (Loza, MacTavish, & Loza-Fanous, 2007), and the Level of Service Inventory - Revised (LSI-R) (Andrews & Bonta, 1995). According to the results of the SIR-R1 scale, the participant scored in the 50th percentile, which means that 50% of offenders with the same score are likely to reoffend after release. The results of the participant’s SAQ score suggest that he was at a high risk for committing a violent or non-violent offence within the first two years of being released. The participant’s score on the LSI-R assert that he had a 76% chance of serving a new sentence within one year after being released.
Note: The participant had completed two full prevention programs and one booster program after taking the standardized assessments, so it is possible that his assessment scores would have differed, if he was re-assessed.

Previous Programming

In accordance with his level of need identified above, the participant took a number of correctional programs during his federal sentence. While serving his sentence at KP, prior to his statutory release, he participated in National Substance Abuse Program - Moderate Intensity (NSAP-MI), NSAP - Pre Release Booster, and VPP-MI. The participant’s overall performance in both of these programs was positive. It was noted in his file that he came up with both a relapse prevention plan and a self-management plan during his participation in these programs. It was also noted that he seemed to have a good understanding of the programs’ skills and their application, although he struggled with applying the skills in practical situations. During his statutory release, the participant took part in a Community Maintenance Program and a community program called Suntrac. He took these programs to maintain his skills he learned in VPP-MI and NSAP-MI. The participant initially displayed good performance in these maintenance programs, but his performance started to slip when he decided to return to a criminal lifestyle. Ultimately, he was suspended from his community programs for poor attendance and for his parole violation.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Assessment Results

VPP-M Semi-Structured Interview – For reasons of confidentiality, the information the participant reported during the interview could not be disclosed. However, the ratings listed in the VPP-M pre-program summary were based around the participant’s reports during the semi-structured interview. It is part of the VPP-M standard procedure for the semi-structured interview to be conducted before the interviewer can give the participant scores on the pre-program summary.

Violence Prevention Program – Maintenance Pre-Post Rating Summaries (Correctional Service Canada, 2009) – The CPO’s pre-program summary noted that the participant used the skill areas of working towards goals and anger and emotion management to some degree. The skills that the CPO listed the participant did not use in applied settings were self-management, problem solving, challenging thinking which supports violence, and communication and conflict resolution. The student’s pre-program summary asserted that the participant used the skill areas of working towards goals, self-management, and anger and emotion management to some extent. The results of the student’s pre-program summary displayed that the participant did not use the skill areas of problem solving, thinking that supports violence, and communication and conflict resolution. After the participant completed VPP-M, the CPO and the student filled out the post program summary. The CPO gave the participant the following ratings in each skill area: 2+ in the skill area of working towards goals, 2+ in the skill area of self-management, 2 in the skill area of problem-solving, 2 in the skill area of challenging thinking which supports violence, 2+ in the skill area of anger and emotion management, and 2 in the skill area of communication and conflict resolution. The student gave the participant the same scores in each skill area except for communication and conflict resolution in which the student gave the participant a score of 1.

Violence Prevention Program Self-Report Assessment Measures – At the start of the first session, the participant filled out the self-report assessment measures. The participant also filled out the self-report measures a second time during a post-session.

Antisocial Personality Questionnaire: Paranoid Suspicion (APQ-PS) subscale (Blackburn, 1999) – The participant's pre-program score on the APQ-PS was 8, which fell into the above average range of paranoid suspicion. The participant’s post-program APQ-PS score was also an 8, which suggests that there were no changes in his scores from pre-program to post-program. The APQ-PS score interpretations and the participant’s pre-post program APQ-PS scores are displayed below in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APQ-PS Scores Pre-Post Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rowe Deceptive Responding Scale (RDRS) - Abridged version (Rowe, 2003) – On the RDRS pre program assessment, the participant had a score of 3 in poor self-appraisal and a score of 0 in antisocial impression management. This made his total score 3 on the RDRS pre-program assessment. The participant’s post-program RDRS scores were 6 in poor self-appraisal and 2 in antisocial impression management, making his total post-program score 8. His total score increased by 5 from pre-program to post-program. However, the increase was not significant because scores on this assessment need to be 17 or less for the other assessments to be interpreted. Therefore, the participant's APQ-PS and AQ pre-program and post-program assessment results could both be interpreted.

Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) (Buss & Perry, 1992) – The participant's pre-program AQ scores were as follows: 37 on the Physical Aggression subscale, which is in the above average range; 17 on the Verbal Aggression subscale, which is in the average range; 19 on the Anger subscale, which is in the average range; 16 on the Hostility subscale, which is in the below average range; and 89 for the total score, which falls in the average range. The participant’s post-program score on the physical aggression subscale was 36, which was a decrease by 1 point from pre-program. His post-program physical aggression score still fell within the above average range. The participant scored 19 in the verbal aggression subscale, which was a 2 point increase from pre-program. Of course, a score of 19 in verbal aggression still falls into the average range. The participant scored 23 on the anger subscale. This is an increase of 4 points from his pre-program score. This changed his anger subscale score from average to above average. The participant scored 18 on the hostility subscale. This was a 2 point increase from pre-program to post-program and it changed his score from the below average range to the average range. The participant's total post-program score was 96, which increased his total score from pre-program from the average range to the above average range. The AQ score interpretations and the participant’s pre-post program AQ scores are displayed below in Table 2.

Table 2

**AQ Scores Pre-Post Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Pre Program</th>
<th>Post Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>&lt;17</td>
<td>17-32</td>
<td>&gt;32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Aggression</td>
<td>&lt;12</td>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>&lt;12</td>
<td>12-22</td>
<td>&gt;22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>&lt;16.7</td>
<td>16.7-26.8</td>
<td>&gt;26.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>&lt;61</td>
<td>61-94</td>
<td>&gt;94</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 Attendance, Homework, and Other Observations

The participant attended all 12 sessions and completed his homework for 9 of the 10 sessions that homework was due in (Appendix E). He came to most of his sessions in a timely manner and displayed an interest in reviewing the skills taught in his initial VPP. However, he did have some difficulty focusing in the later sessions. He reported that this was due to his anxiety about his upcoming warrant expiry release. Despite this difficulty, he displayed an overall understanding of all the skills that were reviewed in the program. He showed an ability to apply the skills within the program sessions. He reported that he used some skills more than others because he believed that some skills worked better than others. Session 4 was the only session that he came to with incomplete homework. He reported that he was facing some challenges on his range a few days prior to that session, which may have contributed to him not completing his homework before attending that session.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

Summary

Due to some offenders being unable to participate in full length programs, this thesis attempted to see if a time-compressed version of VPP-M was effective in assisting a male offender with maintaining and further developing the skills he learned in VPP-MI. There is extensive literature suggesting that VPP is an effective program for teaching violent offenders skills to help them reintegrate into society and avoid committing new offences. However, there is little literature that suggests time-compressed versions of VPP are effective in assisting violent offenders. The results of this thesis suggest that implementing time-compressed programs may be a viable option for assisting offenders with shorter sentences, so they can be provided with the same assistance that offenders with longer sentences are provided with.

As noted in the second half of his VPP-M pre-post assessment summary results, the participant displayed an overall understanding of the skills reviewed in the program. According to the CPO's and the student’s post-program summary results, the participant as well displayed an ability to use most of the skills within sessions and some of the skills outside of the sessions. The skills that the participant displayed were working towards goals, self-management, and anger and emotion management. The skill areas in which the participant was able to demonstrate within sessions, but did not report using in practical settings were as follows: problem-solving, challenging thinking which supports violence, and communication and conflict resolution. The participant displaying the ability to use all of the skills within sessions, but only reporting the use of certain skills outside of sessions could be due to the participant only choosing to use certain skills in the face of high-risk situations. The skill areas that the participant reported use of in practical settings during the current program were similar to the skill areas he reported using in practical settings prior to the program. This could mean that the participant was able to maintain the skills he reported using in practical settings prior to the program. The skill areas in which the participant did not report use of in practical settings prior to his VPP-M were the same skill areas that he did not report use for during his VPP-M. This could mean that the participant did not make significant gains in those skill areas or he gained a better understanding and ability to use those skill areas, but chose not use them in practical settings. The CPO noted in the pre-program summary that the participant did not use the skill area of self-management, but she noted in the post-program summary that the participant did use the skill area. This could mean that according to the CPO, the participant made gains in the use of self-management over the course of the program.

According to the post program APQ-PS assessment, the participant did not report any differences in his paranoid suspicion from pre program to post program. The participant's answers to the RDRS were somewhat more deceptive the second time he filled out the assessment, but the difference was not significant. According to the post program AQ, the participant reported a slightly lower level of physical aggression, a slightly higher level of verbal aggression, a somewhat higher level of anger, and a slightly higher level of hostility. The participant's overall score on the AQ changed in an increasing direction. It is typical for offenders' self-report scores to increase when they are close to being released on warrant expiry, as this stage can be stressful for many offenders to deal with because they no longer have CSC providing them with the resources it provides to offenders under its supervision. The participant himself was released on
warrant expiry soon after the program was finished, and he reported that he felt more irritability during the course of the program because of his upcoming warrant expiry. Another possibility for the participant's AQ scores increasing was that the participant could have gained more insight into his aggression over the course of the program. It is as well possible that the participant answered the items on the AQ with more honesty when he filled it out the second time. One other explanation for the lack of positive change in the participant's self-report scores was that the VPP-M program was delivered over the course of seven weeks, rather than the typical 12-month period. This may have not given the participant enough time to make significant changes in the areas that the self-reports assess. Despite the participant having his self-report scores increasing in a negative direction, he appeared to be motivated to come to the program and address his risk factors related to his use of crime and violence. His motivation was also displayed through him discussing and applying program skills within each session, completing most of his homework, and showing insight into how his thoughts and emotions influenced his use of violence.

**Strengths**

This thesis included many strengths worth noting. The first strength was that a group program provided by CSC was tested out in individual sessions. Also, VPP-M is not accredited for delivery to individuals and this thesis looked at its use with an individual. Another strength was that a CSC program was piloted in a compressed time period. A large amount of participant information was able to be gathered due to the thesis including only one participant. Because this thesis involved individual sessions, the participant had more of a chance to address his needs with the staff, which he would not have been able to do in group sessions. This thesis helped the client further develop and maintain his program skills while he was serving the remainder of his sentence, which may have better prepared him for his release. The participant was encouraged to think of his own situations in which he could use the program skills, which gave him a better understanding of the practical situations to use the skills in.

**Limitations**

This thesis included only one participant, which means that the participant’s performance and his assessment results could not be compared to other offenders. Moreover, there are known therapeutic benefits of offering any behavioural program in a group that could not be available to the participant because he got the service as an individual. A limitation with the program being carried out in a short period of time was that the participant did not have a lot of time to develop his skills in between sessions. Another limitation was that the VPP-M Pre-Post Rating Summaries and VPP Self-Report Assessments were based on subjective measures, which means that they may not have been accurately filled out. Furthermore, the VPP-M Pre-Post Assessment Summaries included incongruent pre program and post program measures; the ratings in the first half were based around yes or no answers and the ratings in the second half were based around a four-point rating scale. The participant knew the purpose of the self-report assessments, which could have affected his responses on them. This is an especially common problem in the use of self-report data in studies with offenders, who often are prone to ‘faking good’. Also, the participant received pay for attending sessions, which may have been the primary motivator for him to participate in the program. The participant reported many times that he was anxious about
his release, which was a confounding variable because it may have had an effect on his program performance and his assessment scores. The student who delivered the program was not trained to deliver correctional programs such as VPP-M. This may have had a negative effect on the participant's learning of the program material.

**Multi-Level Challenges to Service Implementation Report**

**Client Level**
Client motivation can be a concern in institutional settings. Clients sometimes feel forced into taking programs, outlined in their correctional plans, because there are negative consequences to not taking the programs. Low motivation can present itself in various ways in the classroom. This includes limited or unproductive participation, poor attendance, and problematic behaviour. Managing offenders with low motivation can be challenging in a classroom setting because they may be disruptive and may require more individual attention, which can be difficult to provide in a classroom setting. Responsivity concerns, such as cognitive deficits and mental health concerns, can also present a challenge to program delivery. Clients with responsivity concerns may have significant difficulty learning the material presented and may also have trouble adapting to and coping with the classroom environment. Correctional Program Officers are challenged to find alternate ways of presenting and adapting the material to address clients’ unique needs.

**Program Level**
Program level challenges are typically related to the availability of time and space. Each institution has a limited number of classrooms, which staff must share to facilitate programs, school, and interviews. Many program sessions are scheduled to be 2.5 hours. The time available in a classroom may be less than 2.5 hours, which means some sessions can take multiple days to deliver. Taking multiple days to deliver sessions often makes the program longer than is outlined in National Standards. Also, the competence of the CPO has an effect on program delivery. Within sessions, CPO's must cover all of the session material and teach it in a way that participants can understand.

**Organizational Level**
Institutional budgets have an impact on the number of programs delivered annually. Additional staffing resources may not be available if they cannot be accommodated in the budget. The institutional routine, for counting inmates and cell searches, can also have a significant impact on program delivery. The hours clients are allowed to attend work/programs may also be limited by the institutional routine. For example, clients may only be allowed to attend a program for a limited period of time. Institutional shutdowns also impact program delivery. Shutdowns prevent programs from running, are often unexpected, and can last for long periods of time.

**Societal Level**
Working with federal offenders can present challenges at the societal level. Public perception and attitudes towards federal offenders can sometimes be unpleasant and indifferent. People may have negative views of offenders and may have strong beliefs about how offenders should or should not be treated. People may have strong views about their taxes and may not want their taxes to be spent on offenders. Ultimately, these societal concerns coupled with the political climate can impact the amount of money provided to this sector of the Criminal Justice System.
Although correctional programs have been shown to reduce participants' chances of recidivating, the successful completion of correctional programs does not guarantee that participants will not recidivate in the future.

**Contributions to the Behavioural Psychology Field**

This thesis demonstrated that VPP-M can be effective in assisting an offender with maintaining his skills that he learned in VPP-MI. Also, this thesis demonstrated that a time-compressed and individualized correctional program was useful in assisting a participant with maintaining skills he learned in a prior program. This alludes to the potential benefit of an alternative to the typical lengthier group format. As well, this thesis utilized self-report measures like the APQ-PS, RDRS, and AQ, which are not standard assessments for VPP-M. The self-report measures were administered before and after the program, which displayed changes the participant made from pre-program to post-program. These self-report measures are the same as those used in VPP-MI and VPP-HI. Using the same self-report measures may be useful for comparing any further changes in a participant's self-report scores from the start of his VPP-MI or VPP-HI through to the end of his VPP-M. Offenders at KP may benefit from taking time-compressed correctional programs, as there may not be enough time for programs to run within their standard program lengths because of the institution closing soon.

**Recommendations for Further Development**

It is recommended that time compressed VPP-M and other time compressed maintenance programs are tested with groups. This is because correctional programs are typically held within groups, rather than with individuals. Also, using time-compressed maintenance programs with groups will enable a larger sample size of participants. Participants of time-compressed maintenance programs should be compared with participants of full length maintenance programs and those who did not take any maintenance programs, but met the criteria for taking maintenance programs. Self-report measures, objective measures, and data on recidivism could be used to compare the differences between the three groups. This would assert as to whether or not time-compressed maintenance programs are worth offering to offenders with shorter sentences.
REFERENCES


22


Appendix A: Thesis Consent Form

Title:
A Time Compressed Violence Prevention Program - Maintenance with a Federal Offender

Student:
Chris Legnini

Institution:
Saint Lawrence College

College Supervisor:
Dave Villeneuve

Invitation
I am a fourth year student in the Bachelor of Applied Arts - Behavioural Psychology degree program at St. Lawrence College. I have a field placement at your facility this fall. As part of this placement, I am completing a special project called an applied thesis. I am asking for your assistance to complete this project. The information in this form is intended to help you understand my project so that you can decide whether or not you want to participate. Please read the information below carefully and ask all the questions you might have before deciding whether or not to participate.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of the project is to implement a time-compressed Violence Prevention Program – Maintenance (VPP-M) with an individual who has completed either Violence Prevention Program – Moderate Intensity (VPP-MI) or Violence Prevention Program - High Intensity (VPP-HI). Assessments will be done before and after the program to see if the individual further developed the skills that he learned in the VPP that he completed before. The study will also be conducted to see if the individual's beliefs or attitudes towards using violence have changed or remained the same before and after the program is finished.

What will you need to do if you take part?
You will need to show up to the scheduled sessions. The sessions will each be scheduled for one and a half hour. The sessions will be held twice a week, although some sessions may need to be rescheduled due to circumstances such as a range closing or a lockdown. You will be notified ahead of time which days that the sessions will be held. You will need to actively participate in sessions by discussing your mood, discussing the skills taught in VPP, applying the skills taught in VPP to real-life examples, and reviewing your long term goals and self-management plan. You will also need to complete homework assignments in
between sessions. The homework assignments will include brief summaries of the skills reviewed within each session, weekly self-monitoring records, and applied self-management exercises. At the start of the program and at the end of the program, you will fill out the VPP-M Self-Report Measures. The purpose of you filling the self-report out twice is to see if the scores before and after the program change or remain the same.

**What are the potential benefits to me of taking part?**
You get to participate in a program that will help you remember and apply the skills that you learned in VPP-MI or VPP-HI. The skills may assist you while you are serving the remainder of your sentence and when you are released back into the community. You will receive individual sessions, which will give you more room to participate and you will not have to disclose any information around other offenders. You also will receive pay for each session and you get to spend time off of your range.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**
To benefit from the program, you may have to disclose or address information that you are not comfortable sharing with others. You may make little or no progress at all as programs do not work for everybody.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**
You have the option to drop out of the study at any time if you no longer feel comfortable sharing personal information within and between sessions.

**Will my taking part in this project be kept private?**
Your information regarding your criminal history and previous programming will be mentioned in the written project, but it will not be elaborate enough for readers to identify you. Each session will be summarized and filed in the facility's computer system, which is password protected. The pre-post rating summary data and the self-report data will be filed at the institution and on my computer, which is password protected, for my write-up of the project. Your real name and written work will not be included in the project's write-up. Any information that you disclose will be reported to CSC authorities if it relates to anything that could threaten the safety of an individual, threaten the security of the institution, or involve an unreported offence.

**Do you have to take part?**
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without incurring any penalty.
Contact for further information.
This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College. The project will be developed under the supervision of Dave Villeneuve, my supervisor from St. Lawrence College. I really appreciate your cooperation. If you have any additional questions or concerns, feel free to ask me or you can have my on-site supervisor Charline Ivatt contact my College Supervisor, you may also have my on-site supervisor contact the Research Ethics Board.

Consent
If you agree to participate in the project, please complete the following form and return it to me as soon as possible. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records. An additional copy of your consent will be retained at the agency in a secure location.
Consent

By signing this form, I agree that:

1. The study has been explained to me.
2. All my questions were answered.
3. Possible harm and discomforts and possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me.
4. I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.
5. I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study.
6. I have been told that my personal information will be kept confidential.
7. I understand that no information that would identify me will be released or printed without asking me first.
8. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

I hereby consent to participate.

Participant/Parent/Guardian Printed Name: ____________________________

Age of Participant:______________

Signature: _______________________________  Date: ________

SLC Student Signature: ____________________  Date: ________

Printed Name: ____________________________
Appendix B: Assessment Measures

Violence Prevention Program – Maintenance Semi-Structured Interview (VPP-M-SSI) (Correctional Service Canada, 2009) – The VPP-M-SSI is an interview designed to collect information which aims to clarify an offender’s risk factors, path of offending, high risk situations, and self-management plan. The Interview includes questions regarding the offender’s understanding of how his risk factors are related to his use of violence and what type of coping techniques he used to deal with his risk factors. The interview examines the six skill areas taught in the offender's previous VPP and which skill areas he has used since he finished his previous VPP. The six skill areas include working towards goals, self-management, problem solving, challenging thinking which supports violence, anger and emotion management, and communication and conflict resolution. The interview also includes questions that require the offender to discuss how well he has coped in violence-provoking situations since he completed his prior VPP. Before an offender can participate in VPP-M, it is required that he is interviewed with the VPP-M-SSI.

Violence Prevention Program – Maintenance Pre-Post Rating Summaries (Correctional Service Canada, 2009) – The VPP-M Pre-Post Rating Summaries is a two part assessment, which is delivered prior to an offender taking a VPP-M and after he completes a VPP-M. The pre-program summary is filled out by the interviewer soon after administering the VPP-M Semi-Structured Interview. In the pre-program summary, six skill areas discussed in the VPP-M-SSI are listed in rows. In columns, there is a list of whether or not a particular skill was taught in the prerequisite program, whether or not the offender expressed that he used the skill in an applied setting, and any behavioural indicators that the offender used the skill. The VPP-M post-program summary is filled out by the CPO who delivered the program. The same skill areas listed in the pre-program summary are also listed in the post-program summary. There are four possible scores in each skill area. The possible scores are 0, 1, 2, and 2+. A score of “0” would mean that the offender did not understand the skill area and was unable to carry out any of its skills in a classroom, even with prompts. A score of “1” would mean that the offender had a simple understanding of the skill area and needed plenty of prompting to carry out any of its skills in a classroom. A score of “2” would mean that the offender understood the skill area and could demonstrate any of its skills in a classroom with little prompting. A score of “2+” would mean that the offender understood the skill area and reported that he used at least one of its skills outside of a classroom.

Violence Prevention Program Self-Report Assessment Measures

Antisocial Personality Questionnaire: Paranoid Suspicion (APQ-PS) subscale (Blackburn & Fawcett, 1999) – The APQ-PS is a self-report questionnaire with 17 yes or no items that measure one’s level of suspicion that others have negative intentions. A score of 0 means that the test-taker had below average paranoid suspicion, scores from 1 to 6 mean that the test-taker had average paranoid suspicion, and scores from 7 to 17 mean that the test-taker had above average paranoid suspicion. The APQ-PS is a standardized and internally valid measure. Furthermore, the original sample for the test compared a group of offenders and non-offenders. The purpose of this was to show the
difference between the average scores of offenders and the average scores of non-offenders. The APQ-PS potential score ranges are displayed in the table below.

**APQ-PS Score Interpretations**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>&gt;6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Rowe Deceptive Responding Scale (RDRS) - Abridged version (Rowe, 2003)** – The RDRS is a self-report questionnaire that has a total of 36 rating scale items. This test measures the degree a test-taker answers questions with honesty to see if the test-taker is attempting to appear socially desirable. The first 15 items measure poor self-appraisal, which is the degree that test-takers overestimate their own abilities. The other 21 items measure antisocial impression management, which is the degree that test-takers falsely present themselves as being pro-social. A score of 17 or less means that the test-taker did not answer deceptively and the results of the other two VPP self-report measures could be interpreted. Scores from 18 to 22 mean that the test-taker answered questions in a deceptive manner and the other self-reports would need to be interpreted carefully. A score of 23 or higher means that the test-taker answered too many questions in a deceptive manner, so the scores on the other two self-reports could not be interpreted. This assessment has not been formally published.

**Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) (Buss & Perry, 1992)** – The AQ is a self-report assessment with 29 rating scale items that measure four subscales: Physical aggression, which includes 9 items; Verbal Aggression, which includes 5 items; Anger, which includes 7 items; and Hostility, which includes 8 items. A Total score of each subscale is also recorded. For the Physical Aggression subscale, a below average score is 16 or less, an average score ranges from 17 to 32, and an above average score is 33 or higher. For the Verbal Aggression subscale, a below average score is 11 or lower, an average score ranges from 12 to 20, and an above average score is 21 or above. For the Anger subscale, a below average score is 11 or under, an average score is in the 12 to 22 range, and an above average score is in the 23 or above range. For the Hostility subscale, a score less than 16.7 is below average, a score that falls within 16.7 to 26.8 is average, and a score that is more than 26.8 is above average. For a total score, the below average range is 60 or less, the average range is 61 to 94, and the above average range is 95 or above. The AQ scores are based around a sample of 612 post-secondary students. The AQ's sub-tests have been shown to be internally valid within the original American sample and as well as in samples from other countries (Yim, Abd-El-Fattah, & Lee, 2007). The AQ potential score ranges are displayed in the table on the following page.
### AQ Score Interpretations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>&lt;17</td>
<td>17-32</td>
<td>&gt;32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal Aggression</td>
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<td>12-20</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>&lt;12</td>
<td>12-22</td>
<td>&gt;22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>&lt;16.7</td>
<td>16.7-26.8</td>
<td>&gt;26.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>&lt;61</td>
<td>61-94</td>
<td>&gt;94</td>
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</table>
Appendix C: Session Summaries

Session 1: Working Towards Goals - 1
This session reviewed the skills of “Goal Setting” and “Goal Check”. Goal setting involved using a technique called SMART for setting goals. When setting a goal using SMART, the goal must specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time framed. Goal Check involves looking at one’s own goals, evaluating if those goals are currently in the process of being met, and changing or maintaining behaviour to work toward those goals. The participant applied the skills listed above to scenario included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

Session 2: Working Towards Goals - 2
This session reviewed the skills of ‘STOP and THINK’ and ‘TIME OUT’. The purpose of these skills is to prevent violent impulses from being acted on. STOP and THINK is involves recognizing sudden impulses, stopping oneself from acting on them, thinking of the consequences, asking oneself if the consequences can be lived with, and if the consequences are in line with one’s goals. TIME OUT involves recognizing a situation one is in that evokes emotional arousal, leaving the emotion-arousing situation, and using a technique or doing an activity that is calming. The participant applied the skills listed above to scenarios included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

Session 3: Anger and Emotion Management - 1
This session reviewed the skills of “Cue Relaxation” and “Counting Breathing”. The purpose of these skills is to control physical symptoms associated with anger. Cue Relaxation involves taking deep rhythmic breaths, thinking “breath in” when inhaling, thinking “relax” when exhaling, and repeating until relaxation occurs. Counting Breathing involves breathing slowly in a focused manner and counting each breath for a few minutes until relaxation occurs. The participant applied the skills listed above to scenarios included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

Session 4: Anger and Emotion Management - 2
This session reviewed the skills of “Thought Stopping” and “Calming Self-Talk”. The purpose of these skills is to control psychological symptoms associated with anger. Thought Stopping involves recognizing one’s own thoughts are becoming problematic, saying “stop” to oneself, doing something that is calming such as taking deep breaths, and doing something distracting until the negative thoughts go away. Calming Self-talk involves developing a word or phrase ahead of time that is calming to oneself, recognizing when one’s emotions are becoming problematic, taking a large breath, stating the word or phrase to oneself, assessing oneself has calmed down, and repeating the steps as needed. The participant applied the skills listed above to scenarios included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

Session 5: Problem Solving
This session reviewed a skill called “FOCUS”. The purpose of this skill is to solve complex problems. The “F” stands for finding the facts of a problem, facing one’s own feelings if they are getting in the way, and focusing on one’s own goal. The “O” stands for outlining the options for
solving a problem. The “C” stands for considering the pros and cons of each option and choosing which option is the best choose. The “U” stands for using a plan to apply the best option. The “S” stands for standing back and analyzing the result. The participant applied the FOCUS to a scenario included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used FOCUS in practical settings.

**Session 6: Challenging your Thinking - 1**
This session reviewed the skills of “Consequences Check” and “Old Way/New Way”. The purpose of these skills is to challenge and modify one’s thinking that can lead to anti-social behaviour. Consequences Check involves one analyzing a specific thought that lead to negative consequences in the past. The steps in this analysis include thinking of one’s own goals, considering what is most likely to occur if the specific thought persists, asking oneself if the specific thought persisting will cause regret or shame, thinking about whether or not that specific thought persisting will help achieve one’s goals, and if the specific thought will keep oneself calm. Old Way/New Way involves identifying a previous belief that one has about something or a situation; the belief usually supports antisocial behaviour. Once the previous belief is identified, some new ways of thinking are looked at. A new way of thinking replaces the previous belief. The new way of thinking must be in line with one’s goals and it should not cause an occurrence of negative emotions. The participant applied the skills listed above to a scenario in his own life and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

**Session 7: Challenging your Thinking - 2**
This session reviewed the skills of “Personal Standards Check” and “Old Way/New Way”. The purpose of these skills is to challenge and modify one’s thinking that can lead to anti-social behaviour. Personal Standards Check involves thinking about expectations for oneself and evaluating if negative thoughts that one is experiencing are in line with those expectations. The steps include asking oneself in continuing to think negatively will lead to a sense of pride, considering if one is trying to find reasons to justify thinking negatively, thinking about whether or not one should tell another person about the negative thoughts, and asking oneself if a respectable person would think the same way. The participant applied the skills listed above to a scenario listed in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

**Session 8: Challenging your Thinking - 3**
This session reviewed the skills of “Reality Check” and “Old Way/New Way”. The purpose of these skills is to challenge and modify one’s thinking that can lead to anti-social behaviour. Reality Check involves one evaluating how realistic negative thoughts that one is experiencing. The steps include looking at evidence that support the negative thoughts, looking at evidence that goes against the negative thoughts, considering other possible explanations, trying to look at the situation that the thoughts are related to as a whole, and considering how others in the same situation would think. The participant applied the skills listed above to a scenario included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

**Session 9: Communication and Conflict Resolution - 1**
This session reviewed the skills of “Expressing Feelings and Wishes/Assertive Communication” and “Respectful Listening”. The purpose of these skills is to increase communication, especially
in the face of problematic situations. Expressing Feelings and Wishes/Assertive Communication involves stating one’s feelings to another person and why those feelings are occurring. It also includes expressing what one wants another person to do, the reasoning for the request, and how it ties into one’s feelings. Respectful Listening is a strategy used to effectively listen to others. The steps include posturing oneself, keeping eye contact with the speaker, paying full attention to the speaker, encouraging the speaker, reflecting what the speaker said, and asking open questions. The participant applied the skills listed above to a scenario included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skills in practical settings.

**Session 10: Communication and Conflict Resolution - 2**

This session reviewed the skill of “Disarming Criticism”. The purpose of this skill is to increase communication, especially in the face of problematic situations. Disarming Criticism is used when one is being criticized by another person. The steps involve using the skill respectful listening, finding part of the critique that the person being criticized agrees with, expressing agreement, asking for the reason of the criticism and what needs to be done to deal with it. The participant applied disarming criticism to a scenario included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skill in practical settings.

**Session 11: Communication and Conflict Resolution - 3**

This session reviewed the skill of “Perspective Taking”. The purpose of this skill is to understand what another person is thinking and feeling, especially in the face of problematic situations. Perspective taking involves reminding oneself that people do not always see situations the same way, thinking about what the other person in a problematic situation thinks or the way someone looking in from the outside thinks about the situation, and trying to view the situation from the perspective of the other person involved with the situation. The participant applied perspective taking to a scenario included in the session plan and he discussed the degree in which he used the skill in practical settings.

**Session 12: Communication and Conflict Resolution – 4**

This session reviewed the skill of FOCUS and how it can be applied to interpersonal conflicts. The purpose of this skill was mentioned in the session 5 summary. The participant applied FOCUS to a scenario included in the session plan. The application of the skill included a role-play that the student and CPO. The participant also discussed the degree in which he used the skill to resolve conflict in practical settings.
### Appendix D: Blank Attendance and Completed Homework Log

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Appendix E: Filled Out Attendance and Completed Homework Log

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