

SOARING 2 PILOT SUMMARY

Prepared for:

Bureau of Justice Assistance

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The SOARING 2 eLearning Program



This is a preliminary summary of the SOARING 2 pilot study. The pilot is ongoing; the numbers and outcomes reported here are subject to change.



Study Goals and Aims

SOARING 2 is an eLearning system created to assist justice professionals in building skills associated with using evidence-based practices for the effective management of offenders. George Mason University's Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence (ACE!), along with its partners a Carleton University, and with funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, designed the system to target the large audience of criminal justice personnel who are on the "front line" and provide this audience with a tool that helps translate evidence-based research into practice.

The interactive simulation tools available in the eLearning system provide practice vignettes, video demonstrations, and individualized feedback that are useful to fill the void left by traditional classroom-based training materials. The web-based nature of the SOARING 2 system also permits users to routinely review materials as needed for refreshing concepts. Internal coaching within the agency further helps promote the utilization and sustainability of evidence-based concepts.

Study Design

The SOARING 2 pilot study provides training on evidence-based practices that was designed to promote knowledge transfer, behavior change, and sustainability. This is important for agencies that wish to translate evidence into practice, as the design uses multiple strategies to optimize the continued use of EBPs. The eLearning modules provide a clear presentation of the materials that can be accessed at any time throughout the study, while internal coaching is used to gauge and facilitate behavior change within each jurisdiction.



Figure 1. SOARING 2 Study Design

SOARING 2 Modules

The SOARING 2 system consists of five training modules: Risk-Need-Responsivity, Motivation and Engagement, Case Planning, Problem Solving, and Desistance. The modules focus on both knowledge building and skill enhancement and have been designed to accommodate users at a range of skill levels by including basic, intermediate, and advanced lessons within each of the five modules.

Risk Needs Assessment: What is Risk? (Basic Level, Part 1)

The Risk Principle

This slide contains an important audio clip. Press the play button below.

The **Risk Principle** states that recidivism is reduced when the intensity and duration of interventions and controls match each offender's **Statistical Risk**.

The intensity of interventions should be tailored to the **Statistical Risk** level of the individual offender based on the **Statistical Risk** factors. Low risk cases warrant minimal intervention while high risk cases warrant maximum controls in order to appropriately manage **Statistical Risk**.



Play Narration [Volume icon] Slide 7 of 15 [Navigation icons]

Problem Solving (Intermediate Level)

Behavioral Chain



Background Factors & Situation (Peers, stress, financial pressure)

Positive Effect (Feeling a rush)

Negative Effect (Anger, depression)

Coping with Effect (Substance abuse)

Planning & Opportunity (Short-term problem solving in support of crime)

Cognitive Distortions to Support Criminal Behavior (Minimizes, neutralizes)

Commit Offense

Cognitive Distortions to Avoid Guilt (Denial, justification)

Slide 14 of 27 [Navigation icons]

Figure 2. SOARING 2 Interactive Features

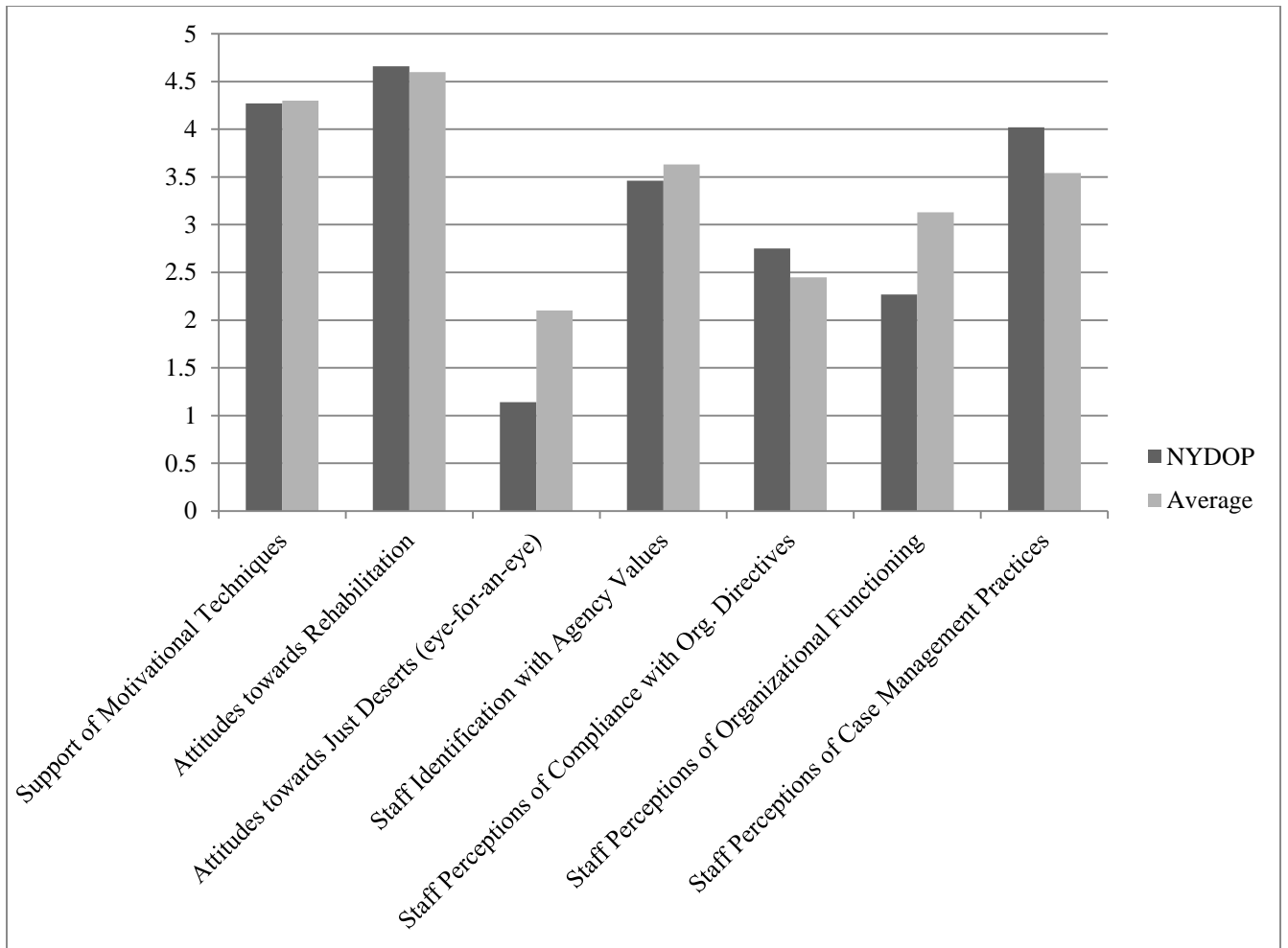
The modules contain a number of interactive features that have been designed to enrich the user's training experience and improve adoption of evidence-based practices by appealing to a variety of learning styles. These features include audio enhancements, video demonstrations, case vignettes, live feedback, and printable resources available throughout the modules.

Coaches' Training

The New York City Probation Department identified three officers to serve as internal coaches for the SOARING 2 training program. Each coach attended a two-day training at George Mason University to learn the expectations and requirements of their role as a coach. During this time, coaches were trained to provide support, guidance, and feedback for the staff assigned to them on the SOARING 2 project. They were also provided with supplemental materials to assist them in grading advanced quizzes and providing responses to staff questions.

Site Kick-offs

Upon completion of the two-day training, the coaches scheduled an internal kick-off meeting for implementing the SOARING 2 system within the New York City Probation office. This meeting was a self-run introduction and launch of the SOARING 2 pilot study. In preparation for the meeting, George Mason University provided the coaches with a presentation template describing the SOARING 2 study and eLearning modules. The launch included an introduction of the study's conceptual framework, software, and site surveys. The baseline survey response rate was 71.4%. Analysis of the surveys indicate that participating officers from the NY City Probation office reported similar support for use of motivational and rehabilitative techniques as officers from other jurisdictions using the SOARING 2 curriculum. NYC probation officers were also less supportive of just deserts, or 'eye-for-an-eye' responses to offending. While officers reported lower than average perceptions of officer identification with the agency's values, they also reported higher than average perceptions of compliance with organizational directives. Finally, officers perceived lower than average organizational functioning, however they reported the highest perceived use of case management practices among all sites.



Officer completion of the SOARING 2 eLearning training varied between lessons. Completion rates for lessons varied from 60% to 89%. In comparison, quiz completion rates ranged from 91% - 100%. In general, officers had the most difficulty with the Problem Solving Materials. The Basic PS module showed the most officers attempting to “test out” by skipping the lesson and going straight to the quiz. Officers also required the greatest number of attempts for this quiz to achieve a passing grade (80%). This is likely a combination of both the general difficulty of the material as well as officers attempting to test out and failing the quiz. In general, officers experienced the most difficulties in grasping the Problem Solving module, as further evidenced by the average quiz score. The two lowest averages were for the Basic and Advanced quizzes in this module.

Module Completion Rates and Grades

Module	% Completed Lesson	% Completed Quiz	Mean Quiz Attempts	Mean Quiz Score
Basic Risk	88.6	97.1	1.26	85.98
Basic Need	85.7	97.1	1.18	91.43
Basic Responsivity	77.1	97.1	1.26	89.79
Basic Stabilizers & Destabilizers	82.9	97.1	1.29	88.57
Intermediate RNR	68.6	94.3	1.58	84.00
Advanced RNR	71.4	91.4	1.28	84.06
Basic Engagement and Motivation	85.7	100	1.74	84.29
Intermediate Engagement and Motivation	71.4	94.3	1.45	85.72
Advanced Engagement and Motivation	77.1	94.3	1.24	77.83
Basic Case Planning	68.6	94.3	1.33	86.61
Intermediate Case Planning	65.7	91.4	1.19	87.94
Advanced Case Planning	71.4	94.3	1.33	82.33
Basic Problem Solving	60.0	97.1	2.53	77.71
Intermediate Problem Solving	68.6	97.1	1.59	86.29
Advanced Problem Solving	77.1	91.4	1.34	70.57
Basic Desistance	65.7	97.1	1.44	90.41
Intermediate Desistance	68.6	97.1	2.21	87.62
Advanced Desistance	65.7	97.1	1.18	81.84

George Mason university is currently working with the NY City Probation office to expand the SOARING 2 training to officers from the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) offices. In October of 2013, 30 additional officers and supervisors completed the SOARING training, and another 80 officers will complete the training during the month of December. Furthermore, GMU and NYC Probation have collaborated with community-based service providers to extend the SOARING 2 training to community-based partners who deliver treatment and other services to justice-involved individuals. The intent is to develop a common language between probation and service providers so that they may benefit from a shared understanding of the unique treatment needs of the community corrections population.