

**E**ffective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS), an evidence-based practice, is a model of community supervision developed by the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI). The model combines Core Correctional Practices research with the risk, needs, and responsivity principles and puts them into practice. EPICS is designed to improve the effectiveness of probation officers' one-on-one sessions and provide sufficient dosages of treatment interventions delivered to youth to reduce recidivism. Probation officers are taught to use a structured session; focus on criminogenic needs, especially the thought-behavior link; teach skills; and to use a social learning, cognitive behavioral approach during their interactions. The goals of community supervision are to decrease delinquent behavior, ensure public safety, provide accountability, monitor compliance to court orders, and make appropriate referrals to service providers. Probation officers accomplish these goals through regular visits, developing case plans, monitoring conditions, drug testing, supporting, guiding, and collaborating with the youth and family to solve problems. Community supervision has had barriers to accomplishing these goals, such as dosage, length of supervision, caseload size, unknown risk of youth, availability and quality of treatment services, and content of interaction with youth, as well as policy/procedural issues. Studies have shown that in the past, case plans were developed based on court-mandated conditions rather than assessment results. When criminogenic needs were identified, in many circumstances, they were not discussed. Finally, when probation officers focused solely on conditions of probation, there was a rise in recidivism.

EPICS takes what was learned from research and focuses on two ideas: adherence to the principles of effective intervention and the use of Core Correctional Practices.

### Adherence to the principles of effective intervention:

- ✓ Target moderate and high-risk youth
- ✓ Target criminogenic needs
- ✓ Use of cognitive behavioral interventions

### Use of Core Correctional Practices:

- ✓ Quality collaborative relationship
- ✓ Reinforcement, Disapproval, and Use of Authority
- ✓ Cognitive Restructuring
- ✓ Structured Skill Building
- ✓ Problem Solving Skills

The EPICS model maximizes the time that probation officers spend with youth and ensures they receive a consistent message throughout supervision. The EPICS model is not intended to replace more intense cognitive behavioral treatments that address specific criminogenic needs.

### ***Building a Collaborative Relationship***

#### Balanced Approach:

Probation officers who use a combination of caring, fairness, trust, and authoritativeness with youth are most likely to influence reductions in recidivism. Role clarification can help the youth understand the role of the probation officer in the supervision process as well as the role of the youth in the change process. A probation officer should explain the dual role of their job, that of a helper and one who must hold the youth accountable. These roles are unique yet embodied simultaneously throughout the supervision process. As a helper, a probation officer works with the youth to identify goals, open themselves up to interventions during sessions, and recognize risky situations. They also help develop effective strategies to use in those situations. A probation officer in the accountability role will monitor for compliance with conditions.





## Four Part Structured Session

### Check in:

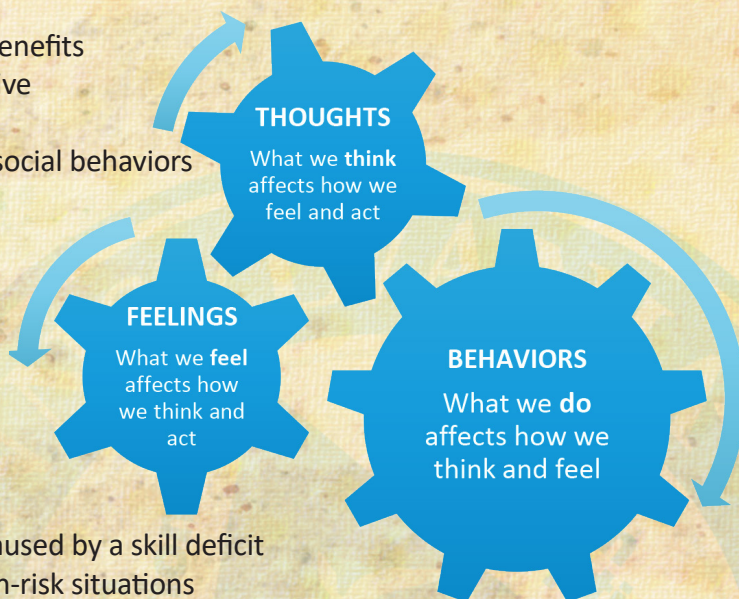
- Promote a collaborative relationship with youth
- Assess for crises/acute needs
- Assess for compliance with conditions

### Review:

- Set or review goals with youth
- Discuss community agency referrals
- Enhance learning by reviewing previous intervention
- Review previous homework assignment

### Intervention:

- Target criminogenic needs using structured cognitive behavioral techniques
  - o Cost Benefit Analysis
    - Weighs both short- and long-term costs and benefits of a target antisocial behavior and an alternative prosocial behavior
    - Helps build motivation towards changing antisocial behaviors
  - o Behavior Chain
    - Teaches youth the link between thoughts and behaviors
    - Helps youth identify their antisocial thinking in risky situations
  - o Cognitive Restructuring
    - Teaches youth to replace their antisocial thinking with prosocial thinking
  - o Skill Building
    - Used when problem behavior is likely being caused by a skill deficit
    - Teaches prosocial behavioral responses to high-risk situations
  - o Problem Solving
    - Teaches youth to be independent problem solvers
    - Teaches youth to use problem solving with “time to think” problems first, so they can apply the skill later to “in your face” problems
    - Target specific responsivity issues
  - o Discuss barriers and match cognitive behavioral interventions



### Homework:

- Generalize learning to new situations from the past or in the future
  - o Discuss real-life situations where the newly-learned intervention would be helpful
- Assign appropriate homework
  - o Match homework to the intervention completed in the session
  - o Give youth clear expectations about when homework is due and discuss potential barriers
  - o Encourage youth to use interventions in risky situations