

57824

INITIAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF OBJECTIVE-BASED PAROLE SUPERVISION



KENTUCKY BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS

OFFICE OF SUPPORT SERVICES

EVALUATION UNIT

67824

ACA, Evaluation

ABSTRACT

Objective-based parole supervision was monitored during the first few months of its implementation. On-site interviews were conducted at one office in each district, including both rural and urban settings. A questionnaire was distributed to all probation and parole officers and responses analysed statistically.

In general, implementation of the program seems to be successful: officers have now been trained and most are completing supervision plans on their clients. However, several difficulties were identified: there are problems in developing goals and objectives in all areas for all of the types of clients served, confusion exists over reducing the level of supervision and changing clients from active to inactive supervision, and more than 20 working days are needed to complete the supervision plan. Suggestions were also solicited on improving the objective-based parole supervision as well as the gradual release program.

Objective-based parole supervision was implemented in March of 1978, retroactive to January, 1978. Training included a two-hour training session on the new procedures and a forty-hour in-service training session at Richmond. Manuals were distributed at the in-service training which was completed in September, 1978.

Objective-based parole supervision was identified by the Management Team as one of the projects of the Evaluation Unit. To become informed as to the program rationale, members of the Evaluation Unit met with Brett Scott, Deputy Commissioner of Community Services; Jerry Nichter, Director of Probation and Parole; and Larry Logan, Field Services Manager. A program rationale was developed which specified the activities involved, the immediate results which are expected, the long term outcomes of the program and management concerns. As a result of these discussions, it was determined that the Evaluation Unit would, of necessity, want to visit probation and parole offices across the Commonwealth to determine what problems officers have had in implementing objective-based parole supervision, what aspects they felt were positive, and the suggestions they had for change.

During May and June of 1978, Mary McQueen and Pat Reese visited at least one office in each district: Hopkinsville, Lexington, Catlettsburg, Covington, Newport, Campbellsville, Greenup, Hazard, London, Madisonville, and Lawrenceburg. Specific questions were asked at each site; suggestions or problems were discussed with Jerry Nichter or Larry Logan while maintaining the officer's anonymity.

Information from the interviews was used to construct the questionnaire which was sent to all the probation and parole officers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky (see Appendix A and B); responses were collected with

the help of Jerry Nichter and the district supervisors and were received from 87 officers, most completed in a highly responsible, professional manner. The answers or responses were coded, converted to machine readable form and statistically analyzed with a SPSS, computerized program.

Implementation of Supervision Plans

One measure of the implementation progress is the percentage of the caseload for whom supervision plans have been developed. As of August, 1978, 78.7% of the officers reported completed supervision plans for all or most of their clients added after January 1, and 83.9% of clients added after March 1 (Table 1); most officers reported that they have filled out between 11 and 20 plans (Table 2). Officers from rural/urban areas were less likely to have filled out supervision plans which may reflect one district or several officers across districts lagging in the implementation.

The questionnaire indicated that most officers (54.2%) do not routinely update the plans. This may indicate either a lack of time in utilizing the plan or an initial utilization of the plan rather than continued usage as designed. Updating procedures included: making minor updates in the narrative with asterisks; writing a new objective; re-doing the plan each time; and adding additional pages with specific areas to be updated. Updates were seen as too time-consuming and several officers did not know how to handle them.

Procedural Aspects of the Supervision Plan

Parole officers were equally divided in reporting that two, three, or four interviews were required to complete a supervision plan, urban officers preferring two, urban/rural officers preferring three, rural officers preferring four interviews. Most (63.1%) felt that 20 working days was inadequate to complete the plan, the majority suggesting between 30-40 days.

TABLE 1
 PROPORTION OF CASELOAD WITH SUPERVISION PLANS DEVELOPED

<u>Proportion of Caseload with Supervision Plans</u>	<u>Added to Caseload After January 1</u>		<u>Added to Caseload After March 1</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
All	35	46.7%	41	50.6%
Most	24	32.0%	27	33.4%
A Few	7	9.3%	12	14.8%
None	<u>9</u>	12.0%	<u>1</u>	1.2%
Total	75		86	

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF SUPERVISION PLANS BY RURAL OR URBAN AREAS

Number of Plans	Rural		Urban/Rural		Urban		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-10	7	26.9%	8	36.4%	4	14.3%	21	26.9%
11-20	12	46.2%	10	45.5%	12	42.9%	34	43.6%
21-30	6	23.1%	2	9.1%	5	17.9%	13	16.7%
31+*	<u>1</u>	3.8%	<u>2</u>	9.0%	<u>7</u>	17.9%	<u>10</u>	12.9%
Totals	26		22		28		76	

*Note: Reports of over 30 were exceptionally and suspiciously numerous.

Constructive suggestions for changing the format included reducing the number of problem areas and printing the problem areas on the form. Since the offender's descriptive information was not turned into Central Office prior to the implementation of the supervision plan, officers and their secretaries say that the new form has increased time spent in typing; therefore they suggested that the form be printed on two pages rather than one.

Use of Supervision Plan with Clients

In general, many officers felt that clients did not understand what goals and objectives were, they lacked motivation and interest, and they do not think up the goals but will agree with anything. Officers reported that they did not need to fill out a goal and objective for each area, that setting dates was very difficult, that searching for a problem is detrimental to the client, and there was some confusion on when to stop adding goals. However, officers with urban clients more frequently reported a lack of client motivation and more frequently reported that clients can develop objectives with some assistance.

Several officers felt that immediately after release from an institution was a bad time to fill out the plan. A suggestion was that inmates be given the objective supervision plan before leaving the institution, or that they voluntarily agree to enter into an agreement somewhat like a contract.

Since objective-based parole supervision plans are being applied to all probation and parole clients, it is important to note problems which may be specific to clients of a particular type of supervision. Objective parole supervision seems to be working well with parolees, 60% of the officers report no special problems; rural officers, however, were more likely

to report difficulties. Although developing supervision plans for conditional releases is a problem generally, rural officers stressed the difficulty. The most frequent problems included: the short time on the caseload and the lack of control over the client; additional problems were: a "no care" attitude among urban clients, the frequent change of goals and objectives, and the lack of rural parole officers' time. In the personal interviews probationers were cited as a problem, officers felt they could not follow the procedure specified in the manual when dealing with probationers because the judges would not stand for it; they could not release clients from active supervision and thought that it was useless to try. However, the questionnaire showed that most officers, particularly those from urban areas, felt there were no special problems in using the supervision plan with probationers. However, 57.9% of the rural officers reported problems with the judges as well as the rapid changes in the client's supervision plans. When asked if there seemed to be a conflict between the parole officers' manual and the procedure required by the local judge, a problem identified in interviews, 72.2% reported that there was no conflict. However, of those who felt there is a conflict, a lack of judicial support for the supervision plan was reported. Misdemeanants, on the other hand, are considered problematic by 58.5% of the parole officers, especially rural officers; the short time on the caseload, the "don't care" attitude, the frequent changes of goals and objectives, the lack of judicial support, and limited officer's time were reported.

Officer's Role in Supervision Plans

There was considerable debate over whether reducing the level of supervision was an incentive for clients to meet objectives. The majority of parole officers (72.6%), and particularly rural officers, felt that they

had the authority to reduce the level of supervision of their clients and felt that the reduction was an incentive to the client. Interestingly enough, urban officers were more likely to indicate that a reduction of level of supervision was not an incentive to their clients.

Furthermore, questions arose about changing clients from active to inactive supervision. When asked, "Do you feel you will be able to change a person from active to inactive when he has attained his goals and reached his objectives?", 68.4% of the parole officers responded positively. Over half of the officers (53.5%) felt that the district supervisor should have final approval of a change from active to inactive supervision. When asked if recommendations for change from active to inactive supervision must fall within the old guidelines, 64.2% responded negatively. Although 84.8% felt that changing from active to inactive supervision was an incentive, rural officers were less likely to report it as an incentive.

When asked if the PSI should list skills and deficits, several officers pointed out that employment skills were routinely included in the narrative, adding that the narrative was more flexible. Officers felt a listing would have a negative impact on the judges, new skills attained while incarcerated might not be included in the supervision plan, and that it might encourage a dependence on what others had written in the PSI. The majority of parole officers (75%) felt that the judges in their area would oppose a listing of skills and deficits; however, urban officers were more likely to indicate that judges would not approve.

Although most officers (75%) had no suggestions for reporting their workload to Central Office, the point system is considered unrealistic and gives no indication of the quality of the job. The point system was

described as time-consuming and confusing; getting negative points for parole violation was considered unfair. Suggestions received included reporting the amount of time spent, the number of clients supervised, the number of PSI's written, as well as major tasks accomplished such as client contacts, misdemeanor reports, and interstate transfers. This would seem a more accurate and fairer method as type of workload seem to vary somewhat by geographic areas.

Because of the importance of training to the successful implementation of any program, questions were asked about the in-service training conducted by the Bureau of Training in Richmond, Kentucky. At the time of the structured interviews, about half of the officers had been through training. Although most of the parole officers (76.2%) had participated in training at the time of the survey, a higher percentage (92.3%) were from rural areas. Comments on training ranged from "it was a waste of time", to "it was better than most". The training on communication skills was reported most frequently (31.9%) as the most positive aspect, followed by training in the supervision plan and training on available resources; however, 17% felt there were no positive aspects to training. The major criticisms of training were: it was overly structured, it lacked reality, it "stinks", there was too much emphasis on goals and objectives, the instructors were poor, the training was unclear, and the sessions too long. Older parole officers, in particular, felt it was too elementary. Many felt that training should be an opportunity to receive answers from Central Office and they noted that trainers stressed one pat form (termed the "Ronald McDonald Plan"). The suggestion was also made that training be on a local level rather than in Richmond.

The manual which was distributed at training was described as extremely good; officers reporting it helpful in explaining job expectations, in defining the procedures to be used, and clarifying the job description. Suggestions for improvement included simplifying the examples, making examples more realistic, and including sections on dealing with judges.

Questions were also asked about the T₁ Living Skills Training and the Gradual Release Programs. Very few officers felt that T₁ was worthwhile; most, however, did not know anything about it. Those that were familiar with T₁ felt it needed improvement, it was too long or the instructors were poor. One or two officers wanted the program in their area. Questions were also included about the gradual release program. Although 81% have had between one and three clients in the program, 57.8% report problems: the expenditure of a large amount of officer time, concern about the negative impact of the jails, and transportation difficulties. Suggestions for improvement included: locating better facilities, using furloughs more extensively, making the gradual release program more like furloughs, and hiring of coordinators for the program. Most (58%) were not aware of the availability of a vocational training release program through the gradual release center. It should be noted that many of the suggestions have been incorporated and changes made in the program since the questionnaire distribution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the personal interviews and the questionnaires, several suggestions can be made. It is important to note, however, that due to the time delay in distributing this paper, many of the recommendations may have already been accomplished or are in the process of implementation.

1. Since all officers should now be trained, it seems timely to begin monitoring the completion of supervision plans for all clients added to the caseload in 1978. Quality of the completed form should be monitored, both positive and negative feedback should be given where appropriate.
2. Consideration should be given to increasing the 20 working days allowed for completion of the plan.
3. Clarification should be issued on several procedures: updating the plan, reducing the level of supervision, and changing a client from active to inactive status.
4. Additional consideration should be given to the applicability of the supervision plan to misdemeanor and conditional release clients.
5. Some thought should be given to publicizing the change to objective-based supervision among judges in order to solicit more judicial support for the program.
6. The form might be more efficiently used if revised to delete the descriptive information included in the supervision plan and if program areas were printed.
7. Requiring problem statements in all areas should be reconsidered; however, it is suggested that skills/deficits (if any) should be listed in each area.

8. Clarification on setting appropriate time periods is needed as well as when and when not to add additional goals and objectives to the plan.
9. Consideration should be given to training offenders or at least increasing offender awareness of the supervision plan while still incarcerated. This could be accomplished by the institutional parole officer, through a T₂ module, or a combination of approaches.
10. Revamping of the method of reporting officer workload is also indicated, particularly to include all of the tasks an officer is asked to perform.

Name _____

Date _____

PAROLE OFFICER INTERVIEW

1. When do you fill out the supervision plan? _____

2. Do you update the supervision plan? _____

3. Could the format of the supervision plan be improved? _____

4. What client problems do you have with objective based supervision? _____

5. Is reducing level of supervision an incentive? _____

6. Do you expect difficulty changing a person from active to inactive supervision? _____

7. Is 30 days reasonable for returning supervision plan to central office? _____

8. Have you been to the in-service training dealing with objective based supervision?

9. Do you have any contact with the gradual release program? _____

10. Have you had any clients go through T₁, T₂, T₃? What are the problems with the T series?

11. Ideas for determining caseload or workload? _____



OFFICE OF
SUPPORT SERVICES

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS
FRANKFORT 40601

MEMORANDUM

To: Probation and Parole Officers
From: Mary McQueen and Pat Ray Reese
Re: Objective-based Supervision Plans
Date: June 28, 1978

In December of last year the Bureau created an Evaluation Unit under the Office of Support Services. The Evaluation Unit is charged with looking at several programs (objective supervision is one of them) to identify implementation problems, make suggestions for improvement, and provide management with feedback from field personnel.

As you may know, we have visited at least one probation and parole office in each district and discussed with field staff views, problems, and ideas on objective-based parole supervision at each office. I might add that we have been impressed by the suggestions and ideas which staff has presented to us. And, we have frequently heard the question: Why aren't field staff asked about new programs? Since we do not have the resources to talk to each officer personally, we have prepared some questions which we would like you to take the time to answer.

The questionnaires, like the interviews, will be compiled on a no-name, group basis. The information that you provide will be added to that already provided by your fellow officers. A report will then be developed incorporating problems that you identify, your suggestions for change, and your comments on the positive aspects of objective-based supervision. We have also included some questions about the gradual release program, general questions about your caseload, and how to report your workload to Central Office most effectively.

We have asked your district supervisor to collect the questionnaires from you in a sealed envelope and return them to us in a timely manner. Since the results will be used to make major decisions, we urge you to consider your answers carefully, providing management with your best suggestions and your most honest answers.

Your time and efforts in this regard are greatly appreciated.

Pat Ray Reese

Mary McQueen

Attachment

PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICER QUESTIONNAIRE

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. Please answer the questions as completely as possible. If you need more space, go into more detail on the back. Return to your supervisor as soon as possible.

1. Approximately how many supervision plans have you filled out? _____
2. Have you developed supervision plans for your clients who came: (circle one answer)
After January 1 all most a few none
After March 1 all most a few none
3. Approximately how many interviews with the client do you find it takes to fill out a supervision plan? _____
4. Do your clients have problems developing goals and objectives? _____
If yes, explain _____

5. Do you find that clients are able to assist you in developing their goals and objectives? _____
If yes, explain _____

6. Do you find it difficult to write a goal and objective in each area? _____
If yes, explain _____

7. Do you have special problems with objective-based supervision in dealing with any of the following? _____ If yes, what are they?
(a) conditional releasees _____

(b) probationers _____

(c) misdemeanants _____

(d) parolees _____

8. Do you feel there is a conflict between the manual and the procedure that you are required to follow on probationers by the judge? _____ If yes, please explain the conflicts which you have encountered _____

9. Do you routinely update supervision plans? _____
10. How do you think supervision plans should be updated? _____

11. Do you feel you have the authority to reduce the level of supervision (that is, maximum to medium to minimum) when the client has reached some of his objectives? _____
12. Do you think reducing the level of supervision when certain goals are reached is an incentive to the client? _____

13. Do you feel you will be able to change a person from active to inactive supervision when he has attained his goals and reached his objectives? _____

14. Do you feel comfortable making the recommendation to remove someone from active to inactive supervision? _____

15. Do you feel that the District Supervisor should be given the authority of final approval for requests to move a client from active to inactive? _____

16. Do you feel as if recommendations for changing from active to inactive must fall within the old guidelines which specify the amount of time on supervision by the person's sentence length? _____

17. Do you think changing a client from active to inactive supervision is an incentive to the client to attain some of his objectives? _____

18. How can the form that is used for supervision plans be improved? _____

19. Would it be more efficient to fill out the supervision plan if the PSI was completed by listing skills and deficits rather than writing a narrative? _____

Explain _____

20. Do you think the judges in your area would like or prefer a listing of skills and deficits? _____

21. Are 20 working days a reasonable amount of time for returning the supervision time to Central Office? _____ If no, what would be a reasonable time?

22. Have you been to the in-service training in Richmond dealing with objective-based supervision? _____ If yes, what were the positive aspects of the training?

What problems did you encounter? _____

23. Do you have any suggestions on reporting your workload to Central Office other than the point system? _____ If yes, explain _____

24. Approximately how many misdemeanants do you have on your caseload? _____
How many parolees? _____ How many probationers? _____ How many conditional releasees? _____

25. Are your clients located in: (circle one) primarily rural rural and urban
 primarily urban area
26. How many of your probationers are assigned from Circuit Court? _____
 District Court? _____
27. On the average, how many PSI's do you write per month? _____ How many mis-
 demeanor reports do you write per month? _____ Approximately how many inter-
 state transfers to you deal with on an average per month? _____
28. After reading the manual, do you understand more clearly how Central Office ex-
 pects you to manage your caseload? _____ Explain _____

29. Do you think that the manual should include more precise guidelines for you to
 use in making the decision to violate a parolee? _____

30. Do you have a gradual release center in your area? _____ If yes, how many client
 have you had in the gradual release program? _____
31. Have your clients encountered any problems with the gradual release program? _____
 If yes, explain _____

32. Do you have suggestions on improving the gradual release program? _____

33. Can clients routinely participate in vocational training release (work during the
 day and return to local jails at night) from your gradual release center? _____
 If no, explain _____

Thank you very much for your recommendations and time in considering these questions.

ACA

END