

## Criminogenic Needs

A criminogenic need is an attribute of a person or a person’s environment that contributes to illegal behavior and that can be changed during the process of supervision and/or programming. If our goal is to reduce the likelihood that a person will violate the law again, we should focus on those conditions that have the greatest impact—on the things that really matter. The research has identified the criminogenic needs below.

### RISK/NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

**Criminogenic needs are most effectively identified using a fourth-generation risk/needs assessment such as the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) or the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI).**

### Criminogenic Need

### Goal

#### ANTISOCIAL COGNITION

**Thoughts, values, and attitudes supportive of antisocial/illegal behavior (e.g., rationalizing/not taking responsibility for behavior; minimizing actions; blaming others; acting entitled; attempting to exert power and control over others)**

Help people understand their thinking patterns, feelings, beliefs, and values; recognize the connection between these and their actions; and develop new ways of thinking

#### ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY/TEMPERAMENT

**Poor coping and problem solving skills; risk taking; lack of empathy; anger and hostility; impulsivity; lack of focus (not a DSM-5 diagnosis)**

Help people develop skills to address temperament issues (e.g., manage anger in a more appropriate, less harmful way; increase their understanding of other people’s viewpoints; increase their sense of responsibility to or concern for others; make well-reasoned decisions that minimize harm to themselves and others)

#### ANTISOCIAL ASSOCIATES

**Associating with people who encourage and reward illegal behavior**

Help people recognize and resist negative peer influences and form meaningful relationships with prosocial people

#### FAMILY/MARITAL

**Constant fighting; lack of warmth/caring in the home; disregard for prosocial success; attitudes and behaviors that are supportive of law violations**

Help people build skills to reduce or better manage stress and conflict in the home

**THE FOUR CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS LISTED ABOVE are recognized as the most influential needs. Programs, interventions, and supervision strategies that target these needs will have the most significant impact on recidivism for people who are moderate to high risk. The most impactful interventions are ones that take a cognitive behavioral approach and that involve skill practice.**

## Criminogenic Need

## Goal

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Use of illegal substances that leads to increased contact with people who are antisocial, makes it difficult to succeed in educational and employment settings, and contributes to behavior that a person might not engage in if they were not using substances

Address substance abuse and the influences that lead a person to misuse drugs and alcohol

### EMPLOYMENT

Lack of employment history; record of poor performance on the job; poor work ethic/commitment to work; relationship conflicts at work; resistance toward authority

Help people improve their commitment to work ideals and work performance

### EDUCATION

Relationship conflicts at school; poor academic achievement; low commitment to school; resistance toward authority

Help people improve their commitment to education and to academic performance

### LEISURE

Involvement in illegal activities as a way to spend time, find excitement, and be sociable

Help people identify prosocial interests, build confidence to participate in these activities and meet others with shared interests, and schedule time for the activities

The above criminogenic needs may be a reflection of the four most influential needs. For example, a poor employment record may be a result of antisocial cognition ("I am not going to work for minimum wage"), or poor coping skills may contribute to substance abuse.

### RESPONSIVITY/STABILIZATION FACTORS

Practitioners often view factors such as physical and mental health issues, learning disabilities, and self-esteem as criminogenic needs. These factors have not been strongly correlated with recidivism, but they must be addressed before a person is able to engage in programming focused on their criminogenic needs, and they must be considered when determining what interventions to choose and how to apply them.