

GRIP Training Institute

Research Findings and Forecast

The GRIP curriculum is designed as an evidence-based, best-practice informed, comprehensive offender accountability program. It incorporates three main research-based principles of effective rehabilitation programs:

1. The risk factors for crime can be static or dynamic. Static factors such as race and sex cannot be changed, but dynamic factors such as a drug addiction, antisocial attitudes, and association with criminal others can. The need principle states that interventions should focus on addressing these dynamic criminogenic needs.
2. Treatment is effective only when it focuses on and is responsive to these criminogenic needs in a behavioral way. This is called the responsivity principle. The most effective treatments are cognitive-behavioral interventions focused on changing antisocial attitudes, cognitions, personality orientations related to recidivism.
3. The third principle of effective correctional treatment is the risk principle, which states that interventions such as prison sentences should be given primarily to high-risk offenders, because they have many criminogenic needs that can be easily targeted. Low-risk offenders, in contrast, are actually more likely to stop offending if they do not become involved in the justice system through prison sentences.

The key insight is that while prison does not always involve rehabilitation programs, and while not every treatment is effective in reducing reoffending, well implemented programs following these three principles are more likely to reduce reoffending.

Sources of these three *principles of effective correctional treatment* include the following: Andrews, 1995; Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Andrews et al., 1990; Gendreau, 1996; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Gendreau, Smith, & French, 2006; Smith, Gendreau, & Swartz, 2009; Cullen & Jonson, 2012.

GRIP Program Results: Primary (Recidivism) and Secondary

The first GRIP participants graduated in 2012. Perhaps the most telling finding is simply this: as of 03/31/18, over the last 6 years, 109 GRIP graduates have been released and have returned to their communities. Almost all of them were life-sentenced (with the possibility of parole), violent offenders. We have every reason to believe that nearly all of them remain in California. Within the state, which is what we can monitor, none of them have re-offended. Up to this point, that is, **our program has a recidivism rate of 0.0%**.

Many of the 109 released GRIP graduates not only live lives as productive citizens; they now work to give back to the same communities they took from by occupying leadership positions as 'Change Agents' in working with challenged youth, and in half-way homes and addiction recovery centers. A cadre of former prisoners that we have trained is gainfully employed in scaling the program by going back in to various CA. state prisons to facilitate the program. This component of the program has become a very potent aspect in increasing the intrinsic motivation for transformation among the new students.

It costs upwards of \$75K per year to house a prisoner in California. (This number tends to be higher for older prisoners). Even a small reduction in recidivism can translate into significant tax savings each year. Additionally, we are confident that the GRIP Program positively influences the correctional institutions it which it operates, which can not only lower costs (and stress levels of correctional staff) but also increase the quality of correctional and rehabilitation-related processes. Finally, there are the difficult to measure but in our view extremely plausible 'spillover' effects related to GRIP graduates returning to at risk families and communities.

In many cases, people in these released lifers (extended) social networks are at extremely high risk of being incarcerated (e.g., children, grandchildren). GRIP's promising indications of effects on recidivism rates can be seen as an indication that GRIP graduates return to their (at risk) families and communities as agents of positive change. As such, the GRIP Program provides two solid rationales to rehabilitate and release more lifers. We are currently serving around 500 prisoners in 5 CA. state prisons. We are organizationally preparing to replicate the GRIP Program to more state prisons in California and beyond, leading to savings of many millions of dollars, *while* increasing public safety and preventing re-victimization.

Note: The average rate of recidivism in California is around 61%. This is the percentage of released prisoners returning to prison within 3 years. Almost 1 in 4 Ca. state prisoners is currently a lifer. The recidivism rate for the approx. 28,000 'lifers' in CA. is lower in general but their rate of release has historically been typically small. We believe that implementing the GRIP program on a larger scale constitutes a solid rationale to release more lifers.

Economists at the Catholic University of Milan (Italy) recently conducted a study based on psychological tests and incentivized behavioral 'games' or situations. While still preliminary (the first article is in the 'revise and re-submit' stage, a PhD. dissertation will be defended early 2018), analyses reveal positive and significant increases in participants levels of patience, self-esteem, generosity and ability to forgive. It is available via this link:
<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-economic-psychology/recent-articles>

Also available is a scholarly article on the GRIP program by Bowen Paulle, a noted sociology professor from the University of Amsterdam. The main findings of Paulle's article, which can be found here <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1466138116686803> is that the GRIP Program is self-correcting intervention. Even men entering it with an eye to influencing the Parole Board end up, within a matter of months, buying into the program's cognitive-behavioral and trauma therapy goals and authentically "doing the work."

Professor Paulle and his team, supported among others by research assistant Sarah Calhoun, have crafted an instrument that is designed to assess participants' and non-participants' perceptions of the program of the program. This project is slated to be implemented in 2018. This measurement tool has been developed and is in the very last stages of the departmental approval process by the CDCR Office of Research.