

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

A BRIEF INTERVENTION TO REDUCE OFFENDING

THE STUDY OF A FAITH-BASED PROGRAMME

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Psychology

at Massey University, Palmerston North,

New Zealand.

Jeffrey N. Lees

2007

Abstract

Concern about the growing level and cost of criminal behaviour in New Zealand has resulted in a high priority being given to the research and development of effective interventions. The targeting of appropriate interventions to those at greatest risk of reoffending is identified as a key to successful outcomes. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Making Right Choices (MARC) programme in reducing offending of those at moderate to high risk of persisting in criminal conduct. MARC is a brief, faith-based, biblical approach to curtailing offending, developed at Tauranga Community Probation Service between 1993 and 2003. Seven recidivist male offenders, 19 – 26 years of age, volunteered to participate in this study. Five of the participants were prison inmates serving short sentences and two were on supervision in the community. Two risk measures (RoC*RoI and YLS/CLI) were used to ensure that participants met the medium/high risk criteria. In addition to attending the 10-session MARC course, participants were asked to undertake pre- and post-treatment assessments of antisocial attitudes, criminal associations and offending. Sessions were on average 60 minutes long, delivered one-on-one in an office setting. In addition to conviction history from the Law Enforcement System (LES), measures included the Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA), the Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO), the Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) and the MARC Self-report Measure of Offending (MSMO).

Follow-up assessment was carried out 6 months and 12 months after completion of the programme and/or release from prison. Results at six and twelve months after MARC showed that of the seven MARC participants, five had markedly reduced their offending on the self-report measure, three had significantly less conviction on the LES measure, four recorded a distinct drop in contact with criminal companions and two had noticeably ameliorated their antisocial attitudes. Five participants were able to describe ways they had been helped by the programme. While the limitations of the methods preclude certainty about this programme's effectiveness, the positive outcomes provide tentative support to the hypothesis that facilitating spiritual change can be an effective way to bring about cognitive and behavioural change with recidivist offenders.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their help and support during this research:

To my supervisor, Dr Patrick Dulin, for being willing to take on this unconventional project, and giving unwavering support, encouragement and guidance throughout its extended duration. To Joanne Taylor, who came in as a second supervisor near the end of the project and gave valuable assistance in editing the thesis document. To Associate Professor Kevin Ronan whose encouragement and enthusiasm provided the initial impetus to launch the MARC research project.

To my wife Brenda and my five children, Amy, Thomas, Susanna, Daniel and Gregory, who patiently believed in me, prayed for me and loved me through these years of being “home schooled” along with them. This special time of togetherness has greatly enriched my life.

To Joshua Goodwin for his invaluable service as research assistant in helping ensure the accurate compiling and analysing of research data.

To the Department of Corrections for approving this project and providing necessary resources for its implementation. Special thanks to staff of Wanganui Prison and Wanganui Community Probation Service for providing support at the coalface when it was needed. Included among the many that helped are Sandy Stoddard, Stephen Radburn, Carmen Park, Jenny Saywood, Dominic Devine, Vasiti Waqa, Nick Wilson and Paul Whitehead.

To staff of the Arahina Training Centre who provided a programme room, and gave friendship and encouragement to my family throughout our time in Marton. To the intercessors of St Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Feilding and Mount Maunganui Baptist Church, and other Christians who supported the project in prayer.

To the seven volunteers who courageously agreed to be part of this project and actively participated in its requirements.

Research approval was obtained from the Massey University Ethics Committee and the Central Regional Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Health.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures	xi
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Three General Principles of Effective Interventions	2
1.2.1 The Risk Principle.....	2
1.2.2 The Need Principle.....	3
1.2.3 The Responsivity Principle.....	4
1.3 Development of the MAKING RIGHT CHOICES (MARC) Programme.....	5
1.4 Research into Faith-based Offender Programmes.....	9
1.5 Spiritual, Cultural and Ethical Issues.....	12
1.6 The Present Study.....	14
CHAPTER 2 THE PLACE OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW WITHIN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND PRACTICE	16
2.1 A Comparison of Worldviews	16
2.2 A Conflict of Worldviews	18
2.2.1 The Emergence of a Competing Religion	18
2.2.2 The Promotion of Hedonism and Moral Relativism.....	21
2.2.3 Finding Common Ground.....	22
2.3 The Christian approach to therapy	23

2.4	Similarities between MARC and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	25
2.5	The Spiritual Dimension of MARC	26
2.5.1	The Authority Factor.....	26
2.5.2	The Prayer Factor.....	27
2.5.3	The Fear Factor	27
2.5.4	The Grace Factor.....	28
2.5.5	The Love Factor.....	28
2.5.6	The Revelation Factor.....	28
2.5.7	The Conscience Factor.....	29
2.6	The Goal of the MARC Intervention	29
 CHAPTER 3 METHOD.....		30
3.1	Design	30
3.2	Participants and Setting	32
3.2.1	Participant A.....	34
3.2.2	Participant B	34
3.2.3	Participant C	35
3.2.4	Participant D.....	35
3.2.5	Participant E	36
3.2.6	Participant F.....	36
3.2.7	Participant G.....	37
3.3	Measures	37
3.4	Measures of Risk.....	38
3.4.1	Risk of ReConviction*Risk of Imprisonment (RoC*RoI)	39
3.4.2	Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI).....	40

3.5	Measures of Anti-social Attitudes/Associates and Criminogenic Thinking	41
3.5.1	Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO)	41
3.5.2	Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)	43
3.6	Measures of Offending	44
3.6.1	Law Enforcement System (LES) – Criminal and Traffic Conviction History.	44
3.6.2	MARC Self-Report Measure of Offending (MSMO).....	45
3.7	Measure of Desirable Responding	46
3.7.1	The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS).....	46
3.8	Progression of Treatment	47
3.8.1	Session One: Introduction – The Thorn Bush.....	47
3.8.2	Session Two: The Root of Bitterness	48
3.8.3	Session Three: The Root of Moral Damage	48
3.8.4	Session Four: The Root of False Foundations	49
3.8.5	Session Five: Moral Law and the Hopeless Pit.....	49
3.8.6	Session Six: Step One – Getting Out of Denial	49
3.8.7	Session Seven: Step Two – Believing there is a Way Out	50
3.8.8	Session Eight: Step Three – Preparing to Choose God’s Way Out	50
3.8.9	Session Nine: Steps Four to Seven – Confess, Renounce, Surrender.....	51
3.8.10	Session Ten: Step Eight to Twelve – Learning to Walk with God.....	51
3.9	Ethical Considerations	52
CHAPTER 4	RESULTS	54
4.1	Overview	54
4.2	Measure of Desirable Responding from Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS)	55
4.3	Participant A	56

4.3.1	Brief Profile	56
4.3.2	Risk Rating – High.....	56
4.3.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	56
4.3.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	57
4.3.5	Summary.....	58
4.4	Participant B	60
4.4.1	Brief Profile	60
4.4.2	Risk Rating – Medium.....	60
4.4.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	60
4.4.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	61
4.4.5	Participant feedback.....	62
4.4.6	Summary.....	63
4.5	Participant C	63
4.5.1	Brief Profile	63
4.5.2	Risk Rating – High.....	64
4.5.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	64
4.5.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	65
4.5.5	Participant feedback.....	66
4.5.6	Summary.....	67
4.6	Participant D	67
4.6.1	Brief Profile	67
4.6.2	Risk Rating – Medium.....	68
4.6.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	68
4.6.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	69
4.6.5	Participant feedback.....	70

	4.6.6	Summary.....	70
4.7		Participant E	71
	4.7.1	Brief Profile	71
	4.7.2	Risk Rating – High.....	71
	4.7.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	71
	4.7.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	72
	4.7.5	Participant feedback.....	73
	4.7.6	Summary.....	74
4.8		Participant F	74
	4.8.1	Brief Profile	75
	4.8.2	Risk Rating – Medium/High	75
	4.8.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	75
	4.8.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	76
	4.8.5	Participant feedback.....	77
	4.8.6	Summary.....	77
4.9		Participant G	78
	4.9.1	Brief Profile	78
	4.9.2	Risk Rating – High/Medium	78
	4.9.3	Antisocial Attitudes and Criminal Companions (SPSIO & MCAA).....	78
	4.9.4	Re-offending (LES & MSMO)	79
	4.9.5	Participant feedback.....	80
	4.9.6	Summary.....	81
4.10		Summary of MARC Research Results across Participants.....	82
	4.10.1	Antisocial Attitudes.....	82
	4.10.2	Criminal Association	83

4.10.3	Offending.....	84
4.10.4	The Big Picture.....	85
CHAPTER 5	DISCUSSION	87
5.1	Summary of the Findings	87
5.2	The Process of Spiritual Change.....	88
5.3	Limitations of the Present Study.....	89
5.3.1	Selection Bias	90
5.3.2	Maturation	91
5.3.3	History	91
5.3.4	Therapeutic Relationship, Experimenter Expectancies and Desirable Responding.....	92
5.3.5	Measurement Limitations	93
5.3.6	Threats to External Validity	93
5.4	Recommendations for Future Research	94
5.5	Clinical Implications for the Community	95
5.5.1	Brief Format Makes MARC Accessible and Attractive to Offenders.....	95
5.5.2	Why Christians Volunteer for Prison Service	96
5.5.3	Effective Moral Development, Cross-Cultural Appeal and Informed Consent	97
5.5.4	Empirically-Validated Faith-Based Programmes – A Cost-Effective Option	98
5.6	Conclusion	99
	REFERENCES	101
	APPENDICES.....	107
Appendix A.	MARC Problem Solving Model.....	108
Appendix B.	MARC Problem Solving Worksheet (Session 1 – 4).....	109

Appendix C.	The Barrel of Bitterness (Session 2)	110
Appendix D.	The Tripartite Model of the Human Person (Session 4).....	111
Appendix E.	False Foundations (Session 4)	112
Appendix F.	The Solid Foundation (Session 4)	113
Appendix G.	MARC Booklet – How to Solve Problems (Session 3).....	114
Appendix H.	MARC Booklet – The Moral Damage Checklist (Session 3).....	119
Appendix I.	MARC Booklet – Being in a Hopeless Pit (Session 5)	120
Appendix J.	MARC Booklet – God’s Rescue Plan (Session 5).....	122
Appendix K.	MARC Booklet – 12 Steps to Freedom (Sessions 6-10).....	123
Appendix L.	MARC Booklet – Getting Out of Denial (Session 6).....	125
Appendix M.	MARC Booklet – Believing there is a Way Out (Session 7)	126
Appendix N.	MARC Booklet – Preparing to Choose God’s Way Out (Session 8) ...	127
Appendix O.	MARC Booklet – Confess, Renounce, Surrender (Session 9).....	128
Appendix P.	Examples of Redemption Analogies.....	130
Appendix Q.	Gravity of Offence Table	131
Appendix R.	MARC Gravity of Offence Table	132
Appendix S.	MARC Self-Report Measure of Offending (MSMO).....	133
Appendix T.	MARC Information Sheet for Prospective Participants	134
Appendix U.	Participant Consent Form.....	138
Appendix V.	MARC Brochure for Prospective Participants	139
Appendix W.	A Prayer Used To Help Bring About Spiritual Change	141

List of Tables

Table 1.	<i>A Comparison between the Christian Worldview and that of Naturalism</i>	17
Table 2.	<i>Summary of Results for MARC Participants – Showing Risk Rating and Indication of Significant Intervention Effect</i>	86

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Average rate of offending for MARC participants before and after MARC	8
<i>Figure 2.</i> Seriousness of re-offending since MARC	9
<i>Figure 3.</i> Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS).....	55
<i>Figure 4.</i> Participant A – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	57
<i>Figure 5.</i> Participant A – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA).....	57
<i>Figure 6.</i> Participant A – Level of Offending (from LES conviction data).....	58
<i>Figure 7.</i> Participant A – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO).....	58
<i>Figure 8.</i> Participant B – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	61
<i>Figure 9.</i> Participant B – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA).....	61
<i>Figure 10.</i> Participant B – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)	62
<i>Figure 11.</i> Participant B – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO).....	62
<i>Figure 12.</i> Participant C – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	64
<i>Figure 13.</i> Participant C – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)	65
<i>Figure 14.</i> Participant C – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data).....	66
<i>Figure 15.</i> Participant C – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO).....	66
<i>Figure 16.</i> Participant D – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	68
<i>Figure 17.</i> Participant D– Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)	69
<i>Figure 18.</i> Participant D – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data).....	69
<i>Figure 19.</i> Participant D – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO).....	70
<i>Figure 20.</i> Participant E – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	72
<i>Figure 21.</i> Participant E – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA).....	72

<i>Figure 22.</i> Participant E – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)	73
<i>Figure 23.</i> Participant E – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO).....	73
<i>Figure 24.</i> Participant F – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	75
<i>Figure 25.</i> Participant F – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA).....	76
<i>Figure 26.</i> Participant F – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data)	76
<i>Figure 27.</i> Participant F – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO)	77
<i>Figure 28.</i> Participant G – Social Problem Solving Inventory for Offenders (SPSIO) / Measures of Criminogenic Thinking	79
<i>Figure 29.</i> Participant G – Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)	79
<i>Figure 30.</i> Participant G – Measure of Offending (from LES conviction data).....	80
<i>Figure 31.</i> Participant G – Measure of Offending (from Self-Report data – MSMO).....	80
<i>Figure 32.</i> Group Level of Antisocial Attitudes on SPSIO Measure.....	83
<i>Figure 33.</i> Group Level of Antisocial Attitudes on the MCAA Measure	83
<i>Figure 34.</i> Group Level of Criminal Association on MCAA Measure	84
<i>Figure 35.</i> Group Level of Offending from LES Convictions.....	85
<i>Figure 36.</i> Group Level of Offending from the MSMO Self-Report Measure.....	85