



Carey Guides and BITS: FAQs

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Q: What are the Carey Guides?

A: Research demonstrates that traditional methods of supervision are ineffective in reducing recidivism. For behavior change and recidivism reduction to be possible, people must understand the personal and environmental factors underlying their harmful behavior and develop the skills that will support positive change in the future. The Carey Guides are designed to equip staff with the information and tools they need to support these changes among the people with whom they work.

We know that staff have a heavy workload and little time, so we have made the Guides short, practical, and easy to use. They are designed to translate evidence-based practices (EBP) into a series of strategies and tools that are quick and to the point.

The Carey Guides include 33 handbooks that help staff effectively implement EBP. There are 14 Blue Guides that specifically address criminogenic needs and 19 Red Guides that address common case management issues. Each Guide follows a consistent format. Background information provides staff with important research findings and contextual information to support the application of evidence-based approaches. Each Guide also contains two to five tools (worksheets). These tools are designed for use by people who are justice-involved—with the assistance of their staff member—to understand and address risk factors, triggers, and other conditions that are essential to their success. In total, the Guides contain 100 tools that staff can use as they help people build skills and make positive changes in their lives.

Q: What are the BITS?

A: The BITS, or Brief Intervention Tools, were created to teach people skills that will help them make positive life choices. They are meant to be used in short, structured interventions.

There are six BITS tools: “Decision Making,” “Overcoming Automatic Responses,” “Problem Solving,” “Thinking Traps,” “Overcoming Thinking Traps,” and “Who I Spend Time With.” Each BITS tool is:

- short: only one page, front and back
- situational: designed to be used when a spontaneous “teachable moment” arises or to target problematic behavior patterns
- versatile: can be useful in many circumstances, with both youth and adults
- user-friendly. There are no manuals to read, and while training on the use of the BITS is recommended and will likely enhance staff’s confidence and the effectiveness of the tools, it is not required.

The BITS can be used as a supplement to the Carey Guides or they can be used on their own.

Q: In what formats are the Carey Guides and BITS available

A: The Carey Guides and BITS are available in three formats: paper, electronic (available with a license to Carey Group Publishing’s Digital Library, and interactive (available through Carey Group Publishing’s Tools on Devices, or TOD). Increasingly, people are moving toward the electronic and interactive formats, which offer unique benefits such as the ability to access agency dashboards and to produce reports reflecting tool usage.

Q: What exactly is TOD?

A: TOD is an add-on feature to an English Carey Guide license that allows people to complete the Carey Guides and BITS on their smartphones, tablets, or personal computers. The tools are presented as “fillable forms” on these devices. There is also TOD Deluxe, which is an

expanded version of TOD. Along with fillable Carey Guide tools and BITS, the TOD Deluxe package includes a fillable Driver Workbook (see page 7 for more information about the Driver Workbook); a tool navigator, to help staff determine what tools would most benefit the people with whom they are working; and a dosage meter, to track the amount of dosage, or programming, people receive completing Carey Group Publishing tools or other activities.

Q: Are the Carey Guides and BITS supported by research?

A: The Carey Guides and BITS were developed based upon the research on cognitive behavioral interventions, social learning theory, effective risk reduction strategies, and the specific subject matter of the Guides and BITS (e.g., harmful thinking, harmful associates, problem solving, motivation, impulse control, substance use, case management, etc.). Each Carey Guide was developed by a subject matter expert, reviewed by Carey Group Publishing staff, and then peer-reviewed by a panel of researchers (to ensure the accuracy of content) and practitioners (to ensure the applicability of the content). (Research citations are available at careygrouppublishing.com/Research.pdf.)

Q: Has Carey Group Publishing conducted research on the Guides and BITS?

A: Carey Group Publishing has made a deliberate effort *not* to conduct research on these tools out of concern for a potential conflict of interest; many would conclude that the findings of such research were suspect since we are the developers of the material and have a vested interest in the outcome of such research. Instead, Carey Group Publishing urges users of the Guides and BITS to conduct their own research and, indeed, we have been informed that Carey Group Publishing tools are the subject of agency studies in several states. We have seen results from one large jurisdiction in California (Santa Clara County Probation) that has used BITS in their youth detention facility with excellent results. Their findings are available at careygrouppublishing.com/the-carey-guides-and-bits-contest-winners. In addition, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS)

conducted a study of the Division of Community Corrections' use of structured worksheets such as the Carey Guide tools. A summary of the results can be found at careygrouppublishing.com/structured-worksheets-yield-positive-results.

Q: Are there other products similar to the Carey Guides and BITS?

A: There are several products available from other companies that strive to achieve the same behavior change goals as we do. Carey Group Publishing's product line is more extensive than those of our competitors; with that said, we support the use of any tools that seek to achieve behavior change.

Q: How widely are the Guides and BITS used?

A: The number of Carey Guides and BITS users has consistently grown since these resources were released. At the time of this writing, more than 500 agencies in 42 states and four countries are using the Guides, and more than 450 agencies in 34 states are using the BITS. Carey Group Publishing estimates that more than 8,000 staff are using Guides or BITS in the U.S. as of this writing.

Q: What types of agencies are using the Guides and BITS?

A: Carey Guide and BITS customers are largely justice system agencies, with the majority being state departments of correction and state and local probation/parole agencies. Private agencies are also using these resources. The Guides and BITS are being used in community settings as well as residential settings, including detention facilities and camps for youth, and jails, prisons, and day reporting centers for adults. Some jurisdictions are using the BITS with populations in the pretrial phase and the Guides and BITS with populations who have been diverted. And, some courts are using the Guides and BITS to help people acquire the skills they need to be successful in their day-to-day lives.

Guides and BITS are used increasingly as behavior change tools outside the justice system by community-based service organizations, social/human service agencies, schools, and colleges.

Q: Is it possible to talk to Guides and BITS users?

A: Absolutely. Numerous customers have indicated that they are more than willing to talk to others about their experiences using the Carey Guides, BITS, and other Carey Group Publishing products. Please contact us directly for references.

Q: What other products and services are available to support the effective use of the Guides and BITS?

A: Carey Group Publishing has developed the following resources to support the effective use of the Carey Guides and BITS:

- **The Carey Guides User's Guide** includes charts listing all the Carey Guides and tips on when you might use each one, as well as answers to frequently asked questions on topics such as how to integrate the Guides into casework, how to work with people on the Guide tools, what reading level is needed for the Guide tools, etc.
- **The Carey Guides Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Kit** includes a manual that explains the importance of CQI and that recommends a process for administering three tools that help ensure the Carey Guides are being implemented with fidelity. The Client Feedback Survey measures perceptions of people who are justice-involved regarding the usefulness of an appointment in which a Carey Guide tool is used. The Carey Guides Case Audit Tool measures the degree to which the Carey Guides are used under appropriate circumstances. Finally, the Carey Guides Direct Observation Tool measures the degree to which staff are using the Carey Guides as intended and the extent to which staff incorporate the use of the four core competencies—building professional alliance, using skill practice, effective case planning and management, and appropriately using rewards and responses to noncompliance—in their work.
- **The BITS Primer** offers information about how the BITS can be used to teach people skills that will help them make positive life choices.

- **The 8 Keys to Success Skills Poster** lists, in strength-based terms, the key behaviors that lead to successful living (for example, “Live a Sober Lifestyle” and “Maintain Healthy and Supportive Family Relationships”), skills that are essential to success in each area, and strategies that staff can use to help the people with whom they are working build these skills. The poster is intended to be interactive, to help staff and the people with whom they are working recognize and identify skills that can help them lead successful lives, and to support the development of strategies to build these skills.

In addition to the poster, a one-page document translates each “Key to Success” into one of the eight criminogenic needs and directs staff who are working with people who are justice-involved to Carey Guides and BITS that can help people build new, prosocial skills in each area.

- **The Tool Organizer** includes a pocket folder for storing assigned and completed worksheets, such as Carey Guide and BITS tools. Each folder contains a 15-page memo pad that prompts people to record their assignments, learnings, and topics to discuss with their staff member. The cover of the Tool Organizer identifies the 8 Keys to Success.
- **Goal Appointment Cards** list, in strength-based terms, the key behaviors that lead to successful living (as identified on the 8 Keys to Success Skills Poster) and identify the primary case plan goal on which the person is working, the specific skill that is being developed to support achievement of that goal, the person’s take-home assignment (e.g., the Carey Guide or BITS assignment that will enhance and reinforce their skill development), the date of their next appointment, and the staff member’s name and phone number. The purpose of the Goal Appointment Cards is to keep interactions between staff and the people with whom they are working focused on people’s needs and on the skills that will help them be successful in their day-to-day lives.

- **Criminogenic Needs Cards** are pocket-sized cards that, on one side, list the criminogenic needs in research-based terms and, on the other side, list the criminogenic needs, or “key life areas,” in terms that are more appropriate for use in discussions with people who are justice-involved. These discussions are critical to increasing people’s engagement in the change process.
- **The Driver Workbook** helps staff and the people with whom they are working identify the driver—the criminogenic need that is driving the illegal behavior. Identification of the driver helps determine the focus of the case plan and, by extension, resources that can be used to address criminogenic needs.
- The **Supervisor’s EBP BriefCASE** (**C**oach and **A**dvance **S**taff in **E**BP) is an 18-module curriculum designed to be delivered by supervisors to their staff in one-hour sessions—one per month. The BriefCASE was developed to provide supervisors with the structure to establish a collaborative coaching relationship with staff and the knowledge and skills to teach and reinforce EBP and core competencies. Among the topics covered in BriefCASE sessions are interpreting and sharing assessment results, identifying drivers, identifying skills to develop, conducting skill practice sessions, case planning, and using the Carey Guides. Two skills cards, *Using the Carey Guides* and *10 Tips for Using the Guides and Working with Offenders*, contain key points to keep in mind when introducing the Guides, using the Guides, and working with people who are justice-involved in general.

Further support for the Carey Guides and BITS is available through Carey Group Publishing’s partner company, The Carey Group. The Carey Group provides training and coaching for agencies that are interested in supporting skill staff development in the use of Carey Group Publishing’s tools. These trainings include courses on the effective use of the Carey Guides, BITS, Driver Workbook, and Supervisor’s EBP BriefCASE, as well as on EBP, motivational interviewing, the development of four core competencies (building

professional alliance, effective case planning and management, using skill practice, responding effectively to prosocial and noncompliant behavior), effective case planning and management, 10 steps to risk reduction, reducing recidivism 20 minutes at a time, risk reduction coaching, and continuous quality improvement/coaching.