

United Kingdom experiences in drug treatment evaluation

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What is an Evaluation?

“any form of assessment or measurement carried out before the intervention begins, while it is taking place, or after its completion”.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
(EMCDDA 2007)

The evaluation of interventions and programmes is ideally set up when they are being planned and is always an integral part of a well designed intervention.

Why Evaluate?

- Need to know “what works” in the range of treatment programmes and services that encompass a large variety of approaches and methods.
- The need to legitimise public funds spent on treatment services calls for adequate data on their efficacy and cost-effectiveness.

The ultimate goal is to gather credible evidence on: programme implementation, treatment results, and cost-efficiency that will help in the decision making process to improve quality of care.

(EMCDDA 2007)

UK Prison & Probation Services

approach to evaluation

The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel (CSAP) criteria of ongoing evaluation states, the arrangements for evaluation should as a minimum include an assessment of:

- the demographic and clinical characteristics of participants and those not accepted onto the programme
- changes in the dynamic risk factors targeted by the programme
- relationship between records of attendance and whether offenders change as intended
- previous criminal history and reconviction



The Short Duration Programme

Developed in response to

- the number of “revolving door” drug using, short term detainees
- Need for them to have an intensive intervention
- The need for an accredited, intensive intervention for prisoners serving less than six months
- The need for an accredited drug programme to have a (short term) goal of harm minimisation/reduction rather than abstinence

Goal and purposes of treatment evaluation

- Testing of new therapeutic approach:

Short: 4 week

Intensive: 5 days a week

harm minimisation and motivational intervention for prisoners on remand (potential of not completing the intervention and no admission/ presumption of guilt) or serving sentences of less than 6 months

- How closely facilitators would adhere to the manualised intervention



Evaluation Approach

Outcome evaluation

- focuses on the consequences of treatment for the clients, their families and/or the community.
- It also considers an eventual impact on other treatment approaches and on treatment motivation in the target population.
- Outcome can be measured against predefined behaviour norms (normative evaluation), baseline pre-treatment status (evaluation of change) or Pre-defined treatment goals (goal attainment evaluation).

Evaluation Approach continued

Quality assessment focussing on:

- Conformity of delivery by facilitators

Outcome and Quality measured by:

- assessing behavioural and psychometric changes in the target group; before and after measures taken.
- questionnaires , observation, assessment, feedback, drug testing.



Evaluation Methods:

- Psychometric measures
- Behavioural monitoring
- Participant feedback
- Programme monitoring



Psychometric measures:

Psychometric tests: any standardized procedure for measuring sensitivity or memory or intelligence or aptitude or personality

Stages of Change Questionnaire (Prochaska and DiClementi 1982)

The Stages of Change questionnaire (McConnaughy et al., 1983; McConnaughy et al., 1989) is designed to measure the process of change, regardless of the problems being addressed.

Stages of Change Questionnaire continued (Prochaska and DiClementi 1982)

It is a 32 item self-report questionnaire, these items being rated on a five-point scale from strongly disagree (score 1) through undecided (score 3) to strongly agree (score 5). Eight items each measure four stages:

- (1) Pre-contemplation
- (2) Contemplation
- (3) Action
- (4) Maintenance



Barratt Impulsivity Scale

The BIS-II is a 30-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure forward planning, motor, and cognitive aspects of the construct of impulsiveness (Barratt, 1994).

Each of the items is rated on a four-point scale: rarely/never, occasionally, often, and always. A total score is calculated.

The psychometric tests are taken pre and post programme.



Behavioural Monitoring

Pro-social Behavioural Assessment Checklist

Facilitators are required to complete this form on a weekly basis for each participant.

These are used to indicate how individuals may be changing their attitudes and behaviour whilst on the programme and any changes noted should be written into a post programme progress report.



Weekly Participant Monitoring Sheet

In addition to the Pro-social Behavioural Assessment Checklist, Facilitators are required to complete a Weekly Participant Monitoring Sheet on each group member. This is to assess the extent to which they appear to be engaging with the programme.

Any apparent difficulties with the programme should be highlighted on this form and discussed with the individual during the one-to-one key working sessions, to try and address the issues raised.



Record of Attendance and assignment completion

The level of attendance and assignments are monitored; the greater the engagement the likelihood of participants altering their behaviour as a result of attending the programme.

At the end of the programme the information collated by these means is discussed with the participant using a motivational style



Voluntary Drug Testing

In order to attend the course all participants must agree to undergo drugs testing at least twice whilst on the programme. The tests are given without prior warning.

The individual attitudes to a positive result are recorded using the Positive Drug Test Monitoring Sheet.

The result could be indicative of a lapse, rather than a return to previous levels of substance use.

Participant Feedback

Weekly and end of programme Participant Review Sheet used to:

- assess individual outcome and include in final progress report
- Contribute to quality assessment of the programme. The aim of this feedback is to help ascertain which elements of the programme participants feel have been helpful and those that they feel could be delivered more effectively. This could be used to make changes to improve the programme.

Programme monitoring

The following are used to monitor the programme:

- Live Supervision
- Programme session record
- Programme participant review sheets
- Programme monitoring via evaluation and audit team

Live Supervision

- The Treatment Manager will ensure that the programme is being delivered according to the programme manual by randomly live monitoring at least 20% of the programme sessions.
- Observations from live monitoring are fed back to Facilitators during their individual supervision session



Programme Session Record

Facilitators (and Treatment Managers who have observed a session), are required to fill in a daily Programme Session Record .

This asks them to assess in detail elements of the programme appear to be working well or less well.

The aim is to highlight those elements that could perhaps benefit from being altered to enhance treatment effectiveness.

Programme monitoring via evaluation and audit team

Evaluation team

- Score Psychometrics
- Collate and analyse data from the same programmes delivered in different prisons
- Report on Findings

Audit team

- Conduct annual audit to focus on treatment integrity
- Check quality of group delivery and facilitation skills
- Assess notes from live observations/reports
- Talk to Facilitators and prisoners



Ethical Issues in Evaluation

- Mandatory Participant contribution
- Validity of self report questionnaires
- Lack of knowledge or skill in technique or method
- Facilitator bias/subjectivity
- Lack of cultural sensitivity
- Evaluation findings exaggerate successes and positive findings
- Ideological positions that predetermine the evaluation outcome

General Evaluation Issues

- Feeding back scores to participants
- Cost of tests/measures
- Qualifications needed to administer e.g. Psychologist
- Use of external evaluators
- Evaluation findings are released belated so they are no longer relevant
- The evaluation is not robust due to use of weak measures



Questions

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