

THE WILEY SERIES IN OFFENDER REHABILITATION

ADDICTED TO CRIME?

Edited by

JOHN E. HODGE, MARY McMURRAN
AND CLIVE R. HOLLIN

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**The Wiley Series
in
Offender Rehabilitation**

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Young Offenders and Alcohol-Related Crime

Mary McMurran and Clive R. Hollin

What Works: Reducing Reoffending
Guidelines from Research and Practice

Edited by James McGuire

Therapeutic Communities for Offenders

Eric Cullen, Lawrence Jones and Roland Woodward

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Series Preface

Twenty years ago it is doubtful that any serious consideration would have been given to publishing a series of books on the topic of offender rehabilitation. While the notion of rehabilitation for offenders was widely accepted 30 years ago, the 1970s saw the collapse of what we might call the treatment ideal. As many other commentators have noted, the turning point can be pinpointed to the publication of an article titled 'What Works—Questions and Answers about Prison Reform', written by Robert Martinson and published in 1974. The essential message taken from this article was that, when it comes to the rehabilitation of offenders, what works is 'nothing works'. It would be stretching the case to say that Martinson single-handedly overturned the rehabilitative philosophy, but his message was obviously welcomed by a receptive audience. As writers such as Don Andrews have suggested, there are many reasons why both the academic community and politicians and policy-makers were more than willing to subscribe to the 'nothing works' philosophy although the evidence suggests that the public at large did not buy completely the need to abandon rehabilitation). Thus the 1970s and 1980s saw a return to hard sentencing, the predominance of punishment, and the handing out of just deserts to those who transgressed the law of the land. Throughout this period of rehabilitative nihilism a small group of academics and practitioners kept faith with the rehabilitative ideal, led perhaps by Paul Gendreau and Robert Ross, and slowly began to look for new ways to argue the case for rehabilitation. The turnabout, when it came, was dramatic. Through the development of a methodology for statistically reviewing large bodies of research, called 'meta-analysis', unequivocal evidence was produced that rehabilitative programmes did work. The view that 'nothing works' is simply wrong: rehabilitation programmes do have a positive effect in reducing recidivism. The effect is not always large, although sometimes it is; nor is it always present, although on average it is. However, it is there and that cannot be ignored. Since 1990, armed

with these findings, there has been a remarkable resurgence of the rehabilitative ideal: practitioners have eagerly attended conferences, seminars, and training courses; researchers are working not to make the case for rehabilitation, but to improve and refine techniques for working with offenders.

While it is critically important to build upon existing knowledge and to evaluate rehabilitative work with offenders, it is equally important that time and space are given to the exploration of new ideas. It would, in our opinion, be most unwise to settle for evermore within an exclusive and restricted style of thinking and a one-track approach to working with offenders. As psychological and criminological theory and research grows, which it continues to do at an exponential rate, so new possibilities arise for the synthesis of different fields of enquiry. Of course, as ideas meld so they give rise to practical advances in the development of new ways of working with offenders.

This book looks at a way of thinking about criminal behaviour as yet hardly explored in the current literature—the application of models of addictive behaviour to the understanding and treatment of criminal behaviour. This approach seeks to make sense of some criminal behaviour, mainly repetitive or serial offending, by drawing on models of addictive behaviour. This line of thought has, arguably, been prompted by the apparent relevance and effective application of addiction treatment approaches to criminal behaviours, for example the use of relapse prevention in the treatment of sex offenders. For interventions to develop rationally, some level of conceptual underpinning is essential. This book is a first step in drawing together theory and practice, addictions and crime.

We think that the contributors to this book have shown considerable insight in developing and applying new ideas. We are grateful to John Hodge for his editorial lead in this particular project; to all the contributors for the excellence of their work; and to our publishers for having the foresight to encourage this particular book in the Series.

Mary McMurrin
Clive Hollin
March 1997

Preface

As all practitioners will know, many offenders present with a range of problems that sit alongside their criminal acts. As well as a focus on offending, practitioners are accustomed to working with mental health problems, family problems, sexual and relationship difficulties, disadvantages in education and employment, and problems with gambling, drug abuse and drinking. When seen in this light, the task facing practitioners who work with offenders is daunting in the extreme. As well as keeping pace with the burgeoning what works developments in offender rehabilitation [see J. McGuire (Ed.), *What Works: Reducing Reoffending*. Wiley, 1995], practitioners need to be aware of effective interventions in all those areas noted above. Similarly, researchers in the field of offender rehabilitation need to keep abreast of advances in these other areas of concern. For practitioner and researcher alike, this can be seen as either an intimidating task or a professional challenge!

Following the above, one of the effects of the demands of working with offenders is that very often practitioners and researchers develop expertise in two areas. For example, practitioners and researchers concerned with sexual offending will not only be aware of issues centrally related to sex offences, but will also be highly knowledgeable about human sexuality generally. It was this need for duality of knowledge that sparked the idea for this book.

Substantial numbers of offenders present with drug and alcohol problems; sometimes these problems are an inherent part of their offending, sometimes not. Nonetheless, we need both to understand the parameters of such problems and to work with them for the benefit of the community generally and the offender specifically. Thus, a previous book in this Series considered the overlap between juvenile offending and drinking [M. McMurren & C. R. Hollin, *Young Offenders and Alcohol-Related Crime: A Practitioner's Guidebook*. Wiley, 1993], while elsewhere the work of one of us has branched into the mainstream of theories of addiction [M. McMurren, *The Psychol-*

ogy of Addiction. Taylor & Francis, 1994]. At some point in this process, the possibilities of a theoretical link between addiction and offending began to emerge from the haze. Some criminal behaviour is highly repetitive, as are addictive behaviours; some criminal behaviour appears to bring about 'internal rewards' for the offenders, as do addictive behaviours; understanding of criminal behaviour often invokes concepts such as motivation and emotion, excitement, control, and reward, as similarly found in the addiction literature. Could there be more than coincidence to this overlap?

In setting out to develop this idea, we contacted several researchers and practitioners and offered them the germ of the concept. Several caught the bug, indeed some were already infected, and they set to work to expound on the theme. Within the broad remit of the text, contributors were given total freedom to speculate as they saw best. Drawing on as many sources as they wished—including previous research, theoretical speculation, their own empirical work, and casework—contributors were at liberty to wander where they felt the ground was fertile. When the chapters appeared, it was evident that three took a primarily theoretical orientation, the remainder leaned towards practice.

The first part of the book contains the three theoretical chapters. The first of these, by Iain Brown, best known from his contribution to research in gambling addiction, presents an overview of current thinking in behavioural addictions. This chapter very clearly sets the agenda for what follows in that it takes current knowledge of addictions and applies this knowledge to offending. Naturally, there are strengths and weaknesses in such an exercise: to consider the possibilities is the challenge. The second chapter, by Derek Roger, considers the issue of emotional control and its development into operational use. It is clear that the concept of emotional control spills into theorising about both addiction and offending. This chapter considers the possibilities and begins to define an empirical approach to taking the next steps in testing the ideas. The third chapter, by John Hodge, offers some theoretical insights into the possibilities when seemingly unconnected strands of the literature—in this case models of addiction and knowledge of post-traumatic stress disorder—are applied to develop our understanding of violent behaviour. One of the tantalising strengths of this particular chapter is to be found in the hypotheses it begins to define for further research to explore.

In the second part of the book the contributors have applied the concept of 'addicted to crime' to a particular type of offence, sketching ideas for both theory and practice.

The offences covered in these chapters are all offences that are typically repetitive in nature. Gail McGregor and Kevin Howells show how an addiction model can be applied to sexual offending; David Gresswell and Clive Hollin do the same for multiple murder. In both chapters the authors show how the concept of addiction can be usefully applied, although clearly the application is not without difficulties and raises many further questions. The offence of car theft is one that greatly troubles contemporary society, but remains much under-researched by psychologists. The two chapters here, one by Rosemary Kilpatrick, the other by Mary McMurren and Jessica Whitman, show how psychological ideas and research, sympathetic to an addictions model, can be applied to car theft. It is commendable that both chapters display theoretical sensitivity alongside practical innovation. Rather like car theft, shoplifting is of much concern without perhaps attracting the degree of attention from psychologists that it merits. The chapter here by James McGuire provides an outstanding example of how psychological ideas and concepts, here from the standpoint of addiction, can be used both to enhance our understanding of this particular criminal behaviour and to develop practice with some shoplifters.

Finally, we hope that this book will be seen as a valuable addition to the Wiley Series in Offender Rehabilitation. Unlike other books in the Series that aim to consolidate current knowledge, this book is primarily and unashamedly speculative in nature. While most books will cover an existing field of knowledge, we believe that there must always be room for speculation. Without surmise, theorising, and hypothesising, we run the grave risk of intellectual stagnation. It is heartening to think that there are publishers who are prepared to give room to conjecture, and that there are academics and practitioners who can offer the level of insight exhibited here. We are grateful to our publisher and contributors alike for their work on this project which, at the very least, has reduced any danger of our own intellectual stagnation.

John Hodge
Mary McMurren
Clive Hollin
March 1997

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Introduction: Current Issues in the Treatment of Addictions and Crime

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What is happening to the construct of addiction? In the recent past, the term 'addict' has been reserved for those who overindulged in certain behaviours, with apparent associated loss of control, and in whom a biological abnormality was suspected. This construct of addiction could most readily be applied to substance use, where craving and loss of control might logically be understood in terms of a substance ingested, inhaled or injected into the body causing changes in cell metabolism or neural activity in the brain, particularly in those with a biological vulnerability to the effects of substances. With the rise of social-psychological models of addiction, however, the emphasis on the biological element has been reduced; that is, whilst a person's biology undoubtedly affects his or her behaviour, cultural,

social and psychological factors have an important role to play. If we accept that addiction is a product of the person–environment interaction, with biology playing only a part, then we may look at addiction as a behaviour explicable in terms of the same psychological principles as other behaviours. This view allows for the inclusion of non-substance-based behaviours as addictions. Gambling and sex have already received attention in the academic literature (Orford, 1985), and more recently the notion of some types of crime as addictions has been proposed (Hodge, 1991). Non-academics have suggested an even wider array of addictions amongst which feature work, exercise, love, and using computers. (See McMurran (1994) for a review of addiction.)

Substance-based addictions have been the subject of a considerable amount of scientific enquiry over the years, and one positive aspect of widening the usage of the term addiction is that we can draw upon developments in the understanding and treatment of substance use to inform thinking and practice relating to non-substance-based addictions. Current issues in the study and treatment of addiction may inform the study and treatment of criminal behaviours, and, indeed, there may also be scope for fruitful exchange in the opposite direction. Furthermore, substance use and crime commonly occur together, in that the same people are heavily involved in both types of behaviour, and explanation of this phenomenon might help in the prevention and treatment of a variety of problem behaviours.

COMMON ANTECEDENTS

Criminal behaviour and substance use share many common antecedents along their developmental pathways (see review by McMurran, 1996). These include hyperactivity in childhood (Klenteberg et al., 1993), poor family management practices and low family bonding (Hawkins et al., 1992), conduct problems in childhood (Maughan, 1993; Wilens & Biederman, 1993), low commitment to school (LeBlanc, 1994), and association with delinquent peers (Elliott et al., 1985). Indeed, problem behaviours frequently appear in a cluster in adolescents, these behaviours including both delinquency and substance use (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). The person–environment interactions that lead to the development of these problem behaviours suggest that the difficult child may elicit poor family management practices by parents or carers, with the child consequently developing conduct problems. This disadvantages the child in the school setting in that he or (less commonly) she becomes unpopular with peers and

teachers, fails to attend to lessons, does not achieve academic success, and eventually avoids the unpleasant experience by truanting. Truancy presents the opportunity for association with like-minded peers who as a group engage in a range of antisocial activities. As time passes, the individual's *curriculum vitae* progressively precludes acceptance by conventional society and a criminal lifestyle becomes entrenched. Beliefs and attitudes simultaneously take shape in ways that justify or rationalise behaviour (Walters, 1995).

These observations bear many implications for the prevention of both delinquency and substance use through interventions such as family support, family management training, preschool enrichment programmes, and classroom management strategies (Farrington, 1994). One may also conclude that crime and substance use, for some people at least, serve similar functions. This may provide a rationale for interventions aimed at reducing individuals' involvement in both substance use and crime, including help with emotion control, interpersonal skills, and problem solving. Once an antisocial lifestyle has developed, then efforts may be needed to alter this. Walters (1994) suggests that the entire lifestyle should be addressed, with interventions encompassing relationships, leisure activities, education, and work.

PERSISTENCE AND ESCALATION

Most people grow out of both crime and problematic substance use in early adulthood, yet some persist and escalate. There appears to be a core group which displays a continuity of antisocial behaviour throughout life, and, interestingly, heavy drinking at age 18 years predicts the continuity of crime into adulthood (Farrington & Hawkins, 1991; Loeber, 1990). Persistence of crime, particularly violent crime, is associated with high levels of psychopathy (Hare, 1996), and psychopathy is also associated with alcohol and drug problems in offenders (Smith & Newman, 1990). Treatment programmes for these people may need to address substance use and crime separately, yet perhaps there are common underlying features that need to be addressed to change both types of behaviour. Serin and Kuriychuk (1994) suggest the need to address impulsivity, thinking styles, and hostile attributions.

There is scope for investigating new pathways to violence and addiction. Solursh (1989) noted that some American veterans returning from Vietnam showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. They also showed an increased likelihood of becoming involved in both violent crime and substance abuse, even though they had not engaged in these behaviours before their war experiences.