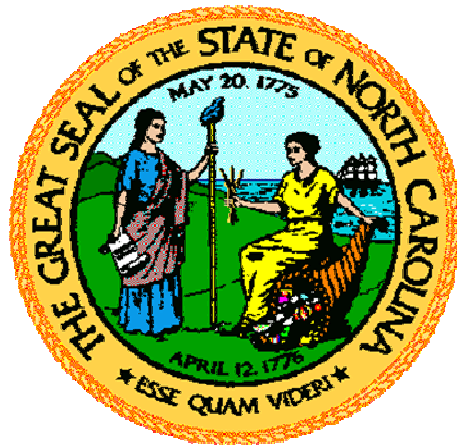


# **North Carolina Department of Correction Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Case Study**



**Prepared by:**  
**Michelle Beck-Warden, Office of Research and Planning**  
**Charlotte A. Price, DOP Administrative Services**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1998, the North Carolina Department of Correction adopted the cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) approach as the cornerstone of its rehabilitative programs and services. During 2003-2004, the department conducted a process evaluation of the department's Cognitive Behavioral Intervention program. The evaluation process examined North Carolina Department of Correction's CBI program in terms of its effectiveness at reaching the appropriate target population, its consistency with program design, resources expended for the program's operation, and areas for program improvement. As a result of this process evaluation, the department has conducted case studies of two Division of Prisons (DOP) facilities and four community corrections settings, in order to identify successful models for implementation of CBI in other prisons and community settings.

A case study is a research technique used to examine programs in depth that have a unique characteristic of interest. In this case, the characteristic of interest is offender participation in the *Thinking for a Change (TFAC)* cognitive behavior intervention (CBI) program. *TFAC* is a 22-lesson standardized curriculum from the National Institute of Corrections designed to teach offenders to change their behavior that includes cognitive restructuring, social skills development, and development of problem solving skills. Case studies are the preferred research strategy if one wants to learn the details about how something happened and why it may have happened. A case study requires direct contact with those administering the program and delivering the service. A case study involves obtaining information through document review, interviews, and direct observation.

Locations for the case study were selected based on length of time involved in the CBI program, experience of CBI facilitators, quality of CBI program, and availability of data. The selected locations included: Hyde Correctional Institution, Southern Correctional Institution, Cumberland Day Reporting Center, Durham Criminal Justice Resource Center, Iredell County Day Reporting Center, and Onslow County Day Reporting Center.

The researchers made site visits to each of the above mentioned facilities/settings and included interviews with staff involved in the CBI program. All of the programs involved in this case study use the *TFAC* curriculum.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

**Hyde Correctional Institute**, a medium custody male facility with a 600-bed standard operating capacity in Swan Quarter, NC, began CBI groups in 2001. There are four trained facilitators on staff who rotate facilitation of the CBI groups. Three of the facilitators are program staff, while one is a Correctional Officer. Normally, groups at Hyde CI are conducted twice per year and meet two times per week. Inmates are recommended for the group by case managers and then screened by the facilitators. Inmate participation in the CBI program is voluntary.

**Southern Correctional Institute**, at the time of the study, was a medium custody male facility with a 640-bed standard operating capacity located in Troy, NC. Its CBI program has been in operation since 1999. The Divisions of Prisons contracts with non-DOC Master Trainers to provide the *Thinking for a Change* curriculum. Program staff at Southern CI handles the administration process of scheduling CBI classes and monitoring and documenting inmate participation. The master trainers screen participants and facilitate the groups.

**Cumberland Day Reporting Center (DRC)** a Criminal Justice Partnership Program in Fayetteville, NC, has been offering *Thinking for a Change* to offenders since 2000, when two probation officers completed facilitator training. There was a break in program delivery due to staff changes, and then groups restarted using a probation officer and a staff person as facilitators. Currently, a non-DOC Master Trainer is on contract with the DRC to co-facilitate groups with a probation officer.

**Durham Criminal Justice Resource Center** is a Criminal Justice Partnership Program that has been conducting *Thinking for a Change* groups since 1999. Multiple groups are offered to offenders with a staff person co-facilitating with a probation officer so that both day and evening participants can enroll in the program. There are five staff and approximately eight probation officers that have completed the facilitator training so that they can rotate the facilitation responsibilities.

**Iredell Day Reporting Center**, a Criminal Justice Partnership Program in Statesville, NC, has utilized probation officers as the primary facilitators of *Thinking for a Change* groups since 2000, with some co-facilitation by DRC staff. One of the probation officers that facilitates and coordinates the scheduling of groups is a CBI Master Trainer. Participation in a TFAC group is a requirement of the DRC, but other probationers are referred for the group.

The **Onslow Day Reporting Center**, a Criminal Justice Partnership Program located in Jacksonville, NC, held its first CBI group in 2000. They usually offer two CBI groups each year. In all, there are five trained CBI facilitators in Onslow County. There is one DRC staff member and a probation officer that facilitate on a regular basis and other serve as back-ups if needed. All of the probationers involved in the DRC program are expected to attend CBI as part of their case plan.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF *THINKING FOR A CHANGE* PARTICIPANTS IN PRISON SETTINGS**

Statewide, there were 5,248 inmate assignments to *Thinking for a Change* between April 3, 1999 and July 9, 2004. As of July 9, 2004, 2,830 (54%) had completed the program. There were 257 (5%) currently assigned to the program and 2,161 (41%) who had been terminated from the program prior to completion for various reasons including disciplinary actions, withdrawals, removals, and transfers, etc.

The average length of time an inmate was assigned to the *Thinking for a Change* program was 65 days for both groups. The inmates who completed the CBI program averaged 81 days in the program while those terminated prior to completion averaged 43 days in the program.

### Participant Demographics for the 5,248 Prison Inmates Assigned to TFAC

<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	5,162 (98%)
Female	86 (2%)
<b>Race:</b>	
Black	3,455 (65.8%)
White	1,640 (31.3%)
American Indian	79 (1.5%)
Other	57 (1.1%)
Asian/Oriental	13 (0.2%)
Unknown	4 (0.1%)
<b>Age</b>	
21 and under	58 (1%)
22-29	1,592 (30%)
30-39	2,015 (38%)
40-49	1,241 (24%)
50 and over	342 (7%)
<b>Average Reading Grade Level Score (WRAT)</b>	8.9
<b>Average IQ</b>	94.5
<b>Average Sentence Length</b>	9.9 yrs.
<b>Average Reported Highest Grade Completed</b>	11.1
<b>Most Frequent Crimes (top 10):</b>	
Habitual Felon	795 (15.1%)
Robbery with Dangerous Weapon	668 (12.7%)
Murder Second Degree	582 (11.1%)
Rape Second Degree	199 (3.8%)
Trafficking Schedule II	188 (3.6%)
AWDWISI	178 (3.4%)
Breaking & Entering (Fel/Misd)	168 (3.2%)
Indecent Liberty with a Child	165 (3.1%)
Murder First Degree	146 (2.8%)
Selling Schedule II	138 (2.6%)

The demographic profile of those participating in CBI programs differs from that of the general inmate population, which is partly a function of the facilities that offer CBI. As of June 30, 2004, the inmate population of 35,205 was 93% male and 60% black, 34% white, 2% American Indian, 0.3% Asian/Oriental (the remainder other or unknown). A larger percentage of inmates in the total prison population were younger than the inmates who participated in CBI; 8% were age 21 or under compared to 1% in the CBI group.

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL PARTICIPANTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

From April 1, 1999 through July 1, 2004, there were 2,696 probationers in Criminal Justice Partnership Programs (CJPP) enrolled in cognitive behavioral programs. Of these, 51% successfully completed the class. In addition, 77% of offenders that completed CBI also completed their assignment to the CJPP, compared to only 10% that were not successful in the CBI group.

There were probationers assigned to CBI programs in all three of the different types of CJP programs across the state. Day Reporting Centers contained the largest percentage (72%) of the CBI assignments, followed by Resource Centers (18%) and Satellite Substance Abuse Centers (10%). The table below describes the demographics of probationers participating in CBI in CJP programs, which are very similar to the overall population of offenders assigned to CJPP.

**Participant Demographics for the 2,696 CJPP Offenders Assigned to TFAC**

<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	2,125 (79%)
Female	571 (21%)
<b>Race:</b>	
Black	1,546 (57.3%)
White	1,113 (41.3%)
Other	37 (1.4%)
<b>Age</b>	
21 and under	882 (33%)
22-29	898 (33%)
30-39	597 (22%)
40-49	262 (10%)
50 and over	57 (2%)

**CHANGES IN PARTICIPANTS OF CBI PROGRAMS**

The *Thinking for a Change* curriculum includes a self-evaluation tool for offenders to rate themselves on fifty skills. This test was administered before delivery of the program materials and on the last class in groups facilitated by Master Trainers. These pre and posttests were analyzed for a total of 543 offenders in both Division of Prison and Division of Community Corrections settings.

Each item on the test asks the participant to rate themselves for a skill whether they “never use the skill” (1) to “always use the skill” (5). To look for a change from before completing the program to after, the differences in the scores were determined by subtracting the pretest from the posttest score and paired t-tests were preformed. Of the 50 items, there was statistically significant (at  $p>.05$ ) change in 46 questions posttest when compared to the pretest. The combined difference in score prior to *Thinking for a Change* and after is an average of 10 points higher, which shows a statistically significant change at the highest level of significance ( $p>.0001$ ). This analysis demonstrates a positive change in the offender’s report of abilities using skills taught in the program.

Infraction rates were investigated as a possible intermediate outcome to measure changes in behavior of inmates that complete CBI programs. Several methodologies were used to compare the rates of infractions for inmates that completed the program and those that did not. The analyses showed no substantial differences between infraction rates prior to and after participation in the program. However, the infraction rate for inmates completing CBI programs was lower than the overall rate of the inmate population prior to enrollment in CBI and after completion of the program.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL PROGRAMS**

The following characteristics and best practices of successful CBI programs in prison and community corrections settings were evident from the case study review. During site visits and interviews, staff and facilitators identified the essential components of CBI programs. These components are important for successfully implementing and sustaining a CBI program, regardless of the setting. These components are outlined in the following section of this report. The following two sections identify best practices with examples of program delivery specific to prison and community settings. Many of the themes are very similar, since the same issues arise in both settings.

### **Essential Components of CBI Programs in Any Setting**

- Two trained facilitators are needed to deliver the curriculum for each group meeting. It is preferred that the same two facilitators work with the group for all 22-lessons, with substitutions as needed to assure continuity of the group process. Also, it is important to have compatible co-facilitators who work well together as a team to model the CBI program elements for offenders.
- Provide appropriate, comfortable, quiet space for group. A large part of the group involves active participation and offenders should feel comfortable to do so. The space may also be provided with visual reinforcements or encouragements of the CBI concepts. An example of this is the “Wall of Emotions” in the Onslow county CJPP program. Offenders assisted the staff in created 8x10 pictures of the emotions from the “How Am I Feeling” handout and these are on the wall in the classroom and serve as an excellent reminder for offenders.
- Make CBI part of job duties, not additional work for staff. This may require reducing other workload requirements to compensate for time spent on CBI. Provide compensatory time or flexible schedules if workload cannot be reduced to compensate for CBI time.
- Make it one person’s duty to update information into the system weekly. Attendance should be entered by that staff person within a couple of days of the session (into OPUS for prison programs and CJPP IMS for community groups). Also, certificates have to be entered into system at completion. In order to complete any future analysis of CBI data, it is imperative that all completions are entered.
- Give facilitators time to prepare for class (one hour per class). It is imperative for facilitators to be prepared to work with the group. This should also include time with the co-facilitator to work out the division of lesson activities and practice facilitator role plays.
- Each group should adopt a set of group rules that everyone agrees upon. Start with the group rules in the curriculum, get group input for any additions and make sure everyone follows the rules. As part of this, limit absences and make participants aware of expectations. There are guidelines in the CBI Standard Operating Procedures for absences.
- Participants must do the role plays and complete the homework for each. This provides “learning by doing” for offenders. Also, since everyone has to participate in role plays, it creates group cohesiveness and an environment for sharing. Review homework each week. Once the routine is established, this should be a quick process at the beginning of each class.

- Order handbooks and materials in advance. Participants will need to complete homework starting from the beginning and may want to take notes, so they will need their workbooks. Also, flip chart paper is needed for the facilitators to deliver the curriculum correctly.

### **Best practices for CBI in prison settings:**

#### **1. Implementation:**

- a. Ensure staff support from management to line staff. This begins with encouraging program delivery by assuring staff are trained to facilitate CBI programs. Identifying the right people to facilitate CBI. These should be staff that volunteer and people who have good people skills. At Hyde CI, staff volunteered for CBI due to an interest in the program. Supervisors supported the nominations and they were able to attend training and become facilitators.

Once trained, management must ensure facilitators are able to dedicate sufficient time to the delivery of the program, including some time for class preparation and follow-up training. This may involve allowing some flexibility with schedules. At Hyde CI, time is given to the facilitators to prepare for class and for the correctional officer facilitator to change into street clothes prior to class. The facilitators also prepare for the second half of the class during a “mail call” break for inmates halfway through the class.

- b. Orient all staff to CBI principles. There are many components of *Thinking for a Change* that would benefit all staff in interactions with offenders. In addition, it would be helpful for staff to be able to reinforce what is learned in the classes. At Southern CI, a Master Trainer conducted an orientation for staff regarding CBI prior to full implementation. Also, CBI is discussed at staff meetings and at case manager meetings.
- c. Have realistic expectations when beginning a CBI program. The first group should be a “sweetheart” group of offenders with a history of cooperation and success. The group size should also be kept smaller for the first group. This will allow new instructors to work through the curriculum with less stress. It is also important to conduct the first group soon after completing facilitator training. At Hyde CI, the new facilitators began their first CBI group within 3 months of completing the training while the training was still fresh in their minds.

#### **2. Identification of Participants**

- a. Participants should be screened for appropriateness (i.e. reading ability, length of time remaining in system, motivation, etc.). The CBI facilitator should meet briefly with each potential participant and complete a standard screening (Appendix 1 and 2 of the CBI Standard Operating Procedures).

Sexual offenders should not be mixed with general offenders in a group (have a separate group for sexual offenders). Hyde CI completed a group

exclusively for sexual offenders in 2004 in which the inmates were able to be more open with one another and with the facilitators.

- b. Notify staff and offenders of upcoming groups and encourage referrals. At Southern CI, flyers are placed on bulletin boards and memos are sent to all case managers notifying inmates and staff of upcoming CBI groups. This memo states the following:

The next Thinking for a Change group will start <date> and will meet at <time> each Tuesday and Thursday for about the next 11 weeks. Anyone interested in participating in the Thinking for a Change program should have their request turned into <staff person> no later than 2:00 on <date>. Interviews for this program will be held on <date> in the school area. If you are not contacted for an interview, feel free to sign up for the next scheduled session.

Inmates complete a Request for Information to ask to be assigned to the TFAC group. Case managers are then sent a list of all inmates who are scheduled to attend the CBI group.

- c. Plan for some attrition when forming a group. Due to unanticipated transfers or scheduling conflicts, some offenders may not be able to complete the group. Hyde CI usually begins with a list of 15 inmates and usually ends up with about 12 inmates per group. At Southern CI, 10 inmates are assigned to each group and staff work to avoid transfers until the program is completed.

### 3. Scheduling

- a. Plan ahead! Develop a regular schedule of CBI groups (6 months to 1 year in advance). This may best be done by scheduling a CBI group and then allow 2-3 weeks and set the first date for the next group to begin. This way there can be a running list of offenders to fill a group and allow time for screening by facilitators. Both Hyde and Southern CIs plan their CBI groups months in advance and offer 2 to 3 groups per year.
- b. Allow facilitators time to prepare for the group each week, approximately 1 hour per class. Once they become more familiar with the material, less time may be appropriate. Hyde CI offers the facilitators additional time during breaks and after the group to prepare for the next class and divide activities.

### 4. Groups

- a. Make it fun! Both Hyde and Southern CIs provide incentives for offenders such as ceremony or pizza party at graduation. Hyde CI selects an honor student from each class, and offers inmates the chance to watch all of the Breakfast Club. Both facilities offer time, either merit time or restore lost good time, to inmates who complete the program.



- b. Groups should be established and consistent during entire curriculum. This has to be run as a closed group, since each lesson builds on prior lessons. Some late additions can be made up to Lesson 4, but not thereafter. Both Hyde and Southern CIs attempt not to transfer inmates while they are participating in CBI by distributing a roster of inmates assigned to CBI groups.
- c. CBI is not meant to be a lecture style class, but rather a group learning the process and skills needed. It should be a group effort between the facilitators and offenders with participation from all. At Hyde CI there was a correctional officer facilitating a group that would always change into street clothes from the standard uniform before the group meeting. This left the enforcement side of being an officer on the outside to allow more of a treatment environment in the CBI group.

### **Best practices in community corrections settings:**

#### **1. Implementation:**

- a. Ensure staff support from management. This begins with encouraging program delivery by assuring staff are trained to facilitate CBI programs. Most of the sites we visited have multiple officers trained in TFAC. In Iredell County there are about 10 probation officers trained. This allows groups to be run as often as necessary for all DRC offenders to participate, but each officer (or sometimes a CJPP staff person) does not facilitate the 22-lesson program more than about once a year. This rotation helps prevent burnout of officers since the same ones are not continuously facilitating a group. In addition, there is a pool to draw from in the event one of the assigned facilitators has to miss a meeting another can fill in, which is what has also been arranged in Durham County.

It is also important that management ensure facilitators are able to dedicate sufficient time to the delivery of the program, including some time for class preparation and follow-up training. This may involve allowing some flexibility with schedules.

- b. Identify the right people to facilitate CBI. The program should be facilitated by someone that believes that the principles of cognitive behavioral program can produce change in offender behavior. This is best accomplished by allowing volunteers to complete the facilitator training. It is also important that facilitators are people who are comfortable leading a group.

In all of the counties visited, probation officers stated that it is important to understand that they have a different role as facilitator than in their other interactions with offenders. This includes the removal of a badge or gun in the group room. The atmosphere in the group should be one of treatment and not enforcement.

- c. Orient all staff to CBI principles. There are many components of *Thinking for a Change* that would benefit all staff in interactions with offenders. In addition, it would be helpful for staff to be able to reinforce what is

learned in the classes. Officers that are CBI-trained but not facilitating groups should be encouraged to use the principles of CBI in case management duties, as is done in Iredell County. Aspects of CBI are discussed in staff meetings with an example being officers doing a Thinking Report with offenders that have compliance problems.

- d. Have realistic expectations when beginning a CBI program. The first group should be a “sweetheart” group of offenders with a history of cooperation and success. The group size should also be kept smaller for the first group. This will allow new instructors to work through the curriculum with less stress. It is also important to conduct the first group soon after completing facilitator training.

Durham DRC has been offering TFAC classes since a few months after their first staff person completed training in 1999. When new officers or staff members complete CBI facilitator training, they co-facilitate a group with a more experienced facilitator.

## 2. Identification of Participants

- a. Participants should be screened for appropriateness (i.e. reading ability, length of time remaining in system, motivation, etc.). The CBI facilitator should meet briefly with each potential participant and complete a standard screening (Appendix 1 and 2 of the CBI Standard Operating Procedures). In Cumberland County, the facilitator meets with each offender to screen before beginning the group. This brief meeting only takes fifteen minutes with each offender.
- b. Notify staff and offenders of upcoming groups and encourage referrals. In Cumberland County, memos are sent to officers and chiefs a couple of weeks before the start of a new group so that they can make referrals. When the group is formed, regular memos of attendance are sent to officers to inform them of offender compliance. In addition to regular communication with probation, Iredell County DRC staff also send memos to judges periodically to encourage referrals for CBI.
- c. Plan for some attrition when forming a group. Due to unanticipated transfers or scheduling conflicts, some offenders may not be able to complete the group. In Cumberland County groups start with 15 probationers and there are usually 10-12 that graduate.

## 3. Scheduling

- a. Plan ahead! Develop a regular schedule of CBI groups (6 months to 1 year in advance). This may best be done scheduling a CBI group and then allow 2-3 weeks and set the first date for the next group to begin. This way there can be a running list of offenders to fill a group and allow time for screening by facilitators. This is how the schedule is setup in Cumberland County. The time between groups is used to set appointments with offenders for the screening interview.

- b. Allow facilitators time to prepare for the group each week, approximately 1 hour per class. Once they become more familiar with the material, less time may be appropriate. In Durham County, the CJPP staff person and the probation officer that co-facilitates the meet after each group meeting to discuss the next lesson and divide the activities.

#### 4. Groups

- a. Make it fun! Provide incentives for offenders. Some programs give participants candy for responses or snacks for class breaks. Another important consideration is acknowledgment of program completion. This can be done with a graduation ceremony. In Onslow County the DRC solicits contributions from community businesses to contribute to the graduation ceremony, such as one held at the Golden Coral. The staff then printed the completion certificates on high quality paper and tied a ribbon around the rolled certificates for presentation.
- b. Review homework each week. Once the routine is established, this should be a quick process at the beginning of each class. The expectation of completing homework is further reiterated in Durham, with the case plan stating the expectation of “enrolling, attending, doing homework, and participating in TFAC classes.”
- b. Groups should be established and consistent during entire curriculum. This has to be run as a closed group, since each lesson builds on prior lessons. Some late additions can be made up to Lesson 4, but not thereafter. In Durham they do allow offenders to switch from a day class to an evening class if they obtain employment and switch their DRC schedules.