Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop: An Evaluation Of The Perceived Benefits By Offenders

by

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my parents, without their constant support throughout the times I have needed it most, and the advantages they have given me in life, I would not have had the opportunity to be where I am today.
Abstract

The Motivational Based Intervention Strategy (MBIS) and Skills Workshop is an intervention that has been introduced in federal correctional facilities across Canada in an effort to address behavioural issues of offenders’ who have been placed in administrative segregation. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the offenders’ perception of the beneficial changes the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention has had on them, by surveying a sample population of individuals who have completed or were enrolled in the intervention. The Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop Evaluation survey was developed by the study author with input from the MBIS and Skills Workshop Coordinators at Correctional Services of Canada (CSC). The survey was completed by 15 offenders who had previously participated in the MBIS intervention. The survey was designed to evaluate the offenders’ perception of changes to their motivation, and skills following participation in the intervention as well as their perception of the overall effectiveness of the intervention. Offenders were also able to make comments and suggestions on the intervention or service delivery. Based on the results of the survey the offenders’ perceptions were that the intervention increased both their motivation and skill development. The overall intervention was rated positively (4.09 out of 5). Based on these results and additional comments made by the offenders in the study it was concluded that the Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop intervention had a positive effect on the offenders’ perceptions of their motivation to change maladaptive behaviours and work towards new behavioural skills, which would hopefully make the correctional facility safer for both the offenders and correctional staff. This study serves as preliminary research into the effectiveness of the Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop intervention; however, further longitudinal studies using more objective measures of the offenders’ behaviour changes post-intervention would be of great benefit to the agency.
Acknowledgments
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Chapter I: Introduction

Offenders may be removed from the general population for a wide range of reasons and placed in segregation or isolation. Possible reasons for removal from the general population include a form of punishment, protection, or management (Bartol & Bartol, 2008). The Motivational Based Intervention Strategy (MBIS) and Skills Workshop is an intervention that has been introduced within federal correctional settings across Canada, specifically for offenders placed in administrative segregation.

Administrative segregation can either be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary administrative segregation occurs when an offender requests, on reasonable grounds, to be removed from the general population, usually for a fear of his own safety. Involuntary administrative segregation refers to admitting an offender to segregation based on behavioural problems that may be a threat to the safety of staff and/or other offenders (Correctional Services of Canada, 2007). MBIS and Skills Workshop has been developed for high-needs offenders placed in administrative segregation to address behavioural issues. High-needs offenders have been identified as individuals who benefit the most from correctional programming (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006); however, these offenders’ motivation levels and disruptive behaviour often prevents them from receiving any form of programming.

The MBIS and Skills Workshop is an intervention that was developed for federally incarcerated offenders, placed in segregation, who volunteer to participate and who would like to address skill deficits which have led to inappropriate behaviour in regards to adjustment to prison life. The intervention uses a teamwork approach between the service provider and offender to develop motivation, with an emphasis on being flexible and adapting to the needs of the offender. The Motivational Based Intervention Strategy uses a four step approach to develop motivation. The first step involves building a therapeutic alliance and developing an understanding of how the offender sees his problems. The second step involves creating a decisional balance between the benefits and the repercussions of their problem behaviour. The third step involves exploring and pursuing behavioural change goals. The final step involves clarifying the goals and developing an action plan of how to achieve them (Girard & Bastien, 2003).

Once an appropriate level of motivation is established, there is a therapeutic working relationship with the practitioner, and the offender is ready to commit to the intervention, the Skills Workshop is introduced. The offender is able to choose which workshops he would like to take, such as: self monitoring, anger control, high-risk thinking, slips and craving management, communication skills, and/or problem solving. The Skills Workshops are based on cognitive-behavioural strategies and apply concepts from correctional programming that have been demonstrated to be effective in terms of behavioural changes and reduced recidivism (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). The purpose of these workshops is to give the offender the necessary skills, which will contribute to the pursuit of their behavioural goals. Allowing offenders to choose which workshop they would like to study and allowing the offender work at a pace he feels comfortable at helps maintain their motivation (Potter, 2004). These skills not only help
the offender with achieving the behavioural goals he set for himself, but helps with reintegration into society, arming him with more appropriate ways to deal with the challenges and barriers that he is faced with day-to-day.

The overall goal of the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention is to assist the offender to adjust to the correctional setting by correcting problem behaviour. By helping the offender to develop the skills necessary for appropriate integration into the correctional setting, the offender’s risk in the prison and his risk to re-offend once released back into society should be reduced. Despite the length of time that this intervention has been developed and implemented there has not been an evaluation based on the offenders’ point of view of the intervention in this region (Griffin, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the offenders’ perception of the beneficial changes the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention has had on them, by surveying a sample population of individuals who have completed or were enrolled in the intervention. Although the intervention incorporates concepts of accredited correctional programs, and caters to each offender’s level of motivation and abilities, there has yet to be any data reporting the benefits perceived by its participants. It is hypothesised that the intervention has an increase in both offender motivation and behavioural skills. High-needs offenders are usually the individuals who need/benefit from correctional programs the most, yet usually resist or are unable to participate in programming (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006). The results provide evidence of whether or not the intervention was beneficial in terms of developing motivation to work towards changing their behaviour from the offenders’ perspective and if the skills developed are considered to be of help when offenders are adjusting to the correctional setting again, from their perspective. It is hoped that Corrections Canada will be able to use this preliminary data as part of a more general review of the effectiveness of this intervention. The following paper outlines the efficacy of the MBIS and Skills Workshop through an extensive literature review, followed by an outline of data collection methods and measures. The results show the increase in motivation and behavioural skills broken down by offender location in the various institutions. The paper concludes with strengths and limitations of the study.
Chapter II: Literature Review

**Prison Adjustment**

As a prison sentence begins, so does a new lifestyle of restrictions on behaviour and deprivation of the components in life the majority of people take for granted. In an environment where many freedoms are taken away, isolation from family and friends, a strict schedule to follow, and a constant threat from a dangerous population; prison can be a stressful experience and take a psychological toll on anyone. Although humans for the most part are adaptable beings, prisons may be a difficult environment to adjust to for most people. A major study conducted by Zamble and Porporino (1988) evaluated several aspects of prison adjustment and identified depression, anger and anxiety as the most common emotions experienced by offenders, especially at the beginning of their sentence. Most of these feelings appear to dissipate over time as the offender becomes more familiar with his setting, as long as he incorporates appropriate coping strategies into his daily life. However, many behaviours that previously served as a coping function for the challenges they faced in society (i.e., becoming intoxicated or fighting to resolve or escape from problems) are not tolerated within the prison walls. If an offender is unable to develop new strategies for dealing with his problems and he is exposed as an anxious, angry or depressed person, he may be perceived as a vulnerable target for bullying or harassment by other offenders, or may experience negative consequences if he acts out aggressively. Offenders have been shown to have “low-level” coping strategies due to poor previous learning histories and few resources available in the institution for dealing with challenges. The most common form of coping found in the study of prison adjustment identified escape as the leading response to emotional or physical distress (Zamble & Porporino, 1988). For example, an offender missing his family may lift weights until he forgets about it, or become involved in the institutional drug and alcohol subculture. Should the offenders not address the poor coping strategies that may have contributed to their initial incarceration, likelihood of re-offence remains elevated.

**Risk, Need and Responsivity**

The main concept of the MBIS and Skills Workshop is to address high-risk offenders in terms of inappropriate behaviour when adjusting to a correctional environment. The Risk, Need and Responsivity (RNR) model is the most effective approach to adult rehabilitation in the field of correctional programming (Andrews & Drowden, 2007). Offenders succeed (in terms of program completion and rehabilitation) in programs that meet their risk level and criminogenic needs. An offender who is identified as high-risk is more likely to benefit from correctional programming because there is more room for personal improvement. Although it has been established that programming is necessary and beneficial for high-risk offenders to reduce rates of recidivism, should the program not properly address the needs and responsivity issues of the offender, the program could have a negative impact on the offender’s behaviour.
(Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006). There are many responsivity barriers to consider when working with such a diverse population such as, culture, language, motivation, values, education, all play a significant role in how the offender accepts and understands the treatment. Although the RNR model has been identified as the most effective method, it is difficult to recruit the highest-risk offenders and implement its key concepts within the general population. Many offenders who present the highest risks within a prison population are typically not motivated to change their behaviour, or seek assistance from authoritative figures within the institution (i.e., joining correctional programs). There are also difficulties addressing the needs and responsivity of offenders in group treatment programs. Each offender presents their own needs that have to be address, along with their own learning styles and personal barriers to treatment. The RNR model has been identified as the most effective focus of treatment, however idealistically it may be difficult to implement the overall theory of the model with each offender individually. Segregated offenders are usually deemed high-risk and the MBIS and Skills Workshop has been developed to address not only the risk and need of the offender but working one-on-one with the offender allows the service provider to address his responsivity as well, catering the intervention to suit each offender individually.

A meta-analysis conducted by Landenberger and Lipsey (2005) further supported that the delivery of programs, abiding to the program manual and targeting the risk level of offenders, has the greatest impact on an effective outcome. This includes, incorporating cognitive-behavioural strategies such as anger control and social skills, showed greater results than behavioural programs alone. The analysis was unable to identify specifically what worked in the cognitive-behavioural strategies, but rather the general concept had positive effects in terms of reduced recidivism. Further it has been suggested that it is important to implement these strategies in the early stages of the offender’s prison sentence. Studies have demonstrated that providing programming to offenders during their sentence has a greater impact on reduced rates of recidivism than waiting to treat the offender once released to the community (Smith & Gendreau, 2008).

In the Social Problem Solving Skills Training intervention described by Bourke and Van Hasselelet (2001), treatment addressing anger management, empathy, stress inoculation, and social skills training had a positive effect on behavioural changes of offenders. The article does, however, address some common drawbacks of working with offenders in a correctional setting. One drawback is the constant change of the participants in the group as offenders leave the group for reasons such as transfers to other institutions, or ejection from the group for disruptive behaviour, or as a repercussion for their behaviour in the general population. Therefore, each session has to be independent to allow for an offender to benefit daily, should the offender have to stop the program for any reason. Another common drawback of any program deals with the diversity of the group. As noted by Taxman and Thanner (2006), the specific responsivity issues of each offender can vary widely in a group. Characteristics such as education level, culture, age, language, motivation, and learning style can play a significant role in the amount of practical information taken from each lesson and can become a barrier to the treatment process. The MBIS and Skills workshop works one-on-one with the offender and can address drawbacks such as transfers and the specific responsivity issues.
The program is catered to the individual rather than a group; therefore changes in the delivery can easily be made to accommodate that individual.

Andrews and Drowden (2005) not only established the benefits of the Risk, Need, and Responsivity model, but also addressed the components that maintain program integrity in a meta-analysis. They identified the selection of workers, the training they have, the manuals they use, the “freshness” of the program, and the evaluation of the service providers, as all contributing to establishing acceptable program integrity. When the service deliverer is passionate about the program and maintains the boundaries set by the manual, there is a greater impact on the individuals receiving the treatment. It is important to note that the risk, need and responsivity model remains the basis of successful treatment; the components listed above only increase the effectiveness of the responsivity of the program delivery.

For any change in environment, stimuli, or consequences, an individual must adjust his behaviour accordingly. However, many offenders have not developed the ability to adjust to new environmental conditions appropriately throughout their life. For some offenders, unable to cope with their new environment, administrative segregation may be necessary for their own protection. Administrative segregation is typically for offenders who have behaved inappropriately and are kept isolated from the general population, usually for 23 hours a day, with minimum contact with correctional officers or staff. This does not allow the offenders to adjust to regular population and they are unable to develop any necessary behavioural skills to do so. These offenders are usually high-need in terms of correctional programming and are usually not able to receive programs due to their segregation status (Bartol & Bartol, 2008).

Motivation to Change

In order to begin any behavioural change, the offender must want to make the changes. As outlined by Bieling, McCabe, and Anthony (2006), client motivation and readiness to change are two essential components for a successful treatment outcome. It is important for an intervention to target the client’s specific stage of change (e.g., pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, maintenance) for treatment to have an impact on the client. Once the motivation has been established, skill deficits that maintain criminal or problematic behaviour can be addressed and changed. Corresponding with this concept, Farmer and Nelson-Gray (2005) noted that motivation strategies are essential at the beginning of treatment to develop awareness of the problem behaviour and how this behaviour impedes on long-term goals and aspirations. Once the motivation is established and problem behaviours are identified, clients are able to address skill deficits and work towards a greater behavioural repertoire to respond appropriately to a wide range of situations. The Transtheoretical Stages of Change model (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984), first used in the field of addictions for identifying the readiness of addicts to change their drug using behaviour, has been generalized to describe a wide range of behavioural changes. By identifying which stage of change an individual is in, a behavioural intervention can be targeted specifically to the stage, which will make the intervention more likely to be a success (as cited in Levy, 1997). Critics of the model
have argued that an individual’s actual behavioural changes are not as concrete as the literature states, however, the model itself provides appropriate target areas to begin the intervention. By identifying the stage of change the individual is in, motivational techniques may be administered to bring the individual to the stage of change necessary to begin any sort of intervention and begin skill development (Williamson, Day, Howells, Bubner, & Jauncey, 2003).

**Skill Development**

Bourke and Van Hasselet (2001) identify three key areas that are beneficial to offenders in correctional programs: anger management, social skills, and substance abuse. Given that aggression is common within the prison system, it is important to target interpersonal functioning and have a program that teaches offenders how to deal with and express their anger appropriately, control impulses and develop basic social skills. Another important aspect of adjusting to a correctional setting as noted by Biggam and Power (1999) is the offender’s social problem-solving skills. Their study looked at problem-solving skills within a prison with three sample populations; inmates who appropriately adjusted to the prison; a disciplinary group; and a group who were unable to adjust to the setting. The study identified offenders who are unable to adjust to the correctional setting as having the greatest skill deficits. The study also identified offenders who are vulnerable to, or victims of, bullying in correctional settings, as having low problem-solving skills. By teaching these offenders appropriate problem-solving skills, it is hoped they will have a greater behavioural repertoire and develop appropriate coping strategies when faced with challenges in the institution.

Eidhen, Sheehy, O’Sullivan, and Breada (2002) noted that a major contributor to prison adjustment and coping ability is interpersonal characteristics. Social interaction with other offenders is seen as a protective factor in an institution. As an individual befriends other offenders, he gains a sense of security and is able to integrate into the prison population. If an offender has a more introverted personality, he may use a less effective coping strategy such as escape or avoidance (Zamble & Porporino, 1988). When an offender avoids interactions with other individuals in the institution there is a decrease in opportunities for building relationships, which would have otherwise helped the offender to adjust to the prison culture. Although socialization with other offenders may increase the individual’s knowledge of crime and create social ties with other criminals, it could also teach him how to cope by others who have adjusted well (Smith & Gendreau, 2008). Befriending other inmates and participating in programs and employment opportunities, gives offenders activities to pass the time, and may be protective against depression and anxiety.

Another factor relevant to prison adjustment as identified by Jiang, Fisher-Giorlando, and Mo (2005) is social support, which has been shown to be an important factor in the reduction of rule violations (theoretically stemming from more appropriate behaviour). The study “Social Support and Inmate Rule Violations” looked at the role of positive social supports (i.e., good communication with family) compared to the number of prison violations. The study confirmed that social supports lead to a more appropriate
behavioural adjustment to prison by reducing stress and anxieties through ventilation, being more responsible for their actions, and having more to lose through acts of rule violations. Having inmates participate in programs that address the skills necessary for garnering and maintaining positive social supports will also give offenders more activity in their daily lives, reducing boredom which may lead to inappropriate behaviour.

Corresponding with the concept of correctional programming reducing the number of rule violations, Steiner and Wooldredge (2008) conducted a study evaluating individual and environmental effects in regards to rule violations in correctional settings. They identified four contributing factors: the offender’s age, previous incarcerations, drug and alcohol abuse and correctional program participation. Correctional program participation proved to reduce the number of rule violations, which may be due to a decrease in opportunities to act out or the offender gaining new skills that he applied to his setting. The MBIS and Skills workshop helps offenders develop a behavioural repertoire that will allow them to adapt to prison life and create and maintain a positive social support network. Developing these skills will not only contribute to positive behavioural changes while incarcerated but may also generalize to other settings once the offender is released from prison.

**Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshops**

McMurran and McCulloch (2007) conducted a study which assessed factors related to non-completion of treatment based on a sample from a cognitive skills program. Due to a small sample size and lack of previous research it was difficult for the study to come to a generalized conclusion. Despite these drawbacks the study did identify that non-completers described themselves as motivated to change their behaviour at the beginning of treatment, which is contrary to the idea that offenders join the programs just for good impressions or a reduced sentence. These offenders identified that the reasons for dropping out of the programs were because the programs did not address the needs that the offenders felt were necessary, and there were more dominant problems (such as a substance abuse problems) that interfered with the treatment process. Another reason for program dropout was the specific responsivity of the offenders not being addressed and that most programs were either too complex or too effortless for different members of the group. The final reason identified was working and participating in a group. For completers this was identified as a benefit, while non-completers found it difficult to participate and stated that one-on-one programs would be more beneficial. This corresponds with the possible drawbacks of the RNR model. It is difficult to address each need of the offender in a group setting, although programs incorporate generalized treatment (i.e., substance abuse in anger management programs), each need has to be targeted individually. Offenders also come from a wide range of cultures, languages and education levels, which may create more barriers to treatment in regards to the responsivity of the offender.

The Motivational Based Intervention Strategy (MBIS) is a four step approach to address the motivation of an offender in order to change his behaviour. The first step teaches the offender the process of change. The second step identifies the behaviours that the offender would like to change and examines the reasons why they are important. The
third step involves developing realistic goals that the offender would like to pursue. The final step is the development of a plan to attain those goals. Following MBIS, the offender is able to choose from a variety of skills workshops, such as: self monitoring, anger control, high risk thinking, slips and craving management, communication skills and problem solving (Griffin, 2007). The offender is able to complete any number of these programs at a comfortable pace, contributing to the development of behavioural skills that will be beneficial for the offender when faced against challenges both in the prison and once released back into society (Potter, 2004). Providing an intervention for offenders who are removed from the prison population addresses the risks and needs of these offenders, which might otherwise have gone untouched. With this intervention, the service provider can work one-on-one with high-needs offenders to develop the motivation to make behavioural change and identify a target behaviour chosen by the offender, which they would be motivated to work towards changing. Once the motivation to change is developed, the offender can work towards his behavioural change goals through a series of skills workshops.

Summary

There are many consistencies within the correctional literature. A common theme identifies the difficulties of adjusting to an institution should an offender not have the appropriate coping strategies needed to adapt to the environment. In this case the personal safety of the offender and the institution may be put at risk. Most offenders have to deal with a variety of stressors when first introduced to a correctional setting. In order to adapt, the offenders must have or must develop cognitive-behavioural skills such as problem-solving and social skills, in order to deal with their new environment. The problem with segregation is that it does not solve the problems; offenders have minimal contact with staff and other offenders, so the skills remain undeveloped. Another consistency in the correctional programming literature is the effectiveness of the risk, need and responsivity model. Targeting the risks and needs of an offender with a reliable form of cognitive-behavioural programming shows the greatest results in skill development and reduced recidivism. This illustrates the need for the MBIS and Skills Workshop. The intervention is targeted to offenders with skill deficits and uses strategies that have shown to be effective in other contexts of correctional programming.

Currently, there is no research illustrating the impact of mainstream correctional programming on offenders in administrative segregation because offenders in segregation are unable to participate in general population programming. This evaluation of the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention, an intervention that incorporates working concepts of accredited correctional programs, will be an initial contribution to the literature for Correctional Services of Canada in terms of identifying the self-perceived benefits of the program to offenders who have participated in it. Another identified gap in the literature as noted by Taxman & Thanner (2006) is the evaluation of specific responsivity issues of offenders during correctional programming. Given the MBIS and Skills Workshop is delivered in a one-on-one format, the specific responsivity issue of motivation of the offender was analysed and included in the evaluation. Further research will be needed to compare the motivation of the offenders working one-on-one, in terms of personal desire to change and skill development, to other group correctional programming and the impact of motivation on outcome such as reduced recidivism.
Chapter III- Method

Participants

Individuals participating in the study were 15 males over the age of 18, incarcerated in federal correctional facilities in the Ontario region for various crimes and sentence lengths. Participants were either from the general population of the institution; transition from segregation to general population; or remaining in segregation and the current institution they were residing in was noted. Participants had to have been placed in segregation at some point of their incarceration and completed the MBIS and Skills Workshop or completed enough of the intervention to give feedback based on the discretion of the MBIS Coordinators. Participants were excluded if they had been transferred to a correctional facility outside of the region or if they had completed their incarceration of their prison sentence (offenders on parole were not surveyed). For participants who refused to participate or did not show up to the interviewing room, their survey was removed from the study.

Setting

Each offender was surveyed in the prison they resided in at the time of the study. The test administrator waited in an office or classroom as the offender participating in the study was escorted from his cell to the room. The parole officer or MBIS Coordinator would then wait outside while the survey took place. Informed consent was then explained to the participant and given to him to read and sign. Following consent being signed the survey was then explained and participant was asked if they would like to complete the survey himself or prefer to have the questions read by the test administrator. Following the test the participant was asked if he would like to keep a copy of the consent form and was thanked for participating.

Informed Consent

Consent was obtained using the B.A.A. Behavioural Psychology Student Consent Form (Appendix A). The consent form was verbally explained to the participant by the test administrator, identifying the role of the student during the placement, the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits, and confidentiality issues. Following the explanation, the consent form was handed to the participant for his own evaluation and signature. All participants had to provide consent to participate in the study and were asked to give permission to use the information gathered to be presented at a conference or published in a peer-reviewed journal or professional publication. All information gathered was kept confidential, and there was no identifying information about the participant on the evaluation form, other than a number to correspond with the consent form. All consent forms were kept with the host agency Correctional Services of Canada, Regional Headquarters in Kingston, Ontario. The offender was informed he had the right to refuse to take the survey, refuse any question, or stop the process at any point. It was noted that should taking the survey cause the offender any distress associated with thinking of past behaviours, he would be referred to the Institutional Psychology Department. It was further noted that should the participant withdraw his consent to the study at any time, the interview would be terminated at that point and the survey would be marked “refused”.

Following the signing of the consent form the participant was asked if he would like a copy of the form for his own records and any further questions were answered.

**Procedure**

The MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention is delivered on an individual basis to offenders who volunteer to participate. The MBIS and Skills Workshop Co-ordinators meet with the offenders once a week for a brief session to review motivational or behavioural skills homework, discuss new concepts and assign new homework. The intervention lasts for as long as the offender finds it beneficial to his adjustment or until he returns to regular population. This study evaluated the MBIS and Skills Workshop by surveying 15 offenders chosen at random using a questionnaire of the perceived benefits of the intervention. Given that no intervention process data was collected based on the intervention, the survey was developed to measure self-perceived progress made in motivation for change and behavioural skills development post intervention. The survey relied on the offenders’ self-report of previous, current and perceived future motivation, and skills repertoire. The survey also measured the overall effectiveness of the intervention including the working relationship with the services providers. The survey *Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop: Evaluation* (Appendix B) was developed by this author following discussion and input from the MBIS and Skills Workshop Co-ordinators. The survey assessed changes in participants’ motivation and skills following completion of the intervention (or up to skills development) and the applicability of those changes in their current setting, which included remaining in segregation, transition, or returning to general population within the institution.

**Measures**

The *Motivational Based Intervention and Skills Workshop Evaluation* (Appendix B) was used to measure the offenders’ perception of the benefits of the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention. Participants were asked to respond to a set of questions using a Likert scale, ranging from very low, low, medium, high and very high, each given a numeric value from 1 to 5 for the purpose of analysis (i.e. very low=1, very high=5).

Following the survey there was a short informal discussion where offenders were encouraged to provide comments on what part of the intervention they found most beneficial to them and what changes could be made to the intervention to make it more successful. The interviewer recorded their comments. The comments can be viewed in the raw data or in an overview in the discussion section.

As per data collection and analysis, each question was assigned a ranking from 1 to 5, one being very low and five being very high. Questions pertaining to factors before the intervention were identified and scored separately, and classified as a perceived baseline. This self-report data was used as a baseline to identify self-perceived increases in motivation and skills during and post intervention. If the participant consented to participate and only answered some of the questions, their data was still reported, with the unanswered questions left blank, so that it did not affect the rest of the data. Offenders who were asked to complete the survey but refused to participate were not incorporated in the data collection or analysis. The internal consistency of the survey was also
measured using correlation charts and Chronbach’s Alpha, to establish the integrity of the survey. Please refer to Appendix C for graphs and raw data collection results.
Chapter IV - Results

For purposes of the data analysis, questions 1, 2, & 7 were identified as perceived baseline. These questions referred to how the offender perceived his motivation and skills before the intervention began. Questions 3, 4, & 5 refer to the offender’s perceived motivation during and post intervention. Questions 8, 9, 10, & 11 refer to the offender’s perceived skill development during and post intervention. Questions 12, 13, & 14 refer to the overall effectiveness of the intervention rated by the offenders. The results are summarized in the table below. For raw data and graphs see Appendix C. Graphs in Appendix C show increases in motivation and skills with the use of trend lines.

Table I: Overall Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>During/ Post Intervention</th>
<th>Overall Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean SD</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. MBIS & Skills Workshop Survey Results

*The above graph represents the average rating for each question pertaining to motivation and skill development from all the participants of the study. This demonstrates an overall increase in motivation and skill development of 30.4%.*

Based on the results of the survey, the intervention increased offenders’ perceived motivation ($M=1.14$) and skill development ($M=1.89$). Offenders rated the overall experience of the intervention as high ($M=4.09$). Participants were also encouraged to make comments on their experience which can be seen in Appendix D. A consistency
among the comments was that the program was very beneficial to offenders’; however they also noted they would prefer more access to the service providers, including more working sessions together. There was very positive feedback on the service providers for the time the offenders did spend with them. When the results are broken down by offender location there was an increase in motivation and skill development ($M=1.57$) for offenders released back into population, an increase for offenders who were in transition to the general population ($M=.70$) and an increase for the offender who remained in segregation ($M=2.33$).

### Table II:
**Results for offenders in General Population**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline</th>
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<th>Overall Experience</th>
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*Figure II. MBIS & Skills Survey: General Population*

The above graph represents the average rating for each question based only on offenders who have returned to general population. This shows an increase of motivation and skill development of 31.4%
Table III: Results for offenders in Transition Unit

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Figure III. MBIS & Skills Workshop Survey: Transition Unit

The above graph represents the average rating for each question based only on offenders who were at the time in transition from segregation to general population. This shows an increase of motivation and skill development of 14%.

Table IV: Results for offenders in Segregation

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Figure IV. MBIS & Skills Workshop Survey: Segregation

The above graph represents the rating of each question based only on the offender who remained in segregation at the time of the survey. His survey demonstrates an increase in motivation and skill development of 46.6%.

As per internal consistency of the survey the following tables were developed to identify the correlation of the survey questions, followed by the Chronbach’s Alpha. Baseline, during/ post intervention, and overall experience were all evaluated separately.

Table V:
Correlation among Perceived Baseline Questions

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Perceived baseline questions scored a Chronbach’s Alpha of 0.836
Table VI:  
*Correlation among Perceived During/Post Intervention Questions*

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Perceived during/post intervention questions scored a Chronbach’s Alpha of 0.948

Table VII:  
*Correlation among Overall Experience*

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The overall experience scored a Chronbach’s Alpha of 0.819

The consistency of the questions of this survey ranged from low to high. The question which displayed the lowest correlation was question 12 (-0.05) and the question displaying the highest correlation was question 3 (0.90). The Chronbach’s Alpha indicates that there was a medium to high internal consistency among the responses of the questions. The Chronbach’s Alpha for questions pertaining to perceived baseline was 0.836, for during/post intervention was 0.948 and for the overall experience 0.819, which shows medium/high consistency within the survey.
Chapter V - Discussion

The outcome of this study indicated that the Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop Intervention had a positive effect of increasing the perceived motivation and skill development of segregated offenders and that the overall experience was perceived as satisfactory. Although the original goal was to obtain 50 participants, given a number of unforeseen obstacles only 13 completed the entire survey, 2 completed some of the survey and 12 refused to participate or did not show up to the interview room where the survey was being conducted. Those offenders who refused to participate or were identified as “no shows” were not included in the data analysis.

For the most part the feedback received on the Motivational Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop was quite positive. With the average overall experience being rated 4.09 and a perceived increase in both motivation and skill development, the intervention appears to have had a constructive impact. The transition unit had the lowest increase of motivation and skill development. This could be due to several reasons including fears of returning to general population and not being able to generalize their new skills. The offender in segregation had the greatest increase in motivation and skill development. This was not a representative sample as only one offender was surveyed, and the high increase may be due to overconfidence and/or a desire to present well and appear motivated in an effort to promote a release to general population. However, the offender in segregation did seem extremely motivated to change his behaviour and was very thankful of his service provider.

Questions pertaining to during and post intervention showed the greatest correlation which could be due to the fact that offenders shared similar beliefs of the effectiveness of the program. The overall experience showed the lowest correlation, more specifically question 12, “If you feel this has been a successful experience for you, do you feel you would have had the same outcome in general population programming?” This question is worded so that the participant would only answer if it has been a successful experience and offenders’ answers would mostly correspond with if they have taken general population programs in the past or not. In the future this question would be removed from the survey.

Based on these results and the encouraging comments made by offenders in regards to the service delivery and effectiveness, this intervention appeared to be beneficial to offenders’ personal growth. As mentioned in the literature review, many offenders are limited in their abilities to cope with feelings such as stress and anger, which can lead to inappropriate behaviour such as drug consumption or fighting. The MBIS and Skills Workshop helps develop appropriate ways to deal with such feelings, potentially reducing the likelihood that offenders will create high risk situations within the institution. Teaching participants appropriate ways to cope with challenges and barriers during their incarceration will hopefully lead to a generalization of the behaviour once the offender is released back to society.
**Strengths**

This study was beneficial to the two MBIS and Skills Workshops co-ordinators as it gave them feedback on the interventions they had implemented. It also benefited Correctional Services of Canada by demonstrating how well received the intervention is by the offenders. This study contributes to the field of Behavioural Psychology by providing evidence and support of the perceived effectiveness of cognitive-behavioural concepts within a Correctional setting, by surveying offenders who participated in the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention. It is important to note that no behavioural changes were tracked and that it was the perceived effectiveness of the cognitive behavioural techniques from the viewpoint of the participants that was assessed. Further formal and in-depth research is needed to confirm that the behavioural changes perceived and reported on by the offenders in the study were also reflected in true behaviour change.

The results of this study are supported by the literature in the field of corrections and behavioural psychology. As mentioned previously the Risk, Need and Responsivity model is considered the most effective approach to adult rehabilitation in the field of correctional programming. The model suggests that offenders succeed (in terms of program completion and rehabilitation) in programs that meet their risk level and criminogenic needs (Andrews & Drowden, 2007). The MBIS and Skills Intervention was designed to address the risk, need and responsivity of each offender by working one-on-one with them. Doing so allows the service provider to identify the offender’s personal strengths and weaknesses, formulating the style and pace of the intervention to cater to his wants and needs. This addresses the issue of the concepts of the RNR model not being able to be addressed in group treatment. Ideally working one-on-one with offenders would be very effective; however time and resources make this very difficult. Another strength of the intervention is the working relationship developed between the service providers and the offenders. Based on the comments made by offenders, working with the two MBIS & Skills Intervention co-ordinators was a positive experience. Andrews and Drowden (2005) noted that the selection of workers, the training they have, the manuals they use, and the “freshness” of the program all contribute to acceptable program integrity. When the service deliverer is passionate about the program and maintains the boundaries set by the manual, there should be a greater impact on the individuals receiving the treatment. This appears to have been well implemented by the two service providers delivering the MBIS program.

**Limitations**

The major limitation of this study was the recruitment of participants. Participants were chosen based on completion or participation of the intervention, however, many had been moved to other institutions, had been released to the community or had their prison sentence expire. These individuals were excluded from the study due to the difficulty of contacting them. There were also a number of participants who refused to participate in this study. This may have been due to several factors including not having a positive experience with the intervention, having a bad day, not having any incentive to
participate, being misinformed about what the survey was for, or other extenuating circumstances. As a result it is possible that the results of the present study were affected by a selection bias. That is, those offenders who declined to participate may have had less positive experiences with the MBIS program than those who chose to participate.

Another limitation was the development of the survey and the method of data collection. The survey was developed by this author and was used for the first time during this study, which meant its validity and reliability had not been established. Also the survey only measured perceived benefits of the intervention as it was a self-report of the effects. Although the comments and feedback from the perspective of the offender were used to make recommendations included in the MBIS and Skills Development Regional Draft Report, a more structured and comprehensive method of measuring behaviour longitudinally would likely have provided more informative data.

Another issue relevant to the intervention is that, although the aim of the program is to develop motivation for high-needs offenders, the offenders must volunteer to participate. Unfortunately, it is common for the highest-needs offenders to decline to participate in any form of programming. Therefore offenders who elect to participate in the intervention clearly already possess some motivation to change their behaviour. The service provider can encourage the offender who refuses to participate in the intervention; however, there may be other strategies for approaching this select group that may result in greater levels of participation among those who are most in need of such programming.

The final limitation of this study was that it was based entirely on self-report by the offenders as to how they perceived their own behaviour and skills. The offenders may have engaged in impression management (i.e., presented a favourable impression of themselves), may have experienced some demand characteristics (i.e., felt it was in their best interest to say positive things about the program), or may have been unrealistic about the gains they made in the program.

**Multi-level Challenges**

There are many challenges when working with incarcerated clientele, especially when considering the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention. From a client perspective, offenders typically do not want to be in prison, and particularly in the segregation unit for inappropriate behaviours, which means that the offenders who are likely in the most need of some form of intervention are often the least likely to volunteer to participate in this setting. Additionally, co-operation with authority is sometimes discouraged by other offenders, which may influence individuals who are interested in programming to feel too intimidated to work with the service-providers. The clients’ cognitive functioning can also be a barrier for this sort of programming since homework assignments are completed alone and typically involve reading and writing. If an offender has high cognitive functioning they may find the work easy and not challenging whereas low functioning offenders may find the work too difficult and not be able to complete it. Within the prison system offenders are also moved around either from sections within the institution or to
different prisons. This can become a barrier for either individual or group programming as offenders may start programs and then not be able to finish them. If the offender is placed in segregation they may not be able to attend their correctional programs which may cause them to fall behind or be ejected from the group. Should the offender be moved to another institution they may not be able to join the correctional programming that is being provided at that institution and may have to restart the entire program at a later date.

Problems associated with the intervention as discussed with some offenders during evaluations, include only meeting with the MBIS co-ordinators once a week. Offenders reported that they would prefer to have more access to the service deliverers. Another problem with the intervention is that it is restricted to segregation or transition. Once the offender is returned to the general population the program ends. If the offender was starting to make progress and the intervention is quickly stopped it may have damaging consequences on the client, although they do continue to have access to the service providers should they need it. This was another comment made by a number of participants (i.e., that they wished the intervention would continue until completed and not until being released back into general population).

Implications from an organizational point of view usually consist of limitations in resources, no matter what agency is being discussed. Due to the fact that this is only an intervention and not a fully accredited programming, money and service providers are currently minimal. For this region there are only two MBIS co-ordinators who visit each prison once a week. It would be beneficial to have one service provider in each institution that would be available to the offenders more consistently.

From a societal point of view, some members of the public believe that programming/interventions are a not a good use of tax payers’ money. Some people believe that if an offender commits a crime they should be confined to their cell as a form of punishment rather than rehabilitated using cognitive and behavioural techniques. However, the reality is that these offenders will eventually be released back into society and intervening and helping the offenders develop some behavioural skills will benefit society in the long run.

Recommendations

Future research on the effects of interventions for offenders placed in segregation would be beneficial to Correctional Services of Canada. The information taken from this study should only be used as preliminary research and further, more extensive studies should be conducted on this population. As previously mentioned in the limitations section, a longitudinal study beginning prior to the intervention and following through until release specifically measuring aspects of the offenders’ behaviour, would be beneficial to the organization. Using a formal method to measure increases in the offenders’ behavioural repertoire, along with generalization skills once readmitted to general population will greatly assess the effectiveness and the integrity of the intervention. Additional recommendations include using a larger sample size, extending the research to offenders who have been released to the community and including a
measure of generalization of the behavioural skills would be more informative. It would also be beneficial to compare the one-on-one intervention with other group interventions to measure offender responsivity, which can play a crucial role in the completion of programs.

In conclusion, this study provides a preliminary evaluation of the Motivation Based Intervention Strategy and Skills Workshop intervention. Incorporating accredited cognitive-behavioural techniques with offenders who demonstrate a high risk and need for some form of intervention, proves to have positive effects on adaptive behaviour within an institution as perceived by the offenders.

References


Appendix A:
B.A.A. Behavioural Psychology Student Consent Form
100 Portsmouth Ave.
Dear __________________________

I am a student in the Bachelor’s Degree in Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College. This four-year degree program is based on a behavioural framework, which has been demonstrated to be effective in developing positive skills with a wide range of individuals. Currently, I am completing an Applied Thesis that involves an intervention or project that I will summarize in a written report.

My project; Evaluating Motivational Based Intervention Strategy (MBIS) and Skills Workshop will involve surveying your perception of changes to your motivation and behaviours following participation in the MBIS and Skills Workshop intervention. This client-focused project is being developed in collaboration with you, Correctional Services of Canada and the evaluation team members.

The benefits of participating in this project will include providing you with the opportunity to assess the progression you have made following the intervention and to provide feedback to Correctional Services of Canada on the program. The risks of participating in this project include potential distress associated with thinking about your past behaviours. If at any time you experience distress please inform me and a referral will be made to the Institutional Psychology Department.

This project has been approved by Correctional Services of Canada and by the Research Ethics Board at St. Lawrence College. The project will be developed under the supervision of Dr. Yolanda Fernandez my supervisor from St. Lawrence College and in collaboration with Chris Mangan of Corrections Canada, Regional Headquarters.

I would like your permission to implement the process described above. All information collected will be kept strictly confidential. The information will be coded and stored in a locked cabinet in a non-identifying way. Upon request, we will gladly share a copy of a brief report of the project. Participation in this project is voluntary and __________________________ may withdraw at anytime without any negative consequences.

If you agree to participate in the project, please complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to me as soon as possible. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records.

I sincerely appreciate your cooperation. If you would like to receive more information about the project or have additional questions or concerns, please contact my College Supervisor, Dr. Yolanda Fernandez, (613) 351-8189

Sincerely,

Andrew B.
St. Lawrence College Student

St. Lawrence College

100 Portsmouth Ave.
Kingston, Ontario K7L 5A6
I, ______________________, being the legally authorized consent giver for ________, understand and consent to the following.

**NOTE:** all information identifying you ____________________________will be removed from any reports to protect confidentiality

_____ I consent ____________________ to participate in the intervention/project conducted by Andrew B.

_____ I consent for the data collected as part of this intervention/project to be put in a report in the college library.

_____ I consent for the data collected as part of this intervention/project to be presented at a conference.

_____ I consent for the data collected as part of this intervention/project to be published in a peer reviewed journal or professional publication.

Client/Guardian Signature: __________________________
Date: __________________________

Printed Name: __________________________

Witness Signature: __________________________
Date: __________________________

Printed Name: __________________________

SLC Student Signature: __________________________
Date: __________________________

Printed Name: __________________________

Appendix B

*Motivational Based Intervention Strategy & Skills Workshop: Evaluation*
1) How motivated were you to change your behaviour before the intervention?

2) How confident were you that you could change your behaviour when starting the program?

3) How much did the MBIS increase your motivation to change your behaviour?

4) Do you maintain that motivation now that the program is over?

5) 3 months from now, do you feel you will still have the same motivation?

Which Skills Workshop did you take?

6) How would you rate your skills dealing with ________________ before the workshop?

7) Did the workshop address the needs and skills you wanted it to?

8) How would you rate your skills dealing with ________________ now?

9) Do you feel confident in your ability apply these skills in a variety of settings?

10) Do you feel that you will develop upon these skills and they will be beneficial for you in the future?

11) If you feel this has been a successful experience for you, do you feel you would have had the same outcome in general population programming?

12) How was the therapeutic relationship between you and the service provider?

13) Overall how would you rate the effectiveness of this intervention?
The above graph represents the average rating for each question pertaining to motivation and skill development from all the participants of the study. This demonstrates an overall increase in motivation and skill development of 30.4%.

The above graph represents the average rating for each question based only on offenders who have returned to general population. This shows an increase of motivation and skill development of 31.4%.
The above graph represents the average rating for each question based only on offenders who were at the time in transition from segregation to general population. This shows an increase of motivation and skill development of 14%.

The above graph represents the rating of each question based only on the offender who remained in segregation at the time of the survey. His survey demonstrates an increase in motivation and skill development of 46.6%.
This chart represents the raw scores of each participant, on each question of the survey. The following graphs represent the same information but broken up into the location they currently reside in within the prison. This can affect the data by demonstrating the generalization of the motivation and skills within different settings.

### General Population

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**Mean:** 3.00 2.93 2.46 4.07 4.08 4.15 4.08 4.62 4.38 4.31 3.58 4.23 4.46

**SD:** 1.24 1.07 0.88 1.07 1.08 1.21 0.86 0.65 0.85 1.24 0.93 0.78

This chart represents the raw scores of each participant, on each question of the survey. The following graphs represent the same information but broken up into the location they currently reside in within the prison. This can affect the data by demonstrating the generalization of the motivation and skills within different settings.
### Transition

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Mean: 3.33 3.00 3.00 4.00 3.00 3.00 4.00 4.67 4.00 4.00 3.00 3.67 4.33

SD: 0.58 0.00 1.00 0.00 1.41 1.73 0.00 0.58 0.00 1.00 1.41 1.53 0.58

### Segregation

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JL Seg
Appendix D:
Comments

1) Useful to continue in general population
2) It works
3) More time working one-on-one, more counselling
4) More contact with service provider
5) Great one-on-one
6) She is a good lady and she help me a lot I would like to thank you
7) Made it easy to learn and was very beneficial and understanding. Although we met once a week, it was a very good learning experience
8) Has been the best program facilitator I have ever had. Inspired me and is a true believer in my success as a contributing member of my community