

You Can Come Home Now!

Harold B. Wooten

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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F. Travis III
Latessa, Jr.
maro F. Vito

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Kenneth Adams

Improving Parole Success with PAS

Lois Shawver

T. L. Clanton

Douglas Kurdys

Howard Friedman

**Decisionmaking in Correctional
Education**

Dale K. Sechrest

Shelley J. Price

Classification Models in Probation Control or Treatment-Rehabilitation?

Peter C. Kratcoski

ve Meetings

Carolyn Sue Brown

Glen Plutschak

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This Issue in Brief

It's O.K. Supervision Enthusiasts: You Can Come Home Now!—Author Harold B. Wooten asserts that probation systems have lost interest in supervision of offenders; instead, trendy practices which are best described as elaborate monitoring mechanisms have taken the day. But, the author contends, before we rally the supervision loyalists, we should first admit that changing self-defeating behavior of offenders has never been significantly reinforced as a value in probation. The author cites historical reasons for this failure, identifies current barriers to effective supervision of offenders, and offers recommendations to various participants in the process to address effective supervision of offenders.

A Challenge Answered: Changes in the Perception of the Probation Task.—Author Richard Gray responds to the point of view expressed in this issue's article by Harold B. Wooten. Do probation officers actually help probationers or are they primarily paper pushers or law enforcers? According to the author, past experience and current job orientation have caused a change in probation officers' perspective of their job. The author discusses the sociology of knowledge in addressing shifts in task-related perspectives.

Private Enterprise and Institutional Corrections: A Call for Caution.—The current crisis of overcrowding in American prisons and jails, coupled with reduced resources available for corrections, has led to the development of innovative responses to the problems of institutional corrections. One such innovation which has been proposed and is receiving increasing support is the idea of "privatizing" institutional corrections. Authors Lawrence F. Travis III, Edward J. Latessa, Jr., and Gennaro F. Vito examine the movement to contract with private firms for the construction and operation of prisons and jails. Focusing on legal, cost, and accountability issues in such contracting, the authors conclude with a call for caution in the movement to employ private companies for the provision of this governmental service.

Impact of a Job Training Program on CETA-Qualified Offenders.—In this article, author Dennis B. Anderson reports on research—conducted in an industrial

midwestern city during 1984—of a job training program for CETA-qualified probationers. Controlling for self-selection and risk factors, the study compared these pro-

CONTENTS

It's O.K., Supervision Enthusiasts: You Can Come Home Now!	Harold B. Wooten	4
A Challenge Answered: Changes in the Perception of the Probation Task	Richard Gray	8
Private Enterprise in Institutional Corrections: A Call for Caution	Lawrence F. Travis III Edward J. Latessa, Jr. Gennaro F. Vito	11
Impact of a Job Training Program on CETA-Qualified Probationers	Dennis B. Anderson	17
Short-Term System-Therapy with Adult Probation Clients and Their Families	John VanDeusen Joseph Yarbrough David Cornelsen	21
Addressing Inmate Mental Health Problems: A New Direction for Prison Therapeutic Services	Kenneth Adams	27
Predicting and Improving Parole Success with PAS	Lois Shawver T. L. Clanon Douglas Kurdys Howard Friedman	34
Planning and Decisionmaking in Correctional Facility Construction	Dale K. Sechrest Shelley J. Price	38
The Functions of Classification Models in Probation and Parole: Control or Treatment-Rehabilitation? ...	Peter C. Kratcoski	49
Conducting Effective Meetings	Carolyn Sue Brown Glen Plutschak	57
Departments		
News of the Future		60
Looking at the Law		63
Reviews of Professional Periodicals		66
Your Bookshelf on Review		69
Letters to the Editor		73
It Has Come to Our Attention		74
Indexes of Articles and Book Reviews		75

The Functions of Classification Models in Probation and Parole: Control or Treatment-Rehabilitation?*

BY PETER C. KRATCOSKI, Ph.D.

Department of Criminal Justice Studies, Kent State University

THE USE OF classification systems in corrections is not a new development. When corrections moved from a punishment model to a rehabilitation or treatment emphasis in the early 20th century, classification systems, such as that developed by Howard Gill, were used to separate prisoners according to their potential for treatment or training. Gradually, classification systems became more complex and multipurposive, and today they are used not only to classify offenders within institutions but also to assess the amount of supervision needed by offenders placed on probation in lieu of institutionalization or those paroled from prisons.

Classification systems now in use are complex and multipurposive. A distinction can be made between those that are used for administrative and management purposes and those designed to treat and rehabilitate the offender. Those of a management nature are designed to enhance control and to predict the likelihood that an offender will commit new criminal acts after release. The treatment-rehabilitation systems try to differentiate the offenders on the basis of their needs, attitudes, motivations, and attributes and then provide the treatment necessary to bring about the desired changes in values, attitudes, and skills that will inhibit the offenders from recidivating. The treatment-rehabilitation systems of classification are based on the concept of differential treatment, which implies that the needs and problems of inmates and those in community supervision must be defined and treated on an individualized basis. The offender is matched with the specific treatment program which best addresses these problems and needs.

According to Edith Flynn, an effective classification system should meet the following criteria:

- (1) There must be an explicit statement regarding the function and purpose of the classification system.
- (2) The classification system should be dynamic and theoretically based so that it may serve to increase

the system's predictive powers and its success in reducing recidivism.

- (3) The assumption on which the classification system is based must be explicit.
- (4) The critical variables of the classification typology applied must be specific so that the utility of the system can be empirically tested.
- (5) The classification system should be useful and feasible and facilitate efficient management and optimum use of available resources.¹

Classification of offenders within institutions was closely related to programming, while the use of classification for those placed on probation and parole was initially directed toward predicting recidivism, and levels of supervision were set up according to the assessed risk that the offender would become involved in criminal activity after release.

Since 1980, the Federal Probation System has used a Risk Prediction Scale (RPS 80) which classifies offenders for "high activity" or "low activity" supervision. The items used in this scale include completion of a high school education, the age of the offender, arrest-free status for 5 or more consecutive years before the previous offense, few prior arrests, a history of freedom from opiate usage, and a steady employment period of at least 4 months prior to arraignment for the present offense. Each item is weighted, and a cutoff point on the total score determines whether the offender will initially be assigned to low or high activity supervision.² Before initiation of this new system, survey data collected by the Probation Division of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts in 1974 and by the Research Division of the Federal Judicial Center in 1977 indicated that a variety of caseload classification methods were used by Federal probation officers. These methods ranged from purely subjective assessments to statistical prediction devices.³

¹ Edith Elisabeth Flynn, "Classification Systems," in *Handbook of Correctional Classification* (Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Company, 1978), p. 86.

² Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, *Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedures: Probation Manual*, Vol. x-0 §4004 (February 15, 1979).

³ James B. Eaglin and Patricia A. Lombard, *A Validation and Comparative Evaluation of Four Predictive Devices for Classifying Federal Probation Caseloads* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Judicial Center, 1982), p. 1.

*The research presented in this article was funded by a grant to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction from the National Institute of Corrections, NIC E-P-6.

When the National Institute of Corrections placed the development of statewide classification systems for probation and parole as a high priority funding project, various states developed systems for classification of those under supervision. These statewide systems considered both control and treatment in their classification procedures. One of the earliest states to receive funding for a new classification program was Wisconsin, and a statewide system was put into effect there in 1977. More than 30 other states have now adopted some form of statewide classification model, and the current emphasis in the field is for county level probation departments to incorporate some features of the state models in their supervision programs. Because of its early start in this area and the wide publicity given to its features, the Wisconsin classification system is often considered the prototype for development of new classification systems.

Classification models tend to have common features. One would be an assessment of the risk (danger to the community) presented by the offender. The risk classification device is designed to assess a client's potential for future criminal behavior. Items related to the offender's criminal history and socioeconomic-personal adjustment background are weighted, and a total score is used to place the offender at a specific level of supervision, with the intensity of supervision designed to reduce the threat of recidivism to a minimum. For example, the instrument used to assess risk in the Wisconsin system included the following:

- (1) Number of address changes in the last 12 months;
- (2) Percentage of time employed in the last 12 months;
- (3) Alcohol usage problems;
- (4) Other drug usage problems;
- (5) Attitude;
- (6) Age at first conviction;
- (7) Number of prior periods of probation/parole supervision;
- (8) Number of prior probation/parole revocations;
- (9) Number of prior felony convictions;
- (10) Convictions or juvenile adjudications for burglary, theft, auto theft, or robbery, worthless checks or forgery; and
- (11) Conviction or juvenile adjudication for assaultive offense within the last 5 years.⁴

⁴ S. Christopher Baird, Richard C. Heinz, and Brian J. Bemus, *The Wisconsin Case Classification/Staff Deployment Project* (Madison, Wisconsin: Department of Health and Social Services, 1979), p. 7.

⁵ James W. Fox, Mitchell Stein, and Gary Rasmussen, "Development of the Tennessee Case Management for Delivery of Parole Services." Paper delivered at the 1983 Convention of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, San Antonio, Texas, 1983, p. 7.

⁶ James B. Englin and Patricia A. Lombard, *A Validation . . . Caseloads*, pp. 99-122.

When the various states or local probation and parole departments developed their own risk instruments, there was acceptance of the format used in Wisconsin, but each supervising authority tended to vary somewhat in the number of items included, the specific focus of the items, and the weight given to each item in relation to the total score. For example, those responsible for developing a risk instrument for the Tennessee system reasoned that:

Since laws vary from one state to another, law enforcement varies from one state to another, and people differ from one state to another, those individuals who find themselves in prison and then on parole will differ from one state to another. This . . . requires that the processes of determining levels of risk and need should be reflective of the clientele in the Tennessee Parole System.⁵

This approach of adjusting the instrument to the local conditions seems appropriate. It also apparently does not detract from the predictive power of the instrument. In classifying offenders supervised under the Federal system, several predictive devices used were found to have comparable predictive power, even though the specific items used in the instrument and the method of scoring and assignment to risk levels varied.⁶

Another feature of classification models is use of a needs instrument, which assesses the offender's needs in such areas as family support, employment, emotional problems, or drug or alcohol abuse treatment. As an offender's score on the needs instrument increases, it is assumed that the amount of time and the number of resources directed toward the case will also increase. The needs assessment instrument is most effective when clients are reassessed on a regular basis and determinations are made as to whether progress is occurring in meeting the offender's needs and working on his or her problems.

Both risk and needs instruments allow officers and supervisors the opportunity to categorize all those supervised in a matrix format: offenders with high risk and high needs levels, those with low risk and high needs, those with high risk and low needs, and those with low risk and low needs. Management and officers get a very clear picture of the distribution of cases which are currently under supervision, and workload distributions can be made according to the intensity of supervision required for the offenders. The models move away from caseloads and incorporate a "work unit" concept, which is set up on the basis of the supervision levels of the offenders, the geographic distribution of the cases, the types of duties required of officers (preparation of presentence investigations or supervision only), and special types of cases handled (transfers or interstate compact cases). Theoretically, this approach should equalize the amount of work expected from each officer. Under past systems, caseloads were defined in terms of the number of cases supervised. Little attention was given to the intensity of

supervision required or the amount of time needed for each case.

After assessments have been completed, the classification procedure takes place. Classification in the case management approach involves grounding the specific classification in an evaluation of the interacting forces of the case. The specific classifications of offenders generally include maximum, medium, and minimum supervision levels. They may also provide for cursory levels of supervision, with little or no contact between officer and offender. The specific classification of offenders may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, even though these offenders may have common characteristics. A case perceived as low risk in one jurisdiction may be classified as a medium risk in another because of the small number of serious cases serviced there. The risk score cutoff points may vary significantly, depending on the number of cases supervised and the number of officers available. For example, Ohio and Wisconsin use essentially the same risk and needs instruments, but in Wisconsin the maximum supervision category begins at a score of 15 on the risk instrument, while in Ohio it begins at 26.

In addition to risk factors, other methods are used to classify offenders. Rather than basing classification of criminal activity, other behavioral and personality characteristics of the offender are taken into account. This information is obtained through an interview with the client or from case file information. In Ohio, four Case Supervision Approaches (CSA) are defined, including criminal orientation, multiproblem, socially deficient, and situational offenders. An individual is assigned to one of the CSA's on the basis of a structured interview. After placement at a risk level and a CSA, a case management plan for providing services to the client is developed. The offender is expected to provide input in developing this plan and should agree that the activities required of him or her are appropriate and achievable.

Once the supervision level is defined for a case, the supervision is conducted according to a formula set up for the number and types of contacts required at this level. The specifications of the case plan will direct the officer toward referrals to agencies, the amount of counseling needed, requiring drug presence tests, and setting of special conditions. Case monitoring involves verifying employment, place of residence, participation in required programs, and compliance with probation and parole conditions.

In California, the classification system differentiates both types of offenders and types of parole officers. Offenders are classified as "control," "service," or

"minimum-supervision" cases. Those with high risk assessment scores are designated "control" and given intensive supervision by officers who handle only control cases and whose only function is surveillance. "Service" cases, classified by a high needs assessment score, are under the supervision of a service officer, who acts as a broker in obtaining referrals to appropriate community agencies. If a service category offender commits a new offense the service officer cannot arrest him—this function is reserved for control officers. Minimum supervision cases (those with low risk and needs scores) are seen only at the time of release from prison and at the end of the year of parole, with monthly mailed-in reports from the offender taking the place of visits to the parole office. Minimum supervision specialists handle these cases, but perform no other functions. In 1981, 84 percent of the parolees were classified as control cases, 8 percent as service cases, and 8 percent as minimum supervision cases. The California parole officers were assigned to control as opposed to service or minimum supervision in a 6 to 1 ratio.⁷

Most classification systems provide for periodic reassessments of the cases. These may take place at specified time intervals (6 months, for example) or if there is a change in jurisdiction from one unit to another or if the person supervised has committed a new offense. The reassessment instruments shift emphasis from past criminal behavior to overall performance or adjustment during the current probation or parole. The reassessment instrument taps the offender's adherence to the rules and special conditions, use of community services recommended, and overall adjustments in the areas of work, family, and personal functioning. At the time of reassessment the level of supervision may be reduced or increased, although there would be a tendency to reduce rather than increase supervision.

At the time of final evaluation before release a summary of the changes and progress which occurred during supervision is developed. Once the case has been terminated, the information available on all of the classification instruments is stored for future access, if needed.

The Effects of Classification Systems on Clients and Staff

Although the majority of states have developed some form of offender classification which attempts to provide a control and treatment formula within the same model, the evaluation of the effectiveness of these models has generally been rather sketchy. Each state has attempted some internal evaluation, and on occasion detailed evaluation by a neutral agent has taken place. The bases for the determination of effectiveness have varied, but recidivism reduction is the primary factor considered.

⁷ Stephen Gettinger, "Separating the Cop from the Counselor," *Corrections Magazine*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April 1981), p. 35.

The purpose of this section of the article is to draw attention to areas in which the departments might be affected regardless of the changes in criminal behavior which may occur after the classification system is put into operation. The manner in which the system affects the staff is generally not even considered in evaluations of its effectiveness. In this article we will look at effects of new systems on both clients and officers, including the degree to which administrators and officers accept and commit themselves to the new system, opinions of the new system's efficiency in comparison to prior systems, and the effects of standardization and the reduction of discretion on the officers' perceptions of their role and their job satisfaction. Does the new system remove autonomy and professional discretion, require upgrading of skill levels, vary or consolidate responsibility areas, increase tedious paperwork, improve communications with other officers and superiors, and reduce or enhance overall job satisfaction? For the clients, what is the expectation in regard to recidivism and community adjustment? The new systems are geared to efficiency and productive use of resources. Recidivism is not expected to decline at all supervision levels. Instead, those offenders who are placed in a maximum supervision category and who also have high needs are given the most intense supervision and concentration of services, and for them the model predicts that criminal behavior will significantly decline and that individual and social adjustment will increase. For offenders placed at lower intensity of supervision levels it is predicted that their present level of performance will not deteriorate and that they will not commit criminal offenses at levels greater than their prior performances.

A study conducted by the National Institute of Corrections involved 474 probation and parole officers who were working in nine states in which some new case management system had recently been introduced. In responding to questions about their new system, more than three of every four respondents viewed it as beneficial. The majority of negative comments about the systems dealt with very specific policy issues indigenous to the particular state system. Some of these comments centered on the inability to adequately perform as expected because of an extremely high caseload, the inclusion of juveniles in the system, problems in rural areas related to finding appropriate settings for conducting interviews, and lack of social-community support systems for referrals once the problems of offenders had been assessed. In this study, 32 percent of the respondents rated the system as being "very helpful" in their job, 46 per-

cent considered it "helpful," 14 percent considered it "moderately helpful," and 8 percent regarded it as "not helpful." Seventy-three percent indicated that the system increased their knowledge and understanding of the clients, 53 percent said that it helped improve their case planning, and 54 percent said it helped them improve their ability to anticipate problems on the job⁸.

The degree of satisfaction with new case management systems seems to depend on the commitment to the system by administrators, the preparation for changes, and the ease of the transition from one system to the other. The nature of change is also an important point. In New York City, the Department of Adult Supervision Services had to introduce radical changes in the manner in which it supervised clients because of the influx of more than 13,000 new cases annually and budget reductions. The system introduced, called the Differential Supervision Program (DSP), had three levels of supervision assigned according to risk. However, the minimum supervision level contacts consisted of a monthly telephone call by the offender to a data entry telephone operator. If the call did not occur, a computer-generated letter was sent to remind the probationer to make the call. If the call still was not received, the probation officer was notified and appropriate action taken. Carol Rauh, in evaluating the New York City program, found that two factors were important in determining acceptance or rejection of the model by the rank and file officers. One was whether the automated support services portion of the system performed adequately and actually fulfilled the standardized routine tasks expected of it. The assumption of the program was that the computer would relieve the officers of much of the routine paperwork which was extremely time consuming but contributed to the offenders' welfare. In actual operation, the computer frequently broke down or was in error, and the officers were required to handle a deluge of calls, which led to dissatisfaction and general disillusionment with the system. The second factor mentioned by Ms. Rauh as important in acceptance of the new system was the administration's support and direction. To assess administration and staff commitment, a number of interviews were completed. The higher levels of administrators were very enthusiastic and unanimous in their belief in the importance and effectiveness of the new system. However, satisfaction with the system decreased in the lower levels of administration, and was at its lowest point among the unit supervisors. Only one of six supervisors interviewed spoke enthusiastically about the new system. This lack of belief in the system was reflected in the attitudes of the probation officers. Half of the officers interviewed reported that while it was a good idea in theory they saw little practical value in the new system. Rather than reducing their workloads, they

⁸ National Institute of Corrections, *Client Management Classification System Officer Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, 1982).

felt that the new system had added to them. About two-thirds of the officers reported that they did not find the forms used to classify clients helpful, and only two of all the officers interviewed felt that the forms helped them focus on client problems.⁹

An extensive evaluation of the Ohio Case Management System was conducted in selected regions of the state 1 year after the new system had been in operation. I was the person selected to design and carry out this evaluation. As part of the evaluation, officers in one of the first regions to receive training in the new system were asked to complete an Attitude Assessment Questionnaire before they were trained in the new system. They completed the same questionnaire approximately 1 year after the training was received and the system had been in operation in that region. The questionnaire explored officers' perceptions of administrators' attitudes toward officers, administrators' effectiveness as perceived by the officers, and officers' positive attitudes toward change. Comparison of the results of the two administrations of the questionnaire revealed that in the post-test there was some change toward more positive attitudes, with the most significant change occurring with regard to officers' perceptions of the administrators' effectiveness.

A second phase of the evaluation of attitudes and opinions of personnel involved a qualitative assessment of the system by supervisors and officers in another region of the state in which the new Case Management System had been implemented. A semistructured interview format was used. The supervisors' responses ranged from total acceptance to a somewhat skeptical "wait and see" attitude. Problems identified included the need for an increase in personnel and adjustment in the number of work units allotted for each supervision level case and for emergency situations for cases which involved revocation procedures. The supervisors also saw a need for additional officer training in the development of case management plans. The officers in general accepted the new system as a useful tool, regarded the standardization in the new system as good, and felt it professionalized the officer's position, promoted efficiency, and gave the officers the security of making case management decisions based on objective criteria. Some officers felt that it did involve more paperwork, but the majority felt that the new system was more efficient than the former system because it assisted in developing a case plan earlier and

offered direction as to what would be appropriate referrals to social service agencies. Some indicated that it led to an improvement in communications with immediate supervisors. In the past, if there were some confusion or disagreement about how a case should be supervised, the officer would have to accept the supervisors' directions. Now, because of the standardized procedures, it was quite easy to explain to a supervisor how a decision on a case was reached.

In contrast to the New York City probation program, the Ohio case management system was given firm support at all administrative levels. The top administrators supported it through communications and personal appearances to discuss the merits of the system. Regional supervisors and unit supervisors were involved in the Case Management System Development Committee, which designed the instruments in conjunction with the Research Division of the Adult Parole Authority. This support by the administrators was reflected in the comments by the officers, who indicated that in the beginning they thought the new system was just a gimmick or even a way of increasing caseloads and reducing staff, but after its introduction they believed that the administration was committed to it, that the system was here to stay, and that they might as well work with it.¹⁰

Perhaps the most drastic change in the role of officers occurred in the California system. We noted earlier that the roles of the officers became quite specialized. The acceptance of the case management model in California by administrators, supervisors, and field officers varied. Administrators and supervisors appeared to accept the model because of its emphasis on the protection of the community. Given the current emphasis on "just deserts" for offenders, and the fact that parole was actually abolished for a period of time in California, a model which emphasizes the control facet of parole work had strong appeal. Some of the field officers also appeared to be quite pleased with the system. They found the concept of the minimum supervision of some cases to be logical and efficient. Some also liked being responsible for only one facet of parole work. Many did not feel competent to handle the dual roles of control and service. On the other hand, some officers lamented the loss of discretion, the ability to use their own judgment in making decisions. This discretionary power was a factor which gave the officer a professional status. Others also felt that the process was more complex and cumbersome than the old system. Their most frequent complaint was that the new system has generated more paperwork, and this detracts from the main job of supervision.¹¹

A latent product of extreme specialization by officers only vaguely recognized is a tendency for the department personnel to factionalize on the basis of their assignments.

⁹ Carol Rauh, "Important Considerations in Ensuring the Success of a Case Management/Management Information System Model." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, San Antonio, Texas, 1983.

¹⁰ Peter C. Kratoski, *An Evaluation of the Case Management System Probation and Parole Sections: Division of Parole and Community Services, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction*, report submitted September 1983, pp. 171-173.

¹¹ Stephen Gettinger, "Separating the Cop from the Counselor," pp. 36-37.

Officers tend to develop a perspective or orientation toward their job which reflects the major goal of their work. The control officers might begin to perceive themselves as law enforcement officers, while the service officers would view themselves as social service workers. The communication gaps and internal dissension between custody and treatment personnel are well recognized in institutional settings on both the juvenile and adult levels. The competition for resources and personnel, in particular when budgets become tight, leads to a general decline in interpersonal relations, morale, and common goal orientation. In most cases, when these conflicts occur the custody factors take priority over treatment.

Recidivism

Although the success or failure of case management systems should not necessarily be dependent on the reduction of recidivism produced, when the basic question, "Does it work?" is asked, reduction in criminal behavior tends to be the criterion which can justify an affirmative response.

The case management models developed by the various states do not suggest that an across the board reduction of criminal behavior will result after the system commences operation. If the model functions according to design, the significant reductions in recidivism should occur in the maximum supervision category. The minimum supervision category should not change, even with the reduction in supervision, and the medium supervision cases might show a reduction in criminal behavior because of the employment of a more individualized case management plan.

Systematic research on the effects on recidivism of new case management plans is trickling in, but the data only give hints regarding the long term effects. Those who have considerable experience in the corrections field are knowledgeable enough to expect dramatic changes in criminal behavior for the maximum supervision cases. An offender whose deviant behavior dates back to childhood and whose life has followed a pattern of repeated offenses, supervision and/or incarceration is not going to change over night because of more intense supervision or a different approach to supervision.

In Wisconsin, a sample of offenders who were placed in the maximum supervision group were compared with a matched sample of cases who had not yet been included in the case management plan. Those in the control group

were matched with those in the experimental group in age, sex, race, probation or parole status, employment, and items on the risk and needs instruments. The maximum supervision group under the new case plan had significantly lower recidivism than those in the control group. Thirty-seven percent of those in the control group had a new offense reported, compared to 18 percent of the experimental group. Twenty percent of the control group members had their probation or parole revoked, compared to 11 percent of the experimental group.¹² For the medium supervision cases a smaller percentage of those supervised under the new system recidivated when they were compared with the control group, but the differences were not large enough to be considered statistically significant. The recidivism in the minimum supervision group was quite low for both the experimental and control groups, confirming the hypothesis that this category of offenders can be given only cursory supervision and still not show an increase in their criminal behavior.

The findings that only 18 percent of the maximum supervision group committed a new offense and only 11 percent had their parole or probation revoked appears incredible when compared to the much higher recidivism rates generally considered to be normal for maximum supervision probationers and parolees. However, it should be noted that the Wisconsin Bureau of Community Corrections is responsible for the supervision of all adult probationers and both juvenile and adult parolees¹³ and the overall characteristics of this offender population may not be comparable to what one would find in a more urban-industrialized state.

A study by the Wisconsin Bureau of Community Corrections after 2 years of experience with the case management system revealed that there was a strong correlation between the score the offenders obtained on the risk instrument and revocation rates. The higher the risk score, the higher was the revocation rate. For example, of 4,231 probationers and parolees who were terminated within 2 years after commitment to the program, 1,124 (27 percent) had a risk score between 4 and 7 and had a revocation rate of only 2.49 percent. However, at the other extreme 60 offenders (1.4 percent) had a risk score of 30 and above, and they had a revocation rate of 42.55 percent¹⁴

In Wisconsin, both risk scores and needs scores were used to assign cases to supervision categories. The risk scores, however, appear to be most predictive of new criminal activity. In Wisconsin, a risk assessment score of 15 and above would lead to a maximum supervision classification, a score of 8 to 14 would result in medium supervision, and a score of 7 and below in minimum

¹² Baird, Heinz, and Bemus, *The Wisconsin Case Classification/Staff Development Project: A Two Year Follow-Up Report* (Madison, Wisconsin: Department of Health and Social Services, 1979), p. 26.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

supervision.¹⁵ About 50 percent of new clients were placed in maximum supervision.

The evaluation of the Ohio Case Management System I conducted involved a two-faceted research design. In one facet, an experimental region of the state, the first region where the new system was implemented, was used to develop a comparison of recidivism in the region before and after implementation of the system. Cases for the months of September, October, and November 1981, when the new system had been put into effect, were compared with those in the months of September, October, and November 1980. All cases which originated in parole and probation units selected for the experimental region were included. The 1980 sample had 276 cases, while the 1981 sample had 261 cases. The case files of all offenders in the samples were examined, and all criminal offenses which resulted in convictions, all alleged parole and probation violations which were confirmed, and all probation and parole "violator at large" statuses which occurred during a 12-month period from the date that the offender was placed on parole or probation were considered. The offenders were divided according to supervision level (maximum=risk score of 26 and higher; medium=risk score of 18 through 25; minimum=risk score of 0 through 17) and compared with regard to recidivism, as shown in table 1.

TABLE 1.—*Recidivism of Cases in the Experimental Region by Supervision Level Before and After Implementation of the Case Management System*

Supervision Level	Recidivism 1980		Recidivism 1981	
	N	% of Total ¹	N	% of Total ²
Maximum	40	70%	50	63%
Medium	26	42%	32	47%
Minimum	27	17%	25	22%
TOTALS	93	34%	107	41%

¹ In 1980, there were 57 maximum supervision offenders, 62 medium, and 157 minimum.

² In 1981, there were 79 maximum supervision offenders, 68 medium, and 114 minimum.

As shown in table 1, recidivism was lower for the 1981 maximum supervision group than for the maximum supervision group in 1980, although the decrease was not statistically significant. Although the recidivism increased from 1980 to 1981 in both the medium and minimum supervision levels, the increases were not statistically significant. This comparison, while not conclusive, gives

some support for the assumptions underlying the Case Management System model. In the maximum supervision category, where the intensity of supervision was increased, there was a decline in the percentage who recidivated. At the minimum supervision level, where supervision was decreased, no substantial increase in recidivism occurred. The only group which performed contrary to the model's expectations was the medium supervision level. It was expected that recidivism here would remain constant, but it increased.

Of those parolees who committed new offenses, 58 percent of those in the 1980 sample committed felonies, compared to 49 percent of those in the 1981 sample. The percentage of parolees revoked and sent to prison was slightly higher for the 1980 sample (24 percent) than for the 1981 sample (23 percent). Of the probationers committing new offenses, 50 percent of those in the 1980 sample and 47 percent of those in the 1981 sample committed felonies, and 11 percent of the 1980 probationers in the sample were returned to prison, compared to 9 percent of the probationers in the 1981 sample.

The second facet of the research design involved a comparison of the sample of offenders in the experimental region, where the new Case Management System had been implemented (1981), with a sample in a control region of the state, where the system had not been implemented in that year. Since the offenders in the control region were not classified, the researchers classified them according to maximum, medium, or minimum supervision qualifying status, using the same instruments used by Parole Authority staff to classify the offenders in the experimental region. A comparison of the recidivism of the offenders in the experimental and control regions is given in table 2.

TABLE 2.—*A Comparison of Recidivism by Supervision Level in the Experimental and Control Regions*

Supervision Level	Experimental ¹ Region		Control ² Region		Significance
	N	%	N	%	
Maximum	50	63%	28	60%	Not significant at .15 level Chi Square test
Medium	32	47%	34	44%	
Minimum	25	22%	19	17%	

¹ In the Experimental Region, there were 79 maximum supervision offenders, 68 medium, and 114 minimum.

² In the Control Region, there were 47 maximum supervision offenders, 77 medium, and 114 minimum.

As shown in table 2, recidivism was almost three times as great at the maximum supervision level as at the minimum level for both the experimental and control group samples, and the recidivism for the medium level

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

was more than twice that of the minimum. These patterns follow the projections made for the Case Management System model. However, it was projected that the recidivism for the maximum level experimental group would be lower than that for the maximum level control group because of the intense amount of supervision given to the maximum offenders in the experimental group, where the new Case Management System had been applied. This did not occur. The higher proportion of offenders in the maximum supervision category in the experimental group sample, when compared with the control group sample, no doubt had some bearing on the lack of recidivism reduction at this level. For the medium and minimum supervision levels, slight increases in recidivism also occurred in the experimental group sample, although it was projected that recidivism at the medium level would be reduced.

When the severity of new offenses by those who recidivated was compared by supervision level, the maximum level offenders in the control group had a greater proportion of felonies (33 percent) than did the maximum level experimental group (27 percent). In the medium level, the percentage committing felonies was the same for the two groups (25 percent). At the minimum level the experimental group (7 percent) and the control group (8 percent) had similar percentages committing felonies. This offense pattern follows the Case Management System model, with the maximum level offenders in the experimental group having a reduced percentage of serious offenses.

Table 3 compares the offenders revoked and sent to prison in the experimental and control regions.

TABLE 3.—*A Comparison by Supervision Level of Offenders Sent to Prison After a New Offense or Technical Violation in the Experimental and Control Regions*

Supervision Level	Experimental ¹ Region		Control ² Region	
	N	%	N	%
Maximum	24	30%	17	36%
Medium	14	21%	18	23%
Minimum	6	5%	11	10%

¹ In the Experimental Region, there were 79 maximum supervision offenders, 68 medium, and 114 minimum.

² In the Control Region, there were 47 maximum supervision offenders, 77 medium, and 114 minimum.

As shown in table 3, slightly higher percentages of the control region offenders in all supervision levels were revoked and sent to prison. Although these differences are not statistically significant, they support the projection of the Case Management System model that increased supervision of the maximum level cases will have positive results.¹⁶

One should be cautious about generalizing findings from one state program to another, even if a comparable case management system were used. In Ohio, risk and needs classification instruments were adopted which are quite similar to those used in Wisconsin. However, the cutoff points in the risk instruments used to delineate the Ohio supervision levels were considerably higher (26 and above for maximum supervision, 18 to 25 for medium supervision, and 17 and below for minimum supervision) than those used in Wisconsin (15 and above for maximum, 8 to 14 for medium, and 7 and below for minimum). If one compared Wisconsin and Ohio by supervision level without taking into consideration the actual risk scores used to delineate the various levels, it would appear that recidivism was considerably higher for the Ohio offenders than for those in Wisconsin. However, if the cases from the two states were matched by actual risk scores, the proportion committing new offenses would not vary significantly in the two states.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the case management models should be evaluated in relationship to their utility and not necessarily in relationship to a reduction in criminal activity. The systems work if officers make better decisions on cases, make more appropriate referrals to community service agencies, are more efficient in their work, establish better communications with supervisions, and are more confident and satisfied with their own job performance. If the agency administrators can live with the programs, even though recidivism rates do not drop significantly, case management systems will continue to be refined and this should result in a significant improvement in community corrections.

¹⁶ Peter C. Kratcoski, *An Evaluation of the Case Management System . . . Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction*, pp. 174-178.