

# EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION OF OFFENDERS

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The first part of this paper outlines the sentencing options for adults and young people in Victoria, Australia. Much of the factual material is taken directly from Correctional Services Victoria website and the Department of Human Services Victoria website. The second part of the paper focuses on effective practice in the supervision of offenders, including the practices which both motivate and encourage offenders to be involved in programmes and which lead to reduced reoffending. Most of the material from the second part of the paper is taken from material in my 2006 book *Working with Involuntary Clients* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, also available in Japanese translation, Akashi Shoten, Tokyo) and from a chapter on 'Involuntary Clients in Corrections' published in Rooney R (2009) *Strategies for Work with Involuntary Clients* (Columbia University Press, New York).

## I. CORRECTIONS IN VICTORIA

### A. Sentencing Options for Adults (18 Years and Over)

Victoria has the following sentencing dispositions in the adult courts. Most Australian states have similar options although there are variations from state to state.

- Imprisonment
- Combined Custody and Treatment Order
- Drug Treatment Order
- Home Detention
- Intensive Correction Order
- Suspended Sentence
- Youth Justice Centre or Youth Residential Centre Orders
- Community Based Order
- Dismissal, Discharge and Adjournment
- Fines

#### 1. Imprisonment

Imprisonment may be for a specific term or may have minimum and maximum terms. If it has minimum and maximum terms then the prisoner becomes eligible for parole following the completion of the minimum term. Decisions about release on parole are made by a parole board chaired by a retired judge. If an offender has not been paroled in the past he or she will usually receive parole immediately after serving their minimum term. If they have had previous paroles this may be delayed; however, a prisoner must be able to show an address to go to following release and have a plan for their parole. Parole may include three months of intensive supervision including community work, cognitive behavioural programmes or work related programmes, drug or psychiatric programmes, or other conditions determined by the parole board.

#### 2. Combined Custody and Treatment Order

A Combined Custody and Treatment Order (CCTO) combines an immediate term of imprisonment, of at least six months, with a period of supervised treatment and urine testing in the community. It is aimed towards offenders whose drunkenness or drug addiction contributed to the commission of their crime.

#### 3. Drug Treatment Order

A Drug Treatment Order (DTO) combines a term of imprisonment with treatment, except the term of

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imprisonment is suspended. A DTO can only be imposed by the Victorian Drug Court, a specialist court set up to deal with offenders with drug addictions. A maximum two year sentence can be imposed as a DTO. Successful completion of the treatment programme means the offender will not have to serve any time in prison; however, if the offender does not comply with conditions he or she may have to complete the term of the order in prison. There are regular meetings with the magistrate and counsellors as well as urine tests for offenders subject to a DTO. A multi-disciplinary team consisting of a case manager, clinical adviser, dedicated police prosecutor, defence lawyer and specialist community correction officers assist the Drug Court Magistrate in the supervision of offenders placed on a DTO.

#### 4. Home Detention

Home detention is a prison sentence that can be ordered to be served at home for up to one year. Offenders and any other person who will be living at the house where the sentence will be served must consent to the home detention order. The offender must agree to comply with any requirements or conditions imposed. Both the courts and the Adult Parole Board may direct offenders to home detention. Serving prisoners may apply to the Adult Parole Board for consideration of home detention as a pre-parole option. Home Detention Unit staff provide assessment reports to the courts or the Adult Parole Board advising of the suitability of the offender for the programme. Violent and sex offenders are not eligible. Family members and potential co-residents must give permission for the offender to serve home detention. Offenders may still participate in employment, and maintain family and community ties, but their freedom is significantly restricted. Offenders are subject to an electronic monitoring system, and must observe a strict curfew and submit to random breath and urine tests. Offenders may be required to undertake programmes to address offending-related behaviour, including attendance at education, training, unpaid community work, or counselling. Offenders have regular face-to-face meetings with their supervising officers, and must accept random home visits from their supervising officer at any time.

#### 5. Intensive Correction Order

An Intensive Correction Order (ICO) is a prison sentence, up to one year, served in the community. It combines supervision, education and rehabilitative programmes and unpaid community work. Additional conditions may be included.

#### 6. Suspended Sentence

A suspended sentence is a prison term of up to three years which is suspended and served in the community although part of the sentence may be served in prison.

#### 7. Community Based Order

A Community Based Order (CBO) is a supervised sentence of up to two years, served in the community, with conditions combining treatment and unpaid community work.

#### 8. Dismissal, Discharge and Adjournment

- (i) A dismissal is when the court finds an offender guilty of an offence, does not record a conviction and dismisses the offender without imposing any other sentencing option.
- (ii) A discharge is when the court finds an offender guilty of an offence and records a conviction but then discharges the offender without imposing any other sentencing option. The difference between a dismissal and discharge is the recording of a conviction.
- (iii) An adjourned undertaking is when the court finds an offender guilty and releases them into the community unsupervised for a period of up to five years. An adjourned undertaking can have conditions attached, with the most common being to be of good behaviour (i.e. not commit further offences) for the duration of the undertaking.

#### 9. Fines

Fines are monetary penalties. A person may also apply to have a fine served as a CBO.

### **B. Sentencing Options for Young People**

Victoria has the following sentencing options for young people (under the age of 18).

#### 1. Caution

A formal caution issued to a young offender by a senior police officer in the presence of a parent following

which no court proceedings are brought.

2. Undertaking

An undertaking is a promise made to the Court to be of good behaviour. It may either be oral or in writing. It may result in re-sentence if not complied with.

3. Good Behaviour Bond

A good behaviour bond means the charge is adjourned upon a child signing a promise to be of good behaviour and to comply with any special conditions imposed by the Court. Non-compliance with a bond may result in re-sentence.

4. Fine

Fine may include costs.

5. Probation

The child or young person is supervised by a probation officer and may be required to comply with special conditions imposed by the Court. The probation officer may be either a paid employee of Juvenile Justice or an honorary probation officer.

6. Group Conference

A group conference is a formal meeting conducted by a mediator and attended by a young offender, his or her parent or guardian and persons affected by the young person's offending. The underlying philosophy is 'restorative justice'.

7. Youth Supervision Order

A youth supervision order is a sentencing order by which a child or young person is supervised by a probation officer and may be required to comply with special conditions imposed by the Court. The level of supervision is generally higher than that involved with a probation order for a specified period.

8. Youth Attendance Order

A youth attendance order is a sentencing order by which a child or young person aged between 15 and 17 is required for a specified period to attend a youth attendance project for a maximum of ten hours per week (a maximum of three attendances) of which no more than four hours may be spent in community service activities.

9. Youth Residential Centre Order

A youth residential centre order is a sentencing order by which a child or young person aged between 10 and 14 is sentenced to be detained in a youth residential centre for a specified period.

## II. TREATMENT AND SUPERVISION OF OFFENDERS

Treatment and supervision is offered through most of these sentencing options including prison, treatment orders and community based orders and for youths, for those on probation, supervision orders and attendance orders. Offenders are required to attend for supervision and treatment under these sentences either on a one to one basis or in groups. The treatment may be offered by Community Corrections Officers individually or in groups, or it may be offered by community based non-government organizations. In Victoria these organizations include, for example, the Victorian Association for the Care and Re-settlement of Offenders, Salvation Army, Melbourne City Mission, and many others. There has been a great deal of research about the effective supervision and treatment of offenders, particularly relating to how to reduce reoffending. The remainder of this paper focuses on this research, including a practical example of how the effective practices should be applied.

### A. Effectiveness in Work with Offenders

In the 1960s and 1970s practitioners and academics in the field of corrections often accepted the 'nothing works' view in relation to interventions in corrections. An extensive literature review by Robert Martinson and his colleagues (1975) supported the view that casework and other interventions which aim to rehabilitate offenders seem to have little impact in terms of reducing reoffending rates. This view

was supported by literature reviews about casework in general in the 1970s (e.g. Fischer 1973). During the 1980s and 1990s the 'nothing works' view was increasingly challenged. It was argued that rather than corrections interventions having no impact they in fact have an impact but this impact can be both positive and negative. Some approaches or intervention methods lead to reductions in offending and some lead to increases in offending. More recently it has been argued that the more effective interventions can reduce reoffending by as much as 80 percent, with the average effective interventions resulting in 40 or 50 percent reductions in offending (Trotter 1996a, Gendreau 1998, Andrews 2001). Since the early 1990s there have been more and more publications which offer literature reviews and meta-analyses of the 'what works' research. These reviews have argued on the basis of the research that corrections interventions can be successful in reducing reoffending (for example, Andrews et al 1990, Izzo and Ross 1990, McIvor 1990, Mc Guire 1995, Andrews and Bonta 1998, Dowden and Andrews 1999, Trotter 2006, Andrews 2001, Farrell 2002, Hopkinson and Rex 2003, McNeill 2003, Raynor 2003, Wing Hong Chui 2003).

The burgeoning 'what works' literature has been accompanied by an increasing willingness in many places, in both community and residential corrections settings, to embrace rehabilitation alongside a law and order and punishment agenda. Correctional systems in western countries seem to be increasingly punitive, with rising numbers in incarceration, yet at the same time 'what works' conferences and rehabilitation programmes are increasingly part of the corrections landscape.

What do the traditional literature reviews and the meta-analyses tell us about what works? In discussing this I am primarily focusing on what works in the one to one supervision of offenders in community settings. The principles apply generally however to institutional work and to work with groups of offenders.

#### 1. Pro-social Modelling and Reinforcement

I have conducted two studies in corrections, one with juvenile offenders and another with adult offenders, each of which found that probation officers and community corrections officers who scored high on the California Personality Inventory (CPI) Socialization Scale had offenders with lower reoffending rates compared to those who scored low on the inventory (Trotter 1990, 1993, 2000). The Socialization Scale measures the extent to which people have pro-social or pro-criminal attitudes. My studies suggested that the more pro-social officers were more inclined than the less pro-social officers to model pro-social behaviours, to focus on the pro-social behaviours of their clients and to appropriately challenge the pro-criminal comments of their clients. These practices were directly related to lower offending rates. Similar outcomes were found in a study undertaken in Canada in the 1970s, although the Canadian study suggested that it was also important for the probation officer to have high levels of empathy (Andrews et al 1979).

Pro-social modelling and reinforcement has been shown to be effective in a number of other studies and it is included as one of the key components of 'what works' in most of the 'what works' reviews (for example Gendreau 1998, Andrews 2001, Raynor 2003, McNeill 2003). One illustration of the power of simple modelling processes is seen in a study I recently completed in child protection (Trotter 2004). When child protection clients indicated that their workers returned their phone calls, kept their appointments and did the things they said they would do, the outcomes for the clients were much better than when the clients believed that their workers did not do these things. Client satisfaction was greater, worker estimates of client progress were greater and cases were closed earlier. The results could not be explained by client risk levels or other factors. It seems that the principles of pro-social modelling may be important not only with corrections clients but with involuntary clients in general. The pro-social approach which I have used in my research and in workshops with probation officers includes four steps: (1) identifying clients' pro-social actions and comments; (2) rewarding the pro-social actions and comments; (3) presenting a pro-social model; and (4) challenging pro-criminal actions and comments.

##### *(i) Identify Clients' Pro-social Comments or Behaviours*

Some examples of pro-social actions and comments include those related to compliance with the order such as keeping appointments, being punctual, completing community work, not offending, and complying with special conditions such as attending for drug treatment. Other client pro-social actions include working through problem solving processes with the worker, accepting responsibility for offences, comments about the harm that crime can do to others and oneself, empathy for the victim and comments that crime is wrong. Other pro-social comments include those which value non-criminal activities and associations including

family, sport, non-criminal friends, hobbies and attending school or work. And comments which are fair, non-sexist and non-racist and which reflect optimistic attitudes, for example expressing a belief that life without crime is achievable, that goals can be achieved, that workers can help, and that clients can change.

*(ii) How do the Workers Reinforce these?*

The first and most obvious method of providing re-inforcement is through body language (e.g. smiling, attentive listening, leaning forward) and the use of praise. Rewards can also be provided by the worker giving time to the client, attending court with the client and providing positive evidence, reducing the frequency of contact, helping the client find a job or accommodation, doing home visits or meeting a client outside the office, doing a positive report for a court or parole board, speaking to other agencies/professionals such as social security or the police about the client's needs or making positive comments in file notes.

The idea of pro-social reinforcement is that the rewards should be contingent on the behaviour. The reinforcement should be offered clearly in response to the pro-social behaviour. The client needs to clearly see the link. The clients should understand that the reduction in visits, the praise used by the supervisor or a visit to court is directly linked to their pro-social behaviour, for example the fact they have kept appointments, been punctual, been attending job interviews, and not reoffended. One of the most powerful rewards available to a Probation Officer in his or her day-to-day work is the capacity to reduce the frequency of contact. It is important in using this model to make the link between reduced frequency of contact and the pro-social activities of the client. It should not be seen simply as usual procedure, it should be seen as reward for good progress. In this way the client gains a sense that his or her goals can be achieved through pro-social behaviour.

*(iii) Model Pro-social Values*

Pro-social modelling involves the worker keeping appointments, being punctual, honest and reliable, following up on tasks, respecting other people's feelings, expressing views about the negative effects of criminal behaviour, expressing views about the value of social pursuits such as non-criminal friends, good family relations and the value of work. It involves interpreting people's motives positively e.g. "most police are people trying to do a job and they have similar needs to most of us" rather than "all police are pigs". It involves being open about problems the worker may have had which are similar to the offenders e.g. "I spent a period of time unemployed at one time and I found it depressing". It also involves being optimistic about the rewards which can be obtained by living within the law.

*(iv) Challenge Pro-criminal Comments and Actions*

How do more effective workers challenge or confront clients? The issue of confrontation in work with involuntary clients is a complex one. There is little support in the research for aggressive or critical confrontation. A small qualitative study (Burns 1994) undertaken with probation officers in Australia found that the more effective probation officers (those with clients who had low recidivism rates) focused pretty much exclusively on the positive things that their clients said and did and made little if any use of confrontation. My child protection study (Trotter 2004) found that confrontation which was most likely to be related to positive outcomes was confrontation which: suggests more positive ways of dealing with the situation, acknowledges that negative feelings may be justified and explores the reasons why clients feel and act the way they do. On the other hand, confrontation which gives the client a sense of being criticized or confrontation which points out the likely ill effects of the clients' views was related to poorer outcomes in the view of both the clients and the workers. Ignoring pro-criminal or anti-social comments and actions was also related to poorer outcomes in the study.

Care needs to be taken therefore in the use of confrontation. A Canadian study suggests a "four to one" rule (Andrews 1982). For every negative comment give four positive ones. Evidence from my studies (Trotter 1996, 2004) certainly confirms that people are more likely to learn from positive reinforcement rather than negative reinforcement.

## 2. Problem Solving

Effective interventions in corrections address the issues which have led offenders to become offenders. The literature reviews and meta-analyses often refer to the concept of criminogenic needs. Criminogenic

needs are those needs or problems which are related to offending but which it is possible to change. Obviously age, gender and prior criminal history relate to offending. They cannot however be changed. On the other hand, employment, family relationships, drug use, peer group associations, housing, finances, pro-criminal attitudes, may all relate to offending and can be changed. These are criminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs do not include intra-psychic issues such as anxiety, self esteem or depression, factors which cannot easily explain offending behaviour (Gendreau et al 1998).

There seems little doubt that effective practice in work with offenders involves addressing the clients' offence related problems or needs. My research suggests also that the problem solving process will be more successful in reducing offending if the workers and the clients reach agreement on the problems to be addressed and what it is hoped to achieve (Trotter 1996a, 2006). The general counselling literature is replete with research studies which point to the importance of working with the client's view of their problems (see for example Hepworth, Rooney and Larson 2002 for more detail on this issue). It may be perfectly clear to the worker that a particular young male client is persistently offending because of rejection by his family, because of drug use or because of homelessness. However, until the client acknowledges that these are problems for him then it is very difficult to work through the issues. Effective work in corrections involves a collaborative approach which helps the client to acknowledge their offence related problems. It is also important in work with offenders to canvas a range of potential offence related problems. Don Andrews (2001) suggests that the meta-analyses conducted by himself and his colleagues point to much greater reductions in reoffence rates when as many as six problems are addressed in the intervention. I have argued elsewhere that holistic approaches work best with involuntary clients (Trotter 2006) and work in corrections is no exception to this. The problem solving model I have used in my research and work with probation staff involves the following steps:

1. Problem survey
2. Problem ranking
3. Problem exploration
4. Setting goals
5. Developing a contract
6. Identifying strategies or tasks
7. Ongoing review.

### 3. Role Clarification

Much of the work with offenders involves what Ronald Rooney (1992) and Jones and Alcabes (1993) refer to as client socialization, or what I have referred to as role clarification (Trotter 2006) - in other words helping the client to accept that the worker can help with the client's problems even though the worker has a social control role. This involves exploring the client's expectations, helping the client to understand what is negotiable and what isn't, the limits of confidentiality, and the nature of the worker's authority. The stage is set for effective work once the client begins to accept that the worker can help and once the worker and client begin to reach agreement on the goals of the intervention.

### 4. A Balanced Approach – Social Control and Problem Solving

The research consistently suggests that interventions which focus exclusively on punishment or scare tactics lead to increased offending (e.g. Gendreau 1998, Andrews 2001). Similarly, interventions which focus exclusively on developing insight or which focus exclusively on the client/worker relationship are unlikely to be helpful (Trotter 1990, 1996b, Gendreau 1998). This was also evident in my recent child protection study – when clients described their workers as helpers and investigators the outcome were substantially better than when they saw them as either a helper or an investigator (Trotter 2004). Again it seems that the principles of effective practice which apply to offenders may apply to work with other groups of involuntary clients.

### 5. Focus on High Risk

Much of the literature talks about the importance of focusing on high risk offenders rather than low risk offenders. It is argued that there is a relatively large group of offenders who are unlikely to reoffend and are unlikely to benefit from intensive intervention, whereas there is a smaller group of medium to high risk offenders who are more likely to reoffend and more likely to benefit from supervision (see for example Gendreau 1998). For this reason it is important to assess risk levels and to focus resources on medium

to high risk offenders. The issue of risk assessment is a complex one and it has its critics (see Robinson 2003 for a discussion about the issues). The primary criticism is that risk levels are often used as part of a sentencing process and as part of a post sentencing method to provide for varying levels of supervision. This can lead to offenders who are already disadvantaged getting harsher penalties. An offender who is homeless, without family support, with a drug or alcohol addiction, and without employment might receive a harsher sentence or intervention than someone else who does not have these problems but has committed a similar offence.

Nevertheless, it does seem to make sense to concentrate welfare or human service resources on higher risk individuals who are likely to reoffend. To this end, a number of risk assessment profiles have been developed for use by corrections services. One of the most popular ones is the LSIR (Level of Supervision Inventory Revised) developed over many years by Don Andrews and James Bonta (1998). It is in use in many probation and community corrections services in many English speaking countries, for example Canada, USA, Australia and the United Kingdom. The LSIR, as well as providing a risk assessment, also helps to identify criminogenic needs which can inform the problem solving process.

#### 6. Programmes

A recent meta-analysis by Don Andrews and his colleagues suggests that structured learning programmes may have the most potential for reducing reoffending (Andrews 2001). Community corrections services around the world offer group and individual programmes based on the 'what works' principles. These programmes, in the words of Peter Raynor (2003:79) "put together a series of planned and sequential learning opportunities into a cumulative sequence covering an appropriate curriculum of skills and allowing plenty of opportunity to re-inforce learning through structured practice". Research on one of those programmes, for example, the reasoning and rehabilitation programme, has shown promising results (Raynor 1988, Pearson et al 2002).

#### 7. Other Factors

This is not an exhaustive list of 'what works' principles. The reviews refer to a number of other practices. For example 'multi-modal' approaches, which rely on a range of intervention methods, are likely to be more effective than those which rely on only one method (Gendreau et al 1998). This is supported by my study in probation which found that probation officers who used a range of skills, including modelling and reinforcing pro-social behaviours, role clarification and problem solving, had lower reoffence rates among their clients than situations in which the workers made use of only one or two of the skills (Trotter 1996a). There is also some support for working with families of young offenders (see Corcoran 2000 for a review of the evidence), for intervention methods which are implemented as they were intended and for matching workers and clients according to learning style and personality (Gendreau 1998, Wing Hong Chui 2003). Relationship skills are also referred to in some of the reviews (e.g. Gendreau 1998). I have not identified this as a key skill or a key factor in effective practice because the evidence in relation to this area is somewhat equivocal. Studies I have undertaken in corrections with both juveniles and adults have found that probation officer empathy levels, for example, do not relate to reoffending rates (Trotter 1990, 1996a). Don Andrews and his colleagues also found that high empathy workers only did better with their clients if they made use of the other skills (Andrews 1979). On the other hand, my study indicated that when workers made judgmental comments about their clients (e.g. lazy, no hoper) those clients were more likely to reoffend even after taking into account client risk levels. Certainly workers in corrections need to be able to listen to their clients and to model appropriate behaviour.

### **III. TROTTER STUDIES**

Outlined below are summaries of two studies I have undertaken in Victoria, Australia, the first in probation (Trotter 1993, 1996a) and the second in child protection (Trotter 2002, 2004). The corrections study was based on the hypothesis that probation officers who make use of the skills of role clarification, pro-social modelling and reinforcement, collaborative problem solving and empathy will have clients who are more likely to experience reductions in their problems and less likely to reoffend than clients of officers who don't make use of these principles. A group of 30 probation officers was offered a training course in these skills. Twelve probation officers agreed to make use of the skills with their next ten clients. The remaining 18 did not continue with the project for a number of practical reasons, for example they left their positions

or took extended leave. The study sample was selected using a systematic random method. It consisted of 104 clients of those probation officers who undertook the training and agreed to make use of the model. The sample also included a control group consisting of 157 clients selected from the same offices as the experimental group but with different probation officers. A sample of clients of those probation officers who withdrew from the project but continued in the probation service (105) was also followed up; however, the results for this group were very similar to the control group and are therefore not reported here.

Data was collected through a questionnaire to clients and an analysis of client files and police records. The study found that:

1. File notes suggested that probation officers who completed the training and agreed to use the model were significantly more likely to use the skills compared to probation officers in the control group. In other words, probation officers were more likely to use the principles after training.
2. Clients receiving supervision from those probation officers who did the training and agreed to use the model (the experimental group) were significantly more likely to report that their problems were reduced during the period of probation than clients in the control group. In fact almost twice as many clients in this group, in comparison to the control group, reported that their problems relating to drug use were reduced.
3. The reoffence rates for clients in the experimental group were significantly lower than for clients in the control group after one and four years. For example, the imprisonment rate after one year for clients in the experimental group was almost 50 per cent lower compared with clients in the control group. This is illustrated in the Table below.

Trotter (1996a) Offender imprisonment rates after one year and four years

	Experimental group	Control group
1 Year (p = 0.04)	13/104 (12%)	33/157 (21%)
4 Years (p = 0.02)	27/104 (26%)	61/157 (39%)

4. The model was most effective with young, high-risk, violent and drug-using offenders.
5. The use of pro-social modelling and reinforcement as revealed in file notes was consistently, strongly and significantly correlated with lower reoffence and imprisonment rates.
6. The use of problem solving was related to reduced reoffending, although it was most influential in improving compliance with the probation order (e.g. keeping appointments and special conditions).
7. The use of role clarification was correlated with lower reoffending but not at significant levels. This may be explained by the tendency of probation officers to discuss issues of role after the probation officer became aware of reoffending.
8. Probation officer empathy, as measured by a psychological test and by comments in file notes, was not related to client reoffence or imprisonment rates. However, judgmental comments in files (e.g. no-hoper, lazy, liar) were related to increased reoffending even when client risk levels were taken into account. Whilst officer empathy was not a factor in client reoffending, the extreme lack of it was.
9. The results of the study could not be explained by intervening variables such as frequency of contact between workers and clients, client risk levels, or the experience or education of the probation officers.

The results of this study are, I believe, persuasive, particularly given their consistency with the studies cited earlier and the replicatory nature of the study. The results confirm the importance of workers modelling and reinforcing clients' pro-social comments and actions, and the use of collaborative problem solving. Whilst the study is less persuasive in relation to role clarification, this seems to have been due to a particular intervening variable. The study does not support the value of empathy, although it does suggest that judgmental attitudes are related to poor outcomes. The second study (Trotter 2004) was undertaken in child protection in the eastern region of Melbourne. The aim of the study was to consider the way in which child protection workers use the skills of role clarification, pro-social modelling, collaborative problem solving and relationship skills of empathy, humour, self disclosure and optimism, and how use of these skills

relates to outcomes for clients. In order to gather the data, research officers interviewed 50 child protection workers, 282 clients and observed 13 interviews between clients and workers. The outcome measures included: (1) child protection workers' estimates of the progress of the families with whom they worked; (2) the extent to which the clients were satisfied with the outcomes of the child protection intervention; (3) how long the cases remained open; and (4) whether or not a child or children were placed away from the family in a departmental facility (e.g. foster care) during the period of contact with the worker. When the workers used the skills the outcomes were much better than when they did not use the skills. Some of the more interesting findings include:

- (1) The study supported the value of role clarification skills. For example, when clients saw their worker as both a helper and investigator, those clients had good outcomes. Workers who talked about their dual role as both helper and investigator and who were clear about their expectations, also had clients with good outcomes.
- (2) The study supported the value of pro-social modelling and reinforcement. For example, workers who modelled simple courtesies such as keeping appointments, being punctual and doing what they say they will do, had clients with particularly good outcomes.
- (3) The study supported the value of collaborative problem solving. For example, workers who focused on their clients' view of their problems, who worked with their clients' goals, and who carried out some tasks themselves had clients with good outcomes.
- (4) The study also supported the value of relationship skills. Workers who were optimistic, who listened to their clients and who were not afraid to use humour and self disclosure had clients with good outcomes.

#### IV. AN APPLICATION OF BEST PRACTICE

The following two case studies present alternative ways of using a problem solving approach. The first interview focuses on what the worker believes is the primary criminogenic need, the client's drug use. The second interview focuses on working with the client's view of the problem but working towards helping the client to accept that her drug use is an issue which needs to be addressed. In the second interview the worker demonstrates the skills of role clarification, pro-social modelling and reinforcement and problem solving. The transcript is taken from a role played video tape on "Working with Involuntary Clients" produced at Monash University. The probation officer was one of the probation officers in my corrections study who had clients with low reoffending rates. In the first interview he is drawing on information about the client's problems, which was written in the file at the time of the initial assessment undertaken for the court. The second interview reflects the way he usually works.

##### Problem Solving Interview 1

**Probation Officer:** Jennifer, thank you for coming back. You've been to correctional services twice now, the first time when you came in they went through a number of forms, we explained to you what you had to do and when you have to come. When you saw me last time we talked about what my role will be and we started to look at implementing some of the conditions on your order. What I want to do today is speak to you about the problems you've got in your life and one of the things that you really need to address as a matter of urgency is the drug use because that will....

**Jennifer:** Yeah, but I mean I don't think I've got a drug problem, I told you that when I first met you so, I mean I don't think it's necessary to go into that.

**Probation Officer:** You committed offences and you committed offences in the past and they're all drug related so I think you've got a problem that you need to deal with.

**Jennifer:** Well, why do you think they're drug related? I mean, who told you that?

**Probation Officer:** Well the information that was provided that you gave to the court was that it was drug related and we need to deal with that fairly quickly. So, what I want to do today is look at that and start dealing with that in terms of getting the counselling arranged and getting the testing done and so on. Some of the other things that relate to your offending, that you've got problems with, are the accommodation difficulties that you mentioned.

**Jennifer:** Yeah, that's right, yeah.

**Probation Officer:** And the relationship with your boyfriend that you've had some difficulties with.

**Jennifer:** Yeah.

**Probation Officer:** The other thing that was causing you difficulties was the relationship with your parents and you mentioned that you didn't have enough money to pay rent.

**Jennifer:** Yeah, well I don't because I don't have a job.

**Probation Officer:** Yeah and employment's another one that we need to look at. So, what I want to do today is, maybe I'll just write those few things down so that we don't miss any of them and we'll talk about it in order of priority. Remember last time we sort of made reference to the problem survey where we look at all of the things that are really causing difficulties in your life.

**Jennifer:** Yeah.

**Probation Officer:** And what I want to do today is talk to you about how we're going to do that and I've mentioned already that one of the more important ones is the drug use so I expect you to go to drug treatment.

**Jennifer:** Yeah, I know you keep bringing it up. It seems to me you're calling me a drug user and you don't even know me. So, to me personally I think that finding a job is more important to me than what you're saying.

**Probation Officer:** Yeah and I think that it's great that accommodation and finding a job is important for you but whilst you're using drugs you're going to get into more difficulties and if you get into more difficulties....

**Jennifer:** Well you don't know I'm using drugs. How do you know that?

**Probation Officer:** I guess from the information that's on file at the moment and the order that you've got requires you to do it so you just have to do it. And the testing will then identify whether you're using or not and give me an indication anyhow. So once you've done a few tests we can see whether you're still using or not.

**Jennifer:** What kinds of drugs do the tests show?

**Probation Officer:** They'll show up any drugs that you may be using. Prescribed medications, it might be cannabis, it can be alcohol, it can be heroin, speed, any of the drugs that are available out there at the moment. So, we'll need to deal with that as a matter of priority because I don't want you to get in further trouble with the law. And the other thing is the next one we're going to look at is the money side of it because you mentioned earlier that you haven't got enough money to pay for your rent.

**Jennifer:** Well that's right. I don't.

**Probation Officer:** Yeah. So you mentioned you need to go to community work so you may have difficulties because you've got no money.

**Jennifer:** Yeah, which will make it hard for me to complete this order anyway.

**Probation Officer:** What do you think you can do about that?

**Jennifer:** About what?

**Probation Officer:** With the money side of it.

**Jennifer:** Well I don't know. Hopefully find a job.

**Probation Officer:** Yeah, how would you go about doing that?

**Jennifer:** Well, I don't know. I don't have much skills.

**Probation Officer:** Have you looked for jobs before?

**Jennifer:** I've had a few jobs. Yeah. I haven't worked for a long time though.

**Probation Officer:** Can you tell me how you went about doing that last time?

**Jennifer:** How to find a job?

**Probation Officer:** Yeah.

**Jennifer:** Usually basically just people that I knew who already work there got me the job.

**Probation Officer:** Yeah. And I understand you have to go to Centrelink on a regular basis as well and part of that is you need to look for work.

**Jennifer:** Yeah.

**Probation Officer:** So I expect you to continue that and keep looking for work that way. You might want to look through the paper as well. We've got the local paper at the front in the interview room. You might want

to grab that and have a look at the employment section in that.

**Jennifer:** There's not many jobs there though.

**Probation Officer:** But if you don't go out and look though you won't find any.

**Jennifer:** I don't think they'll hire me anyway.

**Probation Officer:** Why's that?

**Jennifer:** I don't have any skills. I'm on this order so they're probably not going to want to hire a criminal even though I don't consider myself a criminal anyway. I mean I've never harmed anyone before in my life and I don't intend to.

**Probation Officer:** It would have caused some harm doing the burglaries because there would have been some victims in the process. You went in to somebody else's house.

### **Problem Solving Interview 2**

The following interview represents a more collaborative approach to the problem solving process. The probation officer is talking to the same client. He is making use of at least some of each of the skills of role clarification, pro-social modelling, reinforcement and challenging, collaborative problem solving and relationship-building.

**Probation Officer:** Jennifer, thank you for coming in today. You actually made it on time. We appreciate that.

**Jennifer:** I tried to, yeah.

**Probation Officer:** That's good to see Jennifer. Just a recap from the last two sessions, the first time you came to correctional services was when I took you through the induction process, where you filled in a number of forms and got some clarification on what you need to do. And then you came back and saw me three days ago and we talked a bit about what my role is in terms of supervising you on your order and we talked about the two aspects of it. One part was that I supervised your order and made sure that you do the things you're expected to do and the other part that we talked about was that I'm also there to help you identify what issues are in your life and how you want to work through those. Do you remember that?

**Jennifer:** Yeah.

**Probation Officer:** OK then. Jennifer what do you see are some of the issues that are impacting on your life at the moment?

**Jennifer:** I guess a lot has changed in the last couple of months. My boyfriend's been put in jail. I think he'll be there for the next six or seven years.

**Probation Officer:** How do you feel about that?

**Jennifer:** Well, quite upset about that actually. I mean I don't think he deserves such a harsh penalty for what he did.

**Probation Officer:** It was a serious offence, wasn't it?

**Jennifer:** Well, I mean he shot the people whose house we burgled but he didn't kill them. I mean other people have murdered people and they've gone to jail for as long as him. I don't think that's the same thing.

**Probation Officer:** Still it's a very serious offence, isn't it?

**Jennifer:** I don't think he meant to, you know, I don't think he wanted to kill them.

**Probation Officer:** That's probably reflected in the sentence as well. Because had the person died it would have been a lot more serious.

**Jennifer:** Yeah, well it's just made it hard because I'm on this order and they won't let me see him at all, and we've been living with these friends of his and ever since he's gone to jail I just don't feel comfortable living there anymore, but I don't really have much of a chance to leave because I don't have any money.

**Probation Officer:** So Jennifer, one of the things you've mentioned is not being able to get in touch with your boyfriend at the moment. Is that OK if I write that down?

**Jennifer:** Yeah.

**Probation Officer:** Just so that we don't lose them all. We'll deal with all of the things that are worrying you. We'll write it down and identify what all of the issues are and so we don't forget any of them. OK what are some of the other things?

**Jennifer:** Well, as I was saying I don't really want to live where I'm living right now but I don't have any money to find another place to live because it's for free, but ever since my boyfriend went to jail I just feel

like I'm not wanted any more because they're actually friends with my boyfriend. I just met them through him so I wouldn't mind finding somewhere else to live.

**Probation Officer:** Where have you lived in the past Jennifer?

**Jennifer:** Well, I left home when I was about fourteen.

**Probation Officer:** OK. That's about four years ago now.

**Jennifer:** Yeah and I went to live with a friend of mine and her family for a couple of months after that and then after that I sort of had an argument with her and I had to leave there and I lived on the streets for a while, and then I met my boyfriend and he was living with these people and I moved in with them and that's where I've been ever since.

**Probation Officer:** And you need to look at some new place to live now, do you?

**Jennifer:** Yeah, well I'd like to.

**Probation Officer:** So, we'll put that accommodation down as an issue that we might need to work on?

**Jennifer:** Yeah.

**Probation Officer:** OK. What are some of the other things that are worrying you at the moment?

**Jennifer:** Well I don't have a job so I guess that's the only way I can really get some money to find a place to live.

**Probation Officer:** Have you been employed in the past Jennifer?

**Jennifer:** I have but I haven't had really good jobs they've just been, you know, working in a milk-bar and waitressing and stuff like that.

**Probation Officer:** Yeah, but you have been able to get a number of jobs.

**Jennifer:** Yeah, but they've never really lasted very long, only a couple of months.

**Probation Officer:** Is there any reason for that?

**Jennifer:** Well, the first job when I was working in the milk-bar, they thought that I was giving away free food and stuff like that and the second job as a waitress, they thought that I was stealing everyone else's tips which is not true but they fired me for that.

**Probation Officer:** So, we can say that at this point we've got three issues. The first one is in relation to your boyfriend, the other one was the accommodation and then you need to look at employment, finding a job possibly. Anything else that's affecting you at the moment Jennifer?

**Jennifer:** No, not really, no.

**Probation Officer:** In relation to the court order, there is some suggestions about drug treatment and the offences seem to have some relationship to drug use. What do you think about that?

**Jennifer:** Well, when we were arrested apparently they found that I was under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

**Probation Officer:** What sort of drugs?

**Jennifer:** Heroin.

**Probation Officer:** OK. And the offences were they committed to purchase more drugs? That your boyfriend was involved in?

**Jennifer:** Well, yeah. And to buy clothes and food.

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