



Nevada Department of Health & Human Services

Division of Child and Family Services

Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation

The resource center has been named the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation (NCJJI).

The Principles of Risk, Need & Responsivity

Researchers established a foundation for effective intervention that reduces reoffending: the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principles. In essence, RNR focuses on tailoring the intensity, program type, and strategies to each youth to achieve the best outcomes, a core component for the successful implementation of evidence-based practices and programs. Taking a one-size-fits-all approach by referring all youth to the same programs may reduce or even negate program effectiveness. Alternatively, considering a youth's risk level, criminogenic needs, and characteristics when matching youth to interventions increases the likelihood of reducing a youth's future criminal behavior and reduces inefficient use of limited resources.

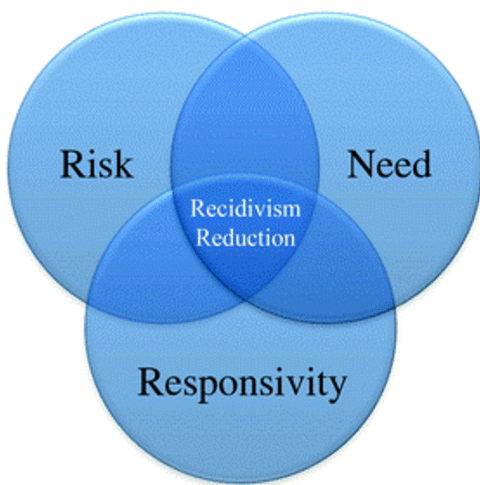


Image from Taxman, Pattavina, Byrne, and Durso's "The Empirical Basis for the RNR Model with an Updated RNR Conceptual Framework" chapter in *Simulation Strategies to Reduce Recidivism* (2013)

The **Risk** principle refers to aligning the intensity or type of intervention with a youth's likelihood to reoffend (i.e., criminogenic risk level). Practitioners often determine risk level from a youth's prior juvenile justice history and the seriousness of the present crime. These risk factors are unchanging, or static. Research has shown that only a small percentage of low risk youth reoffend when they receive no treatment and overserving these youth may actually increase their likelihood to reoffend. Therefore, the most intense interventions should be reserved for moderate and high risk youth to maximize reduction in recidivism and efficient use of resources.

The **Need** principle states that interventions should address a youth's presenting issues associated with offending that are changeable, or dynamic (i.e., criminogenic needs). While youth may have many needs, targeting those that contribute to the delinquent behavior will have the greatest impact in reducing reoffending. Practitioners often determine criminogenic needs through a validated risk and need assessment tool, such as the Youth Level of Service (YLS)/Case Management Inventory (CMI).

The **Responsivity** principle asserts that for youth to be receptive to treatment, service delivery should account for their unique characteristics in addition to risk level and needs. For example, youth without strong reading comprehension skills should not receive reading intensive interventions. Many characteristics influence responsivity such as demographics, learning styles, cognitive functioning, motivation, and mental health. External factors, such as unmet basic needs and lack of transportation, also impact responsivity. Practitioners should identify these potential barriers, leverage strengths, and modify treatment plans to maximize treatment effectiveness.

Here is an easy way to remember the three principles:

The **Risk** principle tells you **Who** to target.

The **Need** principle tells you **What** to target.

The **Responsivity** principle tells you **How** to target.

For more information, watch Dr. Latessa's presentation [Risk, Needs and Responsivity – Foundational Principles in Juvenile Justice](#).

Creation of the Resource Center

Evidence-based practice is at the heart of Nevada's juvenile justice reforms under [AB 472](#) which establishes policies for reducing recidivism rates and improving other outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system. Juvenile court-involved youth, their families, and their communities have a right to know that court-imposed programs and interventions are effective. AB 472 established an evidence-based program resource center, later named the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation, to support the implementation of evidence-based programs and practices. The resource center contract was awarded to the [National Center for Juvenile Justice](#), the research division of the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#).

News

May: The Juvenile Justice Oversight Commission voted and approved a definition of evidence-based practices for Nevada. Look for more information and training on the definition coming soon.

Forthcoming: The NCJJI website is under development. It will house information and trainings on evidence-based programs and practices. We will announce its debut in a future newsletter.

Additional Resources

The Crime and Justice Institute describes the RNR principles in their [presentation](#) on Principles of Effective Intervention in Juvenile Justice.

Bonta and Andrews explain the application of RNR in their [article](#) regarding offender assessment and rehabilitation.

Coming Up Next

The next newsletter will focus on effective program components.

We are eager to hear from you!

Contact us to learn more about how the Nevada Center for Juvenile Justice Innovation (NCJJI) can help you. Feel free to share this email with your colleagues and other juvenile justice stakeholders in Nevada. If you would like to add your email to our distribution list, contact Andrew below.



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