

# **Helping Women Recover/Beyond Trauma:**

Program effects on offender criminal thinking, psychological adjustment, and social functioning

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## **Introduction**

The current report evaluates the effectiveness of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Helping Women Recover/Beyond Trauma program, a female-specific treatment program that addresses substance abuse and trauma. Though the effectiveness of a treatment program can be defined and measured by various terms and variables, the current report focuses on changes in criminal thinking, as well as psychological adjustment and social functioning, as measures of program success. Texas Christian University (TCU) Criminal Thinking scales measured changes in levels of offender justification, personal irresponsibility, power orientation, and criminal rationalization. The TCU Psychological Adjustment and Social Functioning scales measured changes in levels of depression, anxiety, and risk-taking, among other domains.

## **Methods**

### *Sample*

Offenders in the analysis are Oklahoma Department of Corrections female incarcerates who completed Helping Women Recover/Beyond at Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (EWCC) and who also completed pre and post-program testing from October, 2011 through November, 2012. Offender-level data submitted by program personnel yielded a total sample of 115 offenders.

### *Data Source*

Data come from offender responses on the Texas Christian University Correctional Residential Self-Rating Form prior to Intake, administered before the beginning of the program and again at program completion. Several forms are included in this assessment tool. However, analyses for this report focused on data from the Criminal Thinking (i.e., justification, personal irresponsibility, criminal rationalization, and power orientation), Psychological Adjustment (i.e., depression and anxiety) and Social Functioning (i.e., risk-taking) scales. Each domain is discussed separately. Test scores for each measure are on a scale of 10 to 50; higher scores indicate greater levels of criminal thinking, psychological maladjustment, or poor social functioning.

### *Analysis*

Data were first analyzed using descriptive statistics. Next, Paired Samples T-Tests evaluated changes in pre and post-test scores. The researcher chose to analyze the data using this method due to receiving total raw scores for each test component.

## Results

Descriptive statistics indicate that participants at EWCC were primarily female Caucasians aged 31 to 35 years. Most were first-time incarcerates received into prison on a controlling drug offense. The majority of participants were assessed with a case plan need for substance abuse treatment using the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R). There was a higher distribution of high-risk offenders as assessed by the LSI-R at prison admission, with no low-risk offenders in the group. Additionally, many participants had a history of a mental health level B assessment. Please see the Appendix for further statistical information on each demographic variable discussed.

The minimum and maximum scores and ranges for the Criminal Thinking, Psychological Adjustment and Social Functioning domains are:

Justification pre-program were 10.00 and 45.00, respectively, for a range of 35.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 27.00, respectively, for a range of 17.00.

Personal Irresponsibility minimum and maximum scores were 10.00 and 43.00, respectively, for a range of 33.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 25.00, respectively, for a range of 15.00.

Power Orientation minimum and maximum scores were 10.00 and 50.00, respectively, for a range of 40.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 45.00, respectively, for a range of 35.00.

Criminal Rationalization minimum and maximum scores were 13.00 and 48.00, respectively, for a range of 35.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 38.00, respectively, for a range of 28.00.

Depression minimum and maximum scores were 15.00 and 48.00, respectively, for a range of 33.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 40.00, respectively, for a range of 30.00.

Anxiety minimum and maximum scores were 14.00 and 50.00, respectively, for a range of 36.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 50.00, respectively, for a range of 40.00.

Risk Taking minimum and maximum scores were 13.00 and 50.00, respectively, for a range of 37.00; post-test minimum and maximum scores were and 10.00 and 50.00, respectively, for a range of 40.00.

A Paired Samples T-test revealed the difference in mean scores on pre and post measures of all domains listed above. The results are as follows:

### *Criminal Thinking*

Justification: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of justification assessed after the program ( $M = 14.78$ ,  $SD = 4.53$ ) compared to pre-program justification scores ( $M = 23.76$ ,  $SD = 8.59$ ),  $t(114) = 10.66$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.31$ .

Personal Irresponsibility: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of personal irresponsibility after the program ( $M = 15.48$ ,  $SD = 3.92$ ) compared to pre-program personal irresponsibility scores ( $M = 21.40$ ,  $SD = 7.47$ ),  $t(114) = 8.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.99$ .

Power Orientation: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of power orientation that were assessed post-program ( $M = 19.10$ ,  $SD = 6.22$ ) compared to pre-program results ( $M = 27.48$ ,  $SD = 9.66$ ),  $t(114) = 10.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.03$ .

Criminal Rationalization: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of criminal rationalization after the program ( $M = 22.53$ ,  $SD = 6.16$ ) compared to pre-program criminal rationalization scores ( $M = 29.12$ ,  $SD = 7.65$ ),  $t(114) = 8.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.95$ .

### *Psychological Adjustment*

Depression: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of depression assessed after the program ( $M = 19.34$ ,  $SD = 6.46$ ) compared to pre-program depression scores ( $M = 33.54$ ,  $SD = 8.06$ ),  $t(114) = 16.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.94$ .

Anxiety: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of anxiety after the program ( $M = 23.90$ ,  $SD = 7.93$ ) compared to pre-program anxiety scores ( $M = 35.45$ ,  $SD = 8.44$ ),  $t(114) = 14.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.41$ .

### *Social Functioning*

Risk Taking: Program completers scored significantly lower on measures of risk taking that were assessed post-program ( $M = 25.34$ ,  $SD = 7.39$ ) compared to pre-program results ( $M = 34.92$ ,  $SD = 7.38$ ),  $t(114) = 11.43$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 1.30$ .

## **Conclusion**

The analyses suggest that there are positive changes in specific domains of the TCU Criminal Thinking, Psychological Adjustment, and Social Functioning scales for women who have completed Helping Women Recover/Beyond Trauma at Eddie Warrior Correctional Center. Specifically, the results indicate statistically and substantively significant differences for Justification, Personal Irresponsibility, Power Orientation, Criminal Rationalization, Depression, Anxiety, and Risk Taking. Effect sizes were large for all domains included in the analysis.

As indicated in previous reports, future studies could benefit from comparison analyses, which would better evaluate if the positive changes in specific measures of criminal thinking, psychological adjustment, and social functioning are a product of program completion or if the changes are attributed to some other incarceration experience. Though pre and post-tests of these areas are not collected by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections on the general incarcerated population, analyses could compare the results to means of comparable samples.

## **Limitations**

Results from this analysis should be interpreted with caution due to the scaling system used in the TCU Criminal Thinking Scales. Participants were able to choose how much they agreed or disagreed with a statement by selecting one of the following choices: "Disagree Strongly," "Disagree," "Uncertain," "Agree," or "Agree Strongly". Each is assigned a value of 1-5, respectively. Those selecting "Uncertain" receive a value of 3 and are essentially considered to be a middle-of-the-road responder. However, it is not known how the participant interprets the selection "Uncertain," meaning that the participant could be uncertain about how she feels about the question or possibly uncertain about the meaning of a question. Scoring an "Uncertain" response with a value of 3 may skew the results as this impacts the total raw score. An individual who previously answered that she agreed strongly with thoughts consistent with irresponsibility, a value of 5, and now is "Uncertain," a value of 3, will lower her total raw score. If analyzing changes in scores, then a reduction from 5 to 3 would appear to be an improvement; however, it could be inaccurate to suggest that this offender improved when, in actuality, she became uncertain.

## Appendix

### Descriptive Statistics – EWCC Program Participants (N=115)

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<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coding</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Race</b>	African American	14	12.2%
	Caucasian	74	64.3%
	Hispanic	5	4.3%
	Native American	22	19.1%
<b>Age Category</b>	<=20	0	0.0%
	21 to 25	12	10.4%
	26 to 30	18	15.7%
	31 to 35	34	29.6%
	36 to 40	19	16.5%
	41 to 45	14	12.2%
	46 to 50	15	13.0%
	>= 51	3	2.6%
<b>Prior Incarceration</b>	No	66	57.4%
	Yes	49	42.6%
<b>UCR Offense</b>	Drug Offense	65	56.5%
	Other Offense	1	0.9%
	Other Public Order Offense	4	3.5%
	Other Violent Crime	9	7.8%
	Part 1 Violent Crime	13	11.3%
	Property	23	20.0%
<b>Need Sub. Abuse Tx</b>	No	19	16.5%
	Yes	96	83.5%
<b>LSI-R Risk Score</b>	High	69	60.0%
	Moderate	46	40.0%
	Low	0	0.0%
	Not Assessed	0	0.0%
<b>Mental Health Level</b>	A	19	16.5%
	B	66	57.4%
	C1	14	12.2%
	C2	0	0.0%
	D	0	0.0%
	None identified	15	13.0%
Unknown	1	0.9%	

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