

Identifying and measuring key intermediate outcomes

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Mark Liddle, Managing Director, ARCS LTD



The Intermediate Outcomes Measurement Instrument (IOMI) – purpose and development

- *Developed by a research partnership – involving RAND (Europe), ARCS (UK), and the University of South Wales;*
- *Commissioned by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to deliver research focusing on ways of measuring the impact of programmes that work with offenders. The research initially aimed to develop a framework for outcome measurement which could be adopted by organisations delivering mentoring and arts interventions to adult offenders. The focus was on the development and testing of robustly-designed but user-friendly ‘toolkits’ for the measurement of ‘intermediate’ outcomes – these are outcomes that are directly or indirectly associated with reductions in reoffending over the longer term, but that in the shorter term indicate positive changes along an offender’s pathway towards an offence-free future.*
- *(A similar project was delivered by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) in partnership with the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), focusing on interventions to address family and peer relationships.)*

Our project – key strands

- *systematic Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) of empirical research to identify evidence to guide the construction of valid intermediate outcome measures in the areas of mentoring, and the use of arts in offender programmes;*
- *a mapping exercise to identify, and assess the robustness of, existing measures of intermediate outcomes; this included exploration of providers' views, and culminated in selection of the most promising instruments for further development and testing (or for the design of entirely new instruments which would fill an identified gap in the field);*
- *design of draft instruments to measure intermediate outcomes (emerging from the above process), and further consultation with providers about these drafts;*
- *refinement and testing of draft toolkits in the field, working directly with a sample of providers;*
- *finalisation of a toolkit for measurement of these key intermediate outcomes by VCS organisations and other providers, which is:*
 - *user-friendly and accessible,*
 - *appropriately anchored in the available research evidence,*
 - *defensible in terms of current theory (e.g. desistance theory), and*
 - *defensible in terms of practice in the field.*

Designing questionnaire items

Identified possible outcome dimensions from REA and interviews



Conducted search of available psychometric and other instruments



Two psychologists on the team drew up long-list of possible questions from diverse range of instruments



Held all-team workshops to review questions in long-list: criteria against which questions were judged, fidelity to concepts of interest, clarity of wording, simplicity, applicability to offender/ prison and community context



Team consulted more widely with external experts, and drafted new questions to fill gaps

Main tool

Final version was reduced in length to 21 items, across 7 different dimensions:

- **resilience** (2 items)
- **wellbeing** (3 items)
- **agency / self-efficacy** (3 items)
- **impulsivity / problem-solving** (3 items)
- **motivation to change** (3 items)
- **hope** (3 items)
- **interpersonal trust** (4 items)

Additional section on “practical problems” (8 items)

A “post only” section, focusing on client/worker relationships

Testing work conducted

- Prison pilot (HMYOI Portland, n=264);
- Community-based testing (T1 n=107, completed pairs n=63);
- Test-retest exercise (HMP Moorland; T1 n=334, completed pairs with no missing data, n=217)
- analysis of all pilot testing data suggested that the questionnaire is robust in terms of internal consistency/reliability (alpha scores are positive for all dimensions across all tests, with the exception of “resilience”, which is somewhat weaker; test retest scores are also strong);
- the more qualitative data that we gathered from respondents and various provider/prison staff was quite positive (in terms of the accessibility/user-friendliness of the tool, ease of administration, clarity of questions, etc.)

Current use, future testing

- now being used by a wide range of different projects/programmes (team receives regular expressions of interest in the tool);
- the key “dimensions” are very well anchored in terms of existing theory, available research evidence, and the “coal-face nous” of providers;
- the final tool is designed to be more widely applicable than just to arts and mentoring interventions, and to interventions with offenders specifically – should be useable with a wide range of other groups;
- BUT, although the current tool has strong internal consistency, a much larger data-set will be required before we can fully test applicability to a range of sub-groups, and before the full range of reliability and validity tests can be applied (e.g. wider range of test-retest periods, to assess sensitivity to change over time, by dimension; test of dimension and wider “personal development” scores against other data-sets and measures)