

Reentry Education Programs and Criminogenic Needs

Recidivism research has identified categories of criminogenic needs, or needs connected to characteristics that contribute to recidivism. The criminogenic needs have been ranked as the “Big Four Needs” and “Lesser Four Needs” that should be addressed in order to increase the likelihood of a successful reentry.¹

Big Four Criminogenic Needs	
Criminogenic Need	Response
Anti-social cognition	Reduce anti-social cognition, recognize risky thinking and feelings, adopt an alternative identity
Anti-social companions	Reduce association with criminals, enhance contact with pro-social activities and people
Anti-social personality (temperament)	Build problem solving, self-management, anger management, and coping skills
Poor critical thinking	Address repeated mistakes, decision making patterns, inaccurate assumptions
Lesser Criminogenic Needs	
Family and/or marital	Reduce conflict, build positive relationships and communication, enhance monitoring/supervision
Substance abuse	Reduce usage, reduce the supports for abusive behavior, enhance alternatives to abuse
Employment/Education	Provide employment seeing and keeping skills, enhance performance rewards and incentives

¹ <http://www.offendercorrections.com/content/?page=Criminogenic%20Needs>

Leisure and/or recreation	Enhance involvement and satisfaction in pro-social activities
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When these underlying needs are met, research suggests the likelihood of recidivism decreases. Reentry education or workforce programming often focuses on the skill development needed for people to achieve the necessary credentials and skills for them to get good jobs and career advancement after incarceration. In addition to reaching education and training needs, reentry education program providers can also directly address the underlying criminogenic needs,

In an accompanying Tip Sheet, there is an overview of the connection between behavioral health, including the criminogenic needs, and the reentry education and workforce programming. Using this Template, program providers can focus in on how their program elements can directly address criminogenic needs. The chart below identifies the criminogenic needs. There are also two additional columns for providers and partners to identify the program services or elements that (1) currently exist to address the need and (2) proposed enhancements that could address these issues.

To What Extent Are Your Programs Mapping Program Elements to the Big Four Needs?

Use this chart to consider how current program elements address criminogenic needs? Are there any enhancements that you or partners would propose to add to the program to meet a criminogenic need?

Criminogenic Need	Current Program Elements	Proposed Enhancement
Anti-social cognition		
Anti-social companions		
Anti-social personality (temperament)		
Poor critical thinking		
Family and/or marital		
Substance abuse		
Employment/Education		
Leisure and/or recreation		