IACFP Bulletin

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IACFP

from The International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology

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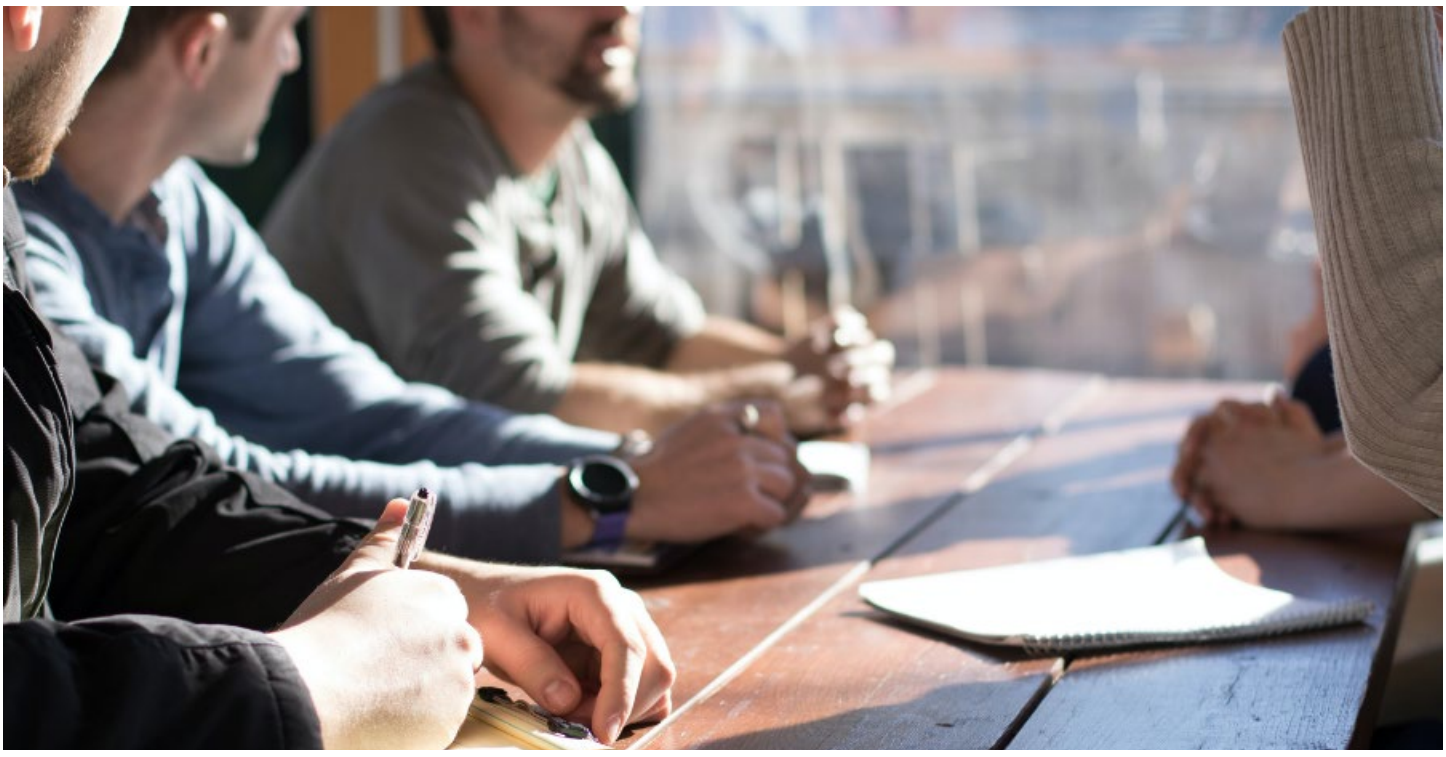

WHO WE ARE

The International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology (IACFP)

The International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology (IACFP) is an organization of leaders practitioners, and researchers who are concerned with the delivery of high-quality mental health services to justice-impacted individuals. We aim to advance evidence- and practitioner-informed policies and practices, and to elevate psychology's role in correctional settings.

IACFP members are not all psychologists and are not all active in the practice of forensic evaluations or correctional mental health. However, they typically have advanced degrees in psychology and behavioral sciences and engage in the administration, practice, teaching or research relating to incarcerated populations and those under community supervision. Our strategic areas of focus for 2025-2031 are:

- **Helping the Helpers:** IACFP is dedicated to advancing the voice of psychology in corrections through supporting psychologists and other helping professionals. The current focus of this support is opportunities for connection with colleagues globally through our *Correctional Mental Health Leadership Network*, and learning through Continuous Professional Development.
- **Research to Practice and Practice to Research:** IACFP's journal, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, offers evidence-based and practitioner-informed research results and resources for practitioners. Our *IACFP Bulletin* bridges research and practice by summarizing current studies and showcasing international corrections initiatives.
- **Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Association for the Future:** IACFP is committed to building our international identity, enhancing communication with members, and strengthening partnerships with other organizations.

We are now accepting submissions.

The *IACFP Bulletin* has six issues per year, and is now accepting submissions. To inquire how to submit, please email **community@myiacfp.org** with your proposed article topic.

Foreword from the President

DR EMMA REGAN / 3 MINS

Dr Emma Regan

As I reviewed the contributions for this edition of the *IACFP Bulletin*, one theme stood out clearly: the importance of understanding the unique person behind the behaviour. Across jurisdictions, cultures, and correctional systems, practitioners are increasingly moving beyond narrow risk-focused approaches to explore how identity, strengths, motivation, neurodevelopment, and human relationships shape desistance.

We begin with innovative work from Hong Kong's Correctional Services, where the *MindSport* programme combines character strengths and physical training to support positive identity development among young people in custody. We also feature the Irish Prison Service's Building Identity Programme, demonstrating how psychological formulation and narrative understanding can help young adults make sense of their experiences and engage more effectively in rehabilitation.

The edition also explores emerging developments we hope influence the future of criminal justice practice more broadly. An article by Tia Tourville examines neuro-responsive approaches within courts and correctional systems, and her interview with Dr Joel Porter considers practical applications of motivational interviewing for people who work throughout the criminal justice system. Together, they challenge us to think critically about how we create systems that support accountability while recognising that motivation, developmental, psychological, and social factors influence behaviour and understanding.

Importantly, these approaches should not be misunderstood as being soft on crime. Effective rehabilitation and desistance-focused practice are fundamentally concerned with community safety. By helping individuals develop more prosocial identities, strengthen motivation for change, improve decision-making, and engage meaningfully with interventions which are meaningful to them, we increase the likelihood of sustained behavioural change and reduce future victimization. The ultimate measure of success is not participation in a programme or compliance with a process, but safer communities, fewer victims, and lasting reductions in offending.

This *Bulletin* also reflects IACFP's ongoing commitment to bridging the gap between research and practice. The practitioner summaries, international updates, and professional development opportunities included throughout this edition are intended to provide readers with quick and accessible information on relevant conferences, workshops and other continuing education events, and CJB practitioner focused abstracts which we hope can be translated into day-to-day work across prisons, probation, forensic mental health services, and community corrections.

We are particularly keen to hear from practitioners working on the front line of services. Many of the most important advances in correctional and forensic practice begin as local innovations developed to solve real-world challenges. If you have developed a programme, evaluated a new approach, implemented a promising initiative, or learned lessons that may benefit colleagues internationally, I encourage you to consider contributing to a future edition of the *Bulletin*. By sharing knowledge across jurisdictions, we strengthen

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our collective ability to support desistance, improve outcomes, and enhance community safety.

On behalf of the International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology, I would like to thank all contributors for sharing their expertise, innovations, and experiences. I hope this edition provides useful ideas, stimulates discussion, and encourages continued development across our field.

If you have something you wish to share, please contact us at community@myiacfp.org.

Dr Emma Regan
IACFP President
June 2026

Strength-Based "MindSport" Programme: Empowering Youth Identity Transformation in Hong Kong Corrections

CELIA HO, DR YVONNE LEE / 10 MINS

Celia HO

Dr Yvonne LEE

What's Strong: Cultivating Strengths Beyond Desistance

Over the past decades, desistance has increasingly been understood not as a singular event of permanent cessation of offending, but as a gradual, non-linear process involving shifts in behavior, identity, and social relationships (Bushway & Paternoster, 2013). Early work tended to focus primarily on whether people reoffended or not, whereas contemporary perspectives distinguish between *primary desistance* (temporary abstinence from offending), *secondary desistance* (a shift in self-identity toward a non-offending self), and *tertiary desistance* (societal recognition and acceptance of that change; Maruna, 2001). Despite being able to achieve periods of crime-free behavior, it is common for justice-involved youths to retain a negative self-perception shaped by disrupted schooling and repeated experiences of frustration throughout their development, as well as the loss of past friendship, social status, and recognition after incarceration.

Research on desistance pathways has found that incarceration can serve as a life turning point (HKCSD, 2025). We believe strength-based approaches complement risk-focused programmes within institutions by facilitating the transformation from an old, negative, criminal self-identity to a new, positive, prosocial one in justice-involved youths, empowering them towards personal growth in addition to reducing recidivism. This article introduces our new initiative pioneered at Sha Tsui Correctional Institution (STCI): "MindSport" Programme, which integrates Character Strength Intervention (CSI) with bodyweight training, fostering more hopeful, prosocial identities among young male persons-in-custody (PICs).

Why Strengths and Sport for Justice-Involved Youths?

CSI, an evidence- and strength-based approach widely adopted in schools, workplaces, and clinical populations, conceptualizes character strengths as positive traits that are central to identity and linked to well-being, resilience, and prosocial behaviour (Niemiec, 2018). It promotes awareness and use of positive traits, facilitating identity exploration and shaping. Studies with adolescents suggest that strengths-based programmes can enhance self-efficacy, hope, and emotional well-being, and that specific strengths such as perseverance, self-regulation, and leadership are associated with fewer behaviour problems and greater prosocial action (Schutte & Malouff, 2019; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). By repeatedly experiencing oneself as kind, perseverant, or curious in structured activities,

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young people accumulate evidence of a prosocial self that gradually becomes more central to their identity (Niemiec, 2018).

Sports-based programmes with incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals have been linked to improved behaviour, stronger social bonds, and the construction of more positive social identities, which in turn relate to psychological need, satisfaction and well-being (Newson et al., 2024). From clinical interviews, many of our young male PICs were observed to be concerned about body build and expressed interest in muscle training.

The "MindSport" Programme has been developed at this intersection of CSI and sport. By integrating CSI with bodyweight training, it not only makes the strength-based intervention more youth-responsive but also uses the physical training environment as a live laboratory for spotting and enacting strengths, receiving feedback from others, and linking those experiences to a more hopeful, prosocial sense of self. The embodied, relational nature of sport can make abstract strengths such as perseverance, teamwork, and self-control visible and experientially real.

A particular consideration in our Hong Kong context is the influence of Chinese cultural norms on self-expression and self-perception. Chinese cultural values tend to emphasize modesty and restraint in self-appraisal, and praise is often used sparingly in parenting and education. In our clinical observations, many young PICs felt embarrassed or uncomfortable when asked to articulate their positive traits and frequently struggled to identify their own character strengths without structured guidance. These cultural dynamics make self-directed strengths identification particularly challenging for this population and further reinforce the value of a structured programme like "MindSport" Programme, which scaffolds strengths recognition through psychoeducation, experiential exercises, and affirmation from multiple external perspectives.

The "MindSport" Programme in Practice

"MindSport" Programme is delivered to groups of six young male PICs. The programme weaves together three complementary modes of delivery: psychoeducation group sessions, group bodyweight training sessions, and individual sessions by a clinical psychologist.

Two psychoeducation sessions, delivered by a trained correctional officer under the clinical psychologist's supervision, introduce participants to the rationale of the programme, the concept of character strengths, the Values in Action (VIA) framework, and how strengths operate in everyday life. Participants complete the VIA Survey, a scientifically validated strengths assessment that measures one's 24 core character strengths, to identify their signature strengths.

Four bodyweight training sessions, facilitated by a sports coach from a partnered non-governmental organization, form the active core of the programme. The sports component serves as an experiential and engaging platform for character strengths in action. In addition to learning and practising essential bodyweight exercises, participants are instructed to perform collaborative exercises in pairs and to monitor partner's postures. They are guided to notice and name the strengths they draw upon during training, for example, perseverance when completing a challenging set, teamwork when supporting a peer, or bravery when attempting a new exercise.

Before, during, and after the programme, each participant meets individually with clinical psychologist. These individual sessions provide a more personal and in-depth space to explore each young person's unique strengths profile, reflect on how their strengths were utilized in the training sessions, and consider how strengths can guide their goals and self-narrative going forward. Psychologist-facilitated reflection links past personal achievements and obstacles they have overcome as well as in-the-moment experiences in the training sessions to each participant's broader identity narratives, grounding abstract strength concepts in their own lived experience and reinforcing the emerging sense of themselves as capable, determined, and prosocial individuals.

Apart from raising young PICs' awareness of their own character strengths, observations are gathered from multiple perspectives and shared with the participants. The clinical psychologist, the correctional officer, the social worker, fellow participants, and parents each independently identify the signature strengths they observe in every participant. This multi-perspective approach, called Character Strengths 360, broadens young PICs' self-awareness and challenges the negative self-images they have often internalized, offering them new, affirming evidence of who they are and who they can become.

Promising Preliminary Outcomes

Preliminary data were collected over two years from 64 young male PICs who participated in the "MindSport" Programme. Pre- and post-programme questionnaires measuring self-efficacy, well-being, and hope were administered.

Paired-samples t-tests revealed statistically significant improvements across all four measures following programme completion (see Table 1). Well-being, assessed by the World Health Organization Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5), showed the most notable improvement, rising from M = 52.56 (SD = 21.46) to M = 61.75 (SD = 19.98), $t(63) = 3.92$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.49$, indicating a medium effect size. Hope, measured by the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) and the Children's Hope Scale (CHS), also demonstrated significant gains that reached medium effect sizes. The improvement in self-efficacy, as measured by the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES-CS), reflected a small-to-medium effect. Overall, effect sizes ranged from small-to-medium to medium (d = 0.34–0.52), suggesting that the observed improvements are not only statistically significant but also of meaningful practical magnitude.

Table 1

Pre- and Post-Programme Scores on Outcome Measures

Measure	*N/n*	T1 *M (SD)*	T2 *M (SD)*	Mean diff	*t*	*p*	*d*
WHO - 5	64	52.56 (21.46)	61.75 (19.98)	9.19	3.92	<.001	0.49
GSES-CS	64	27.44 (5.14)	29.30 (4.83)	1.86	2.71	.009	0.34
AHS	46	22.67 (3.47)	23.85 (3.57)	1.17	2.45	.018	0.36
CHS	18	23.00 (4.41)	26.00 (4.65)	3.00	2.23	.040	0.52

Note. GSES-CS = General Self-Efficacy Scale (Chinese Short version); WHO-5 = World Health Organization Five Well-Being Index; AHS = Adult Hope Scale; CHS = Children's Hope Scale. d = Cohen's d effect size.

In sum, participation in the "MindSport" Programme, a strength-based, sport-integrated intervention, was associated with greater confidence in one's capacity to act, a stronger sense of hope for the future, and enhanced overall well-being. Gains in these domains carry meaningful implications for the desistance process. Self-efficacy and hope, for instance, are closely aligned with the sense of personal agency and future orientation that desistance theorists associate with the transition toward a prosocial identity, leading to sustained, long-term change (Maruna, 2001).

Additionally, analysis of VIA Survey results revealed that the most commonly identified signature strengths among the young male PICs were Kindness (44.4%), Hope (38.1%), Humor (34.9%), Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (31.7%), and Curiosity (31.7%). These findings are clinically noteworthy that strengths such as Kindness and Hope reflect prosocial orientations and a forward-looking disposition that are often absent from the self-narratives of justice-involved youth. Their emergence as dominant signature strengths across the sample suggests that the "MindSport" Programme may help young PICs discover and articulate positive aspects of their identities that had previously been obscured by their offending histories and internalized negative self-images.

Future Directions

The "MindSport" Programme represents a bold and promising step in translating desistance theory into structured, strength-based psychological intervention integrated with sports activity within a custodial youth setting. Looking ahead, we aim to strengthen the evaluation framework by incorporating sport-specific indicators and a matched comparison group, while also extending character strengths work into the family system through Character Strength Parenting. In a trial run of our Inmate-Parent Programme at STCI, parents were introduced to the concept of character strengths and invited to identify their child's signature strengths through guided observation and discussion.

The "MindSport" Programme represents a bold and promising step in translating desistance theory into structured, strength-based psychological intervention integrated with sports activity within a custodial youth setting.

Initial observations suggest that this process not only enables parents to view their children through a more affirming lens, but also reinforces young PICs' emerging prosocial self-images through validation from their most significant relationships. It is particularly meaningful in the Chinese cultural context where parental recognition carries considerable weight.

Additionally, recognising that female PICs present distinct developmental needs and responsivity styles, we are developing a female-responsive, strength-based intervention that integrates CSI with expressive writing and art-making activities as the experiential platform. Similar to "MindSport" Programme for young male PICs, these creative modalities provide an expressive and identity-exploratory space for young female PICs to discover, enact, and narrate their character strengths.

Together, these extensions reflect our broader aspiration to develop strength-based, youth-responsive and gender-specific interventions tailored to the diverse needs of young PICs and firmly grounded in a desistance-oriented approach to psychological rehabilitation that supports a thriving next generation.

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References available upon request.

Building Identity: What Happens When You Give Young People Space to Make Sense of Their Lives

DR EMMA REGAN, TEIGAN WALSH / 15 MINS

Dr Emma Regan

Teigan Walsh

If you work with young people in custody, you already appreciate how difficult they can find engagement with correctional services. Often chaotic, frequently mistrustful of services, they carry more history than they are able to articulate. Many have never sat in a room where someone asked "what happened." The 'Building Identity Programme' in the Irish Prison Service (IPS) grew out of this gap. It is not a new "intervention model" in the traditional sense, but a structured way of slowing things down enough for young people to understand how they got here and what might come next.

Background

Young adults (18–24) are a distinct group in custody. High rates of impulsivity, peer influence, and short-term decision making are not just behavioural, they are developmental. Many are still forming an identity. Alongside that, the clinical picture is familiar:

- Histories of trauma and instability
- Substance misuse
- Mental health difficulties
- Disrupted education and attachment
- Vulnerable to peer influence
- Impulsiveness

Despite this, once they enter custody, they are managed within adult systems. The result of all this tends to be low engagement and high reoffending rates. In Ireland, like many other countries, reoffending rates for younger cohorts are significantly higher than older groups (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

Developmentally, this is not surprising. Psychosocial maturity, particularly around impulse control, perspective-taking and future orientation—continues to develop into the mid-twenties (Monahan et al., 2013). What we often see as "non-compliance" is, at least in part, immaturity interacting with environment.

The Building Identity Programme started from a challenge set by Frank Porporino PhD, who in 2014 reviewed the Psychology Service in Irish Prisons. His concern was the lack of interventions available for people who presented as undermotivated and find it difficult to engage with services.

The Programme

The programme is delivered by Assistant Psychologists (APs), working under the close supervision of qualified psychologists. Referrals are generated proactively, not dependent on help-seeking. Eligible young people include those who are serving a sentence of one year or more, and are not subject to Probation Supervision. This criteria was implemented because of the 'cliff-

edge' young people experience when they don't have the support of Probation Supervision on release. Invitations to attend the first appointment are adapted to participants' literacy level, providing a clear and accessible introduction to the programme. This ensures people understand why they have been invited, can make an informed decision about attending, and have the opportunity to generate any questions in advance of the first session.

The first session focuses on clarity, consent, and expectations. The Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation-Outcome Measure (CORE-OM) is used at entry and completion to capture outcomes.

Session structure (typically 6–8 sessions)

1. Rapport building
2. Psychosocial assessment
3. Timeline development
4. Psychological formulation (The 5 P's)
5. Sentence planning based on the needs and risks highlighted within the formulation (with Integrated Sentence Management Officer coordination)

Follow-up includes monthly support sessions offered post-completion; these are discussed and agreed in supervision and provided on the basis of individual need.

The Relationship

Without a working relationship, nothing else matters. Young people often arrive expecting to be assessed, judged, or processed. They test the interaction early, testing whether the practitioner is genuine, whether they are listening, and whether they follow through. What makes the difference is consistency, honesty and allowing the young person to have some control of sessions including:

- Appointment times agreed collaboratively to support clients maintaining personal goals including participation in work or education.
- Following up missed sessions
- Being transparent about the purpose of the intervention, the expectation of both clinician and client, and the impact of the system on engagement.
- Letting the young person set the pace and not over-directing early conversations by encouraging participants to ask questions and share information which feels safe to explore.

> **Often chaotic, frequently mistrustful of services, they carry more history than they are able to articulate. Many [young people in custody] have never sat in a room where someone asked "what happened."**

Participants repeatedly describe the shift when they feel treated as a person rather than a case.

"Joining the Dots"

Once engagement is established, work becomes more structured. The clinical assessment consists of open-ended questions that cover standard developmental domains, but the development of a timeline is central. This exercise is completed in a visual format to support engagement and accessibility. Built collaboratively, it maps life experiences from early childhood to the present day, helping organise and make sense of fragmented and complex histories.

For many participants, this is the first time their life is seen as a connected narrative rather than isolated events. Participants begin to recognise patterns; how early experiences, relationships and circumstances link to later behaviour. Exploration of both risk and protective factors not only supports insight into unhealthy coping mechanisms, offending risk, and presenting difficulties but also highlights individual strengths and the importance of supportive relationships and adaptive skills in promoting healthier coping strategies.

As described in the research which supports the programme, this process allows participants move from a single-cause explanation ("it's just me") to a more complex and accurate understanding of how multiple factors interact over time (Creavin et al., 2022).

Formulation, Not Labelling

The formulation is typically structured around the 5 P's:

- Presenting needs
- Predisposing factors
- Precipitating factors
- Perpetuating factors
- Protective factors

The emphasis is not on diagnosis, but on meaning-making. When done well, the formulation can:

- Reduce shame
- Build insight
- Increase openness to further psychological work
- Promote continuous progression toward short- and long-term goals.
- Create a platform for change by promoting continuous progression of short- and long-term goals and increasing openness to further psychological work".

This aligns with broader desistance-based approaches, where developing a coherent and more prosocial sense of self is central to behavioural change (Ward & Maruna, 2007). Participants describe this formulation as finally understanding how things "add up" and that there isn't a single cause, but a pattern that can be understood and, importantly, changed.

Turning Insight Into A Plan

The formulation feeds directly into sentence planning. This requires coordination with ISM Officers including:

> Participants repeatedly describe the shift when they feel treated as a person rather than a case.

- Identifying needs
- Matching services
- Sequencing interventions
- Planning for release

The plan may include:

- Psychology or mental health support
- Addiction services
- Education and training
- Employment preparation

The challenge is alignment. The plan must be:

- Created collaboratively with both services and the participant (our experience is this is the most important element)
- Clinically meaningful
- Operationally realistic
- Actually available

What Changes in Practice?

Changes are usually observable in two areas.

Behavioural

- Increased engagement in education/work
- Improved routine
- More consistent service attendance

Psychological

- Greater self-awareness
- Increased confidence in ability to support oneself
- Reduced shame and anger
- Increased future orientation

Participants report feeling understood, often for the first time, and beginning to think differently about themselves, their future, and their ability to reach important personal goals. Whilst these are not end outcomes, they are necessary precursors to them.

Implementation Challenges

The model is straightforward, but delivery is complex and includes:

- **Engagement variability:** Not all young people engage. Mistrust, stigma and peer dynamics remain barriers.
- **Regime constraints:** Lockdowns, staffing issues and competing priorities disrupt continuity.
- **Transfers between prisons:** Assessments are interrupted. Continuity depends on effective handover systems between prisons and APs.
- **Complex need:** Some individuals require more intensive or specialist input than the programme can provide.
- **Staff capability:** The AP model has allowed for scale, but requires strong supervision and consistency.
- **Limited availability of services:** Low staff-to-person in custody ratio in some prisons can impact access to psychological services.
- **System alignment:** Plans depend on actual service availability.
- **Time limitations:** Six to eight sessions are sufficient for engagement and formulation—but not for deeper intervention. Follow-on pathways are critical. Further interventions at primary or secondary care level of intensity can enhance rapport building due to longer duration, allowing for more in-depth exploration of formulation.

Conclusion

What the Building Identity Programme reinforces is that when hard to reach young people are given a structured opportunity to share and understand their own story, in a relationship that is non-judgmental and stable enough to hold that story, they engage. From that point, change is not guaranteed. But it becomes realistic.

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Questions? Contact exregan@irishprisons.ie.

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Rethinking Justice: The Rise of Neuro-Responsive Courts and Correctional Spaces for Young Adults

TIA TOURVILLE / 10 MINS

Tia Tourville

Traditional forensic and correctional systems are built on assumptions that justice involved people have consistent and fully developed cognitive processing, impulse control, and communication. However, neurodivergence, which greatly affects these skills, is not uncommon among justice-involved young adults, creating an invisible barrier to fair procedures and treatment. Prevalence rates for neurodivergence-related diagnoses (e.g., ADHD, Autism, FASD, TBIs, etc.) have been reported to range anywhere from 15% to 90% of correctional populations (Derbyshire et al., 2026).

Particularly relevant for young or emerging adults (ages 18 to 25), the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for cognitive processing and impulse control, may not be fully developed, increasing negative effects of traditional punitive systems for this population. Despite a significant portion of justice-involved people initially entering the justice system in this age range, traditional criminal justice models continue to dominate court and correctional spaces. However, some international jurisdictions are looking to change this, moving toward more functional, neuro-responsive models to ensure procedural fairness, reduce recidivism, and create truly rehabilitative justice environments for young adults.

Recently published in a *Neurodiversity and Criminal Justice* special issue of *Neurodiversity*, Derbyshire et al. (2026) detail how court processes heavily tax areas where neurodivergent traits naturally vary, turning a "difference into a disability." They developed the *Functional Strain Model of Neurodiversity*, which defines eight areas of functioning typically impacted in courtroom and correctional spaces:

- **Executive Functioning / Organization & Planning:** Difficulties with scheduling and remembering court dates.
- **Language & Communication:** Misunderstanding complex legal jargon, struggling with expressive language when questioned.
- **Processing Speed:** Being overwhelmed by fast-paced trials or rapid-fire questioning.
- **Short Term & Working Memory:** Forgetting bail, probation, or parole conditions or forgetting details of an event while under stress (e.g., interrogation, trial, etc.).
- **Attention:** Inability to focus or sustain attention during prolonged hearings.
- **Reading & Writing:** Barriers created by complex text-heavy legal forms.
- **Affect Regulation:** Emotional dysregulation misinterpreted by judges, juries, or correctional staff as defiance, lack of remorse, or guilt.
- **Managing Sensory Input:** Overwhelming courtroom or correctional aesthetics (bright fluorescent lights, echoing acoustics, crowded waiting rooms).

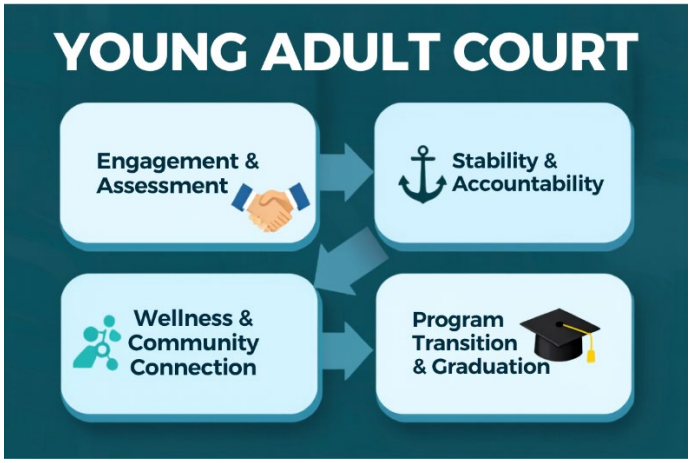
Thus, researchers are emphasizing a focus on these environmental and situational stressors, rather than categorical or diagnostic "deficits," allowing courts and corrections to create more supportive spaces without requiring clinicians or other mental health experts to do so. For example, physical environments in juvenile and young adult courtrooms can work to minimize sensory overload (e.g., natural lighting, sensory decompression rooms, etc.). Judges, lawyers, correctional officers, and other relevant staff can adapt their communication styles for neurodiverse clients (e.g., speaking slower, avoiding complex language and multi-part questions, utilizing visual aids, etc.). These courtroom and correctional personnel can also be trained to identify neurodivergence through screening processes, regardless of documented diagnosis from a clinician (Derbyshire et al., 2026). These improvements do not require significant training or costly construction, simply knowledge, empathy, and motivation to create real rehabilitative spaces.

Case Studies in Innovation: Neuro-Responsive and Collaborative Courts

San Francisco's Young Adult Court

In a push to create more responsive, rehabilitative, collaborative, and developmentally-informed environments for young adults in the justice system, the San Francisco Superior Court partnered with the Felton Institute to create the Young Adult Court in 2015. This four-phase diversion program allows young adults between 18 and 25 with felony charges to have their records expunged via accountability, clinical support, and trauma-informed case management.

- Phase 1: Engagement & Assessment
- Phase 2: Stability & Accountability
- Phase 3: Wellness & Community Connection
- Phase 4: Program Transition & Graduation



In the 10+ years since this program began, over 400 people have participated, with just under 50% of participants having graduated. In a 2024 graduate cohort, 73% of graduates remained "arrest-free" as of August 2025 (Judicial Branch of California, 2026). In light of promising outcomes, Young Adult Courts have been implemented in other U.S. jurisdictions, including Orange County in California (Cauffman, 2024), New Mexico (New Mexico Judicial Branch, 2026), Massachusetts ("Emerging Adult Court"; Hampden District Attorney's Office, 2025), and New York (Pooler & Dalve, 2019), with many more considering starting such programs in the future.

Aotearoa New Zealand's Court Participation Tool

Developed under the *Te Ao Mārama* ("world of light") justice initiative, New Zealand is emphasizing strengths-based, neuro-responsive screening processes to increase courtroom participation from neurodiverse defendants (Derbyshire et al., 2026). The *Court Participation Tool* is a 36-minute interactive interview led by a clinician. The tool constructs a strengths-based profile alongside practical courtroom accommodation recommendations (e.g., visual aids, plain-language translations, modified layouts, etc.) for judges and defense lawyers, allowing for the creation of accessible environments without the need of formal medical or mental health diagnoses.

Despite a significant portion of justice-involved people initially entering the justice system in this age range, traditional criminal justice models continue to dominate court and correctional spaces.

While preliminary outcomes have supported the idea that real-time universal screening can integrate well into New Zealand court systems without causing delays, these authors also highlighted implementation challenges, such as:

- Institutional resistance to changes in courtroom processes
- Staff resistance to procedures that provide accommodation and leniency to people accused or convicted of a crime
- Current reliance on clinicians or speech-language specialists to interpret behavioral and neurocognitive strain in courtroom settings
- The need for screening tools to account for cultural nuances and actively avoid colonial or racial biases

Regardless, initial outcomes for neuro-responsive tools are promising and provide support and perspectives to managing young people in criminal justice settings.

The Benefits of a Neuro-Responsive Approach

In some jurisdictions (e.g., the United States), courtroom participants have a legal an ethical obligation to uphold basic human rights, including those that influence a defendant's ability to fully understand legal proceedings and meaningfully participate in their own defense. Creating neuro-responsive spaces allows for the protection of such rights for neurodiverse people. This approach also addresses and directly counters systemic biases where neurodivergent traits have been historically misattributed to "criminogenic" or antisocial behavior, which yields poorer outcomes in both courtroom and correctional settings (e.g., harsher sentences, higher fines, disciplinary reviews, segregated housing, etc.).

Additionally, aligning criminal justice systems with a young adult's actual cognitive capabilities leads to more productive courtroom and rehabilitation participation, higher program graduation rates, and successful long-term independence (Deal et al., 2022). It creates safer environments for both the justice-involved young adults and the staff responsible for monitoring or caring for them.

Conclusion

Neurodivergent emerging adults face additional disadvantages in courtroom and correctional environments. Emerging data suggests that functional, real-time accommodations are not only feasible but necessary. Justice systems worldwide should consider adopting neuro-responsive practices. As Judge Bruce Chan out of San Francisco's Young Adult Court states, *"When you have people with different educational levels, cognitive abilities, mental health needs, success is defined differently."* True equity requires a system flexible enough to ensure every individual is properly seen, heard, and understood, regardless of developmental, neurological, or cognitive functioning.

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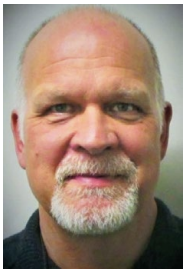
References available upon request.

Motivational Interviewing in Correctional Settings

INTERVIEW BY TIA TOURVILLE WITH DR JOEL PORTER / 10 MINS



Dr Joel Porter

Despite rigorous and extensive research in our field, recidivism remains a persistent issue amongst previously incarcerated people. Some people spend more of their adult life in prison than out. Some may even feel more comfortable when incarcerated or may have no desire to change their behavior when released. Thus, in addition to physical and systemic barriers, motivational barriers also affect successful rehabilitation.

In April of this year, I sat down with Dr. Joel Porter, clinical psychologist with the National Addiction Centre, Christchurch School of Medicine at the University of Otago in New Zealand. Dr. Porter has over 30 years of experience working in motivational interviewing in both addiction treatment and correctional settings across the United States, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, and Southeast Asia. He is a former board member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT), which includes over 1,600 trainers across 20 different countries. Dr. Porter first learned about motivational interviewing at an American Society of Addiction Medicine conference in the mid-1990s. He shortly thereafter ordered a copy of Miller and Rollnick's *Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change*, which set the foundation for the rest of his career. During our interview, we discussed the basics of motivational interviewing and how it can be effectively used in forensic and correctional settings.

Motivational Interviewing: The Basics

Motivational interviewing (MI) started in addiction treatment but has gained popularity in many other settings. Dr. Porter emphasized that there is something universal about it, such that research has supported its effectiveness in not only drug and alcohol treatment, but also in chronic disease management, social work, coaching, and more. Drawn from the 4th edition (2023) of Miller and Rollnick's text, Dr. Porter described MI as a particular kind of conversation to help people change and grow by enhancing motivation and commitment to changing. MI's particular focus is the person-centered and goal-oriented approach to facilitate change by exploring and resolving ambivalence.

Practitioners utilize MI to evoke a person's own arguments and reasons for change, rather than telling them why they should or shouldn't do something. They guide the conversation without directing, fostering the client's expertise on themselves and encouraging self-reflection to motivate change. Rooted in Carl Rogers' Person Centered Therapy, MI is a relational approach where expressing empathy through skilled reflective listening is foundational for effective MI. Dr. Porter identified the four-part 'spirit' of MI as the cornerstone of the approach: partnership, acceptance, compassion, and empowerment. MI is about drawing out the person's own arguments and reasons for change, as well as their abilities, values, goals, aspirations, and skills. Rather than attempting to install the practitioner's arguments and reasons for why the client should change (or what will happen if they do not change).

Developing discrepancy is a central part of MI and Dr. Porter will ask clients "the good and less good things" about the behavior they are trying to change. Asking people what they like about a troublesome behavior is a question that often surprises them. People are used to being asked about the negative consequences of

a problem, but this balanced perspective opens a door to exploring and resolving ambivalence in a way that confrontation and accusation often close. MI research indicates that people who speak more frequently and positively about change are more likely to make a commitment to change. However, we cannot trick people into change, change talk must come from the individual in the context of an empathic therapeutic relationship. Change talk cannot be installed, manipulated, or manufactured. Thus, a collaborative practitioner-client relationship is essential in creating the space where the client can naturally find and articulate such language.

Over time, some helpful bells and whistles have emerged within MI practice (e.g., importance/confidence scaling questions, personal values card sort, etc.), but Dr. Porter insists that those are add-ons, not the core of sound MI-Practice. Understanding what MI is and is not is essential in developing skill and competence in the approach. A working knowledge of MI's spirit and distinct skills along with practice and feedback is more important than knowing all the techniques.

Why It Matters in Corrections & Why It's Hard

In correctional settings, building these relationships in trust is particularly difficult. People in correctional settings will often say what they think needs to be said, especially when program participation affects personal outcomes. It is incredibly difficult to balance the 'jailer' and the 'healer': the probation or correctional officer may want to help but must also report to the court or prison if someone violates conditions or rules. The client knows that too. If they open up and then face consequences for it, they likely won't do it again. Thus, transparency about the limits of the relationship are essential from the outset, not just so the client knows the risks, but also to build rapport and trust.

Correctional environments often rely on consequences and confrontational responses to unwanted behavior.

> **Asking people what they like about a troublesome behavior is a question that often surprises them. People are used to being asked about the negative consequences of a problem, but this balanced perspective opens a door to exploring and resolving ambivalence in a way that confrontation and accusation often close.**

While accountability remains important, these approaches do not always address the motivations sustaining problematic or troublesome behavior and may undermine engagement, particularly when individuals are removed from programs due to transfers, disciplinary sanctions, or other operational factors.

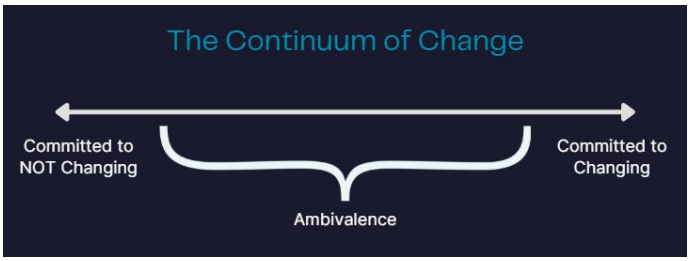
Dr. Porter emphasizes that lasting change is not achieved through consequences alone. Effective intervention requires understanding the motivations underling behavior and helping individuals explore their own reasons for change. Dr. Porter referenced a simple but effective analogy by Miller: people are not excluded from diabetes treatment because they present with high blood sugar; similarly, a lack of motivation should be viewed as a treatment target rather than a reason for exclusion.

This approach recognizes that many people entering correctional services already experience significant shame, self-criticism, and repeated failure. Increasing pressure or focusing solely on negative consequences may do little to enhance intrinsic motivation. MI instead creates conditions in which individuals can explore ambivalence, identify meaningful goals, and develop their own reasons for change.

MI in Practice

Recommendations for MI

Dr. Porter discussed visualizing a continuum of change with 'committed to not changing' on one end, 'committed to changing' on the other, and 'ambivalence' in the



middle. Most people he works with are somewhere in the middle. Practitioners should be aware of where their client falls on the spectrum of change commitment. Giving someone action-oriented treatment items when they're closer to the 'committed to not changing' side will make them resist change further. Continuing non-action-oriented MI strategies when someone is already leaning towards the 'committed to changing' side may cause them to lose momentum.

Even when someone is committed to NOT changing, the spirit of MI including partnership, acceptance, compassion, empowerment is still useful. Dr. Porter indicated that he will continue to support and accept his clients in these moments, continuing the conversation with things like, *"I hear you loud and clear that you're not interested in changing, and that's totally up to you. But I am curious what you like about it so much that you're willing to risk [your family, your job, your health, etc.]"* The goal here isn't to force change talk, but to stay curious and keep the conversation going. If a person doesn't want to change right now, it's not helpful give up. Similarly, if you have recommendations or resources, don't bombard them with information as this can shut them down. Instead, ask: "*Can I share some information with you?*" Give them the choice to say no. Meeting resistance with empathy rather than confrontation leaves the door open for future change talk. If it doesn't work today, we want to set up hope that it will work tomorrow.

In summary, Dr. Porter recommends the following:

DO NOT	DO
Try to directly persuade	Engage in reflective listening
Confront or challenge	Ask open ended questions
Push when someone isn't ready	Let the client set the pace
Continue a conversation without actively checking your pace	Check yourself: *"Are my aspirations for behavior change ahead of the clients right now? If so, let me back it up."*

Considerations for the Client

In addition to interviewer approaches, it is essential that the client's own experiences, needs, and values are incorporated into the conversation. The presenting and troublesome behavior may not have always been unwanted or problematic. There was a point where it started conflicting with that person's values, goals, and life direction. People with alcohol and drug use disorders do not have serious problems when they first start drinking or using, but somewhere along the way, the behavior changes or worsens. The same could be said about antisocial or criminal behavior.

Instead of traditional, confrontational approaches to change, MI offers people the opportunity to connect

the dots themselves, which is far more powerful. Motivational Interviewers simply help them reframe their own beliefs and perspectives to change that experience, to find reasons to live and things to feel motivated about. Ask questions to redirect the client to what matters most, without forcing it. Encourage clients to identify intrinsic motivations rather than extrinsic (e.g., "I don't want to lose the people who matter most to me," instead of "my family wants me to quit"). It is important to remain nonjudgmental and remember that people can hold multiple competing preferences. Someone can love their partner and also love drinking or engaging in criminal behavior. Acknowledging both without judgment is what keeps the conversation open.

Additionally, Dr. Porter reminds us that MI is a brief intervention. If you're using these strategies on the same issue for multiple sessions or conversations without movement, the client may not be ready or may require some other intervention. It is most important to listen to how the client is talking about change. Statements like "I want to, but..." may suggest a client is somewhere in the ambivalence stage. Clients expressing readiness may prompt you to stop using MI and move into actionable planning stages. Be conscientious of where the client is.

You Don't Have to Be Proficient to Try It

Towards the end of our conversation, Dr. Porter's main message was that MI is a skill that takes practice and objective feedback to learn. He has trained clinical psychologists, probation officers, corrections officers, and high school students in peer mediation and MI. A PhD is not necessary. It can also be effective with very limited time; brief exchanges such as when a correctional officer is handing out food trays or a receptionist is checking people in for groups can still be productive. Small interactions happening frequently over time are particularly valuable in locked settings. Rapport and trust can be built without the need for several hour-long sessions. Finally, one does not have to be fully proficient in MI to use the parts that resonate: the spirit, reflective listening, open-ended questions, empathy. Practice and feedback will build proficiency over time. In corrections especially, time is often on ones' side. Brief, consistent conversations over months or years can add up to something meaningful.

Dr. Porter's final message was, "I don't think you're going to hurt anybody by trying to understand them."

Recommended Resources by Dr. Porter

- "Motivational Interviewing and Beyond" podcast — Joel Porter & Steve Rollnick (available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube)
- MINT: motivationalinterviewing.org
- *Motivational Interviewing*, 4th edition — Miller & Rollnick (Guilford Press)
- Mike Clark's books on MI and corrections (based in Oregon or Washington State)
- The "10-Meter Tower" short film — Dr. Porter's recommended metaphor for ambivalence
- *Love at Goon Park* — book about Harry Harlow's work on affection, mentioned by Dr. Porter as influential background to the relational foundations of MI.

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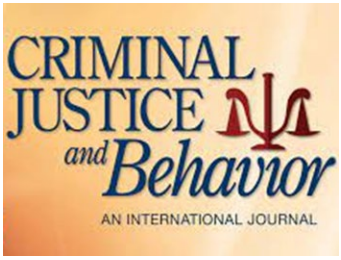
Criminal Justice & Behavior Practitioner Summaries

12 MINS



Authors publishing articles in Criminal Justice and Behavior (CJB) now include practitioner summaries to bridge the gap between research and practice in forensic and correctional psychology fields across international jurisdictions. Below, we highlight some of the most practitioner-relevant summaries which have been approved for publication in CJB, and may have already appeared in OnLine First or in a printed journal or may be scheduled for publication. In this issue of the IACFP Bulletin, included articles address a wide variety of topics, including evaluating COVID-19 as a correctional disruption event, community violence intervention programs, racial differences in procedural justice perceptions, ADHD in justice-involved youth, biases in criminal justice majors, mental health in correctional officer recruits, and psychometric evaluations of risk assessments in Australia, Canada, and Central America.

Broome et al. (2026). **Prison Service Delivery Beyond Lockdown: Lessons Learned from People in Prison and Staff in the Offender Personality Disorders Pathway During COVID-19.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261424375

> "Using the COVID-19 pandemic as a case study of system-wide disruption, this qualitative study explored how people in prison and prison officers experienced service delivery within the Offender Personality Disorder Pathway (OPDP). COVID-19 is treated not as an exceptional event, but as a lens to understand how prisons function during sustained disruption. Prolonged restriction, uncertainty, and staffing pressures intensified distress for people in prison and emotional strain and burnout among staff. Relational, trauma-informed practices such as consistent staff presence, informal check-ins, and empathetic communication, helped maintain trust and emotional safety under pressure. However, inconsistent leadership communication, workforce instability, and limited reflective support undermined these benefits. The findings extend beyond COVID-19 and beyond OPDP services, offering transferable lessons for custodial settings experiencing lockdown regimes, staffing shortages, or organizational change. Practitioners are encouraged to prioritize relational continuity, clear communication, and staff wellbeing to sustain safety and resilience during periods of disruption."

Cheon et al. (2026). **At-risk Youth in Honduras: A Psychometric Evaluation of the Instrumento de Medicion de Comportamientos (IMC).** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261435853

> "This study evaluated the psychometric properties of the Instrumento de Medición de Comportamientos (IMC), a prevention-focused tool designed to assess youth risk and protective factors in Honduras. While research consistently highlights the role of family, school, peers, community, and individual characteristics in shaping delinquency and violence, few validated instruments exist in Central America, including Honduras. Our findings indicate that the IMC demonstrates acceptable reliability, construct validity, concurrent validity, and measurement

> invariance. These results emphasize the value of culturally grounded, locally validated assessment tools. The IMC offers an evidence-based approach to identifying at-risk youth and informing targeted prevention and early intervention strategies before deeper justice system involvement occurs. By extending rigorous psychometric evaluation to Latin America, this study strengthens the foundation for data-driven decision-making and supports more effective, context-responsive youth violence prevention and rehabilitative efforts."

Chinna-Meyyappan et al. (2026). **Correctional Services Canada Recruits: Their Mental Health During Training at Occupational Entry and the Role of Trauma Exposures in Prevalence of Mental Disorders and Suicide Behaviors.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261435837

> "Correctional officers work in environments with frequent exposure to trauma and elevated rates of mental health problems. However, little is known about the mental health of recruits entering correctional work and only with such knowledge can any service come closer to understanding the impact of the work on officers. Thus, using survey data from 792 Correctional Service of Canada recruits, we studied mental disorder prevalence, suicidal behaviors, and trauma exposure prior to employment. Recruits appeared largely psychologically healthy at occupational entry, with only a small proportion screening positive for a mental disorder despite reporting substantial prior trauma exposure. Specific trauma types, such as serious accidents or sudden deaths, were more strongly associated with mental health symptoms than the overall number of traumatic events. These findings highlight the need to recognize recruits require early support and ongoing mental health monitoring, which must be incorporated into any services wellness and/or health strategies."

Kim et al. (2026). **Structures of Oppressive Attitudes among Criminal Justice Majors: A Cross-National Analysis.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261445901

> "Criminal justice professionals exercise substantial discretion over vulnerable populations, making their attitudes toward marginalized groups critically important. This study examined how explicit oppressive attitudes are structured among 697 criminal justice majors in the United States and South Korea. Findings reveal both cross-national similarities and differences. In both countries, male students were more likely to exhibit broad, polarized patterns of prejudice, whereas female students generally showed minimal or selective biases. Distinct cultural patterns also emerged: U.S. female students isolated anti-sex work attitudes as a single issue, while South Korean students showed more hierarchical, cross-domain bias patterns. Notably, interest in corrections careers was associated with high-prejudice profiles among South Korean men but not U.S. men. These findings indicate that future practitioners enter the field with interconnected biases, suggesting that early, targeted training addressing multiple forms of bias simultaneously may be more effective than single-issue approaches."

Liu et al. (2026). **Divergent Effects of Communication Skills on Aggression Among Justice-Involved Youth with and without ADHD: A Propensity Score Matching Analysis.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261430847

> "Youth with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are known to exhibit higher rates of aggression, yet little guidance exists on whether juvenile justice programs can help youth with and without ADHD combat aggression in the same manner. Leveraging ten years of statewide case-level data, this study examined whether communication skills reduce aggression among justice involved

> youth in residential facilities, and whether the effect differs for youth with ADHD. We found that programs targeting communication skills benefit youth [with] ADHD more. When youth with ADHD possess stronger communication skills, they show disproportionately greater reductions in aggressive behavior. These findings underscore the value of integrating structured communication skills training into residential programming, particularly for youth with ADHD. Communication skills are malleable characteristics. By equipping youth with the tools to manage conflict and resist aggression, facilities can foster safer, more rehabilitative environments, while also supporting successful reintegration upon release."

Mackie & Olver (2026). **The Discrimination and Calibration Properties of the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide-Revised (VRAG-R) in a Sample of Canadian Prairie Forensic Inpatients.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261430851

> "The Violence Risk Appraisal Guide-Revised (VRAG-R), a 12-item empirical actuarial violence risk assessment tool, was rated from institutional files in a Saskatchewan forensic mental health sample (N = 124) of patients declared Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder or Unfit to Stand Trial, followed up in the community post-discharge. VRAG-R scores and risk levels demonstrated strong effects in the prediction of violent and general recidivism across fixed follow-ups at a level consistent with cross-validations of the tool in other jurisdictions. Calibration analyses, however, demonstrated that the VRAG-R expected violent recidivism rates from the normative sample overpredicted violent recidivism in the current sample by approximately two to threefold, consistent with Canadian evaluations elsewhere. The broader implications are that while the tool has good predictive properties in this Canadian jurisdiction, risk evaluations and predictive accuracy are likely enhanced by the development of updated or localized recidivism norms and utilizing this tool in tandem with a dynamic instrument that can capture changes in risk and aid release and reintegration decisions."

McEwan et al. (2026). **The Predictive Validity of Stalking Risk Profile Risk Judgements in Everyday Practice.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261445853

> "This Australian research examined the predictive validity of the Stalking Risk Profile (SRP), a structured professional judgement risk assessment that guides decisions about the risk of future stalking and stalking-related violence. Forensic psychologists and psychiatrists used the SRP when assessing 217 adults (90% male) in a community setting (88% referred by probation services and 66% involving ex-partner stalking). Police records of each person were checked over four years following assessment, and 26% were charged with stalking-related offences. Most SRP risk judgements made by the clinicians were meaningfully associated with future stalking and stalking-related violence during the follow-up period, in ways that were generally consistent with the two previous studies of SRP validity. This suggests that most SRP risk judgements can be used to help make valid decisions about which stalking clients do not require additional risk management resources because they are at lower risk of future stalking or stalking-related violence."

Roman et al. (2026). **Credible Messenger Perspectives on the Skills and Traits that Support Effective Outreach and Case Management in Community Violence Intervention.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548251415013

> "This study examines how credible messengers engage individuals at high risk for gun violence and support long-term change. Drawing on interviews and focus groups, the analyses identified seven core skills and traits that shape effective practice:

adaptability, communication, credibility, empathy/compassion, leadership/mentorship, openness/honesty, and patience. These skills are not used one at a time or as a checklist; they work together and show up through ongoing relationships built on trust and consistency. For instance, credibility alone is not sufficient; it gains power when paired with authenticity, compassion, and sustained presence. Credible messengers are not interchangeable frontline staff but informal leaders and mentors whose influence is grounded in community recognition. Their work challenges short-term, output-driven expectations by emphasizing patience, persistence, and engagement through setbacks and nonlinear progress. These findings underscore the need for hiring, training, and supervision practices that recognize and help build these skills and attributes."

Sanders (2026). **A Qualitative Exploration of Black and White Women's Perceptions of Procedural Justice.** https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548261445859

"The current study used qualitative data from 190 White and 146 Black system-involved women in Michigan to explore their perceptions of procedural justice and interactions with the police and judges. The findings demonstrate that both groups of women held negative perceptions of procedural justice and viewed the police as less procedurally just than judges. Additionally, Black women's narratives were somewhat more nuanced, particularly in regard to their negative interactions with the police. Black women's narratives also exposed the existence of broader systemic issues and institutionalized oppression, which took the form of judicial paternalism, barriers to correcting inaccuracies, and difficulty sharing their side of the story. To address procedural injustice and broader structural and systemic issues, practitioners should consider incorporating more procedural justice training for the police and judges, and they also should consider using transformative justice-based strategies, such as community-based alternatives to policing."

IACFP International News, Research, and Resources

TIA TOURVILLE / 15 MINS

We've pulled together a selection of international updates, research highlights and upcoming professional development opportunities that may be of interest to IACFP Bulletin readers working across prisons, probation and community corrections. If there's something happening in your region that we should know about — news, research calls, webinars or conferences, etc. — please get in touch with us at community@myiacfp.org.

1. International Updates

Ask the Network App – Join the Waitlist

Ask The Network is a global, real-time knowledge infrastructure built for professionals across justice, health, and social care to securely collaborate. Designed as a trusted space to navigate complex systemic issues, the platform allows users to anonymously pose difficult questions, tap into AI-driven research summaries, and receive verified expert guidance without organizational barriers. **The app is launching soon** and those interested are encouraged to visit the Ask the Network website to learn more and join the waitlist.

Spanish-Speaking Forensic Psychology Network

The *Spanish-Speaking Forensic Psychology Network* is a digital community and listserv created to aid professionals who work with Spanish-speaking clients in legal settings. Supported by an AP-LS Early Career Practitioner Grant, the platform makes it easy for members to collaborate and share critical tools, including normative data, literature, assessment measures, and specialized legal phrasing. While the group focuses on these tailored evaluation techniques, fluency in Spanish is not a requirement for members to join and participate in the community. Join the listserv here.

The Correctional Psych Forum

The Correctional Psych Forum is a dedicated digital space established for professionals to build social connections, engage in healthy dialogue, and share evidence-informed materials regarding correctional psychology. The forum covers a broad spectrum of professional activities within carceral and community supervision environments, including clinical work, research, training, and public policy advocacy. This forum is open to all interested practitioners, and individuals using non-Gmail accounts can easily participate by interacting with the listserv directly via email. Request to join through this link.

2. Research

Global Prison Trends 2026

The Global Prison Trends 2026 report is a premier annual briefing published by Penal Reform International and the Thailand Institute of Justice that monitors the state of carceral systems worldwide. Grounded in international human rights standards,

this eleventh edition highlights the systemic strain facing global corrections, focusing heavily on severe overcrowding, lagging healthcare infrastructure, and critical gaps in mental health provision. It serves as an essential, data-driven resource for policymakers and researchers aiming to advance fairer, more humane correctional practices.

CrimRxiv

CrimRxiv (prouounced "Crime Archive") is a global, open-access repository and hub dedicated to freely discovering and sharing criminology research. Powered by PubPub and sustained by the CrimConsortium, the platform hosts a wide spectrum of open-science outputs, including preprints, working papers, postprints, and versions of record. It serves as a vital, barrier-free resource for researchers and practitioners looking to access or disseminate the latest data-driven insights in the field.

Criminological Highlights, Vol 22, May 2026

The most recent issue of Criminological Highlights, published by the University of Toronto Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, summarizes research addressing the following questions:

1. Should people who are released from prison after serving short sentences be supervised in the community?
2. Why is the amount of unstructured spare time important in understanding crime?
3. Why have rates of youth crime decreased in many countries?
4. How can city maintenance policies reduce nighttime crime?
5. Should police officers be routinely stationed in schools?
6. How are risk assessments used by judges making pretrial detention decisions?
7. Does the manner in which police officers treat young citizens affect their views of police in the same way across all groups?
8. Are White, Black, and Hispanic citizens affected in the same way by procedural justice training given to police officers?

Read the full issue here.

3. Workshops, Webinars, & Continuing Professional Development

IACFP Webinar Series: *Making Correctional Research Make Sense*

IACFP is launching a brand-new, three-part webinar series titled *Make Correctional Research Make Sense.* Designed to bridge the gap between academia and practice, these sessions will focus on practical strategies for frontline professionals to better interpret, adapt, and apply research data in operational settings. The initial session, "Demystifying Meta-Analyses," kicks off on June 24, 2026, and live attendance is entirely free. Register for Session 1 and keep an eye out for more information on Sessions 2 (September 2026) and 3 (December 2026) on the events page of our website.

ITA Training Opportunity

The *In the Act* team (article featured in IACFP's Mar/April 2026 Bulletin) has partnered with CONCEPT Continuing and Professional Studies at Palo Alto University in California to offer two webinars. The first is a complimentary 1-hour session summarizing the development and implementation of the training curriculum. This introductory session is a great way for correctional administrators and educational leaders to figure out whether ITA may be a good match for their agencies without loosening the purse strings.

The second is a two-part (3.5 CE hours per day, 7 CE hours total) train-the-trainer style session where we'll review program goals, key learning tools, effective group facilitation skills, and practice delivering training segments in a safe and supportive environment. This session is more ideal for senior staff or educational instructors preparing to roll out *In the Act* after purchasing training materials.

Visit the links below to register:

- Complimentary 1-hour session: August 10, 2026
  1pm (PDT) | 8pm (GMT) | 4am (SGT; August 11) | 8am (NZST; August 11)
- Full session (over two half-days): November 2 – 3, 2026
  1pm (PDT) | 8pm (GMT) | 4am (SGT; August 11) | 8am (NZST; August 11)

4. Conferences

NCCHC Correctional Mental Health Care Conference

July 18–20, 2026
Austin, Texas, United States

The 2026 NCCHC Correctional Mental Health Care Conference in Austin centers on the most pressing challenges in the field, ranging from reentry strategies to treating serious mental illness and managing legal complexities. Notable highlights include specialized sessions on medication-assisted treatment (MAT), burnout prevention for clinicians, and juvenile care best practices.

American Probation and Parole Association's Annual Training Institute

In Person: August 16 – 19
Chicago, Illinois, United States

Virtual: August 11 – September 11, 2026

The APPA's 51st Annual Training Institute in Chicago emphasizes skill enhancement through evidence-based methods and cutting-edge strategies for community corrections professionals. Key highlights include specialized workshops on trending topics, the discovery of new technological tools, and extensive networking opportunities for national and international attendees.

Connect to Protect – Children & Youth at Risk

October 5 – 6
Athens, Greece

The *Connect to Protect Conference* in Athens serves as a vital international forum for strengthening child protection systems and addressing violence against vulnerable youth. The event bridges the gap between research and frontline practice, featuring insights from global leaders on safeguarding children's rights in an age of digital harm and social crisis. Attendees will explore trauma-informed prevention strategies and rights-based policies through collaborative sessions and networking events.

International Corrections and Prisons Association Annual Conference

October 25–30, 2026
Belfast, Ireland

ICPA is calling for submissions for its 2026 Annual Conference in Belfast, focusing on the power of collaborative partnerships to address rising pressures in corrections systems. The event will explore critical areas such as community alternatives, managing system complexity, and cross-sector innovation.

6th North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference (N6)

The 6th *North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology* Conference (N6) is officially scheduled for June 3-5, 2027, in Victoria, Canada. Hosted by the Canadian Psychological Association, this international gathering will bring together global researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to exchange innovative work at the cutting edge of criminal justice and correctional psychology. The lineup of keynote speakers is already locked in, and interested attendees should keep an eye out as the call for abstracts is set to open soon.

IACFP

International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology (IACFP)

Promoting evidence-based and practitioner-informed practices and research to support correctional and forensic psychologists and other helping professionals who work with justice-involved individuals since 1954.

Learn more about IACFP or become a member at www.myiacfp.org.

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