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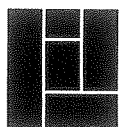
# Putting Public Safety First

*13 Parole Supervision Strategies  
to Enhance Reentry Outcomes*

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#### EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Recognizing that surveillance alone was ineffective at reducing recidivism, the **Oregon** state legislature has begun requiring that the Department of Corrections spend at least 75 percent of its state funding on evidence-based programs. The result of a 2005 law, the statute defines evidence-based practices as those that are based on scientific research, cost-effective, and “reduce the propensity for someone to commit a crime” (Oregon Senate Bill 267, 2003). In **Missouri**, supervision case plans routinely include monitoring activities, such as requirements for drug testing, but also prescribe treatment for substance abuse and mental health when those are identified as criminogenic needs.

For more information, see Oregon Senate Bill 267 at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/03orlaws/sess0600.dir/0669ses.htm> or Carter et al. (2007) at [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/pdf/SVORI\\_CEPP.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/pdf/SVORI_CEPP.pdf).

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## 10. Involve Parolees to Enhance their Engagement in Assessment, Case Planning, and Supervision

Traditional parole practice is contact-driven, focusing on monitoring and surveillance and the quantity of office and field visits rather than the quality of these interactions. The evidence is clear that increasing the number of contacts does not produce better outcomes for parolees (Petersilia and Turner 1993; Taxman 2002, 2007). Evidence-based practices suggest that supervision should evolve from a contact-driven system to a behavioral management model where the parolee is an active participant in developing the supervision and treatment plan (Burke 2004; Taxman 2006; Taxman, Shepardson, and Byrne 2004). In a behavioral management approach, the routine interaction between parole officers and parolees is reframed as an intervention in itself, one in which effective communication is central (Burrell 2008; Taxman 2002, 2007;). With the techniques of motivational interviewing and positive reinforcement, parole officers can enhance engagement by clearly communicating conditions of supervision, reviewing assessment information and developing case plans with parolees, working with parolees to update and modify goals and supervision case plans as appropriate, and explaining the reasoning behind such adjustments.

Recent data from the Urban Institute’s *Returning Home* study have shown that the majority of parolees have remarkably positive attitudes toward their parole officers. Most parolees report that their officer is helpful, trustworthy, professional, and treats them with respect (La Vigne, Visher, and Castro 2004; Yahner, Visher, and Solomon 2008). In fact, parolees have high expectations about the ways their parole officer can

help with their transition. Although such expectations are often unmet, these findings highlight the importance of officer–parolee interactions and the critical role the supervision process could play in facilitating positive behavior change. In fact, a recent parole study by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections found that successful parolees were substantially more likely than violators to indicate having a positive relationship with their parole officer (Bucklen 2006).

A number of parole agencies employ practices that focus on more-meaningful measures that engage parolees in their supervision process. For example, motivational interviewing is a technique that many parole agencies are exploring, and parole officers are receiving increased training in this area. A broader behavioral management approach has been implemented and evaluated in Maryland, and findings suggest that such an approach can reduce the likelihood of new crimes and issuance of warrants that result from technical violations (Taxman 2007).

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#### EXAMPLE FROM THE FIELD

The state of Maryland instituted their **Proactive Community Supervision (PCS)** program to increase parolee engagement, sustain meaningful behavior change and help the parolee become a successful, law-abiding citizen. Employing behavioral management strategies, the PCS model stresses the parolee–parole officer relationship and goal-centered interactions. The model emphasizes engaging the parolee in the change process and uses supervision and treatment interventions to address criminogenic factors, involve informal networks, and facilitate pro-social activities such as job training, counseling, and education programs. According to Faye Taxman, who collaborated with the Division of Parole and Probation on the design and evaluated the PCS model, “all of this is what the reentry movement is trying to accomplish—identifying a responsive model to engage the offender in the change process. This model of supervision does that, and it provides a framework that serves to facilitate offender change” (Taxman 2007, 101).

For more information, see Taxman (2007) at [http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicinfo/publications/pdfs/dpp\\_corrections\\_today.pdf](http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicinfo/publications/pdfs/dpp_corrections_today.pdf).

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## 11. Engage Informal Social Controls to Facilitate Community Reintegration

Interactions with their parole officer comprise only a small fraction of parolees’ time, even under the more intensive supervision regimes. The vast majority of a parolee’s time is spent with family, friends, employers, or alone—just like the rest of us. En-