

Implementation Success Stories: Cognitive Behavioral Tools

Carey Guides, BITS, and Driver Workbook

PREPARED BY:

Carey Group Publishing

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Acknowledgments

We want to begin with a note of thanks to Carey Group Publishing cognitive tool users who have shared with us their fidelity practices and experiences. They are not specifically named due to governmental restrictions; however, we know they welcome outreach from professional colleagues. If you would like more information about their work, please contact us at https://thecareygroup.com/contact or (877) 892-2739 # 81 and we'd be happy to introduce you to each other.

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Introduction

At the time of this report, 47 states and 4 countries are using Carey Group Publishing (CGP) cognitive tools (Carey Guides, BITS, or the Driver Workbook). The manner in which corrections professionals, counselors, juvenile justice professionals, prison and detention staff, nonprofit case managers, and even secondary school staff have adopted these tools in their daily work has been encouraging. They are using the tools to help their clients build skills and improve the likelihood that they will remain law abiding and better able to cope with life's challenges.



It is exciting to read user testimonials and to study agency-reported data that highlight positive outcomes as a result of using cognitive tools; however, there are also stories of poor utilization and ineffective implementation. Indeed, implementation science researchers caution us that change efforts will fall short of their promise if we do not pay attention to fidelity: they note that up to 85% of organizational change initiatives fail to reach their potential.¹



This document shines a spotlight on some ways in which practitioners have implemented CGP's cognitive tools successfully, increasing the odds that their efforts will reap the expected rewards. The bottom line is that they have taken fidelity seriously.

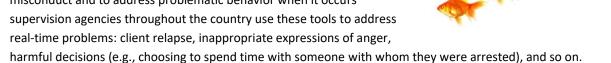
We've divided their strategies into three categories: using tools for different purposes in different settings, making it easy for staff and clients to use the tools, and supporting staff's continuing use of the tools. Some strategies require little investment in terms of time, policy change, technology, and other resources; others require a greater investment. As one might expect, the most impactful solutions require the greatest investment. To be sure, agencies differ in their capacity to invest, so it is important to adhere to the advice "Don't let perfect be the enemy of good."

¹ Rogers, R. W., Wellins, R. S., & Conner, D. R. (2002). *The power of realization: Building competitive advantage by maximizing human resource initiatives.* Development Dimensions International.

Using Tools for Different Purposes in Different Settings

Countless agencies are using cognitive tools to look backward, to identify clients' past patterns in an effort to prevent their recurrence; to help clients address here-and-now problems and stressors; to respond to real-time concerns; and to proactively prevent problematic behavior. For example:

- a juvenile correctional facility uses cognitive tools to address resident misconduct
- a number of adult prisons use cognitive worksheets to proactively prevent misconduct and to address problematic behavior when it occurs



Most cognitive tools, including Carey Guides, BITS, and the Driver Workbook, were designed to be used in one-on-one interventions, but that is not the only setting in which they are helpful.

Cognitive Group Supervision

Many jurisdictions use cognitive tools for group-based supervision. In one state, the probation department created structured lesson plans for groups of probationers. Each lesson plan focused on one of the more influential criminogenic needs—antisocial cognition, antisocial personality/temperament, antisocial associates, and family/marital—as well as on substance use. So far, the department has facilitated nearly 400 groups, providing approximately 2,000 hours of Carey Guide and other cognitive tool intervention.





In the Courtroom

Some jurisdictions use BITS tools in specialty courts. For example, a judge will assign a BITS tool when she wants a drug court participant to learn from an incident (e.g., relapse, recent high-risk situation, prosocial decision). In some cases, the judge has the person complete the BITS tool in the courtroom and then processes it with them from the bench. This open courtroom discussion allows other drug court participants to benefit from the person's experience and learning. In other cases, judicial officers may use a BITS tool to help participants identify their triggers and develop a plan to avoid them; to strategize around healthy and unhealthy relationships; to assess their motivation to work on different parts of their life; or to unpack how they successfully avoided relapse in a high-risk situation.

The use of cognitive tools in diverse settings, including the courtroom, makes the tools more familiar to justice-involved individuals. It reinforces responsible thinking and the development of prosocial skills aimed to counteract criminogenic needs. And, it provides continuity of messaging among justice system professionals—in this case, the judge, case manager, attorneys, and treatment providers.



Making It Easy for Staff and Clients to Use the Tools

CGP's cognitive tools are available in paper, electronic, and fillable formats (Tools on Devices, or TOD). Below are suggestions for making it easy for staff to access these tools...and for clients to complete them.

Central Location

Agencies in three states have developed simple ways for staff to access the paper version of the Carey Guides. One agency placed the individual Guides in a rotating display stand so that staff could access them quickly and easily (see illustration 1) and then photocopy the tools.² Two other agencies determined that it was inconvenient for staff to pull individual Guides and make copies of tools as needed, so the agencies made multiple copies of all the Guide tools and filed them in alphabetical order, placing them in staff common areas (see illustrations 2 and 3). One of these agencies also placed BITS tablets in the central location. In each agency, one staff person is responsible for restocking the tools as they are used.³



Illustration 1



Illustration 2



Illustration 3

² CGP copyright allows each agency to make photocopies (in the case of the paper version of the Guides) or printed copies (in the case of the electronic Guides) of the Guide tools (the worksheets and the instructions for corrections professionals that explain how to use the worksheets) for distribution to staff within the agency. In this way, an agency can make multiple copies of a Guide's tools for use with different clients. However, the narrative pages of the Guides (the information provided for the corrections professional at the beginning of each Guide) cannot be copied.

³ Photocopying and printing of the BITS, as well as of the Driver Workbook, are not allowed. When these tools are used, they must be reordered through <u>https://carevgrouppublishing.com</u>.

Black Box of Tools

A community corrections agency made its cognitive tools more portable. In deference to Dr. James Bonta's seminal research study, *Exploring the Black Box of Supervision*,⁴ the agency gave each officer a black carrying case filled with the most frequently used cognitive tools (see illustrations 4 and 5). The black boxes are portable; officers use them in their offices and carry them into the field.





Illustration 5

Illustration 4

Client Folders

One concern voiced by people who are skeptical about using cognitive tools with clients is that they will refuse to complete the work and/or they will lose their assignments. However, CGP customers—particularly those who are especially skilled in professional alliance and motivational interviewing—commonly report the exact opposite. Their positive attitude about the potency of prosocial skill development coupled with their emphasis on establishing clear expectations up front results in high rates of assignment completion. In fact, we often hear that clients take great pride in their work.

One statewide probation agency has created folders which they give to clients when they are first placed on supervision. Clients are expected to bring their folders to each appointment; as they complete cognitive tools, they add them to the folder. This serves at least four purposes:

- 1. It reinforces the development of organizational skills.
- 2. It enables clients to easily review past assignments to look for patterns, remind themselves of helpful strategies, and so on.
- 3. It instills in clients a sense of pride as they fill the folder with completed assignments and see how far they have come.
- 4. It focuses both the corrections professional and client on skill building and skill practice.



⁴ Bonta, J., Rugge, T., Scott, T.-L., Bourgon, G., & Yessine, A. K. (2008). Exploring the black box of community supervision. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, *47*, 248–270. <u>https://doi.org/10.1080/10509670802134085</u>

Reference Guides

Selecting the right tool for the right circumstance can be challenging for some staff. They tend to keep using the same tool even though other tools may be more impactful. Many jurisdictions have developed paper (laminated for durability) or electronic quick reference guides that help staff identify the tools that work best for particular criminogenic needs. These guides often include short descriptions of the tools.

In some jurisdictions, the reference guides are embedded into existing electronic case management software as dropdown menus. One agency with a love for football created their reference guide as a "playbook."

Digital Solutions

Increasingly, clients make use of technological solutions in their day-to-day lives. In fact, many are more comfortable with electronic solutions than traditional paper and pen methods. The Carey Guides and BITS are now available as Tools on Devices (TOD). This electronic platform allows clients to complete cognitive worksheets as fillable forms on smartphones, tablets, and computers. The fillable Driver Workbook is included in TOD Deluxe, as are the Tool Navigator, which helps staff match specific tools to skills they would like to help clients develop, and the Dosage Meter, which tracks the amount of time spent on risk reduction, skill-building tasks.

TOD is simple to use. Corrections professionals send links to tool assignments via email or text. Clients access the tools from any internet-enabled device, complete the fillable forms, and submit them electronically to their corrections professional. Both corrections professionals and clients have separate, secure access portals to view, complete, and review assignments. DRIVER-

TOD provides real-time information to corrections professionals and administrators regarding which tools have been assigned to which

people; when tools were assigned and when they were started, completed, and submitted; the total time spent completing individual assignments; completion status by person and by topic; and aggregate data on tool use.

Agencies throughout the country are gravitating to this digital solution. They report that it is convenient; it increases the likelihood that clients complete tools and have a positive experience doing so; and it contributes to more meaningful, productive contacts. Clients also comment on the convenience of TOD, and report that they prefer completing fillable tools than paper ones.

Another digital solution is the inclusion—in existing case management software—of a dropdown menu of available cognitive tools. Corrections professionals can use this menu to choose those tools that will best help them address a person's criminogenic needs. Some agencies are also including a menu of cognitive tools in their behavior management software. For example, a juvenile justice facility has adapted CGP's 4:1 Behavior Management System[®], which helps guide responses to prosocial and noncompliant behavior, so that it provides direction on the use of cognitive tools in response to specific behaviors.





Supporting Staff's Continuing Use of the Tools

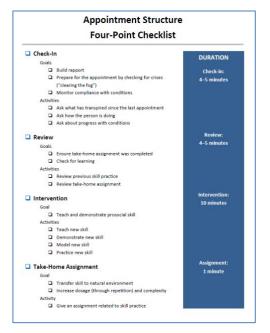
According to Peter Senge, "Learning organizations are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together."⁵ The following suggestions offer ways to create a true learning organization—one that offers staff continuing support on how to use cognitive tools with fidelity.

Messaging

It is often said that "what gets reinforced gets done." Consistent and repetitive messaging to staff about the importance of using cognitive tools to address criminogenic needs—whether the messaging is in the form of visual reminders, Twitter and email tips, questions asked during case staffings, or other means—is key.

Dozens of jurisdictions use the Appointment Structure Four-Point Checklist to help staff structure their time with clients and to remind them to not let the urgent overtake the important. The checklist proscribes an appointment structure (check-in, review, intervention, and take-home assignment) and, within that structure, pinpoints the specific tasks that need to occur to achieve the desired results: clients who have developed the essential skills to make healthy choices for themselves and their families. At the heart of this structure is the use of cognitive tools to help clients build skills.

One prison system provided BITS to its case managers and encouraged them to use the tools as a way to manage behavior and effect long-term behavior change. This was daunting, given that staff had caseloads of more than 250 people. To encourage and reinforce this cognitive approach, central office utilized Twitter and email to promote a series of





"BITS Tips" that were sent to staff on a periodic basis. Below are some examples of those tips.

⁵ Senge, P. M. (2006). The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization. Doubleday.

BITS TIP 1

BITS TIP 2

Keep in mind that BITS work best when you:

- Prepare yourself and the offender.
 Familiarize yourself with the tools, set expectations, and ensure the offender knows how to complete the worksheets.
- Engage the offender. Use praise and encouragement to draw on strengths rather than shortfalls. Fall back on your motivational interviewing skills to involve offenders in the work.
 They should be the ones doing all the thinking and problem solving!
- Manage your expectations. Not everyone will respond positively, so plant what seeds you can and keep your door open. Change happens slowly over time, and relapse is normal. Look for actions, not words, that signal change or appreciation.

One good strategy for choosing who to target with the BITS is to find someone who recently received a misconduct or whose behavior may not have called for a write-up but is still concerning. The key to being effective is to make sure people know that the worksheet is not a *punishment.* There should be no question that both your attention and the worksheet you are giving them are only to help them make good decisions so they can stay out of trouble. When treatment (e.g., programs, worksheets/ essays, meetings with you) is equated with punishment, people will be less likely to change and their behavior could become even more problematic.

BITS TIP 3

Imagine someone comes to open door, asking for the third time in three days for help writing a modification. This is now the third time you're encouraging her to use the law library and reminding her that it's against policy for you to be involved in legal matters. She then swears at you and stomps off. You give her some time to cool off and revisit the situation with a BITS worksheet. Which one are you using?

Using *Thinking Traps* would be a good way to help her identify the selftalk/thinking trap that led to her stomping off (then, at a later time, follow up with *Overcoming Thinking Traps* to help her see how replacing that self-talk could have led to a better outcome). Another option would be to use *Problem Solving* to help her think through the options to be more self-sufficient rather than relying on you to do the work for her.

To encourage staff's consistent use of cognitive tools, many departments have coached their supervisors and managers to ask a set of questions when staffing cases with officers:

- What is the client's risk level?
- What are their criminogenic needs?
- Which criminogenic need is the driver (the need that is likely driving the others)?
- What skill are you working on?
- Which cognitive tools are you using?
- What homework have you assigned?

When supervisors ask these same questions time and again, staff soon understand—without ambivalence—what is expected of them. Multiple jurisdictions have gone a step further, asking staff to document their use of cognitive tools and their adherence to the four-point appointment structure (or a version thereof) in their electronic case notes (sometimes referred to as "smart chronos").



Coaching

From a research perspective, the most impactful way to ensure that cognitive tools are used effectively is through coaching. Agencies across many, diverse disciplines (counseling, behavioral health, education, corrections, athletics) have discovered that coaching must follow initial training in order to maximize results.

Coaching can take many forms. Some CGP customers use a highly structured method of coaching. For example, agencies in different states have established Carey Guide coaches who review audiotapes or sit in on appointments and use a cognitive intervention checklist to guide their feedback. Staff are required to participate in a certain number of coaching sessions each year.

In some locations, coaches work together to review a tape or conduct a case audit, in which they examine a certain number of a staff member's case plans, to increase consistency in their assessments. This method has the added benefit of building a cohesive coaching team that learns from one another.



Typically, coaching focuses on key areas of interest, such as linking prosocial skill development to an assessed criminogenic need; selecting the right cognitive tool for a particular need area/skill; the effective review of homework assignments; identifying opportunities for, and the effective use of, skill practice; and ensuring sufficient dosage and skill attainment before transitioning to a new skill.

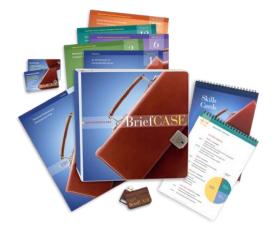
Booster Sessions

In some cases, fidelity measures such as coaching and case audits reveal areas of need that are common to many staff. When this occurs, booster sessions are an ideal solution. Booster sessions can be conducted either as brief trainings or facilitated discussions. They are designed to improve cognitive intervention skills (i.e., "boost skills") in order to achieve maximum performance.

One probation agency conducts booster sessions on a monthly basis. Sometimes, the booster focuses on one cognitive tool: staff discuss how it is best used and they practice using it with an actual client. This is often followed with an agreement that all staff will use the tool with a client in the ensuing weeks. At other times, the agency's booster sessions focus on success stories (and strategies for creating successful experiences) or on discussions of challenging experiences so that staff can learn and problem solve together.



One highly structured booster session option is the Supervisor's EBP BriefCASE (Coach and Advance Staff in EBP). This 18-module curriculum is designed to be delivered by supervisors to their staff in one-hour meetings held monthly. The BriefCASE was developed to provide supervisors with the structure to establish a collaborative coaching relationship with staff, and with the knowledge and tools to teach and reinforce EBP and core competencies. A number of the modules directly or indirectly reinforce the skills necessary to conduct cognitive behavioral interventions using the Guides, BITS, and Driver Workbook.



Staff Meetings

A number of jurisdictions have put concerted effort into increasing staff awareness about the wide range of tools available to them. Collectively, the Guides, BITS, and Driver Workbook are 107 different tools. Knowing the purposes and uses of all the tools, and the optimal circumstances for their use, is challenging. Indeed, many staff report that they have a few "go-to" tools and seldom deviate from their routine.

One way to ensure that staff are aware of the range of tools is to identify those that are most commonly used and to discuss others in monthly staff meetings. During these meetings, a supervisor, facilitator, EBP coordinator, or continuous quality improvement (CQI) coach selects one tool to highlight. Together, staff review the purpose and content of the tool and discuss the situations in which it is best utilized. Staff who have previously used the tool share their experiences with it. Then, each staff person is tasked with using the tool (in the case of the Carey Guides, that might be



one or more tools from a Guide) at least once over the next 30 days. Staff are expected to come to the next meeting and discuss their successes and any challenges they experienced, then another tool is reviewed. The process is repeated until all the Guides, the BITS, and the Driver Workbook are reviewed and discussed. In addition to broadening staff awareness and deepening skills, this format encourages the exchange of case management strategies and collaborative problem solving.

Learning Teams

Establishing learning teams (also referred to as "communities of practice") is another common technique for supporting the effective use of cognitive tools. Learning teams can be convened in person or, for geographically dispersed departments, conducted virtually. Typically, learning teams are structured and scheduled regularly. A subject matter expert facilitates these sessions in a discussion group format. One agency holds monthly cognitive tool learning teams to discuss experiences using Carey Guide tools with clients. The facilitator also



creates mock case studies and asks the group to identify the tool they think would be most effective and to explain their rationale. Staff have opportunities to share positive experiences or to bring challenging cases to the group for input. Skill practice is common, as is the examination of continuous quality improvement data (e.g., the checklist results from a series of observations and coaching sessions; data collected on the most/least used tools).

Performance Appraisals

After sufficient time has passed for staff to learn how to use the cognitive tools, use of the tools becomes part of the daily job expectation and can be included in the annual performance appraisal system. This allows staff to be recognized for exemplary work as well as to be held accountable to departmental expectations. When first introducing the concept that staff will be evaluated on their use of cognitive tools, an agency might temper its requirements. A reasonable learning curve should be expected. The length of that learning curve should be documented and clearly communicated (e.g., in the first few weeks of learning, staff might be expected to show effort and progress, but performing at a high level would not be expected until staff have completed a skill development period). Agencies report that some staff initially express discomfort with being held to these

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standards. However, supervisors and coaches mitigate discomfort by communicating messages of support and reassurance during the initial learning stage, striking an important balance between support and accountability to high performance standards.

Supporting Supervisors

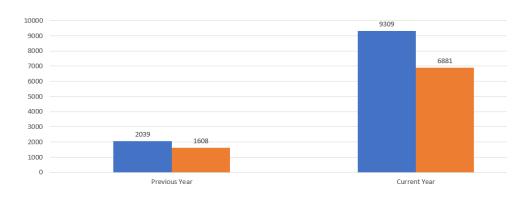
Leadership is crucial to helping staff develop, sustain, and continually improve their skills. To be sure, supervisors are the linchpin to staff effectively adopting a cognitive behavioral approach. This means that agencies must provide their supervisors with a high level of knowledge and an opportunity to develop their own skills so that they are well positioned to coach and guide their staff. Supervisors should be trained on cognitive interventions before their staff so they can provide information, encouragement, and support.

It is also imperative that management get involved. Managers need to know how to support their supervisors, and they need to ensure that all supervisors are effectively and consistently guiding and coaching their staff.

Three Case Studies

Case Study 1

In a large urban agency with a population of a million residents, the adult probation department made a concerted effort to improve the frequency and quality of its staff's use of cognitive tools. Staff had been applying evidencebased practices for years, but their use of a cognitive approach was inconsistent. The agency started the change process by forming a small committee of creative staff. The committee created newsletters, videos, and a stream of email updates on the value of cognitive interventions—all intended to encourage expanded use of the available tools. The committee would single out a specific tool, use it as a newsletter feature story, and, through cleverly designed email messages, encourage everyone to give it a try. The agency held learning team meetings and booster sessions. In a nutshell, it engaged in continuous, positive, and often entertaining communications (e.g., lively and sometimes humorous videos) with staff. The agency's efforts paid off: data demonstrated a significant change in risk reduction interventions. Over a one-year period, the agency experienced a 356% increase in the use of cognitive tools.



Cognitive Tools Assigned and Completed

Assignments Made Assignments Completed

Case Study 2

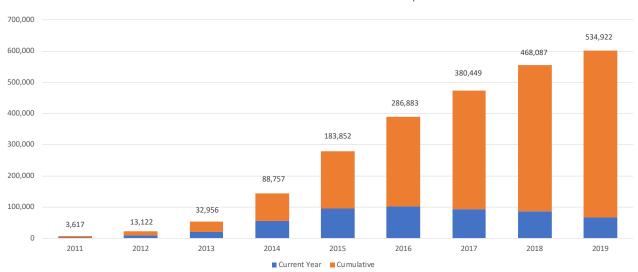
A juvenile department used BITS tools in its juvenile hall, motivated, in part, by a rising rate of high risk youth engaged in serious behavior in the facility. Staff were initially skeptical about using the BITS with this population. Management committed to collecting and sharing incident report data, regardless of the findings. If the tools did not result in a decrease in problematic behavior, their use would be discontinued.

After 16 months, data demonstrated that fights were reduced by 36%, assaults by 5%, use of restraints by 47%, and injuries to staff by 41%. And, the use of two-day disciplines decreased by 9%, while the use of six-day disciplines decreased by 54%. Both staff and outside visitors indicated that the emphasis on EBP and the use of cognitive interventions created a palpable climate change.



Case Study 3

A statewide adult probation department experienced a substantial increase in the use of cognitive tools following a concerted effort by EBP champions to improve public safety. It was an ambitious effort ba Please change page 14Please change page 14sed on a comprehensive strategy that included, but was not limited to, extensive training for supervisors and direct service staff, provision of cognitive tools, use of booster sessions (i.e., the Supervisor's EBP BriefCASE), active encouragement and communication from the director to mid-level managers, staff rewards, and ongoing collection and dissemination of performance data. Worksheet assignments were carefully tracked by worker, unit, and region. Data was analyzed against client performance (e.g., violations, successful completion). The results were significant: between 2011 and 2019, cognitive worksheets were used over 534,000 times. Furthermore, the department found that high risk clients who completed three or more structured worksheets were significantly less likely to commit a new crime or to violate supervision when compared to those who did not complete the worksheets. The department determined that the use of three or more structured worksheets helps establish rapport, improve client engagement, and increase client willingness to receive, and participate in, additional services (e.g., obtaining a substance abuse assessment).



Structured Intervention Worksheets Completed

Additional Resources

CGP provides additional resources to Carey Guide, BITS, and Driver Workbook users on its website: https://careygrouppublishing.com/product-resources. Resources include the following:



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The **Brief Intervention ToolS (BITS) Primer** explores how corrections professionals can use these six short tools to help clients build key skills; outlines the similarities and differences between the BITS, Carey Guides, and cognitive behavioral programming, and suggests when each intervention strategy may be most appropriate; and summarizes which BITS, Guides, and programming can be used to address various criminogenic needs.

The **BITS Tools Usage Guide** summarizes the circumstances under which staff may want to use each BITS tool and the likely criminogenic needs that the tool addresses.



The **Carey Guides User's Guide** lists all the Carey Guides—and the circumstances under which corrections professionals might use each one—and answers frequently asked questions related to the general use of the Guides (e.g., "What are the differences between the Blue Guides and Red Guides?"), how to integrate the Guides into casework (e.g., "How should I use the Guides in case planning?"), and how to work with clients on Guide tools (e.g., "Do I have to use all the tools in a Guide?").







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Carey Guides and BITS FAQs answers frequently asked questions about the Guides and BITS, such as "What are the Carey Guides?" "What are the BITS?" "How widely are the Guides and BITS used?" and "What other products and services are available to support the effective use of the Guides and BITS?"

The **Carey Guides and Driver Workbook Sequencing Chart** helps corrections professionals understand a logical order for using the Guides and Driver Workbook. The sequencing chart divides supervision into six time periods—beginning with the first appointment and concluding with the time period just prior to discharge. It identifies the key step and associated goals of each period, and suggests when to use each Guide and the Driver Workbook to help meet those goals and maximize the impact of risk reduction interventions.

The **Carey Guides Index** lists each Carey Guide, each tool within each Guide, and the objective of each tool to help corrections professionals determine when to use each of the 33 Guides and 100 tools.

The **Carey Guides Linking Chart** links each Carey Guide and Carey Guide tool with each criminogenic need, as well as with responsivity/stabilization factors. Corrections professionals can use this resource to help select which Guides, and which tools within the Guides, would be most appropriate for a particular client, given the results of their risk/needs assessment.

The Carey Group provides training and coaching for agencies that are interested in supporting staff skill development in the use of risk reduction tools. Training and coaching approaches can be customized to your agency's specific needs. If you are interested, contact TCG at info@thecareygroup.com or (877) 892-2739, extension 81.



We Want to Hear From You

If you have adopted other implementation practices that have increased the use or impact of cognitive tools, we want to hear from you. Please contact us at

https://thecareygroup.com/contact or (877) 892-2739, extension 81.