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Running Head: Desistance from Offending

**An Exploration of Factors Contributing to
Desistance from Offending in a Sample of
Moderate to High Risk Young Offenders**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors related to the cessation of delinquency in moderate to high risk young offenders. Because the research investigating this area is sparse, this study was considered an exploratory venture. Subjects consisted of twenty young offenders on probation who had not committed any serious offences (Desistors) for at least eight months and twenty youths who had re-offended (Recidivists). On a self-report measure developed for this research (based on criminogenic risk factors and desistance factors), subjects were asked to identify factors that may have changed in the past year. They were also asked to provide attributions for their behaviour (cessation or recidivism) and a short form of the Stages of Change Assessment was included. Desistors indicated having experienced more positive and less negative changes than Recidivists in domains of family, education, peers, substance use, and personality/attitudes (criminogenic risk factors). Although no differences were found in the amount of treatment received, Desistors consistently rated treatment as more helpful. Subjects in the Desistor group were also differentiated from the Recidivists based on the Stages of Change Assessment. Desistors were lower on Pre-contemplation scores, and higher on Action scores and on overall Readiness to change scores suggesting that they were more likely to recognize their criminal behaviour as problematic, more likely to be actively trying to change the behaviour and overall more motivated to change. Qualitative data indicated that Desistors' attributions for their cessation in offending were more likely internal factors, whereas Recidivists attributions for their re-offending were more likely external factors. In addition, the latter results suggest that some attributions for desistance are unique and are not simply the absence or opposite of risk factors. Directions for future research and clinical implications of these findings are discussed.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors which might contribute to the cessation of delinquency in moderate to high risk young offenders in Northwestern Ontario. Protective and risk factors of delinquency often occur in the same variables, but not exclusively (Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 1993). Some variables may predominantly contribute to protective, risk, or maintenance factors. It is likely that factors relevant to the cessation of delinquency have partial, but not complete, overlap with these variables. Many have articulated the need to identify predictors of desistance which are not simply the opposite predictors of initiation or maintenance of offending (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1996; LeBlanc, 1993; Mulvey & Aber, 1988). Due to the paucity of research investigating the cessation of delinquency (as opposed to the onset of delinquency or recidivism), this research was considered an exploratory venture. Based on a review of the relevant literature, this study proposed to examine the following: (a) criminogenic risk factors relevant to desistance, (b) the potential application of the Stages of Change model to desistance, and (c) attributions that young offenders make for their behaviour (desistance or recidivism).

Young Offenders

The fundamental intention of the Young Offender Act is rehabilitation and prevention while still responding to the serious crime committed. The juvenile justice system is faced with the task of trying to find a balance between the rights and needs of individuals and the protection of society from risk of further serious offenses. Because a small proportion of youths (less than 20% of young offenders) are responsible for the majority of juvenile offenses (almost 85%) (Moore & Arthur, 1989), factors contributing to the chronicity of offending have received considerable attention.

There is debate in the literature whether juvenile courts discourage differential intervention and impose sentences based on offence characteristics, effectively ignoring the rights and needs of the young offender (Andrews et al., 1992), or whether they strive for dispositions which are "custom-made" to the rehabilitative needs of the young offender (Niarhos & Routh, 1992). It is clear that a large amount of social and economic resources are spent trying to explain and amend this social problem. Social debate also continues on the merits of retribution or rehabilitation of young offenders. Research now provides unequivocal support indicating that a punitive approach (such as

deterrence theory or just desserts sanctions) does not have any major impact on juvenile re-offending, while treatment has consistently demonstrated a significant reduction in re-offending (Andrews et al., 1992).

One of the aims of the juvenile justice system is to reduce or eliminate recidivism yet, paradoxically, research on this area has focussed on the negative factors which maintain chronic re-offending. Emphasis has commonly been on the onset and continuation of criminal activity with little attention centered on the desistance or cessation of offending. Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) point out that cases of improved behaviour have been treated as errors in the prediction of future criminal activity, but that non-recidivists may alternatively be thought of as true positives in the prediction of recovery. Young offenders who have stopped offending have been referred to as "Desistors", and youths who have continued to offend as "Recidivists".

Concept of Risk

Literature consistently indicates treatment programs are effective when appropriately targeted to high risk youths (Hoge, Andrews & Leschied, 1994). Three principles of intervention have been outlined by Hoge and colleagues (1994): risk, need, and responsivity.

The Risk Principle suggests higher levels of service are reserved for higher risk cases because they respond better to intensive treatment, while lower risk cases do as well or better with minimal intervention (Hoge et al., 1994). Unlike low risk offenders who may be first time offenders and true non-recidivists, some moderate to high risk offenders may have established a persistent pattern of delinquent behaviour. The risk rating is based on a number of factors, including number of offences, and therefore a moderate to high rating is not necessarily indicative of a chronic pattern of offending. Risk factors refer to individual, environmental and interactional attributes which are positively associated with a criminal history or a criminal future; their assessment allows the above chance prediction of future criminal conduct (Hoge et al., 1994). Factors placing youths at high risk for re-offending include, but are not limited to, threat of harm to self or others, procriminal attitudes, and previous escape attempts.

The Need Principle refers to targeting services to match the criminogenic needs of offenders (Hoge et al., 1994). Criminogenic need factors refer to risk factors which, when altered in a positive

manner, reduce the chances of re-offending (Hoge et al., 1994). Addressing relevant needs such as anger management problems, substance abuse issues, and problem solving or social skills training may limit chances of re-offending.

The Responsivity Principle refers to providing services which are most appropriate for the individual based on their learning styles and abilities (Hoge et al., 1994). Potential moderators of treatment effectiveness include individual differences in conceptual and interpersonal maturity levels, age, gender, ethnicity, motivation, self-esteem, and psychiatric history (Andrews et al., 1992). Hoge and colleagues (1994) articulate the importance of accurate assessment of risk, need and responsivity factors in clients as critical determinants in making decisions about the most appropriate intervention.

Development of the Risk/Need Instrument

A standard measure was required for assessing, classifying and describing young offenders based on dimensions of personality, cognitions and environmental factors to establish differential risk and need of individuals. Measures of risk factors are useful guides to objectify decisions about diversion or treatment as more standardized procedures lead to better clinical judgments (Clark et al., 1993). Furthermore, valid measures are also essential to systematically improve knowledge on delinquency and to improve communication among professionals (Hoge et al., 1994).

Based on the most recent theoretical and empirical developments regarding criminal activity and on existing instruments in use, Hoge and colleagues (1994) developed the Ministry Risk/Need Assessment Form to provide Probation Officers in Ontario with a more systematic assessment of the Risk/Need factors relevant to young offenders. This instrument, in combination with professional discretion of Probation Officers, provides juvenile courts with information relevant to dispositional outcome and to recidivism risk (Niarhos & Routh, 1992). The developers of the instrument grouped the relevant items into eight sections. Each subsection is then summed for a risk level in that area, and a total sum represents the overall risk level. The scale of scores for each risk level is provided in the method section in Table 1.

Additional sections assess other variables which have not been directly associated with recidivism but may be relevant to decisions about the youth. These sections also provide the

assessor an opportunity: to exercise professional discretion in assigning a Risk/Need rating and explain any such moderation of the rating; to indicate service goals and means of achieving such goals; and to estimate the level of supervision appropriate for the case (Hoge et al., 1994). The psychometric properties of the Risk/Need Assessment have been demonstrated and reviewed elsewhere (Jung, 1996).

Theories Relevant to Delinquency and Desistance

In their extensive literature review, Andrews and his colleagues (1992) examined cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of the correlates of delinquent history and predictors of recidivism. Agreement among studies was found on the major variables of importance in criminal behaviour. It should be noted, however, that theoretical explanations for cause and effect of these variables on behaviour is far from approaching consensus. Data are more consistent, though, with psychodynamic, social learning, general personality, and social psychological perspectives (Andrews et al., 1992). A commonality among these theories is their recognition of the multidimensionality of criminal behaviour and the interaction of relevant intrapersonal and situational factors. Before these factors are reviewed theories relevant to adolescence, delinquency, and desistance are outlined.

Internal, or intrapersonal, variables are characteristics of an individual which he/she can control. That is, the individual has the ability to change these factors given the requisite desire, motivation, and assistance if necessary. Many of the factors considered in the Risk/Need Assessment Form are external variables over which the individual can exert little control and, therefore, has limited ability to effect change in those areas. Although the youth may not be responsible for bringing them about, certain changes in external factors are particularly relevant to a youth's cessation from offending. Isolating the individual (internal) and situational (external) factors that contribute to cessation of delinquency is a large and complex task and relatively few studies have examined the dynamics of change these youths have undergone, however, theories on development, social-control and self-determination have been suggested as explanations in the initiation, maintenance and desistance from offending in youths.

Developmental perspectives. Adolescence is characterized by struggling with the process of individuation and identity formation. Blos' theory of individuation states that adolescence involves a process by which the individual is involved with development of relative independence from family relationships and with an increased capacity to assume a functioning role as an adult member of society (as cited in Archer, 1992). This theory seems particularly relevant to young offenders, as supported in the anecdotal accounts and empirical research which indicate that delinquent adolescents have a particular concern with a need for autonomy and self-control. Erikson discussed identity formation as the critical developmental goal in adolescence in which the individual develops a conscious sense of individual identity and continuity in their self-definition. If this is not achieved ego diffusion results, an uncertainty of who one is and what one will become in the future (as cited in Archer, 1992). High risk young offenders often exhibit a lack of direction or concern about their future which may be explained, in part, by a lack of ego identity. Further, delinquents who have stopped offending have reported a novel awareness and concern regarding their future. Another developmental theorist, Loevinger, describes adolescence as a stage marked by increasing complex functioning in terms of impulse control, character development, interpersonal relationships and cognitive complexity (as cited in Archer, 1992). Developmental delays in these areas may account for the difficulty young offenders have in these domains, and a "catch up" in development may partially account for the "maturing out" phenomenon observed with these youths.

Clearly, adolescence is a time of profound developmental change and is supported by the evidence of delinquents "maturing out" of their antisocial behaviour. Many cases of adolescent delinquency exhibit this natural maturing out, presumably the lower risk cases, while other cases do not. It is assumed that moderate to high risk young offenders are less likely to spontaneously mature out of delinquency because the greater number of risk factors increases their vulnerability to offend and recidivate. For those moderate to high risk youths who do demonstrate a cessation in offending, exploration of factors contributing to their behaviour change is warranted.

Social-control Theories. Bandura's social learning theory discusses the process of self-regulation as bringing one's behaviour in line with one's standards of conduct. It involves setting

standards of behaviour, comparing one's behaviour with the standards and self-reinforcing or self-instructing to maintain or modify behaviour depending upon how it fits with the standard (as cited in Andrews et al., 1992). Wiederanders (1988) reported that young offenders on parole had decided to make some behavioural changes and, if those attempted changes were rewarded, other changes would follow. Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) have postulated a social-control theory to explain behaviour control. Based on this theory, an individual controls his/her behaviour based on external influences (e.g., attachment to parents, commitment to education) in order to prevent damaging cherished relationships with these social groups (Mak, 1990). Individuals low in social control are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour because they are free to satisfy their needs in the most expedient manner (Agnew, 1993). This relationship is possibly moderated through the failure of others to satisfy the individual's needs and through social learning from delinquent peers (Agnew, 1993). Others speculate that both social and personal control are important in understanding self-reported delinquency (Mak, 1990).

Self-Determination Theories. Personal control has been described as the individual's ability to refrain from meeting needs in ways that conflict with social rules (Mak, 1990). This theory assumes that an individual appreciates the consequences of his/her behaviour (e.g., empathy) and therefore refrains from acting impulsively. If the individual is more sensitive to the expectations, needs, and emotions of others he/she may refrain from criminal behaviour to avoid disappointing them (Mak, 1990). The self-control concept has six elements: the ability to defer gratification, an ability to tolerate frustration, a tendency to be cautious rather than a risk-taker, engagement in long-term pursuits; a tendency to value cognitive skills, and an ability to empathize with others (Brownfield & Sorenson, 1993).

Data also indicate that internal modification of addictive behaviours occurs both with and without expert assistance (Prochaska et al., 1992). Similarly, Wiederanders (1988) has found that until delinquents have made the decision to change, intervention is generally not successful. Delinquents must make an internal decision to change, or have an intrinsic motivation for change, before attempts at intervention will be useful. Once the youth has made the decision to change then they are open to accepting help offered by professionals, at which time interventions may prove

fruitful. As with the pre-contemplation stage of addiction recovery, an unwillingness to acknowledge a delinquent self-concept (denial) must be overcome as a pre-requisite to recovery from offending (Newcomb et al., 1988). Byrd et al (1993) suggest that some offenders who acknowledge their delinquent orientation (delinquent self-concept) are better able to apply their personal resources toward control of their behaviour, as observed by less frequent offending. According to Wiederanders (1988), the youth is receptive to external interventions only after this stage of preparation has been reached. Furthermore, most young offenders are not motivated to change their delinquent way of life as long as it is in some way succeeding and rewarding (Jenkins & Brown, 1988).

Research on motivation for change has often centered around behavioural changes associated with addictions. Individuals with intrinsic motivation to stop smoking, relative to extrinsic, were more likely to achieve abstinence (Curry et al., 1990). Intrinsic motivation included methods of self-control, whereas extrinsic motivation included reinforcement contingencies and social influence (Curry et al., 1980). Self-determination theory suggests that autonomy is associated with intrinsic motivation and greater persistence of behaviour change (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Contexts that support autonomy by encouraging individuals to make their own choices are preferred over contexts that exert control over the behaviour, that is, pressuring toward a particular outcome. Behaviour change that is controlled by reinforcement will only persist as long as the controlling event is present. Therefore, change that is brought about by external controls is less likely to persist than behaviour change based on internal motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Self-determination is characterized by internalization, assimilating an external value and accepting it as one's own. Based on the self-regulation of behaviour, Deci and colleagues (1994) suggest that three contextual factors facilitate self-determination: providing a meaningful rationale for the belief, acknowledging the individual's feelings, and conveying a choice. The individual is more likely to internalize a prescribed value if he/she perceives a rational reason for the belief, and if the reason has meaning for that individual. The individual will likely have difficulty forfeiting old beliefs and values; acknowledgment of these feelings may ease the dissonance. Finally, providing the individual with choices offers him/her the opportunity to experience self-determination.

Factors Relevant to Delinquency and Desistance

A summary of variables demonstrated in the literature as risk factors for delinquency onset, recidivism, and desistance follows. Included in this summary are considerations about the possible implications for each factor's contribution to desistance from offending. Factors examined here include those which are considered malleable and may reflect changes in the youths' lives and possibly contribute to their desistance from offending.

Prior and current offenses/dispositions. Among the strongest single correlate of delinquency, recidivism, and disposition is the number of prior and current offenses (Clark, Fisher & McDougal, 1993; Kueneman, Linden & Kosmick., 1992; Niarhos & Routh, 1992). Furthermore, earlier age of onset is associated with poorer prognosis in re-offending (Farrington, 1990; Tolan & Lorion, 1988). Ultimately youths are responsible for changes in this domain. While they cannot change prior offences, they can modify their behaviour to prevent further charges.

Family circumstances/Parenting. Items the Risk/Need Assessment Form consider in this subsection include those associated with parental supervision and discipline in addition to quality of parent-child relationships. Research has provided equivocal results on whether these factors contribute a direct or indirect effect on the onset of delinquency and on recidivism (Andrews et al., 1992; LeBlanc, 1992). Some issues which have demonstrated significant importance in this area include: low levels of supervision; inconsistent or inappropriate discipline, including neglect or abuse; low levels of parental warmth, affection and support; criminality in the family of origin; and general parenting skill deficits (Andrews et al., 1992; Farrington, 1990; Henggeler, 1996; Moore et al., 1984). Contrary to earlier assertions, social class of origin has not significantly contributed to predicting recidivism while measures of family hardship (i.e. parental unemployment and long term reliance on welfare) have shown moderate correlations (Andrews et al., 1992).

The social-control theory postulates that the family system may act as a potential barrier to delinquency (Warr, 1993). The amount of time spent with family was related to reducing and eliminating criminal peer influences, possibly through inhibiting the initial formation of these associations (Warr, 1993). LeBlanc (1993) indicated that delinquents experience more family

adversity than non-delinquents. Farrington (1990) and others (Tolan & Lorion, 1988) also found family function to be the most important psychosocial variable predictive of recidivism. Delinquents, relative to nondelinquents, often have poorer indications on scales of family interaction (Bischof et al., 1995).

There is also some support for the suggestion that a lack of parent-child attachment predisposes children to later delinquency and contributes to their lack of empathy (Nelson & Lewak, 1988). Development of this attachment seems to be a protective factor (Farrington et al., 1988). Secure attachment provides the child with a sense of security, promotes ego development and provides a foundation for further emotional and interpersonal development (Rice, 1990). Both parenting practices (i.e., discipline) and family relationships (i.e., attachment/cohesion) have been implicated as contributors to delinquency (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1996). Children with a history of abuse and neglect, or general family problems, are more likely to recidivate (Dembo et al., 1995). Those children removed from their natural parent homes because of abuse and neglect, if able to attach to a surrogate parent, were less likely to become delinquent although emotional scars still interfered with optimal functioning as an adolescent (Nelson & Lewak, 1988). Affectionless control (neglect combined with overprotection) was related to increased delinquency, while lack of maternal bonding was the most important predictor of delinquency in one study (Mak, 1994). Family interaction and parenting variables have the potential for improvement, and therefore improvement in these areas may contribute to a positive change in delinquent behaviour. These are situational (external) variables which the young offender has little control over.

Research by LeBlanc suggests delinquents may decelerate criminal activity if, among other factors, they are better supervised, punished less and become more involved in family life (1993). Lutz and Baughman (1988) were not able to discriminate Recidivists from Desistors based on custody arrangements with parents in their assessment of delinquent youths who stopped offending. Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) observed changes in the home situation which often involved the youth or a disruptive parent leaving the family environment, making the home situation more manageable and less chaotic. The youths perceived the changes in relationships with family members to be a major contributing event toward their change in behaviour (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). Common themes expressed by these youths were of increased control over family relationships, relief at having

a more stable home situation, and pride in their independence (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). These themes were also expressed in individual accounts of desistance from offending in which liberation from a dysfunctional family home to a more structured, less chaotic environment characterized by supervision and support was perceived as instrumental to change (Brown, 1988; Tiberi, 1988). The recurrent theme of gaining independence and control seem to play a crucial role in change for these youths. Seydlitz (1991) found the effect of parental control on inhibiting delinquency was reduced as the subjects got older and was most effective in mid-adolescence. Furthermore, Brown (1988) indicated a need for guidance and encouragement (i.e., supervision and support) by a parent or other adult role-model (e.g., teacher, probation officer, or other professional) for youths with this new-found independence who were yet unprepared for making good choices and planning for the future. Aseltine (1995), however, reported that parental attachment and supervision were only weakly related to subsequent delinquency and drug use, while peers had a greater influence.

Education/Employment. Disruptive classroom and schoolyard behaviour, low achievement, truancy, and lack of employment are considered under this section. Problems with teacher relations and peer relations at school are also considered relevant to this section. The subsequent section, "Peer Relations", refers specifically to delinquent peers.

Low ratings in academic achievement and school failure have been predictive of recidivism (Dembo et al., 1995; Lutz & Baughman, 1988; Moore et al., 1984; Niarhos & Routh, 1992; Tolan & Lorion, 1988). A poorer attitude toward school, such as a lack of interest or below average effort, were also important in distinguishing delinquents from non-delinquents (Lutz & Baughman, 1988; Tolan & Lorion, 1988). Henggeler (1996) reported that low commitment to school and dropping out were correlated to delinquency. Some consider commitment to school and occupational goals a social control agent (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Mak, 1990), however, these may be considered internal variables which are changeable. LeBlanc (1993) found both delinquent and non-delinquent youths became more involved in paid work and more committed to education as they progressed from mid to late adolescence. These data further indicated that delinquents were more likely to decelerate criminal activity if they were more committed to the role of student and if they entered the workplace (LeBlanc, 1993). Obtaining employment was also reported as providing a sense of

worth and purpose to young offenders attempting to modify their delinquent behaviour (Brown, 1988; Rhodes, 1988). Achievement of job skills was reported as being associated with a cessation in delinquency, although there was no support indicating job training or job placement was directly involved in this behavioural change (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). Mulvey and Aber (1988) likewise found those youths reporting a low level of delinquency were more likely to be working than those reporting a high level of delinquency.

Difficulties in personal relationships with peers and teachers are also positively associated with delinquency. In addition to intrapersonal variables (e.g., shyness, weak empathy and isolation), interpersonal variables (rejection by peers and aggressiveness) are also pertinent to assessing the risk and needs of young offenders (Andrews et al., 1992). LeBlanc found as delinquent adolescents improved, attachment to persons in a position of authority increased (1993) as did identification with a socially-approved role model (Brown, 1988). This represents potential for a meaningful change in the interactions of delinquents and the adults they come in contact with as they progress to late adolescence.

Peer Relations. As alluded to previously, the focus of this subsection relates to the proportion of delinquent friends and acquaintances to positive friends and acquaintances. Associating with antisocial companions has consistently been correlated with past and future delinquent behaviour (Andrews et al., 1992; Henggeler, 1996). A negative relationship has also been demonstrated between isolation from non-criminal others and delinquency (Andrews et al., 1992). Although this is a situational variable, if so inclined, the youth does have the ability to effect a change in this area by limiting his/her associations with delinquent others.

Peers have been identified as both potential barriers to delinquency and potential instigators of delinquency (Warr, 1993). Reduction in antisocial peer associations and increases in identification and association with anti-criminal role models has been suggested to reduce delinquent behaviour (Brownfield & Thompson, 1991; LeBlanc, 1993; Wiederanders 1988). A developmental trend for both delinquent and non-delinquent youths is a decreased attachment to delinquent friends (LeBlanc, 1993). Further, if delinquents were more attached to conventional persons and increased their distance from delinquent peers, they may be more likely to exhibit desistance from offending

(LeBlanc, 1993). Those youths on parole who described a decrease in associations with delinquent friends during parole were more likely to be successful (Wiederanders, 1988). It is not clear, however, whether the change in delinquent associations precipitates or results from a reduction in delinquent behaviour.

Although a change in social networks occurred in youths who exhibited a cessation of offending, resulting in a smaller and less dense social network, this change was not perceived as dramatic by the youths and could likely be a regular shift of friends characteristic of adolescence (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). However, support from a significant other (e.g., a girlfriend or a sibling) was attributed by these youths as a major contributor to change and as a source of support during the process of change (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). These findings were mirrored by personal accounts of reformed delinquents who reported that one individual (family, friend or professional) was instrumental in encouraging successful behaviour change (Brown, 1988; Tiberi, 1988). The significant individual was said to have taken an interest; provided chances to succeed; and to have offered support, compassion and direction to the youth during the transition (Brown, 1988; Tiberi, 1988). Others were also seen as essential in helping ease through the transition by providing the youth with an opportunity to meet new positive acquaintances, however, acceptance by these peers is critical (Brown, 1988). Wiederanders (1988) also found young offenders on parole who rated their parole agent as being helpful were more likely to be parole successes.

Substance Abuse. This subsection of the Risk/Need Assessment Form examines the frequency of drug and alcohol use, the degree to which substance use interferes with physical and social functioning, and whether or not substance use is linked to offenses. A high incidence rate of substance abuse among young offenders has been reported and has consistently been linked to past and future criminality (Dembo et al., 1991; Farrington et al., 1988; Field, 1985; Henggeler, 1996; Niarhos & Routh, 1992; Vingilis et al., 1985; Wierson & Forehand, 1995).

Substance use and abuse often begin in adolescence. Prevalence rates for a general population of adolescents indicated relatively high rates for the use of alcohol (65.3%), cigarettes (29.6), marijuana/hashish (23.4%), and cocaine (6.2%) as reported by Johnston, O'Malley and Bachman (as cited in Kazdin, 1992). More conservative estimates were found for severe substance

use among a population of high school seniors by Dryfoos: 12% engaged in heavy smoking, 15% in heavy drinking, 5% in regular use of marijuana, and 3% in frequent use of cocaine (as cited in Kazdin, 1992). Field estimated the proportion of history of alcohol and/or drug problems is 7-8 times higher in an incarcerated population than in the general population (1985). These elevated rates are somewhat supported by data reporting on adolescents with conduct/oppositional disorders: abuse of marijuana occurred in 60% and abuse of alcohol in 48% of the sample (Stowell, 1991). Winters (1993) reported that in a sample of incarcerated young offenders almost 60% indicated a potential need for substance abuse treatment and 90% had indicated the use of at least one drug within the past year. Diagnosis of conduct disorder and substance abuse have a high co-occurrence rate in delinquent offenders. Of youths with a diagnosis of conduct disorder approximately 40% also report using alcohol or drugs at 15 years, and about 50% report using at 18 years. Overlap is highest as age increases and is associated with more serious levels of delinquency and drug use (Loeber & Keenan, 1994).

Although drug and alcohol use tend to reduce inhibitory behaviour and has been associated with the commission of crimes (Dembo et al., 1991; Field, 1985; Wierson et al., 1992), there is little evidence to suggest substance abuse leads to delinquency (Vingilis et al., 1985). Substance use in family members and peers has been correlated with drinking behaviour in adolescents (Vingilis et al., 1985) and, therefore, may be an important moderator of the relationship between substance use and delinquency. Wierson and Forehand (1995) found some support suggesting substance use may decrease natural inhibitory reactions to antisocial activity and increase vulnerability to persuasion by peers. Cognitions are also viewed as a mediating process in adolescent drug use, with self-acknowledged cognitive motivations considered important etiological factors in actual drug use in adolescents (Newcomb et al., 1988).

Some outcome data suggest treatment of substance abuse has a positive impact on reducing recidivism (Field, 1985) and provides some optimism that a change in this intrapersonal variable may be consistent with a change in offending. Further to this, Wierson and Forehand (1995) indicated substance abusing youths were more likely to receive rehabilitative services in conjunction with their sentences. Mulvey and LaRosa also observed a concomitant decline in drug use associated with cessation of delinquent behaviour (1986). Youths were less likely to recidivate if no drug or

alcohol problems were reported during their parole period (Wiederanders, 1988). Tiberi (1988), however, reported that the desire to change delinquent lifestyle was hindered by substance abuse. Again, it is unclear whether a decrease in substance abuse has a direct or indirect effect on reducing delinquent behaviour, or whether this is a manifestation of a general intrapersonal change in the individual (i.e., reflecting a greater sense of self-control).

Leisure/Recreation. Aimless use of leisure time (e.g., watching television, playing video games) has been associated with delinquency (Andrews et al., 1992; Dembo et al., 1995; Hoge et al., 1994). Examining interest or participation in organized activities and interests of a positive nature (e.g., hobbies, reading, sports) is also part of the Risk/Need Assessment Form. Involvement in conventional pursuits reduced delinquency by limiting the time available for deviant pursuits (Hirschi, 1969 as cited in Andrews et al., 1992). Shifting the rewards and costs to favour non-criminal activities over criminal activities has been suggested as a potentially effective strategy to reduce criminality in young offenders (Andrews et al., 1992). Paradoxically, LeBlanc (1993) found both delinquent and non-delinquent youths exhibited a trend of less involvement in organized leisure activities as they progressed from mid to late adolescence. These data indicate this variable is not stable, but rather it seems to shift as part of the natural developmental process. Of more relevance to this study, a reduction in loitering did increase the chances for a positive effect on delinquent behaviour (LeBlanc, 1993) although, the nature of this relationship is uncertain. It is unclear if the youths made a conscious effort to reduce their "aimless" use of leisure time, or whether the decrease was a by-product of a general change toward a pattern of more productive use of time. Furthermore, it is not evident whether external factors (e.g., new commitment to school/job) place time demands on the youth, limiting his/her time available for offending.

Personality/Behaviour. Related to temperament is the youth's activity level, impulsivity, and tendency toward aggression. Delinquents and recidivists have exhibited these behaviours to a greater degree, as evident in the high proportion of Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Personality Disorders (e.g., Borderline Personality Disorder) prevalent in these youths (Hollander & Turner, 1985; Wierson & Forehand, 1995).

ADHD is characterized by a short attention span and restless energy. These behavioural characteristics have both been related to delinquency (Andrews et al., 1992). Another feature of the disorder, which is also positively associated with delinquency and recidivism, is impulsivity (Mak, 1990; Moore et al., 1984). Behaviours related to the notion of impulsivity, which have been predictive of later delinquency, include adventurous pleasure seeking and taste for risk (Farrington, 1990). The treatment of ADHD may decrease symptoms such as impulse control and problem solving (Wierson et al., 1992). Decreased symptomatology resulting from treatment may indirectly impact the youth's global function and, as such, will be considered under general treatment interventions as possible contributors to change in delinquent behaviour.

Poor frustration tolerance and behavioural problems associated with aggression have also been major predictors of recidivism. Research has illustrated that delinquents interpret a wide range of stimuli as reasons for anger, respond to frustration more often as anger and aggression than anxiety and guilt, and tend to rely on aggression, and "non-reasoning" responses to others' anger or criticism (Andrews et al., 1992). There is some indication that aggression control training reflects positive treatment outcome (Basta & Davidson, 1988) and may contribute to a reduction in delinquent offending; however follow up research is minimal and limits conclusions of the effect of this internal variable on recidivism. Improved control over anger was cited by both Brown (1988) and Rhodes (1988) as contributing to the youths' successful desistance from offending.

One of the cardinal indicators of Conduct Disorder is absence of or weak empathy, such as an insensitivity to the wishes and feelings of others and inadequate feelings of guilt. Delinquents have been identified as having less empathy than non-delinquents (Mak, 1990). Andrews notes the importance of distinguishing empathy from other measures of antisocial propensity (e.g., attitudes and impulsivity) because it has been demonstrated to contribute to delinquency independently of measures of criminality (Andrews et al., 1992). Weak empathy is another factor that, while internal, tends to remain relatively stable throughout the life span. Yet, developmental theorists report delinquents who have stopped offending have reported a novel awareness and concern regarding their future (as cited in Archer, 1992). Adolescence is described as a stage marked by increasing complex functioning in terms of impulse control, character development, interpersonal relationships and cognitive complexity (Archer, 1992). Developmental delays in these areas may account for the

difficulty young offenders have in these domains, and a "catch up" in development may partially account for the "maturing out" phenomenon observed with these youths.

Attitudes/Orientation. The focus of this subsection deals with antisocial or pro-criminal attitudes (i.e., values, beliefs, and rationalizations) of the young offender. Failure to seek or active rejection of help and defiance of authority are also examined. Recent surveys of literature support internal variables of antisocial and anti-authority attitudes, values and beliefs as major correlates of delinquent behaviour (Andrews et al., 1992; Henggeler, 1996). Antisocial attitudes, values and beliefs are exhibited by a generalized indifference to the opinion of others, a high tolerance for deviance in general, and an insensitivity to conventional rules and procedures (Andrews et al., 1992).

Values of delinquents, relative to non-delinquents, reflected affirmation of work-related values but rejection of family related values (Ostrov, Offer & Howard, 1982). In their perceptions of illegal activities, delinquent youths tend to hold beliefs minimizing the importance, probability and severity of consequences of deviant and illegal actions through the use of denial and rationalization (Andrews et al., 1992). Evidence suggests that the style and content are different in delinquents in terms of thinking, interpreting, coping and defining situations (Andrews et al., 1992). A suggested target for intervention includes ensuring the client is able to recognize risky situations and has an alternate plan to deal with these situations (Andrews et al., 1992). The efficacy of cognitive-behavioural interventions with delinquents has been demonstrated (Basta & Davidson, 1988) indicating a potential for improvement in this area may ultimately be reflected in a reduction of delinquent offending.

Adolescents in general, and particularly delinquents, are characterized by an emphasis on freedom from adult control (Andrews et al., 1992). Delinquents exhibit this by defying authority and rejection of the validity of the law. Young offenders also tend not to seek out help, or to actively reject help which is offered (Andrews et al., 1992). As mentioned preciously, delinquents tend to exhibit a change toward a more positive attitude to, and affiliation with, authority figures as they mature (LeBlanc, 1993) offering some prospect as a moderator of delinquent behaviour.

Delinquents are further behind on measures of self- and social control at mid adolescence and, while developing at a faster rate than conventional adolescents still lag behind at late

adolescence (LeBlanc, 1993). In a study of the moral development of adolescents, Chandler and Moran (1990) found that non-delinquents showed greater moral maturity. In fact, delinquents were underdeveloped in all aspects measured: moral reasoning, understanding of social conventions, interpersonal awareness, socialization, and autonomy (Chandler & Moran, 1990). Knowledge itself was not predictive of non-delinquent behaviour, but willingness to act in accordance with what one believes to be right was predictive.

General developmental trends in adolescence, however, indicate a decline in parental constraints and a concomitant increase in self-control for delinquents and conventional youths alike (LeBlanc, 1993). LeBlanc suggests delinquents who show positive changes in areas of self- and social- control may be less likely to re-offend (1993). Changes in delinquents control, or perceived control, may play a significant role in contributing to a change in their behaviour. Achieving self-control over their environment was seen as a critical contribution to desistance from offending (Brown, 1988; Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986; Rhodes, 1988). This included the ability to extricate one's self from the external causative influences (i.e., negative familial environment and association with delinquent peers) which maintained delinquent behaviour. In spite of the growing sense of self-control demonstrated by delinquent adolescents, explanations of their criminal behaviour do not necessarily reflect this. Attributions for criminal behaviour, by adolescents and adults, include impaired internal control, external provocation, and randomized events (Harry, 1992). More serious criminals are less likely to accept responsibility for their actions, and are more likely to blame their accomplices or victims (Harry, 1992). The most common reasons reported for delinquency include utilitarian (seeking money or materialistic goods) and hedonistic (seeking excitement or pleasure) motivations (Farrington, 1993).

Measures of poor problem solving, poor coping, and self-regulation deficits are positively associated with delinquency (Andrews et al., 1992). Delinquents, compared to non-delinquents, showed inconsistent and extreme attitudes about their own selves and self-systems which reflected defensiveness and emotional injuries not common among non-delinquents (Ostrov et al., 1982). And while delinquent probationers' attributions of responsibility for their present status and for change were externalized, dimensions of self-esteem and social skills assumed greater significance in their reported attribution to their situation (Nair, 1994). Interventions with young offenders should then

target changes as: increased self-management, problem solving skills, self-esteem and social skills (Andrews et al., 1992). Basta and Davidson (1988) reported social skills training had a positive effect on increasing pro-social institutional behaviour of young offenders, but did not report on the effect on recidivism. A common theme in anecdotal reports of cessation of delinquency indicate the importance of an opportunity or ability to realize successes consistent with societal norms and values (Brown, 1988; Rhodes, 1988). These successes are reported to effect a growing sense of confidence and efficacy in the individual, to provide positive reinforcement for change, and to contribute to his/her commitment to a change in his/her lifestyle (Brown, 1988; Rhodes, 1988). Mulvey and Aber (1988) also found higher levels of social competence and person efficacy were related to lower levels of self-reported delinquency. While these intrapersonal variables have the potential for change, it is uncertain to what degree changes in these areas will moderate delinquent behaviour. It may be appropriate to think of adolescents with social skills as more likely to capitalize on certain opportunities (i.e. related to straightening out) than being influenced by particular events, therefore, the efficacy of teaching these skills at this stage of development is unclear but potentially helpful (Mulvey & Aber, 1988).

Other Relevant Factors. Some of the factors addressed in this section of the Risk/Need Assessment Form refer to individual and situational characteristics that may be relevant to assessing the risk and needs of the individual, although not directly to recidivism per se (e.g., issues of historical abuse, affective disorders, suicide attempts, physical and health problems, and low verbal intelligence) (Binder, 1988; Farrington, 1990; Hollander & Turner, 1985; Wierson & Forehand, 1995). Due to the stable nature of these factors it is unlikely that they will change significantly. Another stable factor is gender. Juvenile delinquency is viewed predominantly as a male disorder, with males outnumbering females approximately 3 to 1 (Kueneman et al., 1992; Moore & Arthur, 1989). And although being male and young (14-24 years) are important predictors of criminal behaviour, the major correlates of delinquency are evident regardless of the gender of the youth (Andrews et al., 1992). Henggeler's (1996) multisystemic approach to delinquency also suggests that neighborhood and community systems are relevant. The prevalence of a criminal subculture, frequent transitions, and low availability of social support have been correlated with delinquency

(Henggeler, 1996). Delinquents have also reported a greater degree of life stress than non-delinquents, as assessed by the Life Change Event Scale (Novy & Donohue, 1985). Although the youth has little control over these external systems modification is possible through multisystemic treatment. This is reviewed further in a subsequent "treatment" section.

Treatment as a Potential Contributor to Change

Treatment for young offenders may vary widely. Counselling may be in individual, group or family formats. It may be focused on social, vocational or coping skills training; or may be related to substance abuse, depression, or other mental or emotional disorders. A broad range of therapeutic backgrounds may also be employed (cognitive-behavioural, family, systemic, etc.). A thorough review is not going to be attempted for the purpose of this study, however, a brief analysis is indicated since many young offenders receive treatment which could contribute to their cessation in offending. A sample of studies will be reviewed that investigate the effect of treatment on recidivism.

Basta and Davidson (1988) conducted a review of treatment outcome studies and reported that behavioural interventions generally had positive outcomes. Further investigation reveals that these tend to have a positive effect on pro-social attitudes and within program behaviours, but generalization beyond the treatment setting remains problematic. Counselling and therapy have also been generally reflective of positive outcomes (Basta & Davidson, 1988). Interventions that are more specific and tied to the youth's individual problems tend to be more successful. Field (1985) reported that substance abusing offenders who underwent counselling for substance abuse were more likely to remain out of prison (70%) compared to those who did not complete the program (25%). This suggests that drug free living may be an important part of crime free living for offenders who have substance abuse issues. Baer and colleagues (1975) found that the completion of an Outward Bound program was associated with non-recidivism at a five year follow-up. This suggests that certain treatments are effective at long-term reduction in offending behaviour. Attributes such as effort (willingness to learn, cooperative, attentive attitude), maturity (easygoing, patient), and leadership (decisive, adherence to rules) were associated with non-recidivism. These factors also represent a capacity to change and adapt, and a greater likelihood to profit from intervention.

However, in their review of treatment outcome studies, Basta and Davidson (1988) found that deterrence and wilderness programs generally had poor results, especially on recidivism.

A cognitive approach to intervention prior to trial seemed to produced mixed results in a sample of young offenders (Wright et al., 1994). A more positive attitude toward police and courts, greater victim empathy and a stronger tendency to view the probation officer as supportive were benefits of the therapy. However, increased susceptibility to deviant peers and external influences and decreased empathy towards others (non-victim) were also observed. Others studies (Izzo & Ross, 1990; Valliant et al., 1995) suggest that treatments which include a cognitive component (such as: problem solving skills, negotiation skills, interpersonal skills training; rational emotive therapy, role play or modeling) have had some success in changing offender behaviours by restructuring behaviour patterns and modifying cognitions. In fact, Izzo and Ross (1990) reported that those interventions including at least one cognitive component were more than twice as effective in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, relative to interventions that did not have a cognitive component.

A multi-faceted treatment program for youths with emotional, educational and legal problems was evaluated (Traynelis-Yurek, 1988). The program was based on a peer group model; had a special education school, wilderness therapy, parent programs and an outreach aftercare program. A ten year follow up indicated that longer stay and maturity (defined by age only) was associated with better recidivism outcomes. Minor (1994) found no effect on locus of control, no reduction in offences, and no modification of self-concepts in a program that involved interventions in job preparation, short term outdoor adventure, and family relationships.

A multisystemic intervention that has been emerging as one of the most successful interventions for a variety of problems of adolescent psychopathology (addiction, schizophrenia, delinquency) is described by Henggeler (1986). The child is embedded in multiple systems that exert direct and indirect influences on behaviour. A combination of individual, family and peer variables has been able to account for a large percentage of variance in the prediction of criminal activity. The relationship between these individual factors (e.g., poor social skills, problem solving strategies) and external systems (family, peer group, school) is reciprocal and bidirectional. Therefore effective intervention should consider characteristics of the adolescent and his/her environment as possible

targets for change. Unlike other Family Therapy models, this "family-ecological" model, or multisystemic treatment (MST), recognizes that intervention in extra-familial systems may also be necessary in order to translate into the desired behavioural changes in youth. Compared to an alternative treatment group in which delinquent youths received one type of treatment (family or individual counselling, recreational or social adjustment, alternative educational experiences, etc), youths who received family-ecological intervention showed the greatest reduction in conduct problems, anxious-withdrawn behaviours, immaturity, and associations with delinquent peers (Henggeler, 1986). Furthermore, these youths also demonstrated improved mother-child relationships and became more involved in familial interactions. The juveniles in the alternative treatment group demonstrated no positive changes, in fact, a deterioration in affective relationships was observed. More recently, Henggeler and colleagues (1993) reported a significant reduction in rates of criminal activity and incarceration in juvenile offenders and multi-need families 2.4 years following MST, relative to a group who received "usual probation services". Significant positive effects of MST relative to an individual therapy group was demonstrated in a sample of high risk juvenile offenders (Bourdin et al., 1995). MST was more effective in preventing future criminal behaviour at a 4 year follow-up, and a general reduction in behaviour problems in the youth was observed. Additional improvement was observed in family correlates of offending and adjustment problems in the family. Family relationships were described as more cohesive and adaptive, while family interactions indicated greater levels of support and reduced conflict. Henggeler (1996) suggests that when the multiple correlates of delinquency are addressed in treatment, through the delivery of flexible, individualized and comprehensive based services to youths and their families, rates of serious juvenile offending decrease.

Since delinquency is multi-determined with contributions from many factors across multiple settings, any treatment approach with a narrow focus is not likely to succeed with delinquents (Henggeler, 1993). Yoshikawa (1994) also suggests that interventions which combine comprehensive family support with early education may have protective or preventative effects on children with multiple risks. These findings suggest that MST can have significant short term and lasting effects with delinquent youth in reducing recidivism, enhancing familial relationships. At this point, however, the mechanisms for these changes are not known. It is unclear if interpersonal

relationships in general are improved, if the youth's self-concept is improved, or some other function accounts of the desired changes in behaviour.

The Process of Change

Desistance can occur spontaneously, in the absence of external interventions, or as a result of legal sanctions (Sommers et al., 1994). Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) have suggested that desistance is a process: the decision to stop offending is preceded by a variety of factors, often including social sanctions; this is followed by efforts to sustain and reinforce the changed behaviour, including forming ties to new lifestyle and social network and replacing old behaviours. The proposed models of desistance from offending draw from, and thus have many similarities with, literature on addictions. Both areas of research provide theories of how people change their behaviour of their own volition.

The Process of Change model from the addictions research may also be applicable to this population. This assumption is based on the overlap between substance abuse and criminality, the similarities in relapse and recidivism, and the generalized implication of motivation in behavioural change. Conduct disorder and substance abuse have a high co-occurrence rate in delinquent offenders; comorbidity is greatest with more serious levels of both delinquency and drug use (Loeber & Keenan, 1994). The strong association between criminality and substance abuse is further highlighted by treatment programs designed toward their mutual reduction (Farabee et al., 1993). Treatment of substance abuse in young offenders has led to a reduction in criminal offending (Field, 1985). A link has been drawn between relapse and recidivism (Howell & Enns, 1995). Relapse prevention in substance abuse involves means of maintaining therapeutic gains following treatment (Howell & Enns, 1995), likewise the aim of the juvenile justice system is, ultimately, to prevent recidivism. Certain personal and environmental high risk factors increase the probability of recurrence of maladaptive behaviours, both in delinquent and addiction populations. By learning to identify personal and environmental factors associated with high risk situations and developing coping strategies to deal with them more adaptive behavioural patterns are maintained (Howell & Enns, 1995). There is some suggestion that the Relapse Prevention approach may be most relevant to those at highest risk (Howell & Enns, 1995). Motivation is an important factor in the treatment

of psychopathology. Without proper motivation, people will fail to enter, continue in, comply with and succeed in treatment. Described as the "unmotivated patient syndrome" the common denominator is lack of motivation which is reflected in populations including underachievers, addicts, criminals, and delinquents (Nir & Cutler, 1978). Increased motivation is associated with better relapse outcomes in substance abusers (Farabee et al., 1993). A parallel may be relevant to criminal behaviour, with motivation indicative of better recidivism outcomes. Perhaps, like relapse, cessation from recidivism requires the same commitment to change. While clearly there is a link between substance abuse and offending, the mechanism of the relationship presently is not understood. Substance abuse is only one dimension of assessing criminogenic risk, however the overlap bears further exploration to elucidate functional relationships. Prochaska and colleagues (1994) have made the link between adult addictions to adolescent offending with this model. They have applied the model to adolescents in assessing changes for addictive behaviours (cessation of cigarette smoking) and have extended the model to adolescent delinquent behaviours in a sample of youths in grades 6 through 11. Commonalities were found on the psychometric properties and the pattern of change across stages on the sample of adolescents. However, the applicability of this Change model with young offenders remains unclear and merits further exploration.

This literature consistently indicates five stages of change. Pre-contemplation is the primary stage in which there is no intention to change behaviour in the foreseeable future. The individual is unaware, or under-aware, of his/her problem and would only seek help due to external pressure. The stage in which people are aware that a problem exists and are seriously thinking about overcoming it but have not yet made a commitment to take action is called the stage of Contemplation. The individual weighs the pro's and con's of the behaviour and the costs of overcoming it. Serious consideration of problem resolution within the next six months is the critical characteristic of this stage, however the individual may remain "stuck" at this stage for a long time. The subsequent stage, Preparation, is a decision making stage that combines intention and behavioural criteria. It involves the intent to take action in the next month; the individual may have made some initial, very small, behavioural changes. In the Action stage, the individual modifies his/her behaviour or environment in order to overcome the problem. It involves overt behavioural changes and requires considerable commitment of time and energy. The criteria for this stage is

successful alteration of the addictive behaviour for a period of one day to six months. Modification of the target behaviour to an acceptable criterion and significant overt efforts to change are the hallmarks of action. The final stage proposed is that of Maintenance in which the individual must continue to work to prevent relapse and consolidate gains attained during the action stage. This is characterized by stabilizing behavioural change and preventing relapse.

Various components, or processes, of change are outlined. These processes work to effect change in a variety of intrapersonal variables associated with insight into one's problem and motivation to change. Consciousness raising involves increasing information about oneself and the problem. Self re-evaluation involves assessing how one feels and thinks about oneself with respect to the problem. Choosing and commitment to act, or belief in ability to change, is referred to as self-liberation. Counter-conditioning involves substituting alternative, desirable behaviours for problem behaviours, while stimulus control involves avoiding stimuli that elicit problem behaviours. Reinforcement management involves rewarding oneself, or being rewarded by others, for making changes. Helping relationships pertains to being open and trusting about problems with someone who cares. Environmental re-evaluation is assessing how one's problem affects the physical environment. Prochaska and colleagues (1992) assert that efficient self-change depends on doing the right things (processes) at the right times (stages). Change processes have been good predictive indicators of outcome in the treatment of addictive behaviours (Prochaska et al., 1992). It seems plausible that the same would hold true for predicting desistance from offending in young offenders, given the findings of Mulvey and LaRosa. That is, young offenders who stop offending seem to go through a similar process of change as addicts in recovery.

The University of Rhode Island Change Assessment scale, also called the Change Assessment Scale (CAS), was developed to measure stages of motivation and has been used to match clients to treatment for addiction services (Prochaska et al., 1992). This scale has been used and validated with different populations involved in psychotherapy. The majority of research with this instrument has been conducted with samples of alcohol and drug users, however, it has also been demonstrated as a useful tool to assess the stages of change for drug-using incarcerated female offenders (El-Bassel et al., 1990). While the literature consistently refers to the five stages of change, McConaughy and colleagues (1983) found four main factors (pre-contemplation,

contemplation, action, and maintenance) in a sample of substance abusers.

Models of Desistance from Offending

Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) considered adolescent antisocial behaviour as a part of a pattern of behaviour over time, rather than a static adolescent disorder. There is unequivocal evidence of the process of natural cessation, in which many youths "grow out" of delinquent activity (Farrington, 1990; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986) although there remains little understanding of this process. Antisocial behaviour is initiated, maintained and stopped at different ages and as a result of a number of individual and situational factors (Mulvey & Aber, 1988). Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) postulated that the reasons for stopping delinquency may be integrally related to the particular developmental influences of adolescence, since a significant decline in delinquent behaviour tends to naturally occur during this stage (Farrington, 1990; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983). Because of the limited guidelines for assessing the transition from delinquency to desistance, factors related to recovery from drug use and cessation of adult criminal activity) were considered.

Mulvey and LaRosa found that all youths who exhibited a cessation in offending could readily identify a time period as a clear marker of gradual but significant change (1986). Anecdotal reports by individuals who became reformed young offenders also describe a theme of identifiable incidents as a motivator for change (Brown, 1988; Rhodes, 1988; Tiberi, 1988). Cognitive change seemed to precede actual behavioural change. The youths indicated making a conscious decision to change their lives for the better but took a while to translate the resolve into an everyday routine (Brown, 1988; Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986; Rhodes, 1988; Tiberi, 1988; Wiederanders, 1988). The cognitive changes included a reordering of priorities, internal resolve that enabled them to change, developmental awareness of one's future and implications of present actions for guaranteeing a desirable adult life (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). It seems that the youths enter a state of cognitive readiness and then take an active role in precipitating positive change. This sets the stage for a gradual process of withdrawal from delinquent activity (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). The study suggested that future research investigate factors that might mediate or promote this cognitive reappraisal, however, this area has been neglected in the past decade.

At some identifiable point in the lives of Desistors, an awareness of their future becomes apparent. With this new-found insight the youth re-examines the direction of his life and discovers a discrepancy between where they are headed in the future and what they desire. In an attempt to reduce this disparity, the youth develops a desire to change his/her established path. Rhodes (1988) reported a lack of interests, sense of worth/purpose and a lack of direction for the youth's future and Brown (1988) indicated that obtaining employment provided the youth with a sense of purpose, confidence and efficacy. Brown (1988) also reported the importance of an ability to identify long-range goals which established a reason for an alternate, socially conforming lifestyle. Socially acceptable successes (e.g., employment, graduation) were described as providing a new perception of life and giving life new meaning (Brown, 1988). Furthermore, prior to desistance from offending, young offenders (and adults) tend to attribute the causes for their delinquency to external force. Any expectations for change are also perceived to be the responsibility of, or at least will be the result of, changes in situational factors. It seems the youths do not accept responsibility for the control of their behaviour. However, Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) found that youths who had exhibited the desired change in behaviour attributed the change to an internal desire which was supported by external sources. This researcher suggests that the internal factors play a role in motivating the desire to change, while external factors may be important in maintaining the change in behaviour.

Based on addictions literature, Sommers and colleagues (1994) have proposed a model of desistance for crime based on their sample of adult female street offenders. The model proposes three distinct stages involved in the cessation of criminal behaviour: Catalysts, Discontinuance, and Maintenance. In the first stage, an individual must build resolve, or discover motivation to stop offending. This is often described as a "turning point" in which a conscious decision is made following some negative experience. Catalysts might include socially disjunctive experiences (tiredness, hitting "rock bottom") or delayed deterrence (fear of sanctions). Part of the decision-making stage includes assessment -- a reappraisal of life goals and criminal activity. Discontinuance consists of a public pronouncement of the decision to stop offending and staking a claim to a new social identity. Leaving the deviant subculture which they have been socially embedded in is difficult. The individual must cope with instrumental aspects of his/her new lifestyle and redefine important relationships. The responses of social control agents (family and peers) to support their

decision is critical to shaping the outcome. Finally, the maintenance of the decision to stop is dependent upon one's ability to successfully re-negotiate a new identity and a new social network. In this sample, treatment groups provided continuing support to maintain a lifestyle free of crime and substance abuse. While this model may bear some application to the cessation of adolescent offending, results were based on chronic offenders who had serious drug addictions and who were living on the street. It is difficult to disentangle the myriad of obstacles experienced by these women. Given the severity of their concerns and the pervasive behaviour changes required to adopt a lifestyle free of crime and substance abuse, that study may not provide an appropriate reference sample to the young offenders considered in this study.

The Proposed Model of Desistance from Offending

The model proposed in this study postulates that a conscious decision to change is made based on re-evaluation of the individual's future and insight regarding his/her "problem" behaviour. This is similar to the contemplation stage in the Process of Change. It is characterized by an awareness of the problem, a desire for change involving increasing autonomy and control, and a re-evaluation of his/her life direction occurring at an identifiable time. The youths then move toward action by implementing minor changes in the stage similar to Preparation. The youth shifts attributions of responsibility for his/her actions and future from external forces to internal ones, developing a sense of self-control. Based on the decision to change their lifestyle, they attempt some small changes in behaviour in an attempt to gain independence and a greater sense of control over their environment. The extension of these changes, comparative to the Maintenance stage, is contingency based: if the youth is rewarded for making these minor changes and receives social support throughout the transition, this provides encouragement to maintain the commitment to change and provides motivation to attempt greater changes. If, however, the small changes are not rewarded the youth is not provided with any incentive or encouragement to attempt further changes and will likely resume his/her antisocial behavioural patterns, as observed in relapse. It should also be noted that recidivists who have not reached an awareness that their delinquent behaviour is problematic would be at the Pre-contemplation stage, and would remain in the justice system.

The Present Study

The intent of this study was to explore factors that contribute to successful cessation of delinquency in young offenders and, therefore, focussed on a sample of Desistors while using Recidivists as a comparison group. This research is applicable to the current young offender system in Ontario because it involved the assessment of a current population of offenders. It also explored factors related to a reduction in the risk of re-offending, in particular for moderate to high risk offenders. This information will hopefully provide us with insights about how we can encourage, promote and assist in the change process of youths who persistently re-offend.

By exploring possible changes in experience (risk factors and life events) and the stage of change the youth is in, differential patterns between Desistors and Recidivists were examined. Desistors and Recidivists were predicted to be similar initially (based on Risk/Need Assessment) and that, over the past year, Desistors would have experienced “changes” that account for their cessation in delinquency. It was hypothesized that Desistors would indicate having experienced a greater number of positive changes and fewer negative changes in the past year relative to Recidivists. On attributions for their behaviour (desistance or recidivism), Desistors were expected to report more internal attributions and motivations for change, while Recidivists were expected to report more external attributions for continued re-offending. Finally, it was anticipated that Desistors would endorse more items reflecting motivation and commitment to change. In addition to these hypotheses, other areas for exploratory consideration included group differences in: Risk/Need data, treatment received; and perceived helpfulness of treatment. Support for existing models of desistance from offending was also explored.

Method

Subjects

Twenty subjects in each of the two groups (Desistor and Recidivist) participated in this study. Subjects were obtained from Probation Services and had to have been on probation for at least eight months prior to data collection (June 1996 or earlier). Additional inclusion criteria allowed only subjects who, at the beginning of their probation periods, were Phase I Young Offenders (ages 12 years to 15 years 11 months) and who were rated as moderate (9-26) or high (27-34) risk on the Ministry Risk/Need Assessment by Probation Services.

The criteria for determining status (Desistor or Recidivist) was based on a minimum of eight months since the youth's self-reported date of last offence. This was chosen over criminal code convictions for several reasons. Offence convictions can, at times, take longer than 12 months after the date the crime was committed. While the charge is pending, the individual may have experienced important changes and stopped offending. Furthermore, individuals who are committing crimes which go undetected would not best be considered "Desistors" for the purpose of this study. Once confidentiality was ensured, subjects seemed very forthright in disclosing the approximate date of their last offence. In addition, if youths reported only a minor charge (e.g., status offence such as drinking under age or a breach of curfew) in the past eight months, this was not considered serious enough to classify them as a "Recidivist". Offences considered "serious" included any thefts or assaults, whether or not the youth was caught or charged. This rationale is based on the degree of improvement in the young offender. The exclusion of cases with minor charges has been done previously in this area of research (Mulvey & Aber, 1988). Further, Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) argued that desistance from offending is less valid for low risk offences than for risky offences, as measures of self-control. A juvenile who is assessed as moderate to high risk who has desisted from committing a serious offense for 8 months will have demonstrated a meaningful change in behaviour. Furthermore, LeBlanc (1993) suggests deceleration, as opposed to abstinence, of criminal activity as a predictive indicator of the end of the criminal career.

Materials

The self-report questionnaire that was administered to all subjects was compiled and designed by the researcher in consultation with Probation Services. It consisted of a Demographic information section (date of birth, gender, culture, and date of last offence) and three main sections: Life Changes Survey, Treatment and Interventions, and a short form of the Change Assessment Scale. In addition to this self-report measure, scores were obtained from the Risk/Need Assessments completed by Probation Services as part of the youth's intake evaluation near the beginning of their current probation period.

Development of the self-report measure. Because this is a novel area of investigation, there are no pre-existing measures that assess the relevant life change events reported by Desistors (Jenkins & Brown 1988; Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986). In the development of the self-report measure, the researcher was trying to obtain information on the changes that had occurred in the Desistors' lives over the past year that might account for the current behaviour regulation. Changes that have occurred in Recidivists lives were also examined so that group differences could be explored.

In the Life Changes Survey section of the questionnaire some items were generated based on findings from research on negative correlates of recidivism relating to the Risk/Need Assessment Form, essentially operationalizing the Risk/Need Assessment form. Additional items were generated based on factors that Desistors attributed to changes in their behaviour identified by Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) and in Jenkins and Brown (1988). A summary of findings referred to for item generation follows:

1. Desistors experience a greater awareness or insight into the consequences of their behaviour (costs of punishment, future direction). Mulvey and Aber (1988) found that all delinquents in their sample voiced a clear perception of the distinction between juvenile and adult correctional systems in which the adult system was perceived as having very serious sanction; however this had no observed effect on deterrence. Youths who did stop re-offending seemed to perceive a higher cost of punishment as they felt they now had more to lose (e.g., important romantic relationship, employment) and felt a greater investment in their future success resulting in a desire and commitment to change. This cognitive "readiness" has been described as a decision to re-order

priorities which often precedes actual behavioural changes (e.g., cessation of offending).

2. Desistors began to accept responsibility for their behaviour and future. Attributions switch from external to internal; they become more committed to social responsibility: have a greater commitment to job/school with a concurrent increase in more productive use of time. This commitment to education, employment, or a significant interpersonal relationship reflects greater cognitive maturation with respect to a focus on the future direction of the youths' lives and the acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour. The reduction in aimless use of leisure time may be another indicator of assuming responsibility for their behaviour and a greater commitment to a productive future.

3. A decline in drug and/or alcohol use/abuse is observed in young offenders who have stopped re-offending. This may indicate a greater sense of control the youths feel they are able to exert over themselves and their environment.

4. Similarly, if the youths feel a greater sense of control over their environment, and themselves, a reduction in aggression and greater anger management may also be observed.

5. Improvement in family function may be evidenced by the improvement in interpersonal interactions within the previously existing family structure (e.g., improved supervision and better, more consistent discipline), or it may be observed by the removal of the youth or troublesome parent from the family environment. Family variables such as cohesion-conflict, or organized-disorganized may show improvement. A more manageable, stable, less chaotic environment has been observed in youths who stop re-offending, providing the youth with a greater sense of independence. This situational variable is also related to ego maturation with respect to the youth's increased sense of control over his/her environment and sense of autonomy.

6. Associated with the cessation of delinquency is a concurrent reduction in the number of delinquent peers and/or the extent of contact with those delinquent peers. Also an increase in associations with positive (non-delinquent) peers is expected and an affiliation with a significant individual instrumental to their transition. This may also be related to the internal ego maturational variables in that the youth may be developing their own sense of identity and, therefore, be less susceptible to peer influence or that the association with a delinquent peer group does not fit with their ideal self concept once they have made the decision to stop offending.

7. An opportunity for success is also important for youths who have stopped re-offending. It is expected that they will have been provided with an opportunity for success from an external source. This may be observed in an employer giving them "a chance", or a professional facilitating their academic success. This would also relate to the internal variable of the youth's attitude about self-competence; encouraging the youth to succeed serves to enhance their self-efficacy.

Based on these findings, items were generated to assess the potential changes in "risk factors" as identified above. To balance for the positive bias of the questions generated by the researcher, items from an adolescent version of the Life Change Event Scale (Yeaworth et al., 1980) were included. The Life Change Event Scale (LCES) is believed to provide an indication of the stress level an adolescent is experiencing. Using face validity, all the items were then categorized according to the Risk/Need Factors. The subsections include: Family circumstances and parenting; Education/employment; Peer relations; Substance abuse; Leisure/recreation; Personality/Attitudes; and Other. The Personality and Attitude sections of the Risk/Need instrument were collapsed into one questionnaire category because of overlapping variables and concepts. Prior and current offences were assessed by one item included in the "Other" category. The Life Changes Survey section of the questionnaire consists of a checklist of dichotomous (yes/no) responses in which the youths are asked to indicate whether the statements reflect a change in their lives in the past year. At the end of each subsection the subjects are then asked to indicate important contributors to changing or maintaining their delinquent behaviour. Because of the differential wording for Desistors and Recidivists for this qualitative section, two different forms of the questionnaire were used (see Appendix A).

For exploratory purposes, an assessment of potential treatment interventions was included as a separate section. A list of possible treatments and interventions that the youths may have received based on their criminogenic need factors was generated. The subjects were asked to indicate (yes/no) services they had received in the past 12 months, and then to rate the degree to which they found those services helpful (2=very helpful, 1=somewhat helpful, 0=not at all helpful).

A measurement of the five stages of change associated with addiction recovery, the University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale (CAS) (McConaughy et al., 1983), was modified to be used with young offenders and constituted the final section of the questionnaire. The

original format consists of 32 statements indicating perception of "the problem" and motivation to change. The statements were modified to reflect criminal or delinquent behaviour rather than the generic "problem" of the original items intended for substance abusers. The subjects respond by indicating the degree to which he/she agrees or disagrees with the statement on a five point Likert rating scale. Consideration was given to the length of Self-Report being utilized, the subsequent demands on the subjects, and the uncertain applicability of this concept to the population of interest. Given these issues, a brief form of the CAS was created. While the literature consistently refers to the five stages of change, McConaughy and colleagues (1983) found four main factors (pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance) in a sample of substance abusers. The brief form of the CAS was created comprising eight questions: the two items with the highest loading for each of the four factors.

The Risk/Need Assessment instrument was completed by Probation Officers early in the subjects' probation period. Individuals were rated as low to high on the eight categories of the risk need assessment. A copy of the Risk/Need Assessment instrument is provided in Appendix B. The sum of these categories reflect the overall score which can range from low to very high (see Table 1).

Procedure

Although longitudinal studies are popular to assess changes in behaviour, Hirschi and Gottfredson (1983) have argued that retrospective designs are sufficient to examine desistance from offending. A pool of potential subjects (Desistors and Recidivists) was identified by Probation Officers from the District of Thunder Bay. Initial contact with potential subjects was made by individual Officers. Once verbal or written consent was obtained by the Officer, the researcher contacted the youths and arranged individual appointments to administer the questionnaires. In cases where the Officer was not able to secure a signed consent form (see Appendix C) prior to the appointment, this was completed before the questionnaire was administered. Subjects were selected who were at least eight months into their current probation period so they could be assessed near the end of their 12 month order. After demographic information was collected, verbal instructions were given for the Life Changes Survey section of the questionnaire. The researcher remained with the

youths to assist with any difficulties or queries they had while completing the self-report measure.

Further instructions were given when the subjects reached the additional sections of the questionnaire. The average time to complete the questionnaire was approximately 30 minutes.

Data Reduction

Because there were many individual items on the questionnaire, the data were summarized in the following areas. Demographic variables included date of birth, approximate date of last offence, ethnicity (Native or Non-Native), and gender. Age was calculated by subtracting the date of birth from the date of assessment. Similarly, the elapsed time since re-offending was calculated by subtracting the reported date of last offence from the date of assessment.

Data from the questionnaire categories were converted into "positive" and "negative" changes for each of the categories: Family and parenting, Education and employment, Peer relations, Substance use, Leisure and recreation, Personality and attitudes, and Other. Responses to items were judged to reflect positive, negative, or neutral changes a priori. For example, a "yes" response to the item "Members of my family are getting along better with each other" was considered positive while a "no" response to the same item was considered negative; a "yes" response to the item "I have quit school" was judged to reflect a negative change, while a "no" response to the same item was considered neutral (key submitted as Appendix D). The number of positive and negative changes were then tallied to reflect the two scores per category. No positive changes were identified a priori for the Other category, so only negative changes for that category were included in analyses. Positive and negative changes on Leisure and recreation were perfectly correlated, $r(40) = -1.00$, $p = .000$, therefore the negative changes score was omitted from analyses. Appendix D also provides a display of the categories; the number of items for each; and the number of positive, negative, and neutral changes for each category.

Responses to items derived from the Adolescent Life Change Experiences Scale (LCES) were collapsed into one score. This was done by simply tabulating the number of responses from the scale that were endorsed by each subject, the standard method for this scale (Novy & Donohue, 1985). A higher scores is believed to reflect a greater level of stress. In addition, the number of treatment modalities received by each subject was summed. A helpfulness rating was given for each

treatment type received, based on a three point scale. These scores were then averaged across treatment type reflecting an overall treatment “helpfulness” rating.

Responses from the short version of the Change Assessment Scale (CAS) were transformed into stages of change scores (Precontemplation, Contemplation, Action, and Maintenance) and an overall Readiness to change score. The eight item version included two items for each of the four stages. The subjects’ responses, based on a five-point Likert rating scale, were averaged for each of the four categories. The overall Readiness score was calculated, as recommended by Prochaska and colleagues (1992), by summing the average contemplation, action and maintenance scores (calculated in previous step) and subtracting the average precontemplation score. This produces scores ranging from a minimum of -2 to the maximum score of 14. Higher scores are reflective of individuals who are more ready to change.

Scores obtained from Probation Services on the subjects' Risk/Need Assessment included scores for each of the eight categories and a total score; no adjustments were made to these scores. A summary of all relevant dependent and independent variables is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Dependent and Independent Variables.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES				
Questionnaire Data:				
		Max. Score for	Max. Score for	
		Positive Changes	Negative Changes	
Family and Parenting		8	12	
Employment and Education		8	11	
Peer Relations		9	9	
Substance Abuse		4	4	
Leisure and Recreation		4	4	
Personality and Attitudes		12	14	
Other		N/A	3	
		Minimum Score	Maximum Score	
Life Change Event Scale (LCES)		0	31	
Treatment (Number received)		0	N/A	
Helpfulness (Overall treatment helpfulness rating)		0	2	
Change Assessment Scale:				
		Minimum Score	Maximum Score	
Precontemplation		1	5	
Contemplation		1	5	
Action		1	5	
Maintenance		1	5	
Overall Readiness Score		-2	14	
Risk/Need Assessment Data:				
		Risk Rating Categories		
	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Risk 1-Offences	0	1-2	3-5	N/A
Risk 2- Family	0-2	3-4	5-6	N/A
Risk 3- Education	0	1-3	4-7	N/A
Risk 4- Peers	0-1	2-3	4	N/A
Risk 5 - Substance Use	0	1-2	3-5	N/A
Risk 6- Leisure	0	1	2-3	N/A
Risk 7- Personality	0	1-4	5-7	N/A
Risk 8- Attitudes	0	1-3	4-5	N/A
Overall Score	0-8	9-26	27-34	35-42
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:				
Status: (based on length of time since previous offence, in months)				
Desistor (min. 8 months since date of last offence)				
Recidivist (< 8 months since date of last offence)				
CONFOUND VARIABLES:				
Gender				
Age				
Culture (Native vs. Non-native)				

Results

All data analyses were conducted using the SPSS version 6.1 program for Windows. For multivariate data (Questionnaire data, CAS data, and Risk/Need data) separate Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVAs) were conducted. In order to minimize the chances of a Type I error, univariate analyses were examined only if the multivariate test revealed a significant difference (alpha .05) between the groups. In addition to F values and significance levels, the proportion of variance accounted for (η^2) by each variable was also reported for univariate tests.

Demographic Variables

Before looking at the main effects of interest, it is important to rule out potential confounds of demographic variables: age, cultural background, and gender. A correlation was conducted between age and length of time since last offence but no significant relationship was found, $r(40) = .22, p = .17$, suggesting that desistance did not occur simply as a result of maturity associated with age. Three separate sets of correlations were performed between age and the questionnaire data (positive and negative changes in each category), the CAS scores, and the Risk/Need scores. No significant effects were observed for any of the questionnaire categories or CAS scores, indicating life changes and motivation did not change as a function of age. One significant effect was found for age on the Risk/Need data. A positive relationship between age and the Substance Abuse score (Risk 5), $r = .31, p = .05$, suggesting that as age increased greater risk was associated with continued substance use. There was no significant difference in ages between males and females, Natives and Non-Natives, or Desistors and Recidivists (See Table 2).

Although there was an unequal number of males and females, the difference was not significant. A Pearson Chi square comparing these four cells (gender x status) revealed no significant differences in proportions, $\chi^2 = 1.67, p = .20$. There was a disproportionate number of Natives to Non-Natives, however the within group proportions were roughly equal between Desistors and Recidivists, $\chi^2 = 0.14, p = .71$. There was no significant difference in length of time since last offence between Male and Female, Natives and Non-Natives, but there was for Desistors and Recidivists (see Table 2).

Table 2. Mean Age and Length of time since previous offence for demographic groups.

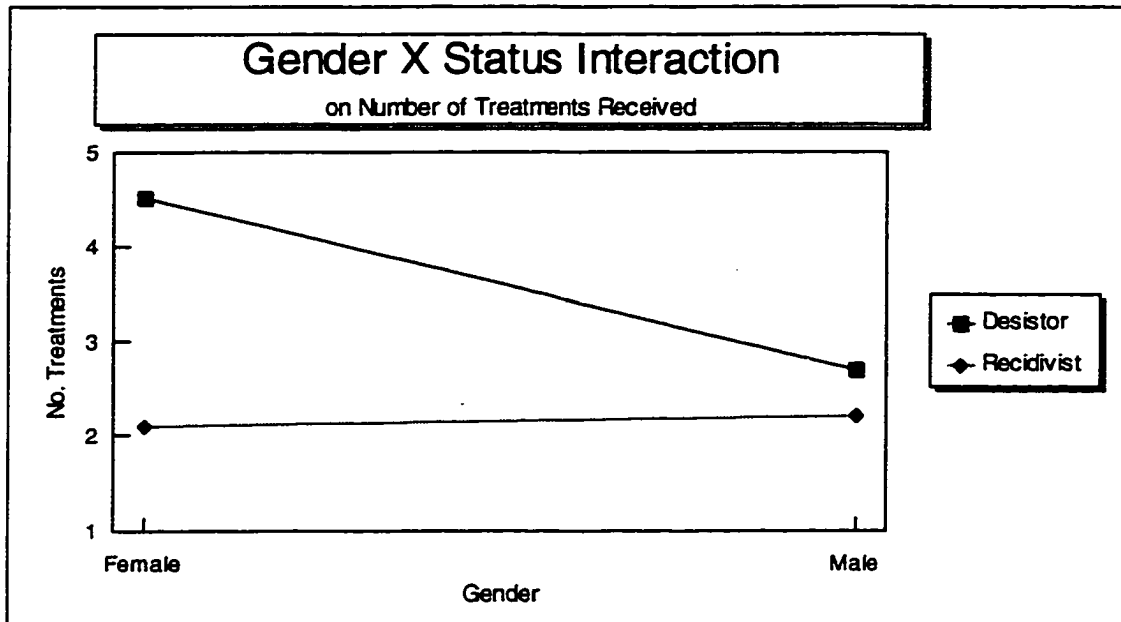
Groups	Age (in years)		Length of Time since previous offence (in months)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Desistors (n=20)	16.13	0.73	12.80	5.58
Recidivists (n=20)	15.86	0.87	2.25	1.52
	$t(38) = 1.03, ns$		$t(38) = 8.16, p < .001$	
Males (n=24)	16.14	0.71	7.21	7.56
Females (n=16)	15.77	0.91	8.00	5.34
	$t(38) = 1.38, ns$		$t(38) = -0.39, ns$	
Natives (n=9)	15.87	0.65	5.89	4.91
Non-Natives (n=31)	16.03	0.85	8.00	7.13
	$t(38) = 0.60, ns$		$t(38) = -1.02, ns$	

Three separate 2 x 2 MANOVAs were performed to compare gender (Male vs. Female) and “status” (Desistor vs. Recidivist) on the questionnaire categories, the CAS categories, and the Risk/Need scores. No significant interaction effects or main effects for gender were observed on CAS scores suggesting there were no motivational differences between males and females in this study. Likewise, no significant gender x status interactions or gender main effects were found on the Risk/Need data suggesting males and females in this sample had similar risk ratings as assessed by probation officers at the beginning of the youths’ current probation order. The multivariate test on the questionnaire categories did reveal significant interaction effects, $F(15, 22) = 2.86, p = .013$. Univariate tests indicated that the only significant interaction was found for the number of treatment modalities received, $F(1, 36) = 9.94, p = .003$. As suggested in Figure 1, it appears that the other three groups received equal amounts of treatment and that female Recidivists received more treatment modalities than the other groups.

Significant results were also obtained on the multivariate tests for gender main effects, $F(15, 22) = 2.49, p = .025$. Univariate tests revealed four significant main effects of gender reflecting a trend that is more favorable for males in the areas displayed in Table 3: negative changes in Family and parenting, positive changes in Leisure and recreation, negative Other changes, and total LCES

score. This indicates that females reported relatively poorer life circumstances and greater stress in the past year. Results may indicate that female young offenders are perceived to be in greater distress and thus in greater need of psychological services, reflected in the interaction.

Figure 1. Gender and Status Interaction on Number of Treatments Received.



Another set of 2 x 2 MANOVAs were conducted to compare cultural background (Native vs. Non-Native) and “status” (Desistor vs. Recidivist). No significant interaction effects of culture and status or main effects for culture were observed for any of the dependent variables suggesting that Natives and Non-Natives were similar in life changes experienced, motivation and risk ratings. The proportion of Natives to Non-Natives in Northwestern Ontario is roughly equal, yet Natives were under represented in this sample. A possible reasons of this disparity may be that the proportion of Natives on probation in the District of Thunder Bay is lower, relative to outlying areas of Northwestern Ontario (e.g., Kenora, Dryden). Alternately, there was some indication by Probation Officers that Natives were less willing to participate in this research project.

Table 3. Main Effects of Gender on Questionnaire Categories.

Variable	Male <i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Female <i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	% variance
Family (+)	5.75	1.92	5.37	1.82	1.28	ns	3.43
Family (-)	3.12	2.21	4.62	2.73	6.62	.014	15.54
Education (+)	4.83	2.06	4.31	2.60	1.38	ns	3.69
Education (-)	4.87	2.42	5.31	3.30	1.01	ns	2.72
Peers (+)	5.12	2.07	6.31	1.78	2.09	ns	5.48
Peers (-)	3.42	2.20	2.87	1.71	0.03	ns	0.09
Substance Use (+)	1.92	0.97	2.25	1.29	0.11	ns	0.29
Substance Use (-)	2.21	1.47	2.12	1.31	0.20	ns	0.56
Leisure (+)	2.29	1.20	1.44	1.41	5.83	.021	13.94
Personality (+)	7.91	3.02	8.87	2.25	0.09	ns	0.25
Personality (-)	4.37	2.99	3.75	1.95	0.02	ns	0.06
Other (-)	0.83	0.48	1.25	1.00	6.54	.015	15.38
LCES	7.62	3.50	11.56	4.72	12.75	.001	26.15
Treatment	2.41	1.28	3.00	1.90	3.39	ns	8.61
Helpfulness	0.73	0.68	0.93	0.69	0.31	ns	0.86

"Variable" (+) = average number of positive changes identified for specified category

"Variable" (-) = average number of negative changes identified for specified category

LCES = average number of Life Change Experience Scale items endorsed

Treatment = average number of psychological treatment modalities received

Helpfulness = average helpfulness rating across treatment types

Questionnaire Data

A MANOVA using "status" (Desistor vs. Recidivist) as the independent variable produced significant results, $F(15, 24) = 3.47, p = .003$. Further investigation into the univariate tests indicated significant results on almost all of the questionnaire categories (refer to Table 4). As predicted, Desistors scored higher on positive changes and lower on negative changes than Recidivists did, reflecting a more favorable outcome on almost all domains. The largest proportions of variance were accounted for by three domains particularly relevant to adolescents in general and young offenders specifically: personality and attitude, peer relations, and substance use variables. The trend for positive Family changes, positive Education changes, and positive Leisure changes were all in the expected direction (Desistors > Recidivists) but did not reach significance

($p = .13$, $p = .06$, and $p = .16$ respectively). Although the number of psychotherapy treatments received was not significantly different between groups, Desistors rated them as being significantly more helpful than Recidivists did.

Table 4. Differences between Desistors and Recidivists on Questionnaire Data.

Variable	Desistor		Recidivist		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	% variance
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Family (+)	6.05	1.40	5.15	2.18	2.41	ns	5.97
Family (-)	2.95	1.85	4.50	2.88	4.11	.002	9.77
Education (+)	5.30	1.95	3.95	2.42	3.78	ns	9.05
Education (-)	4.00	2.56	6.10	2.63	6.55	.019	14.70
Peer Relations (+)	6.60	1.70	4.60	1.85	12.71	.000	25.06
Peer Relations (-)	2.15	1.35	4.25	2.05	14.66	.001	27.84
Substance Use (+)	2.50	0.83	1.60	1.19	7.73	.004	16.91
Substance Use (-)	1.50	1.00	2.85	1.42	12.03	.004	24.05
Leisure (+)	2.25	1.37	1.65	1.27	2.06	ns	5.15
Personality (+)	10.40	1.23	6.20	2.17	56.81	.000	59.92
Personality (-)	2.20	1.15	6.05	2.21	47.67	.000	55.65
Other (-)	0.75	0.85	1.25	.055	4.87	.033	11.36
LCES	8.15	4.40	10.25	4.30	2.32	ns	5.77
Treatment	2.40	1.31	2.90	1.77	1.03	ns	2.63
Helpfulness	1.07	0.72	0.55	0.55	6.50	.015	14.60

"Variable" (+) = average number of positive changes identified for specified category

"Variable" (-) = average number of negative changes identified for specified category

LCES = average number of Life Change Experience Scale items endorsed

Treatment = average number of psychological treatment modalities received

Helpfulness = average helpfulness rating across treatment types

Additional analyses revealed some differential response patterns to individual items on the questionnaire. ANOVAs were executed for each questionnaire category that yielded a significant outcome in the previous step. The significant findings are reported in Table 5. As with the category scores, Desistors' responses also reflect more favorable changes on individual items.

Table 5. Differences between Desistors and Recidivists on Individual Item Analyses

Variable	Desistor		Recidivist		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
FAMILY AND PARENTING - N/A						
EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT						
"I get along better with teachers"	0.75	0.44	0.40	0.50	5.44	.025
"I have given up on school"	0.05	0.22	0.50	0.51	12.93	.001
"I really try harder at school"	0.80	0.41	0.40	0.50	7.60	.009
"I am doing better in at least some classes"	0.90	0.31	0.45	0.51	11.40	.002
PEER RELATIONS						
"I feel better able to say no to friends"	0.95	0.22	0.30	0.47	31.17	.000
"I spend more time with friends who are not in trouble with the law.."	0.70	0.47	0.15	0.36	17.03	.000
SUBSTANCE ABUSE						
"I spend less time with friends who use"	0.68	0.48	0.30	0.47	4.79	.035
LEISURE AND RECREATION						
"I spend my time more productively"	0.65	0.49	0.25	0.44	7.33	.010
PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDES						
"I feel I have more control over my life"	1.00	0.00	0.75	0.44	6.33	.016
"I am better able to control my temper"	0.85	0.37	0.30	0.47	17.03	.000
"I am more likely to listen to someone in authority"	0.80	0.41	0.20	0.41	21.38	.000
"I am more likely to think about the consequences of my behaviour before I act"	0.80	0.41	0.40	0.50	7.60	.009
"I care more about how my actions affect others"	0.85	.037	0.20	0.41	27.92	.000
"I am more concerned about my future"	0.90	0.31	0.35	0.49	18.10	.000
"I am working toward important goals"	0.90	0.31	0.50	0.51	8.94	.005
"I feel better about my ability to succeed at things I try"	0.85	0.37	0.65	0.49	4.61	.038
"I've had a change in physical appearance"	0.35	0.49	0.05	0.22	6.22	.017
OTHER						
"I've been arrested by the police"	0.55	0.51	0.95	0.22	10.31	.003

Risk/Need Data

A MANOVA comparing Desistors to Recidivists indicated that there was significant group differences on the Risk/Need Assessment conducted by Probation Officers at the beginning of their probation, $F(9, 30) = 2.25, p = .046$. Results from the univariate tests produced main effects on three domains of the Risk/Need assessment (Family, Education, Peers) and the Overall Risk/Need score.

Although the Total Score was significantly different, there was a substantial amount of variance and both group means fell within the “moderate” risk category (scores of 9 to 26). These results are listed in Table 6. Recidivists were assessed to be at higher risk in these areas at the commencement of their probation. The other five Risk/Need ratings were not significantly different, indicating the groups were similar in all the other domains when their probation started.

Table 6. Differences between Desistors and Recidivists on Risk/Need Data.

Variable	Desistors		Recidivist		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	% Variance
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Offences (Risk 1)	0.95	1.57	2.00	1.89	3.64	ns	8.75
Family(Risk 2)	2.10	1.45	3.35	1.42	7.58	.009	16.63
Education (Risk 3)	2.30	1.75	3.85	1.57	8.72	.005	18.66
Peer Relations (Risk 4)	1.45	1.23	2.70	1.38	9.11	.005	19.34
Substance Abuse(Risk 5)	0.95	1.19	1.05	0.94	0.09	ns	0.23
Leisure (Risk 6)	1.60	0.88	2.15	1.18	2.78	ns	6.82
Personality (Risk 7)	2.85	2.03	4.00	1.77	3.63	ns	8.71
Attitudes (Risk 8)	1.30	1.38	2.25	1.83	3.43	ns	8.28
Total Score	13.55	6.61	21.70	7.95	12.41	.001	24.63

The distribution of subjects in each of the four categories for Total Risk/Need score is provided in Figure 2. Although there were some outliers in other categories, most Desistors and Recidivists were in the Moderate range. This illustrates that Desistors and Recidivists were categorically similar. In addition, the distribution of scores ranged between 2 and 26 for Desistors and between 9 and 35 for Recidivists with a great deal of overlap. A moderate risk subject with an interval score of 15 or 21, for example, was just as likely to be categorized as a Desistor or a Recidivist. This indicates that the Risk/Need rating system is accurate categorically, its intended application, but may not be sensitive enough to predict criminal status based on the interval scores.

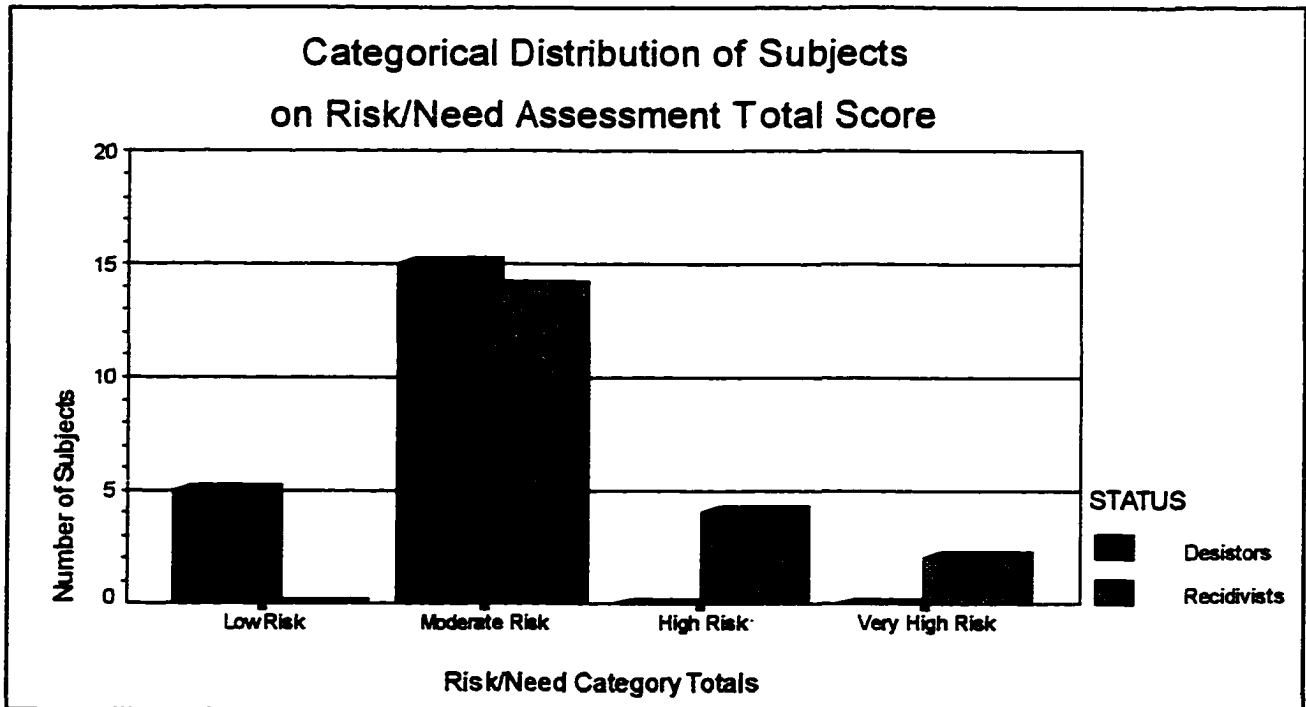


Figure 2. Distribution of Desistors and Recidivists among Risk Categories.

Change Assessment Scale Data

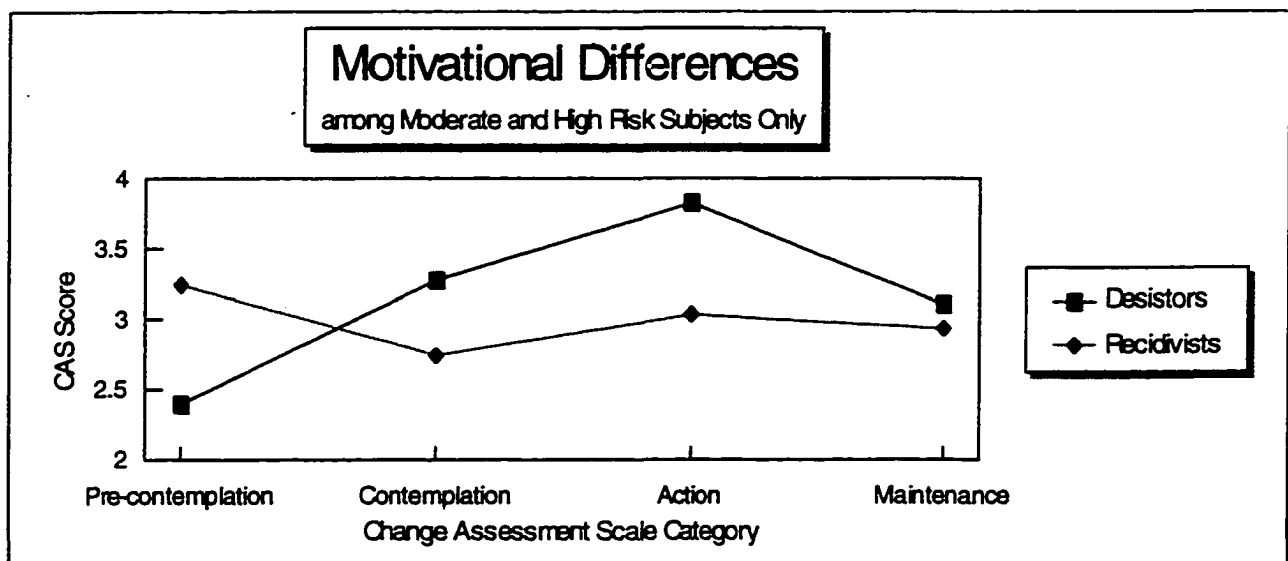
An ANOVA comparing Desistors to Recidivists on CAS data revealed significant differences on all but one of the categories (see Table 7). Precontemplation scores were greater among Recidivists than Desistors, indicating that the former did not perceive their criminal behaviour as problematic. Contemplation, Action, and overall Readiness to change scores were higher for Desistors suggesting that they were more likely to view their behaviour as problematic, be ready for change, and take action to modify their problematic behaviour, relative to Recidivists. The only stage that was not significantly different was the maintenance stage which may suggest that Desistors are maintaining new, modified behaviours while Recidivists are maintaining old, unaltered behaviours.

Table 7. Differences between Desistors and Recidivists on Change Assessment Scale scores (all subjects).

Variable	Desistor		Recidivist		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	% variance
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Pre-contemplation	2.45	1.12	3.30	1.01	9.45	.004	22.26
Contemplation	3.30	1.02	2.67	0.89	6.33	.017	16.10
Action	3.85	0.80	2.90	1.17	6.72	.014	16.92
Maintenance	2.95	0.99	2.88	1.09	0.42	ns	1.25
Overall Readiness	7.68	2.66	5.15	3.46	8.86	.005	21.16

Because of the significant difference between groups on the Risk/Need Total Score, another set of ANOVA's were conducted on the CAS data with a restricted range of subjects. That is, only subjects' whose scores were in the moderate or high range on their Total Risk/Need scores ($n=33$). After taking into account the Risk/Need ratings, Contemplation scores were no longer significantly different between groups. Pre-contemplation, Action and Overall Readiness scores remained significantly different ($p=.03$, $p=.03$, $p=.04$ respectively). An illustration of group differences on these categories is provided in Figure 3. The differences that remain appear to be robust and suggest that some Recidivists view their criminal behaviour as problematic (Contemplation), but relatively few are ready to make behavioural changes (Action).

Figure 3. Categorical Motivation Differences between Desistors and Recidivists (moderate and high risk subjects only).



Treatment

Correlations were completed on the CAS data and the treatment Helpfulness ratings. As above, three stages of change were significantly correlated to ratings of treatment helpfulness. Precontemplation scores were inversely related to how helpful subjects found treatment, $r(40) = -.59, p < .001$; and positive relationships were reflected for scores on Contemplation, $r(40) = .64, p < .001$; Action $r(40) = .49, p < .005$; and overall Readiness $r(40) = .63, p < .001$. Thus, those subjects who were more ready for change rated treatment as more helpful. Maintenance scores were not significantly related to treatment helpfulness $r(40) = .24, p = .14$, possibly because these scores did not differentiate between subjects who were or were not ready for change. Readiness, the overall score provided by CAS responses, was correlated with helpfulness scores for each treatment modality but only two significant effects were found. Helpfulness scores for Anger Management Training, $r(23) = .63, p = .001$, and Individual Counselling, $r(28) = .59, p = .001$, were significantly related to Readiness scores. This suggests that subjects who were ready for change derived most benefit from Anger Management Training and Individual Counselling, however caution should be used interpreting the findings because many of the treatments had very small samples.

Further group differences are observed on helpfulness ratings of each treatment type, as illustrated by Table 8. Independent t-tests revealed Desistors' helpfulness ratings as significantly higher than Recidivists' for Individual counselling only, $t(19.76) = 2.95, p = .008$. However, the differences approached significance for Anger Management ($p = .06$), and the trend was evident across all treatment types: Recidivists consistently underrate treatment helpfulness relative to Desistors. This also corresponds with the difference in the overall Helpfulness rating displayed in Table 4.

Additional information examined from Table 8 includes the differences in what Desistors found most helpful compared to Recidivists. Even though Individual counselling ($n=16$) is prescribed most often to Desistors, Anger Management is perceived as being most helpful to this group with Individual Counselling placing a close second. Conversely, the most frequent mode of treatment received by Recidivists is Anger Management ($n=16$), however it places fourth in their rank order of perceived helpfulness ratings. Individual Counselling ($n=12$) was the second most

frequently prescribed treatment to Recidivists and it was rated as the least helpful treatment by these individuals. This may suggest that the current basis for prescribing treatment should be re-examined. Desistors most frequently cited poor therapeutic relationships (didn't get along with or didn't like therapist) for their under-rating of treatment helpfulness.

Table 8. Treatment Modalities received and respective helpfulness ratings, rank ordered by helpfulness.

DESISTORS (n=20)			RECIDIVISTS (n=20)		
Treatment Type	Helpfulness rating		Treatment Type	Helpfulness rating	
	M	SD		M	SD
Anger Management (n=7)	1.43	.79	Group Counselling (n=9)	0.78	.83
Individual Counselling (n=16)	1.31	.60	Social Skills Training (n=4)	0.75	.50
Group Counselling (n=11)	1.18	.60	Vocational Skills/Special		
Family Counselling (n=3)	1.00	1.00	Education (n=4)	0.75	.50
Social Skills Training (n=3)	1.00	1.00	Anger Management (n=16)	0.69	.79
Substance Abuse			Family Counselling (n=6)	0.67	.82
Treatment (n=2)	1.00	1.41	Substance Abuse		
Vocational Skills/Special			Treatment (n=5)	0.60	.89
Education (n=3)	1.00	1.00	Individual Counselling (n=12)	0.50	.80

Helpfulness ratings: 0 = not at all helpful, 1 = somewhat helpful, 2 = very helpful

Furthermore, Recidivists indicated quite clearly that, unless they were willing to engage in treatment, there appears to be little benefit of receiving it (refer to Table 9).

Table 9. Rank ordered list of all responses to the question (posed to Recidivists only):

Could anything have been done earlier to prevent you from re-offending or motivate you to stop offending?

NO...

- didn't want help; didn't want to stop (n=5)
- when I want to I'll stop on my own; I have to help myself (n=3)
- counselling didn't help because I didn't listen (n=3)*
- no one tried to help (n=2)
- did what I wanted to and didn't care about anyone else (n=2)
- I know what I have to do to stop re-offending, but I'm too lazy (n=1)
- never listed to anyone because I know better (n=1)

MAYBE or YES...

- maybe anger management would help, but my attitude would have to be different this time; now I'm ready for treatment (n=3)
- longer sentence for a first offence (n=2)
- more things for teens to do; reduce boredom (n=2)
- get back into school (n=2)
- better parenting; more attention from parents (n=2)
- a counsellor sooner (n=1)

Qualitative Data

Data amassed from the open ended items on the questionnaire was sorted by frequency of response and rank ordered. Responses that Desistors and Recidivists listed as attributions for their behaviour (desistance or recidivism) are displayed in Tables 10 and 11. Frequency scores for each item were converted to percentages and have been cut off at a 20% response rate (i.e., at least 4 out of 20 subjects rated the item as important). Some interesting trends were observed in these data. More "internal" attributions were given by Desistors as important contributors to their cessation of delinquency, while more "external" attributions were provided by Recidivists as reasons for their continued criminal behaviour. For example, in the top ten responses provided by each group 70% of responses listed by Desistors were considered internal attributions while only 40% of responses listed by Recidivists were. In addition, the overlap of attributions between groups was only 60%. This suggests that the reasons or motivations reported for the cessation of delinquency were not simply the opposite of factors reported as maintaining delinquency.

Table 10. Rank ordering of Responses to the question (posed to Desistors only):
What were important contributors to your NOT re-offending?

Desistors' reported reasons for NOT re-offending	% of Desistors who rated item as an important contributor
I am more concerned about my future (int)	60
I've taken greater responsibility for my actions (int)	45*
More concerned about how my actions affect others (int)	40
Spend less time with delinquent friends (ext)	40
Reduced substance use (ext)	35
Feel I have more to lose if I get caught (int)	35
Think about the consequences of my actions (int)	35
I have more control over/say about my life (int)	35*
Re-evaluated my life; decided I needed to change (int)	30*
Getting along better with members in my family (ext)	30
Getting along better with peers and/or teachers (ext)	30*
Trying harder at school (int)	30
Spending my time more productively (ext)	30
Working toward important goals (int)	30*
Didn't want to return to jail (ext)	25*
I am interested in more things (int)	25*
Better able to control temper (int)	25
Things at home are running more smoothly/stable (ext)	20
I feel better able to say no to my friends (ext)	20
I have someone close that I can confide in (ext)	20*
I feel better able to turn down alcohol/drugs (ext)	20

int = internal attribution; ext = external attribution; * indicates items that do not overlap between Tables 10 & 11.

Table 11. Rank ordered responses to the question (posed to Recidivists only):
What were important contributors to your continuing to re-offend?

Recidivists' reported reasons for continuing to offend	% of Recidivists who rated item as an important contributor
No change in amount of time spent with delinquent friends (ext)	70
Not able to control temper (int)	65
Continued use/abuse of substances (ext)	55
Need money/don't have a job (ext)	45*
Difficulty saying no to friends (ext)	45
Little concern about the future (int)	40
Difficulty asking for/accepting help (int)	35*
Bored; unproductive use of leisure time (ext)	35
Do not think of consequences before acting (int)	30
Do not care how my actions affect others (int)	30
I've been fighting with parents (ext)	25
No change in amount of time spent with substance users (ext)	25*
Not enough discipline/attention from parents (ext)	25
Parents are separating/divorcing (ext)	20
I've quit school (ext)	20
I have not gotten into drugs/alcohol in the past year (>12 mos.) (ext)	20
I do not have more to lose/I have nothing to lose (int)	20

int = internal attribution; ext = external attribution; * indicates items that do not overlap between Tables 10 & 11.

Discussion

Desistance Factors

The data from the Life Changes Survey on the questionnaire and from the Risk/Need instrument did differentiate Desistors from Recidivists in many areas. Separate categories of the questionnaire are discussed. The most relevant areas for this sample (personality and attitudinal variables, peer relations, and substance abuse variables) are discussed first and followed by other interesting findings.

Personality and attitudes. In the examination of differences between Desistors' and Recidivists' questionnaire responses the largest proportions of variance are accounted for by changes in personality and attitude. Over the past year, Desistors indicated having undergone significantly more positive changes and fewer negative changes than Recidivists. Risk/Need scores did not suggest any group differences on either the personality (Risk 7) or attitude (Risk 8) domains at the beginning of subjects' probation periods. This suggests that Desistors had undergone some very meaningful changes since that time. Several individual items differentiated between groups. Desistors reported having more control over their lives, being better able to manage their anger, and caring more about how their actions affect others suggesting support for theories of autonomy and self-control. In addition to greater educational commitment, the social control theory is supported by Desistors' reports that they are more likely to listen to someone in authority and being more likely to consider the consequences of their actions. Responses to these items also suggest that Desistors had achieved greater moral development relative to Recidivists in this study. Additional items that Desistors endorsed included being concerned about their future, working toward important goals, and having better self-efficacy which may reflect more stable ego identity. Overall, this seems to reflect relatively greater emotional maturity and intrapersonal development among Desistors.

Peer Relations. Compared to Recidivists, Desistors in this study reported a greater number of positive changes and fewer negative changes in peer relations on the questionnaire data. A substantial amount of variance between the groups was accounted for by these changes. Only two individual items reflected differences between groups: Desistors reported feeling better able to say

no to their friends and reported greater association with non-criminal peers. Desistors were assessed by probation as being at less risk in the peer domain initially. These data supports prior suggestions that positive peer associations may be important barriers to continued delinquency. Likewise, association with pro-criminal peers seems to maintain delinquency.

Substance Use. Responses to items on the substance abuse section suggest that Desistors had undergone more positive changes and fewer negative changes than Recidivists on this domain. Although a considerable amount of variance was accounted for by these changes, only one item was significantly different between groups: in the past year, Desistors spent less time with friends who use. Near the beginning of their probation, no group differences were observed related to substance use. This suggests that significant changes in substance use did occur over the past year for Desistors. Contrary to other research suggesting a deceleration of alcohol and drug use coinciding with the cessation of criminal behaviour, that trend was not observed. For this sample, it appears that the relationship between substance use and delinquency is mediated through peer associations.

Family circumstances and parenting. Desistors indicated fewer negative changes than Recidivists in the past year. Desistors also experienced relatively more positive changes in this domain, however, the trend did not reach significance. No individual items in the Family section of the questionnaire were able to differentiate between the groups. The data suggest that deficits in this area were related to delinquency but that improvements in the previous 12 months were not directly related to a cessation in offending. Again, Desistors were assessed as being at less risk in the family domain near the beginning of their probation, which may suggest there were fewer aspects of parenting skills and family relationships that required meaningful improvement during the 12 month period assessed.

Education and employment. Similar results were found for education and employment variables: Desistors reported significantly fewer negative changes in the past year and demonstrated the trend for greater positive changes, relative to Recidivists. They were also assessed as being lower

risk by probation. The youths considered Desistors may have initially demonstrated greater commitment to school, as suggested by previous research. This is supported by differences in individual item analyses which suggest better academic performance and greater commitment toward school among Desistors in the past year. As with the family and parenting domain, this social control variable may be indirectly related to desistance.

Leisure and recreation. As mentioned in the method section, only positive changes in leisure and recreation time were analysed. No significant differences were observed between groups either on the questionnaire or at the beginning of their probation. This suggests that neither Desistors or Recidivists changed their leisure activities, however, an individual item analysis indicated that Desistors had begun spending their time more productively. It is possible that group differences were observed on overall changes in leisure because this section consisted of only four similar items.

Other. This section of the questionnaire consisted of only four questions that did not complement any of the previous categories. Only negative changes were analysed for this category. Results indicated that Recidivists reported more negative changes in this category. One item seemed to account for this finding: Not surprisingly, Recidivists were more likely to report having been arrested by the police in the past year. It is interesting to note that, at the start of their probation, no group differences on the first Risk/Need category (prior and current offences) were observed. Essentially, the same question was asked on both measures at different times. This appears to demonstrate the reliability of the experimental classification of Desistors and Recidivists. Although the groups started with similar criminal ranking, based on the Risk/Need scores, Desistors demonstrated modification of their criminal status, based on the Questionnaire data.

Life Change Event Scale. Although Novy and Donohue (1985) found that delinquents experienced more negative life events than non-delinquents on LCES scores, no group differences were found between Desistors and Recidivists. This suggests that the cessation of delinquency was not caused by, nor resulted in, a significant decline in stressful life events, at least as measured by the LCES. Most of the items composing the LCES are external situations over which the youth has

little ability to exert control (e.g., family illness or death). Two individual items of the LCES were significantly different between groups. Desistors more often reported having undergone a change in physical appearance (possibly for the better) and Recidivists were more likely to report having been arrested. Given similar circumstances of life stress, it is interesting to note that Desistors have managed to maintain their non-offending status while Recidivists have continued to re-offend. It is possible that Desistors are better able to cope with stressful situations, and thus are more likely to succeed in re-negotiating a crime-free lifestyle.

Treatment and Perceived Helpfulness.

Studies that include cognitive components, such as problem solving and interpersonal skills have had some success in changing offender behaviour (Izzo & Ross, 1990; Valliant et al., 1995).

Perhaps the most benefit has been observed in multisystemic interventions which strive to effect change in individual, family, peer, school and community systems (Henggeler, 1996). The interaction between individual and external variables must be recognized and addressed for treatment to provide the most effect. In this study Desistors and Recidivists indicated having received several treatment modalities over the past year, however, Desistors consistently rated treatment as being more helpful. Subjects did not receive multisystemic treatment, however some support for theory was suggested. Desistors seemed to demonstrate meaningful improvement in the areas Henggeler deemed relevant: family, peers, education, and intrapersonal variables. It is unclear whether these changes occurred spontaneously or via some combination of treatments. It is clear, however, that Recidivists did not experience the same changes in spite of having received similar treatments. This may suggest that multisystemic treatment may effect more positive changes among Recidivists.

Differences between groups were also observed in the types of treatments most often prescribed and in which treatments were perceived as being most helpful. Desistors most often engaged in individual counselling yet rated anger management as most helpful. The three treatments most frequently received by Desistors were also rated as the most helpful (Anger Management, Individual and Group Counselling). Treatment results among Recidivists were less encouraging. Anger Management was the most frequent mode of treatment among this group, yet was rated as considerably less helpful. The second most frequent treatment received was Individual counselling

and it was rated as least helpful. In this study group treatments such as social skills training and vocational skills were rated as most helpful by Recidivists. Recidivists often identified anger management problems which accounts for the frequency with which it is received by that group. In spite of their acknowledgment of this problem, few reported benefiting from the treatment program.

Some explanations they offered for this discrepancy include not wanting help at the time or believing that they could effect change on their own without external help, if they were inclined to do so. This suggests that Desistors may have found treatment more helpful because they possessed a readiness for change, translating into greater willingness to engage in treatment. It may be useful for practitioners to re-consider the guidelines used to prescribe psychological services to young offenders. If the youth is not motivated to change and does not want help it is unlikely that they will benefit from forced attendance in treatment programs.

Change Assessment Scale

Responses from the change assessment scale suggest that it is applicable to young offenders, with some modification. Without exception, subjects had difficulty understanding the statements and further explanation was required. The greatest difficulty noted was comprehending the meaning of complex sentences. Future use of this instrument with adolescents will require simplification.

After taking total Risk/Need score into account, Desistors scored lower on Pre-contemplation scores and higher on Action and overall Readiness to change scores reflecting greater acknowledgment of their criminal behaviour as problematic, greater efforts to actively change their behaviour, and overall greater motivation to change their delinquent behaviour. The Contemplation and Maintenance stages did not differentiate between groups. This implies that some Recidivists consider their behaviour problematic but are not ready to act on those beliefs. Many Recidivists indicated knowing what they needed to do to stop offending, but that they did not want to stop. Results also suggest that Desistors may be maintaining new, modified behaviours while Recidivists are maintaining old, unaltered behaviours.

Further support for the utility of the CAS with young offenders is found in relation to treatment interventions. With the exception of the Maintenance stage, the CAS scores were significantly related to ratings of perceived treatment helpfulness. Pre-contemplation, which

Recidivists scored higher on, was negatively associated with overall treatment helpfulness ratings. Those individuals who indicated that they did not perceive their criminal behaviour as problematic were less likely to find treatment helpful. Conversely, a positive relationship was observed between scores on treatment helpfulness and scores on Contemplation, Action, and overall Readiness to change. Desistors scored higher on these CAS scores and on treatment helpfulness ratings, providing evidence for the suggestion that they are more likely to benefit from treatment because they are more willing to accept help changing their problematic behaviour.

Subjects' attributions for their behaviour support this position. When Recidivists were asked what could have been done to motivate them to stop offending, their responses primarily involved external contingencies: help from a counsellor, more severe dispositions, more attention for parents, etc. It appeared that they blamed external systems rather than take personal responsibility to change their behaviour. A similar trend was observed on attributions for desistance compared to those for recidivism. Desistors identified internal motivations such as accepting greater responsibility, having greater self-control and re-evaluating their future as important contributors to their behaviour change. This is consistent with the literature suggesting that internal motivation and self-determination are more likely to result in successful behaviour change and maintenance. Recidivists, however, indicated a greater proportion of external motivations (peers, substance use, instrumental needs) for maintaining their delinquent behaviour. This also supports the theory of social control model: if these youths' don't feel their needs are adequately met by others, they are less likely to conform to societal values.

Although there was some degree of overlap (60%) between attributions for desistance and for recidivism. This suggests that correlates of delinquent behaviour do not necessarily translate to appropriate or effective targets of intervention. As Gorman-Smith and Tolan (1996) suggest, what predicts a problem or leads to it is not necessarily what must be undone or changed to end or prevent the problem (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1996). Therefore, interventions should not simply be the removing or minimizing of risk variables, but must also consider factors that directly contribute to desistance.

Models of Desistance from Offending

Catalysts. Both models of desistance from offending suggest that the decision to stop offending occurs at an identifiable moment in time, and usually follows social sanctions (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986; Sommers et al., 1994). This is comparable to the Contemplation and Preparation stages proposed in addictions literature. Although Desistors in this study did indicate that they made a conscious decision to stop offending, few youths were able to identify a “turning point” or a specific point in time at which they made this decision. This may be a result of limited insight, that is, the youths may not have been able to identify a particular event that acted as a precursor to the “decision”. An alternative view, one which is more likely given these results, is that the transition from delinquency to desistance is a gradual process as suggested by developmental theories and the process of change model. Socially disjunctive experiences (hitting “rock bottom”, tired of the lifestyle) were rarely given as motivators for desistance however reasons involving delayed deterrence were quite frequent (consequences of their actions; not wanting to return to jail; not wanting to hurt family). Most frequently, Desistors cited self-appraisal issues cited (concern about my future; re-evaluate my life) as the most important contributors to their cessation from delinquency. This may suggest a process involving progressive emotional maturity and intrapersonal development in youths who have successfully desisted from offending.

Discontinuance. Mulvey and LaRosa (1986) suggest that, following the decision, changes in behaviour begin to occur similar to the Action stage of the CAS. Changes include re-structuring social networks; self-identity; and replacing old behaviours with new, hopefully more adaptive behaviours. Sommers and colleagues (1994) suggest that a public declaration of the intended behaviour change is followed by abandonment of the deviant subculture and adoption of a new lifestyle. Support for this stage is equivocal. Desistors did not indicate having made a public announcement regarding their decision to stop offending. They appeared to be internally motivated and rewarded for their behaviour change and often appeared modest about their success at desistance. While they did report spending less time with delinquent peers, they did not entirely abandon the deviant subculture: many continued to engage in less serious offences (curfew breaches, alcohol and

drug use). Behaviour changes did occur in some areas, and improvement in self-identity was observed (improved self-efficacy and self-assertion).

Maintaining the Decision. Both models reviewed suggest that maintaining the decision to stop offending, or continuing to offend, is largely dependent on support from social networks and the ability to successfully re-integrate into mainstream society (Mulvey & LaRosa, 1986; Sommers et al., 1994). Both Desistors and Recidivists reported having social support (someone to confide in, receiving encouragement to change). Recidivists who reported being encouraged to change indicated that they had reduced the frequency of their criminal behaviour and/or their truancy. These changes were not meaningful enough to be considered Desistance. It would appear that unless these individuals are intrinsically motivated to change their behaviour in a positive direction, the support and encouragement of their social-control systems will exert little influence. For individuals not internally motivated to change it is unlikely that treatment will be successful.

Methodological Limitations

This study was designed as an exploratory venture because of the limited amount of research that has investigated desistance from offending in young offenders. As a result, no simple instruments were available to test the various areas hypothesized to account for this behavioural change. Because the population of interest was young offenders the questionnaire was designed to be relatively brief and straightforward, therefore items were intended to be heterogeneous and internal consistency was not assessed. These criteria were thought to help ensure the subjects would complete the task in a forthright and timely manner before becoming fatigued, disinterested, or careless. Given these challenges, the questionnaire was designed to assess changes in various areas thought to be relevant, based on the Risk/Need Assessment Form which has established psychometric capacity. Further reliability and validity tests were not done in this study because of the limited availability of subjects who met inclusion criteria, however, the instrument was successful in its ability to discriminate between the groups of interest.

The design of this study was a retrospective self-report which has some inherent limitations. Motiuk and colleagues (1992) established that information derived from self-report questionnaires

can be reliably quantified in ways that accurately reflect interview based assessments. However, self-report measures are also sensitive to response biases and distortions, whether intentional (faking good/bad) or unintentional (denial, limited insight). The accuracy of offender self-reports has also been a source of skepticism and are often viewed as a "con". However, offender self-reports can provide a reasonable appraisal of officially assessed behaviour (Motiuk et al., 1992). Furthermore, a person's own self-evaluations of attitudes and beliefs reflect a better indicator of such variables than evaluations by others (Motiuk et al., 1992). Retrospective designs also limit the extent of temporal or causal conclusions. That is, it can not be determined whether the environmental and intrapersonal changes reported by these youths were caused by or resulted in the associated cessation in offending, or whether the changes occurred simultaneously. In addition, given non-randomized sampling, the nature of the sample available in this study is uncertain. Natives are under-represented, relative to their overall rate in the juvenile justice system in Northwestern Ontario. Since Recidivists in general and Natives in particular were less willing to participate in the study, it is possible that the sample is not representative of the general population of young offenders. Those who did not volunteer to be in the study may be different demographically and on relevant variables and may have presented different characteristics. For example, they may have been reluctant to participate because they had a more negative attitude or a more negative life situation. They may have represented the more extreme cases of Recidivists. Alternately, they may have had a favourable life situation and simply been less willing to openly disclose personal information.

The Risk/Need assessment was conducted early in the subjects' probation order (approximately 10-12 months prior to questionnaire administration). It was initially conceptualized as a starting point for the young offender's desistance. Based on this assumption, it was predicted that Desistors and Recidivists would be similar on this attribute and, over the course of the next year, Desistors would have experienced "changes" that would account for their cessation in delinquency. Probation Officers provided a sample of youths who were rated as moderate to high risk, with the exception of a few subjects. In spite of this categorical matching, there was a significant difference between groups on the interval rating of the Risk/Need Total Score. After discovering this discrepancy it seemed logical: The Risk/Need Assessment has been demonstrated as a reliable, valid instrument for predicting recidivism. The results in the present study support the validity of the

instrument. The group differences, however, suggest some possible limitations with the findings. It is possible that the groups (Desistors) and (Recidivists) were inherently different initially, although no differences were found on demographics. If that is the case, results from this study could be explained by other variables related to the inherent difference between groups. Another possible explanation for the difference in Risk/Need ratings is that Desistors were at a different stage of development and of change (relative to Recidivists) 12 months prior to the study (when the assessment was conducted). This would imply a gradual process of change, longer than the 12 month period initially anticipated in the present study.

Directions for Future Research

This study included a large number of dependent variables that may have been relevant to a cessation in delinquent behaviour. Having identified some factors that seem to be more pertinent to the desistance of offending, the design of future studies will be strengthened by incorporating fewer dependent variables (relative to subjects). The intent of this study was to independently examine the relevance of various domains of interest to the cessation of offending, however, future studies may consider discriminant analyses to examine selected variables predictive of desistance from offending. Another option within this field is to examine relevant variables using time series analyses. Looking at the interval of time since a youth has offended, rather than nominal criminal status, may also aid in the prediction successful outcomes.

Additional considerations for future research in this area include examining different samples. This study looked at young offenders who were mainly in the moderate to high range of the Risk/Need Assessment, but included a few subjects in each range. A more homogenous group of subjects (more similar interval scores) may have produced different results. An alternative approach would be to compare youths across risk categories (i.e., low vs. moderate, moderate vs. high, and high vs. very high) or to examine the covariance of the Risk/Need rating with other domains. For example, as risk level increases the likelihood of change may be different. In addition, youths with different types of offences may manifest differences in the area of desistance. Perhaps youths who have had less serious offences (non-violent) would be more likely to exhibit desistance

from offending than youths with more serious offence (violent) histories. Likewise, sexual offenders may exhibit differences relative to offenders who have engaged in non-sexual victim or non-sexual non-victim offences. There appears to be a wealth of opportunity for research in this area to clarify change agents among young offenders.

It is possible that the Desistors and Recidivists differed on intellectual functioning, but this variable was not examined. Recidivists were lower on academic achievement and commitment which may have been the result of poorer cognitive function. Further investigation may implicate higher intellectual ability as a predictor of desistance. Another possible difference between Desistors and Recidivists that was not assessed in this study is level of psychopathology or antisocial personality traits. It is possible that the pro-criminal attitudes and personality of some young offenders are so entrenched, that successful treatment is unlikely. Intensive treatment has provided some prospects for change among high risk young offenders (Bourdin et al., 1995). However this leaves us with yet more questions: How do we determine which youths are unlikely to change? Once identified, what do professionals, or society, then do with these individuals? The long-term costs of services for chronic re-offenders far exceeds the short-term cost of intensive treatment however, given the political zeitgeist, current limitations on social resources seem unlikely to change.

Clinical Implications

Results from this study have implications for professionals working with young offenders. Factors that were particularly relevant to desistance from offending in this study may provide suggestions for encouraging positive changes in these youths. In this study, Desistors reported greater commitment to education and improved academic achievement. Recidivists reported that treatments focussing on special education and vocational skills were among the most helpful. Assisting youths to achieve positive educational experiences may promote greater commitment to their education. Positive peer relations were related to desistance and to positive outcomes on Substance Use. Encouraging youths to avoid delinquent peers may not be sufficient. A greater effect may be obtained by imposing this condition during probation orders and providing opportunities for youths to make positive peer attachments. Spending leisure time more productively

was also related to desistance. Youths who reported being "bored" were more likely to loiter in the company of delinquent friends and to commit crimes. Providing more structure in the youth's environment (i.e., reducing leisure time) and suggesting possible sanctioned activities may reduce risk in this area. Reducing areas of risk are only part of the solution. Often, treatment is also implicated.

Two prominent issues regarding treatment helpfulness were suggested from this study: the youth's attitude toward treatment, and the therapeutic relationship. Unless youths were ready and willing to engage in treatment they did not find it helpful. This suggests that motivational assessments prior to treatment may be appropriate to make effective use of limited social resources. Providing youths' with treatment they feel would be most beneficial may be more productive than mandating treatment based on appraised Need. Furthermore, youths who indicated that treatment was not helpful indicated that good rapport was not established with the professional. Regardless of the professional's status (Psychologist, Social Worker, Probation Officer) youths rated treatment as helpful only when they felt that therapeutic alliance had been achieved. Research has indicated that Multisystemic Treatment provides the most comprehensive therapy and best outcome, even with high risk young offenders. Given the spectrum of changes associated with desistance, it seems is beneficial to consider these areas (i.e., family, school, peers, community) targets for intervention. Again, motivation of family members will undoubtedly factor into treatment success.

Personality is defined as being stable across the lifespan, however during adolescence it is still developing. By encouraging attitudes and qualities that are inconsistent with antisocial personality characteristics, professionals may be able to moderate the degree to which these become stable traits. For example, encouraging a positive self-concept (e.g., self-efficacy and self-determination) and empathy toward others may facilitate the development of these positive traits which were associated with "desistance" in this study. Deci and colleagues (1994) suggest that internalization of "positive" values (vs. pro-criminal values) can be facilitated by: providing a meaningful rationale for the value, acknowledging the individual's feelings, and by encouraging decision making and self-determination. In addition to this, however, the individual must be encouraged to act in accordance with his/her beliefs. Many recidivists in this sample indicated *knowing what was right*, but did not follow through with these values. Emphasizing the relationship

between behaviour and consequences may increase the individual's sense of personal responsibility and evaluation of his/her future. Helping the youth outline the costs and benefits of desistance compared to re-offending may encourage re-evaluation of his/her current behaviour and may help identify internal reinforcements for behaviour change.

Conclusion

This study explored changes that account for the transition from Recidivism to Desistance from Offending in a sample of moderate to high risk young offenders. Desistors were differentiated from Recidivists on a number of variables borrowed from the Risk/Need Assessment instrument and from the addictions literature. Desistors were assessed at lower risk early in probation on social control agents including family, education and peers. Relative to Recidivists, Desistors reported having experienced fewer negative changes and more positive changes over the past year on a several of domains (family, education, peers, substance use, personality and attitudes). Desistors consistently rated treatment as being more helpful. They were more likely to acknowledge their delinquent behaviour as problematic and have greater motivation to change this behaviour. Attributions for behaviour tended to be internal for desistance and external for recidivism. There appear to be common and unique factors pertinent to desistance and recidivism, as with factors associated with the onset of delinquency and recidivism.

Data from this study suggest that the transition from delinquent offending to desistance is a gradual one, rather than a sudden “turning point” suggested from addictions literature. It is plausible that as young offenders mature they begin to be influenced by social-control agents, such as family and peers. These systems may encourage youths to change their delinquent behaviour. If the social-control agents are successful in their efforts the individual may begin to re-evaluate his/her life and internalize the societal values. Once internalization of societal values occurs, the youths may develop greater self-determination and willingness to change their behaviour. Youths in this study reported self-appraisal then delayed deterrence as the most important contributors to their desistance from offending. At this stage the youth may decide to stop offending and engage in preliminary behaviour changes. If support for the changes is received from the social systems (including treatment) at this time, the youth is more likely to maintain the desistance from offending. If the young offender has not reached a state of “readiness to change” he/she is unlikely to benefit from interventions forced upon them. This suggests that the criteria used to prescribe services to young offenders be re-evaluated. Incorporating a motivational assessment into this decision may make more productive use of limited social resources.

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Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRE A (DESISTORS):

Section I: Life Changes Survey

When reading the statements think about how things are in your life now compared to how things were a year ago. Respond by circling Y (yes) to those items that reflect any changes in your life in the past year or N (No) to those areas of your life that have not changed.

FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES/PARENTING

- 1. I have stopped living at my family home (for reasons other than jail). Y / N
- 2. A disruptive family member (other than yourself) has stopped living at the family home. Y / N
- 3. Things at home run more smoothly/are more stable. Y / N
- 4. I get along better with:
 - my siblings (brothers/sisters) Y / N
 - my mother Y / N
 - my father Y / N
- 5. Members of my family are getting along better with each other. Y / N
- 6. I feel like I have more independence at home Y / N
(more say about my life; allowed to make my own decisions).
- 7. A parent has died. Y / N
- 8. A brother or sister has died. Y / N
- 9. My parents are getting divorced or separated. Y / N
- 10. Family member (other than yourself) has been having trouble with alcohol Y / N
- 11. Parent or relative in your family has gotten very sick. Y / N
- 12. A parent has lost their job. Y / N
- 13. I've been fighting with parents. Y / N
- 14. I've been fighting with a brother or sister. Y / N
- 15. Someone new has moved in with your family Y / N
(grandparent, adopted brother or sister, or other).
- 16. My mother has gotten pregnant. Y / N
- 17. A brother or sister has gotten married. Y / N

Of the above statements regarding family circumstances and parenting indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:
 2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about family circumstances and parenting that was not included on the above list?

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT (Remember: Since a year ago....)

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 18. I don't miss as many classes at school. | Y / N |
| 19. I am getting along better with: | |
| other kids | Y / N |
| teachers | Y / N |
| 20. I have given up on school. | Y / N |
| 21. I don't get into as much trouble in school. | Y / N |
| 22. I really try harder at school. | Y / N |
| 23. I am doing better in at least some of my classes. | Y / N |
| 24. I have failed one or more subjects in school. | Y / N |
| 25. I have flunked a grade in school. | Y / N |
| 26. I have lost a job. | Y / N |
| 27. I have quit school. | Y / N |
| 28. I've been in trouble with the teacher or principal. | Y / N |
| 29. I've started a new school. | Y / N |
| 30. I've started a new job. | Y / N |

Of the above statements regarding education and employment indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about education and employment that was not included on the above list?

PEER RELATIONS (In the past year...)

- 31. I feel better able to stand up to/say no to my friends if I don't want to do something (drugs, drinking, criminal activity). Y / N
- 32. There is someone in particular who I'm very close to and can confide in (a brother/sister or a special girlfriend/boyfriend). Y / N
- 33. I have met more friends who aren't in trouble with the law. Y / N
- 34. I spend more time with friends who aren't in trouble with the law than friends who are. Y / N
- 35. There has been someone important in my life who has encouraged me to stay out of trouble. WHO: _____ Y / N
- 36. This important person has been significant in helping me change. Y / N
- 37. Someone in authority (probation officer, teacher, principal, counsellor, boss) gave me a chance to prove myself. WHO: _____ Y / N
- 38. I spend more time alone. Y / N
- 39. A close friend is dying or has died. Y / N
- 40. My relationship with a close girlfriend or boyfriend has broken up. Y / N
- 41. A close girlfriend has gotten pregnant. Y / N
- 42. I've started dating. Y / N
- 43. I've been making new friends. Y / N

Of the above statements regarding peer relations/friends indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about peer relations/friends that was not included on the above list?

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (In the past year...)

44. I have really cut down my drinking/drug use. Y / N
45. I have stopped using drugs/alcohol all together. Y / N
46. I spend less time with friends who use drugs/alcohol. Y / N
47. I feel better able to turn down drugs/alcohol if my friends offer it to me. Y / N
48. I've gotten into drugs or alcohol. Y / N

Of the above statements regarding substance abuse indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about substance abuse that was not included on the above list?

LEISURE/RECREATION (Compared to a year ago...)

49. I spend less time just "hanging around". Y / N
50. I spend more time doing productive things (a hobby/sport; working; homework). Y / N
51. I am interested in more things (hobbies, sports). Y / N
52. I spend less time "vegging" (watching TV, listening to music, playing video/computer games). Y / N

Of the above statements regarding leisure and recreation indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:
 2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about leisure and recreation that was not included on the above list?

PERSONALITY/BEHAVIOUR (Compared to a year ago...)

- 53. I feel I have more control over/say about my life. Y / N
- 54. I am better able to control my temper/anger without acting on it. Y / N

ATTITUDES/ORIENTATION

- 55. I am more likely to ask for help for a problem or to accept help if it is offered. Y / N
- 56. I am more likely to listen to someone in authority. Y / N
- 57. I am more likely to think about the consequences of my behaviour before I act. Y / N
- 58. Ultimately I am responsible for my actions. Y / N
- 59. I care more about how my actions affect others. Y / N
- 60. I am more clear about what I want out of life. Y / N
- 61. I am more concerned about my future. Y / N
- 62. I am working toward some important goals in my life. Y / N
- 63. I feel like I have more to lose now if I got caught
 breaking the law (a job, an important relationship). Y / N
- 64. I feel better about my ability to succeed at things I try. Y / N
- 65. I've been having problems with one of the following: Y / N
 acne, overweight, underweight, too tall, too short
- 66. I've had a change in physical appearance (braces, glasses) Y / N
- 67. I've started my menstrual period in the past year (for girls). GIRLS: Y / N BOYS: N/A

Of the above statements regarding personality, behaviour and attitudes indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:
 2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about personality, behaviour and attitudes that was not included on the above list?

OTHER

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 68. I've lost a favourite pet. | Y / N |
| 69. I've been badly hurt or sick. | Y / N |
| 70. I've moved to a new home. | Y / N |
| 71. I've been arrested by the police. | Y / N |

Of the above statements indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your NOT re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important that was not included on the above list?

Was there a specific point in time when you decided to stop offending or did it happen gradually over a period of time?
Please explain.

Section II: Interventions and Treatment

Please indicate which of the services or treatments you have received over the past year and rate whether or not you found them helpful on the scale provided:

2 = very helpful 1 = somewhat helpful 0 = not at all helpful

	Received Treatment		Thought it was helpful		
Individual Counselling	Y	N	2	1	0
Group Counselling	Y	N	2	1	0
Family Counselling	Y	N	2	1	0
Substance Abuse Treatment	Y	N	2	1	0
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Y	N	2	1	0
Social Skills Training (ie: communication)	Y	N	2	1	0
Anger Management	Y	N	2	1	0
Vocational Skills/Special Education	Y	N	2	1	0
OTHER: (specify what type) _____			2	1	0

Section III: Change Assessment Scale (Short Form)

Please indicate the extent to which you tend to agree or disagree with each statement. In each case, make your choice in terms of how you feel right now. For all the statements that refer to your "problem", answer in terms of your criminal behaviour, legal difficulties and such.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

1. I am doing something about my criminal behaviour because it had been bothering me. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I don't have a problem. It doesn't make much sense for me to get help. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Being on probation or in therapy is pretty much a waste of time 1 2 3 4 5
because my criminal behaviour isn't a problem.
4. I have a problem with my criminal behaviour and I really think I should work on it. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I'm not following through with what I had already changed as well as 1 2 3 4 5
I had hoped, and I want to prevent a relapse of offending.
6. I thought once I had resolved the problem of offending I would be free of it, 1 2 3 4 5
but sometimes I still find myself struggling with it.
7. Maybe probation/therapy will be able to help me with my criminal behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I am actively working on the problem of my criminal behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5

Questionnaire B (Recidivists):

Section I: Life Changes Survey

When reading the statements think about how things are in your life now compared to how things were a year ago. Respond by circling Y (yes) to those items that reflect any changes in your life in the past year or N (No) to those areas of your life that have not changed.

FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES/PARENTING

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. I have stopped living at my family home (for reasons other than jail). | Y / N |
| 2. A disruptive family member (other than yourself) has stopped living at the family home. | Y / N |
| 3. Things at home run more smoothly/are more stable. | Y / N |
| 4. I get along better with: | |
| my siblings (brothers/sisters) | Y / N |
| my mother | Y / N |
| my father | Y / N |
| 5. Members of my family are getting along better with each other. | Y / N |
| 6. I feel like I have more independence at home | Y / N |
| (more say about my life; allowed to make my own decisions). | |
| 7. A parent has died. | Y / N |
| 8. A brother or sister has died. | Y / N |
| 9. My parents are getting divorced or separated. | Y / N |
| 10. Family member (other than yourself) has been having trouble with alcohol | Y / N |
| 11. Parent or relative in your family has gotten very sick. | Y / N |
| 12. A parent has lost their job. | Y / N |
| 13. I've been fighting with parents. | Y / N |
| 14. I've been fighting with a brother or sister. | Y / N |
| 15. Someone new has moved in with your family | Y / N |
| (grandparent, adopted brother or sister, or other). | |
| 16. My mother has gotten pregnant. | Y / N |
| 17. A brother or sister has gotten married. | Y / N |

Of the above statements regarding family circumstances and parenting indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about family circumstances and parenting that was not included on the above list?

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT (Remember: Since a year ago...)

- 18. I don't miss as many classes at school. Y / N
- 19. I am getting along better with:
 - other kids Y / N
 - teachers Y / N
- 20. I have given up on school. Y / N
- 21. I don't get into as much trouble in school. Y / N
- 22. I really try harder at school. Y / N
- 23. I am doing better in at least some of my classes. Y / N
- 24. I have failed one or more subjects in school. Y / N
- 25. I have flunked a grade in school. Y / N
- 26. I have lost a job. Y / N
- 27. I have quit school. Y / N
- 28. I've been in trouble with the teacher or principal. Y / N
- 29. I've started a new school. Y / N
- 30. I've started a new job. Y / N

Of the above statements regarding education and employment indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about education and employment that was not included on the above list?

PEER RELATIONS (In the past year...)

- 31. I feel better able to stand up to/say no to my friends if I don't want to do something (drugs, drinking, criminal activity). Y / N
- 32. There is someone in particular who I'm very close to and can confide in (a brother/sister or a special girlfriend/boyfriend). Y / N
- 33. I have met more friends who aren't in trouble with the law. Y / N
- 34. I spend more time with friends who aren't in trouble with the law than friends who are. Y / N
- 35. There has been someone important in my life who has encouraged me to stay out of trouble. WHO: _____ Y / N
- 36. This important person has been significant in helping me change. Y / N
- 37. Someone in authority (probation officer, teacher, principal, counsellor, boss) gave me a chance to prove myself. WHO: _____ Y / N
- 38. I spend more time alone. Y / N
- 39. A close friend is dying or has died. Y / N
- 40. My relationship with a close girlfriend or boyfriend has broken up. Y / N
- 41. A close girlfriend has gotten pregnant. Y / N
- 42. I've started dating. Y / N
- 43. I've been making new friends. Y / N

Of the above statements regarding peer relations/friends indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about peer relations/friends that was not included on the above list?

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (In the past year...)

- 44. I have really cut down my drinking/drug use. Y / N
- 45. I have stopped using drugs/alcohol all together. Y / N
- 46. I spend less time with friends who use drugs/alcohol. Y / N
- 47. I feel better able to turn down drugs/alcohol if my friends offer it to me. Y / N
- 48. I've gotten into drugs or alcohol. Y / N

Of the above statements regarding substance use indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about substance use that was not included on the above list?

LEISURE/RECREATION (Compared to a year ago...)

- 49. I spend less time just "hanging around". Y / N
- 50. I spend more time doing productive things (a hobby/sport; working; homework). Y / N
- 51. I am interested in more things (hobbies, sports). Y / N
- 52. I spend less time "vegging" (watching TV, listening to music, playing video/computer games). Y / N

Of the above statements regarding leisure and recreation indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about leisure and recreation that was not included on the above list?

PERSONALITY/BEHAVIOUR (Compared to a year ago...)

- 53. I feel I have more control over/say about my life. Y / N
- 54. I am better able to control my temper/anger without acting on it. Y / N

ATTITUDES/ORIENTATION

- 55. I am more likely to ask for help for a problem or to accept help if it is offered. Y / N
- 56. I am more likely to listen to someone in authority. Y / N
- 57. I am more likely to think about the consequences of my behaviour before I act. Y / N
- 58. Ultimately I am responsible for my actions. Y / N
- 59. I care more about how my actions affect others. Y / N
- 60. I am more clear about what I want out of life. Y / N
- 61. I am more concerned about my future. Y / N
- 62. I am working toward some important goals in my life. Y / N
- 63. I feel like I have more to lose now if I got caught
breaking the law (a job, an important relationship). Y / N
- 64. I feel better about my ability to succeed at things I try. Y / N
- 65. I've been having problems with one of the following: Y / N
acne, overweight, underweight, too tall, too short
- 66. I've had a change in physical appearance (braces, glasses) Y / N
- 67. I've started my menstrual period in the past year (for girls). GIRLS: Y / N BOYS: N/A

Of the above statements regarding personality, behaviour and attitudes indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important about personality and behaviour that was not included on the above list?

OTHER

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 68. I've lost a favourite pet. | Y / N |
| 69. I've been badly hurt or sick. | Y / N |
| 70. I've moved to a new home. | Y / N |
| 71. I've been arrested by the police. | Y / N |

Of the above statements indicate which, if any, were the most important contributors to your re-offending? Please rate the importance of each of those statements on the scale provided:

2 = very important 1 = somewhat important 0 = not important

Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0
Item # _____	2	1	0

Was there anything else important that was not included on the above list?

Is there anything that could have been done in the past year that may have helped you stop offending? (felt needs for services that were not met, interventions the "system" could have made differently or sooner to motivate and/or deter you)? Please explain.

Section II: Interventions and Treatment

Please indicate which of the services or treatments you have received over the past year and rate whether or not you found them helpful on the scale provided:

2 = very helpful 1 = somewhat helpful 0 = not at all helpful

	Received Treatment		Thought it was helpful		
Individual Counselling	Y	N	2	1	0
Group Counselling	Y	N	2	1	0
Family Counselling	Y	N	2	1	0
Substance Abuse Treatment	Y	N	2	1	0
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Y	N	2	1	0
Social Skills Training (ie: communication)	Y	N	2	1	0
Anger Management	Y	N	2	1	0
Vocational Skills/Special Education	Y	N	2	1	0
OTHER: (specify what type) _____			2	1	0

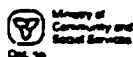
Section III: Change Assessment Scale (Short Form)

Please indicate the extent to which you tend to agree or disagree with each statement. In each case, make your choice in terms of how you feel right now. For all the statements that refer to your "problem", answer in terms of your criminal behaviour, legal difficulties and such.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

1. I am doing something about my criminal behaviour because it had been bothering me. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I don't have a problem. It doesn't make much sense for me to get help. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Being on probation or in therapy is pretty much a waste of time 1 2 3 4 5
because my criminal behaviour isn't a problem.
4. I have a problem with my criminal behaviour and I really think I should work on it. 1 2 3 4 5
5. I'm not following through with what I had already changed as well as 1 2 3 4 5
I had hoped, and I want to prevent a relapse of offending.
6. I thought once I had resolved the problem of offending I would be free of it, 1 2 3 4 5
but sometimes I still find myself struggling with it.
7. Maybe probation/therapy will be able to help me with my criminal behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I am actively working on the problem of my criminal behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B: Risk/Need Assessment Instrument



Risk/Need Assessment - Intake

Young Offender Name		Date of birth
Part I Assessment of Risks and Needs		
1. Prior and current offenses/dispositions		Comments (include any mitigating/aggravating factors)
a. Three or more prior convictions		
b. Two or more prior failures to comply		
c. Prior probation		
d. Prior custody		
e. Three or more current convictions		
Total		
Risk Level: Low (0) — Moderate (1-2) — High (3-5) —		Source(s) of information Date _____ _____
2. Family Circumstances/Parenting		Comments
a. Inadequate supervision		
b. Difficulty in controlling behaviour		
c. Inappropriate discipline		
d. Inconsistent parenting		
e. Poor relations/father-child		
f. Poor relations/mother-child		
Total		
Strength — Risk Level: Low (0-2) — Moderate (3-4) — High (5-6) —		Source(s) of information Date _____ _____
3. Education/Employment		Comments
a. Disruptive classroom behaviour		
b. Disruptive schoolyard behaviour		
c. Low achievement		
d. Problems with peer relations		
e. Problems with teacher relations		
f. Truancy		
g. Unemployed/not seeking employment		
Total		
Strength — Risk Level: Low (0) — Moderate (1-3) — High (4-7) —		Source(s) of information Date _____ _____
4. Peer Relations		Comments
a. Some delinquent acquaintances		
b. Some delinquent friends		
c. No or few positive acquaintances		
d. No or few positive friends		
Total		
Strength — Risk Level: Low (0-1) — Moderate (2-3) — High (4) —		Source(s) of information Date _____ _____

Part 1 Assessment of Risks and Needs

5. Substance Abuse		Comments
a. Occasional drug use		
b. Chronic drug use		
c. Chronic alcohol use		
d. Substance use interferes with functioning		
e. Substance use linked to offences)		
Total		
Strength	---	
Risk Level:		Source(s) of information Date
Low (0)	---	
Moderate (1-2)	---	
High (3-5)	---	
6. Leisure/Recreation		Comments
a. Limited organized participation		
b. Could make better use of time		
c. No personal interests		
Total		
Strength	---	
Risk Level:		Source(s) of information Date
Low (0)	---	
Moderate (1)	---	
High (2-3)	---	
7. Personality/Behaviour		Comments
a. Inflated self-esteem		
b. Physically aggressive		
c. Tantrums		
d. Short attention span		
e. Poor frustration tolerance		
f. Inadequate guilt feelings		
g. Verbally aggressive, impudent		
Total		
Strength	---	
Risk Level:		Source(s) of information
Low (0)	---	
Moderate (1-4)	---	
High (5-7)	---	
8. Attitudes/Orientation		Comments
a. Antisocial/procriminal attitudes		
b. Not seeking help		
c. Actively rejecting help		
d. Defies authority		
e. Callous, little concern for others		
Total		
Strength	---	
Risk Level:		Source(s) of information Date
Low (0)	---	
Moderate (1-3)	---	
High (4-5)	---	

Part II Summary of Risk/Need Factors (from page 1)

	Prior and Current Offenses/Disposition	Family Factors	Education	Peer Relations	Substance Abuse	Leisure/ Recreation	Personality	Attitude/ Orientation	Overall Total
Total									
Risk Level									___ Low (0-8)
Low									___ Moderate (9-26)
Moderate									___ High (27-34)
High									___ Very High (35-42)

Part III Assessment of Other Needs/Special Considerations

1. Family/Parents

- Chronic history of offenses) Financial/accommodation problems Abusive mother
- Emotional distress/psychiatric Uncooperative parents Significant family trauma
- Drug/alcohol abuse Cultural/ethnic issues (specify) _____
- Marital conflict Abusive father Other _____

Comments _____

2. Youth

- Health problems Peers outside age range Third party threat
- Physical disability Depressed History of sexual/physical assault
- Low intelligence/Developmental delay Low self-esteem History of assault on authority figures
- Learning disability Inappropriate sexual activity History of weapon use
- Underachievement Racist/sexist attitudes History of fire setting
- Poor Problem solving skills Poor social skills History of escapes
- Victim of physical/sexual abuse Engages in denial Protection issues
- Victim of neglect Suicide attempts Adverse living conditions
- Shy/withdrawn Diagnosis of psychosis Other _____

Comments (note any special responsivity consideration including the need for culturally specific services) _____

Part IV Your Assessment of the Client's General Risk/Need Level

Low Reasons: _____

Moderate _____

High _____

Very High _____

Part V Contact Level		
Administrative supervision		<p>Comments (note placement considerations and court expectations, if applicable)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Minimum supervision		
Medium supervision		
Maximum supervision		
Probation Officer's Signature/Date Supervisor's Signature/Date Provincial Director's Signature/Date		

Part VI Case Management Plan	
Goal 1	Means of Achievement
Goal 2	Means of Achievement
Goal 3	Means of Achievement
Goal 4	Means of Achievement

APPENDIX C: Parent and youth consent forms

Informed Consent Form - Parent

1. Title of research: An Exploration of Factors Contributing to Desistance from Offending in a Sample of Moderate to High Risk Young Offenders
 2. I give consent to allow my son/daughter, _____, to participate in this study on the exploration of risk factors of re-offending.
 3. All of my child's responses will be kept anonymous and confidential by the researcher.
 4. I also consent to the researcher obtaining information on my child's Risk/Need assessment and current disposition status from the Probation Services Branch of the Ministry of the Community and Social Services as relevant to this study.
 5. There is no anticipated risk to my child for participation. The information obtained by the researcher will not affect my child's probationary status.
 6. If for some reason I wish to discontinue my child's participation in the study once the session has begun, I am free to do so without penalty even after I have signed this consent form.
- I have read the above pertaining to my child's participation in the study and I agree to allow my child to participate.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

(please print)

Informed Consent Form - Youth

1. Title of research: An Exploration of Factors Contributing to Desistance from Offending in a Sample of Moderate to High Risk Young Offenders
2. I _____, consent to participate in this study on the exploration of risk factors of re-offending.
3. The researcher, Leah Fraser, will tell me what I am supposed to do in this project. She will ask me questions about how I am in school, with my friends, at home, and other factors. I understand that she might also look at my Probation record.
4. I know that any information from my responses to her questions, or from my probation records she will keep strictly confidential. This means that my probation officer and any one else, except for Leah Fraser, will NOT know my responses to her questions.
5. It is okay for Ms. Fraser to get the information she needs from Probation Services regarding my Risk/Need Assessment and current disposition status.
6. Ms. Fraser has told me there are no dangers that she can see happening if I consent.
7. If for some reason I do not wish to continue in the study once Ms. Fraser has started to ask questions, I am free to leave. I do not have to explain and I will not be punished even after I sign this consent form.

I have read the above about my participation in the study and I agree to participate.

Signature of Youth

Date

Phone number: _____

Best times to reach youth: _____

Appendix D: Scoring Key for Questionnaire Data

Section I: Life Changes Survey

Positive Change: + Negative Change: - Neutral Change: (blank)

Family Circumstances/Parenting (Items 1-17) (LCES: Items 7-17)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
1	+		10	-	
2	+		11	-	
3	+	-	12	-	
4	+	-	13	-	+
5	+	-	14	-	+
6	+	-	15		
7	-		16		
8	-		17		
9	-				

Education/Employment (Items 18-30) (LCES: Items 24-30)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
18	+	-	24	-	
19	+	-	25	-	
20	-	+	26	-	
21	+	-	27	-	
22	+	-	28	-	+
23	+	-	29		
			30	+	

Peer Relations (Items 31-43) (LCES: Items 39-43)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
31	+	-	38	+	
32	+	-	39	-	
33	+	-	40	-	
34	+	-	41	-	
35	+	-	42		
36	+	-	43	+	
37	+	-			

Substance Abuse (Items 44-48) (LCES: Item 48)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
44	+	-	47	+	-
45	+	-	48		
46	+	-			

Scoring Key for Questionnaire Data, cont.

Positive Change: + Negative Change: - Neutral Change: (blank)

Leisure and Recreation (Items 49-52) (LCES: No items)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
49	+	-	51	+	-
50	+	-	52	+	-

Personality and Attitudes (Items 53-67) (LCES: Items 65-67)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
53	+	-	60	+	-
54	+	-	61	+	-
55	+	-	62	+	-
56	+	-	63	+	-
57	+	-	64	+	-
58	+	-	65	-	-
59	+	-	66	-	-
			67		

Other (Items 68-71) (LCES: Items 68-71)

Item #	Response		Item #	Response	
	YES	NO		YES	NO
68	-	-	70	-	-
69	-	-	71	-	-

Section III: Change Assessment Scale - modified short form

Change Assessment Scale (short form)

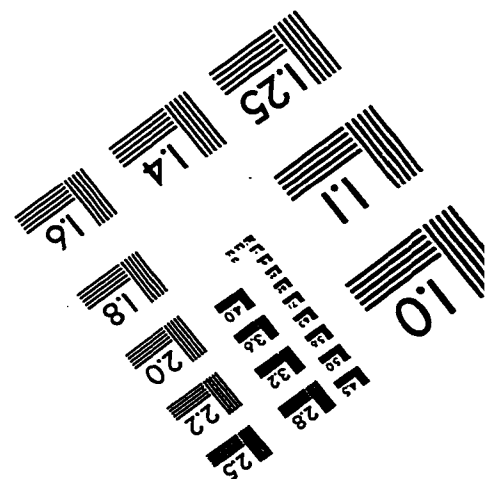
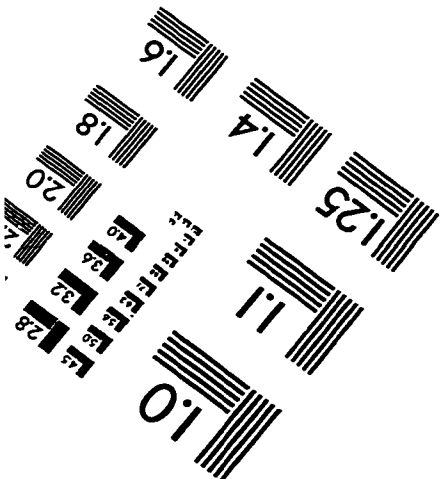
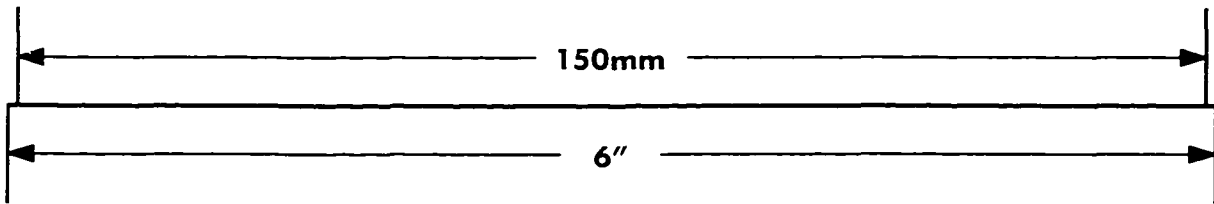
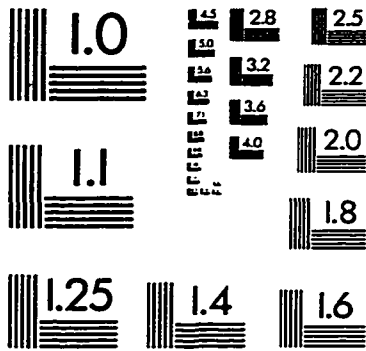
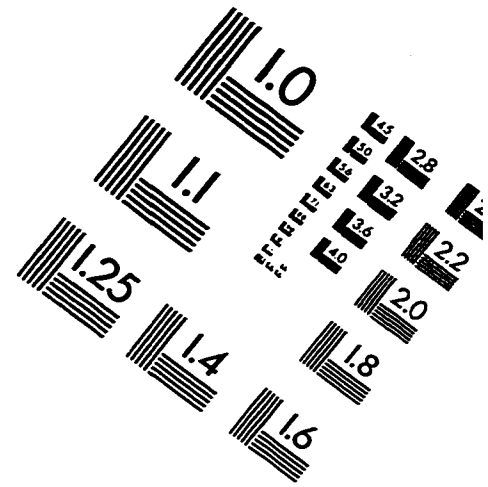
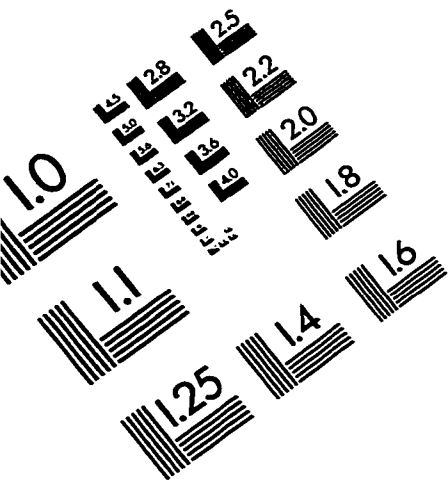
Pre-contemplation
 Contemplation
 Action
 Maintenance

Average of CAS Items

#2, #3 = (P)
 #4, #7 = (C)
 #1, #8 = (A)
 #5, #6 = (M)

Overall Readiness Score Calculation: (C + A + M) - P

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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1653 East Main Street
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Fax: 716/288-5989

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