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The Efficacy of Motivational Interviewing with Offenders: An Outcome and Process Evaluation

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey University, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This research comprised an evaluation of a motivational interviewing programme, the Short Motivational Programme (SMP), delivered by the Department of Corrections and adapted for use with incarcerated offenders. The evaluation consisted of two components: outcome and process.

Outcome

Results indicated that offenders' motivation to change significantly increased from pre to post the SMP (eta squared = .19, p < .05), and a sub-group of offenders demonstrated that motivation to change was maintained at follow-up. This result, given the sample’s risk of recidivism demographic, provided evidence for the SMP’s efficacy with high risk offenders.

Process

On a measure of motivational interviewing skills, psychologists demonstrated full competence only in the use of direction, although global clinician ratings, percent open questions, evocation, collaboration, autonomy and empathy approached competence. Other than, “rolling with resistance”, offenders reported strongly experiencing motivational interviewing principles during the SMP. Lastly, offenders who experienced the motivational interviewing principles to the greater extent did not demonstrate any greater increases in motivation to change from pre to post the SMP and at follow-up.

These findings are discussed and recommendations are made for further research.
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