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Criminal and Addictive Thinking

A cognitive-behavioral therapy approach
Presenter: Phillip Barbour



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Goals of Criminal Thinking Therapy

- To describe and provide examples of common criminal thinking errors in the offender population.
- To help mental health and corrections practitioners and offenders become more aware of thinking errors and thinking distortions.
- To assist change agents in facilitating the criminal thinking change process.



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The Criminal Thinking scope is wide

- The module was created with community based programming in mind.
- Individual study or open-ended groups
- A group size of 8 to 12 participants is suggested, but larger groups are effective too
- The module is designed to be used in collaboration with the Criminal Thinking Errors Worksheets

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Criminal Thinking works in other programs

- Corrective Thinking, Domestic Violence, AODA and/or Cognitive-Behavioral focus
- Adult male or female offenders
- Batterers and/or drug abusers
- 7th grade reading level is the intended target audience

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The History

- Utilizes the theory and principles developed by Stanton Samenow and Yochelson
- Investigation of Criminal Behavior at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C.
- The longest clinical research of offenders in North America
- Three volume publication [The Criminal Personality](#) (Lanham, Md.: Roman and Littlefield) that he co-authored with Dr. Yochelson.

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Question: What is Criminal Thinking?

A simple question



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“thinking that says that its alright to violate others or the property of others”

Samuel Yochelson and Stanton Samenow



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Why talk about Criminal Thinking?

- Broaden the scope of intervention
- Provide information to help your clients
- To help identify persons where this may be an issue.
- To aid the criminal thinker in developing, expanding and sustaining a moral conscious.



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The List: Errors in Thinking

1. Closed Channel Thinking	6. Lack Of Interest In Responsible Performance
2. Victim Stance	7. Lack Of Time Perspective
3. Views Self As A Good Person	8. Power Thrust
4. Lack Of Effort	9. Uniqueness
5. Fear Of Fear	10. Ownership Attitude

Citation: www.criminalthinking.net

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1. Closed Channel Thinking

- Not Receptive
- Not Self Critical
- No Disclosure
- Good at pointing out, giving feedback on faults of others
- Lies by omission

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2. Victim Stance

- Views self as victim (the criminal will even blame social conditions "I live in the ghetto, what do you expect")
- Blames others ("the cops just keep messing with me")

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3. Views Self As A Good Person

- Focuses only on his/her positive attributes
- Fails to acknowledge his/her destructive behavior
- Builds self up at others expense

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4. Lack Of Effort / Selective Effort

- Unwilling to do anything he/she finds boring or disagreeable
- "I can't" meaning "I won't"
- Doing only the minimum to get by

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5. Lack Of Interest In Responsible Performance

- Responsible living viewed as unexciting and unsatisfying
- No sense of obligation
- Will respond only if he/she nets an immediate payoff

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6. Lack Of Time Perspective

- Does not use past as a learning tool
- Expects others to act immediately on his/her/demands
- Decisions on assumptions, not facts

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7. Fear Of Fear

- Irrational fears (many) but refuses to admit them
- Fundamental fear of injury or death
- Profound fear of put down
- When held accountable experiences "zero state" feels worthless

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8. Power Thrust

- Compelling need to be in control of every situation
- Uses manipulation and deceit
- Refuses to be dependant unless he/she can take advantage of the situation

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9. Uniqueness

- Different and better than others
- Expects of others that which he/she fails to meet
- Super-Optimism - cuts fear of failure
- Quits at the first sign of failure

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10. Ownership Attitude

- Perceives all things, people, objects to possess
- No concept of ownership, rights of others
- Sex for power and control - not intimacy
- Use drugs/money as a means of controlling people

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How do you know?

What are some tactics used by the criminal thinker?

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Criminal Thinking Tactics

1. Continuously point out staff inadequacies
2. Building self up by putting others down
3. Telling others what they want to hear
4. Lying, distorting the truth
5. Vagueness
6. Diverts attention
7. Putting others on the defensive
8. Total inattention
9. Accusing others of misunderstanding

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Criminal Thinking Tactics continued

- 10. Attempting to confuse others
- 11. Minimizes the situation
- 12. Agrees without meaning it
- 13. Silence
- 14. Selective attention
- 15. Make a big scene about minor issues
- 16. Putting off doing something by saying I forgot
- 17. Claiming that they have changed because they did something right, once!

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Factor's of people's past that contribute to criminal conduct

- A history of early involvement in deviant or antisocial and criminal conduct;
- Having grown up in a disruptive, abusive and neglectful family where there was lack of parental attention and supervision;
- Failure in school, work and leisure time;
- AOD disorders at an early age

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Risk factors contributing to criminal conduct

- Criminogenic need: Dynamic risk factors or attributes of offenders that, when changed, influence the probability of recidivism

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Do criminals think differently than normal people?

- Researchers believe thought patterns are more important than biology or environment in determining who becomes a criminal. Some major characteristics include:
 - master manipulators
 - compulsive liars
 - people not in control of their own behavior.

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Thinking errors or thinking distortions

- A cognitive distortion is a way of thinking that is automatic to the point that we continue to engage in the errors of thinking even though our experiences and the facts do not support the thinking errors.
- The mental process required by the criminal to live his/her kind of life.

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The Criminogenic Need Principle

Most offenders have many needs. However, certain needs are directly linked to crime. Criminogenic needs constitute dynamic risk factors or attributes of offenders that, when changed, influence the probability of recidivism.

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Criminogenic Needs:

- Self-oriented communication patterns
- Need for family closeness and communication
- Need for primary social unit structures such as family
- Involvement in antisocial and deviant behaviors
- Need to manipulate and to control others
- Receive rewards through criminal conduct
- Participate in environments of high-risk for criminal conduct

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Criminogenic Needs: continued

- Blame others for own action and behaviors
- Impaired moral reasoning; hold self-serving/antisocial moral codes
- Overall impaired social and interpersonal skills
- Overt acting out of feelings of anger and resentment
- Thinking in a “black and white” concrete manner
- Need to use substances to support criminal and antisocial conduct

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Question: Who are they really hurting?

Injuries Unseen

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Injury worksheet
 Self & Victim
 Families
 Neighbors
 Community
 Quality of Life
"Ripple Effect"

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How do you fix this?
 Related Self-corrections

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Criminal Thinking Scales

- Entitlement
- Justification
- Personal Irresponsibility
- Power Orientation
- Cold Heartedness
- Criminal Rationalization

Knight, K., Simpson, D. D., Garner, B. R., Flynn, P. M., & Morey, J. T. (in press).
 The TCU Criminal Thinking Scales

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Steps to undoing Criminal Thinking

- Learning other-directed communication patterns
- Develop ties with family or family-like relationships
- Develop positive social unit and family structures
- Replace antisocial with pro-social behaviors
- Develop self-control and self-confidence
- Shift reward potential to non-criminal conduct
- Develop skills to avoid or cope with high-risk settings

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Steps to undoing Criminal Thinking

- Develop responsibility for own behavior and actions
- Develop pro-social and more other-reflective moral codes
- Develop social and coping skills through social skills training
- Learn self-regulation of angry feelings and other emotions
- Develop skills to increase abstract reasoning and thinking
- Develop recreational, vocational, and interpersonal alternatives to AOD use and criminal conduct

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Resources

- Texas Christian University (TCU)
 - <http://www.ibr.tcu.edu>
 - Criminal Thinking Scales
 - Testing Forms
- Criminal Thinking Therapy
 - <http://www.criminalthinking.net>
 - Workbooks
 - Entire curriculum
