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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION

JOSEPH P. FOLEY  
COMMISSIONER

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RISK/NEED CLIENT CLASSIFICATION  
GUIDELINES  
REPORT #2

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PREPARED BY  
Wald Cochran  
Chief of Probation Services  
  
Linda Gann  
Supervision Assistant

DATE  
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PREPARED FOR THE STAFF OF THE FOLLOWING PROBATION OFFICES:

SUPERIOR COURT

Hampden  
Plymouth  
Suffolk

DISTRICT COURT

Cambridge  
Peabody  
Quincy  
Taunton  
Worcester

JUVENILE COURT

Middlesex Juvenile  
Probation District

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## PREFACE

From the beginning of recorded history, we are aware of the fact that social groups have made constant efforts to overcome the disruptions caused when one member of the group does harm to another. In small and primitive societies, survival of the group often depended on the fullest use of the abilities of every member. When one member was incapacitated and his/her contributions were hampered or eliminated, the survival of the entire group might be threatened. Acts of any group member that impaired the functioning of another thus were considered serious and dealt with accordingly.

The history of Western civilization reveals centuries of harsh and brutal treatment of law violations, especially for acts considered injurious to the person or property of others. More serious offenses were punished by hanging, stoning and various forms of punishment that generally resulted in death. Less serious acts brought amputations, flogging, branding or placement in stocks. These penalties were sometimes supplemented by exile, banishment to distant penal colonies, or consignment as galley slaves. At a later time, indenture and confinement in dungeons or cells was sometimes used in lieu of corporal punishment.

The harsh and rigidly imposed penalties of European criminal law and English common law were part of the cultural heritage brought to America by the colonists. Thus, initially, although many of the colonists

had fled their homelands to escape oppression, there was little apparent concern for "fundamental fairness" or due process in their methods of dealing with offenders in the new world.

As the colonists started to develop an identity that ultimately led to the American Revolution, they also started a significant and, in many ways, a radical transition in their thinking about the criminal justice process.

Late eighteenth century Americans were passionately devoted to the concept of the equality of man. This concept was thoroughly ingrained in the philosophy of our nation's founders; it permeated every field of human endeavor and was even written into our Declaration of Independence. By analogy, all criminals were equal to each other. This led to an early nineteenth century idea that equivalent incarceration was considered just and punitive in both philosophy and, in fact, because it was thought that punishment would alter subsequent human behavior.

With the advent of many of the reform movements of the mid-nineteenth century and the start of the study of human behavior through the field of psychology, an emergence of the idea of individual differences and uniqueness started to have an effect in legislative halls as well as in criminal courts. It is out of the changes of the nineteenth and twentieth century understanding of human behavior that we now have our present field of probation.

With the acceptance of the idea that probation clients present a broad spectrum of individual differences and, not losing sight of the earliest of historical factors, namely, that any community has a right to be protected from individuals who perpetrate acts that are considered injurious to the person or property of others, probation in the latter part of the twentieth century finds itself with a mandate to serve fairly and equitably the interest of the court, probation client, and the community.

A closer observation of our present state of affairs in our present probation system indicates that the Massachusetts Probation Service serves approximately 70,000 clients annually. These probation clients differ tremendously in the following:

1. The degree of risk they constitute in the community, i.e. the likelihood they will commit and be convicted of new offenses while under probation supervision.
2. The degree of physical as well as psycho-social needs of the probation clients.
3. The level of motivation and ability that clients possess to improve their immediate lifestyle and situation.

A systematic and professional assessment and documentation of these critical probationer characteristics will facilitate informed decision-making regarding practical supervision strategies that will effectuate improved accountability and efficiency in probation case management. The Risk/Need Client Classification System which is outlined in the following pages, provides the probation officer with an objective scale for the prediction of

client risk, and a unified framework for assessing client motivation and ability in relation to needs. Additionally, the Risk/Need Classification System provides a wealth of information descriptive of client and agency performance which serves administrative needs, and allows the Massachusetts Probation Service to attain its mission and goals to be of service to the court, client and community.

INTRODUCTION  
TO  
MASSACHUSETTS PROBATION SERVICE  
RISK/NEED CLIENT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Risk/Need Client Classification System is a caseload management system which provides for differential allocation of resources to probationers according to each client's individual needs and risk to the community. This system of caseload management also emphasizes the importance of setting specific goals with each client and then evaluating the client's achievement of these goals over the period of probation supervision.

In addition to the above factors, two additional realities should be remembered:

First, the courts make the ultimate decisions concerning probation and probationary terms. We must adhere to specific judicial decisions and orders concerning types and conditions of probationary supervision.

Secondly, human behavior is extremely difficult to predict and no system of caseload management can be expected to be perfect or infallible. Certainly, no probation officer or office can expect to achieve absolute success with every client.

A client whose case has been comprehensively screened and determined to be low-risk may, in fact, commit a subsequent crime in the community. On the other hand, the most aggressive surveillance and active monitoring of a

high-risk probationer cannot insure against recidivism. With these exceptions admitted, the position can be made that a differential case management system, such as the Massachusetts Risk/Need Classification System, will provide a comprehensive method of efficiently and effectively employing probation supervision services and resources.

## CHAPTER I

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Guideline report is to explain the various components that comprise the Massachusetts Probation Service Risk/Need Client Classification System. The report describes the considerations that should be addressed by probation personnel as they make the full range of decisions regarding probation client classification. The report contains a description of criteria to be used in scoring the assessment of client risk and the assessment of client needs/strengths forms. The report also contains a brief description of information which should be considered in classifying and establishing a supervision plan with individualized action steps for each probation client.

## CHAPTER II

### PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Risk/Need Client Classification System set forth in this report is to be used starting September 1, 1980 by the following probation offices:

#### Superior Court

Hampden  
Plymouth  
Suffolk

#### District Court

Cambridge  
Peabody  
Quincy  
Taunton  
Worcester

#### Juvenile Court

Middlesex Juvenile  
Probation District

The report specifically deals with proposed changes which will further develop and perfect the Risk/Need Client Classification System. The changes have occurred as a result of monitoring the system during the past year and, more importantly, from the feedback and constructive criticism offered by probation personnel during the past eighteen months.

The report contains general overview information regarding client classification and specific information in these component areas:

- (a) Assessment of Client Risk
- (b) Assessment of Client Needs/Strengths
- (c) Supervision Plan Guidelines

Each of these component areas will be described in further detail later.

It is important to remember that this Risk/Need Classification System is not a method of pigeonholing probation clients -- it is a program planning process -- it is a process to present options -- it is a process which leads to a supervision plan.

1. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

The initial assessment of Risk and Needs/Strengths is completed by the probation officer within 30 days of the court's placing the client under probation supervision.

a. Analysis of Risk

The client is assigned to the level of supervision that is indicated by the Risk Assessment Scale Score. However, if the individual circumstances warrant the assignment to a supervision level other than what is indicated by the Risk Scale Score, the probation officer can, after obtaining supervisory approval, make the appropriate adjustment (subjective override).

b. Analysis of Needs

After interviewing a probation client and doing a basic profile of client needs, the probation officer is then in a position to identify and analyze the need level of the client.

2. ESTABLISH GOALS

The probation officer working with the client has to decide what he/she plans to accomplish with the client during the period of probation supervision.

3. DESIGN AN ACTION PLAN

The probation officer has to decide whether he/she will be the primary resource in working with the client, or work with the client to build a program of support systems using resources within the community.

4. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

The probation officer has to arrange for the client to receive qualified help. Time schedules and due dates should be part of the implemented action plan.

5. EVALUATE ACTION PLAN

At a minimum, every time the probation officer has a face-to-face contact with the client, the action plan is to be reviewed to evaluate what actually has been accomplished, and, where needed, appropriate adjustments should be made to the individual plan.

#### ROLE OF THE PROBATION OFFICER

The individual probation officer, through his/her daily interactions with clients, is the essential nucleus of probation case management. In the Risk/Need Classification process, he/she reviews information already gathered on a client, interviews client and other appropriate parties to attain needed information, determines client's risk and need level, records narrative summary of needs, designs a goal oriented action plan with appropriate due dates, and implements the plan during the period of probation supervision.

#### ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

The Assistant Chief Probation Officer is to review, approve/disapprove and monitor case management decisions made by the line probation officer. The Assistant Chief is to provide probation officers with recommendations and suggestions on cases, and elicit input and suggestions from probation officers regarding ways to improve the case management process in the probation office.

#### ROLE OF THE CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

The Chief Probation Officer is to manage the overall implementation of the Risk/Need Classification System in his/her office. The Chief is to establish local office procedures that will provide efficient and effective service delivery through the use of probation case management. In general, the Chief is to be responsible for the quality of work done by the clerical and probation staff with regard to Risk/Need Classification.

#### ROLE OF THE REGIONAL PROBATION ADMINISTRATOR

The Regional Probation Administrator is to assist in the development and maintenance of a professional level of competency in the utilization of the Risk/Need Client Classification System by the probation service. The Regional Administrator is to support, monitor and evaluate the quality of probation work done in case management. The regional administrator is to provide assistance where appropriate to the local probation office regarding case management issues.

### CHAPTER III

#### ASSESSMENT OF CLIENT RISK GUIDELINES

The total risk assessment score is determined by the sum of points assigned for the eight screening criteria found on the Assessment of Client Risk Form (RN-3B 7/80). High scoring individuals are identified as low risk probation clients, and, conversely, low scoring individuals are considered high risks in the community. Risk assessment scores range from zero to thirty.

The initial assessment of risk is completed by the probation officer within 30 days of the court's placing the client under probation supervision. The client is assigned to the level of supervision that is indicated by the Risk Assessment Scale Score. However, if the individual circumstances warrant the assignment to a supervision level other than which is indicated by the Risk Assessment Scale Score, the probation officer can, after obtaining supervisory approval, make the appropriate adjustment (subjective override).

#### CUT OFF SCORES

| <u>RISK ASSESSMENT</u> | <u>SUPERVISION LEVEL</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 14 and below           | Maximum                  |
| 15-23                  | Moderate                 |
| 24 and above           | Minimum                  |

In general, maximum supervision clients either have a relatively high potential for continued unlawful behavior or have demonstrated substantial need for services. Moderate supervision clients have relatively lower probabilities of continued criminal activity but still require ongoing

agency involvement. Minimum supervision clients manifest relatively few problems and are very likely to successfully complete the period of probation supervision without being convicted of a new crime. The minimum number of contacts required for each supervision level follow:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <u>Maximum</u>  | At least one face-to-face contact every 14 days by a probation officer; verification of special conditions of probation, employment, and residence; home visits, collateral contacts as appropriate; staffing at request of probation officer or supervisor. |
| <u>Moderate</u> | At least one face-to-face contact every 30 days; verification of special conditions of probation, employment and residence; home visits and collateral contacts as appropriate.  |
| <u>Minimum</u>  | Some contact with the client, which could include written reports, telephone, letters, or face-to-face, shall occur at least once every 60 days.   |

#### DEFINITIONS OF SELECTED TERMS

For the purpose of clarification in the use of the Assessment of Client Risk Form (RN-3B 7/80), the following terms are defined:

Conviction is a finding of guilt for any misdemeanor, felony or an adjudication of delinquent.

Revocation is the act of a client's probation being revoked when he/she is brought before the court on a probation surrender procedure and it results in incarceration or termination of probation by any other means.



## CHAPTER IV

### ASSESSMENT OF CLIENT NEEDS/STRENGTHS GUIDELINES

The purpose of the following material is to provide an explanation of how to complete the Assessment of Client Needs/Strengths Form (RN-3A 7/80).

- I. Name  
Client's full name
- II. D.O.B.  
Date of birth (month/day/year)
- III. S.S.  
Client's social security number
- IV. Sex  
M or F
- V. Ct. No.  
Court number -- in courts with both adult and juvenile jurisdiction please put letters JUV after court number if it is a juvenile case.
- VI. Date Assessed  
The date that the initial assessment was completed.
- VII. Supervising Probation Officer  
The name of the probation officer assigned to supervise the case.
- IX. Offense(s)  
List the offenses that resulted in the client being placed under probation supervision.
- X. Probation Supervision from/to  
List the dates that the client was placed under probation supervision by the court and the projected termination date.

- XI. Need  
Identifies ten possible problem areas of probation clients.
- XII. Scoring of 1 2 3 4  
A subjective judgment by the classification assessor regarding the motivation and ability of the client in each of the ten need areas. Further clarification to follow.
- XIII. Brief Narrative Summary of Assessment  
Summarize in a couple of sentences the general conclusions of the client's needs and problems. This section is to be completed as part of the initial assessment and at the sixth month and one year point in the probation supervision process.
- XIV. Planned Action Steps and Due Date  
State what steps will be taken to address client's needs as outlined in the need assessment and narrative summary. Included also should be the approximate due date when service delivery will begin. This section should be completed as part of the initial classification process and at the sixth month and one year point in the probation supervision process.
- XV. Termination Summary  
A few crisp and timely remarks summarizing the client's adjustment to the probation supervision process up to the point that the case is being terminated.
- XVI. Other Actions  
When applicable, list the date(s) a warrant was issued, a new conviction, client surrendered, probation revoked, or the date of probation termination.
- XVII. Reviewed by and Date  
This should include the initials of the CPO or ACPO who reviewed the classification at the initial assessment, six months, one year and termination and the date the review occurred.
- XVIII. Probation Supervision  
Maximum: At least one face-to-face contact every 14 days by a probation officer; verification of special conditions of probation, employment, and residence; home visits, collateral contacts as appropriate; staffing at request of probation officer or supervisor.  
Moderate: At least one face-to-face contact every 30 days; verification of special conditions of probation, employment and residence; home visits and collateral contacts as appropriate.  
Minimum: Some contact with the client, which could include written reports, telephone, letters, or face-to-face, shall occur at least once every 60 days.

XIX. Assessment Periods

Initial Assessment is completed by probation officer within 30 days of the court's placing the client under probation supervision.

Six Months Assessment is completed by the probation officer six months after the court's placing the client under probation supervision.

One Year Assessment is completed by the probation officer one year after the court's placing the client under probation supervision.

Termination Assessment is done at the point that probation supervision is terminated by the court.

XX. Use of Community Resources

This area coded from A to F should be filled in at the end of six months, one year, and at termination. The letter A needs further clarification. The reasons why a coding of A = not needed may be filled in are: (1) because P.O. decided not to address the particular need i.e. score of 4; or (2) other needs had priority; or (3) P.O. handled need with his/her own skill; (4) need deficit not related to criminal behavior.

Special Note:

If a case is placed under probation supervision for six months or less with definite action plans, the probation officer does the initial assessment and then moves to the termination column when the court terminates probation supervision. If the case is on probation for one year and probation supervision is terminated on the prescribed date, then an assessment is done at the initial 30 days, six months and termination.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF NEED CATEGORY SCORING

It is expected that the interventions used by the probation officer will be related to needs (problems) which interfere with the client's ability to live in the community without breaking the law. The classification and supervision techniques used by the probation officer, i.e. community referral agent, one-on-one or group counselor, advocate, etc., must be held in their proper perspective of being a means to be used by the probation officer, not an end in themselves. Yet, with so much emphasis focused on the activities of the officer, it must be remembered that the desirable end result is the crime free behavior of the client in the community that results from such an activity instead of a service delivered or a referral made.

One of the problems with focusing on the promotion of crime-free living is that so little is known about which factors and problems are actually linked to the prevention of new crimes. In the absence of such knowledge, especially as it relates to the clientele of the Massachusetts Probation Service, some systematic technique for identifying potentially crime related problems in cases under probation supervision must be used. With the further development and use of the Risk/Need Client Classification System, valuable information will become available on the relation between the problems identified in the ten need categories and future criminal behavior.

In assessing the probation client's needs/strengths, the probation officer should remember that everyone has some degree of unfulfilled need in most of the ten categories. We are not trying to create some form of perfect performing persons. The question the probation officer should asking him/herself is whether or not there is a problem in any of the ten need categories that seems to be related to the probability that the probation client will commit additional crimes while on probation.

#### SCORING ASSESSMENT OF CLIENT NEEDS/STRENGTHS FORM

The following material breaks down the possible scoring of 1, 2, 3, 4 on the Assessment of Client Needs/Strengths Form (RN-3A 7/80). We are primarily using the material of Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard from Situational Leadership Theory in setting up the rationale for the scoring procedure in the Risk/Need Client Classification System. In each of the ten need categories, the probation officer or classification team must determine the client's task-relevant maturity for each need. In determining a score of 1, 2, 3 or 4, the following points should be considered:

1. Is there a problem in any of the need areas that seems to affect the client's ability to maintain crime-free behavior? (Yes/No)
  - a. If yes, is the client's problem one of ability and/or motivation?
  - b. If there is no apparent problem in the need area, the score of the need is 4.
2. If there is a problem, score 1, 2 or 3 based upon the following additional investigation:

TO ADDRESS THE NEED (PROBLEM), DOES THE CLIENT HAVE:

| ABILITY | MOTIVATION | SCORE |
|---------|------------|-------|
| No      | No         | 1     |
| No      | Yes        | 2     |
| Yes     | No         | 3     |

In determining the client's ability, the following questions should prove helpful:

#### ABILITY

1. What is the client's past performance in meeting this need?
2. Did the client ever have any ability in this need area?
3. Has the client let his/her skill/ability slip too far so that he/she no longer has needed skills?
4. Does the client have the necessary knowledge?
5. What is the client's ability to take responsibility for his/her behavior regarding need areas?
6. What is the client's problem-solving ability in this specific need area?
7. What is the client's decision making ability in regard to this need area?

In determining the client's motivation (willingness), the following questions should prove helpful:

#### MOTIVATION

1. Does the client think the need area is important?
2. Is the client committed to performing the necessary task?
3. Does the client have the self confidence in his/her ability to perform the necessary task?
4. What is the client's level of persistence in meeting his/her need in this area?
5. Does the client have a sense of initiative that would allow him/her to address the need area?
6. Does the client have a sense of independence that would allow him/her to address the need area?
7. Is the client willing to take responsibility in dealing with this need area?

In regard to the role of the probation officer, it is important that he/she have a general idea and guideline to follow in determining the supervision level that each client will receive. In determining which supervision style the probation officer should use, two elements to remember are: task behavior and relationship behavior. Task behavior is the extent to which the probation officer engages in one-way communication by explaining what the client is expected to do as well as when, where, and how tasks are to be accomplished. Relationship behavior is the extent to which a probation officer engages in two-way communication by providing socio-emotional support, "psychological strokes", and facilitative behaviors. The probation officer should be guided in his/her supervision of the probation client, based upon the level of the client's task relevant maturity.

## CHAPTER V

### SUPERVISION PLAN GUIDELINES

This section of the Risk/Need Client Classification Guidelines focuses upon the very important probation officer duty of supervising probation clients.

After the sentencing process is completed by the court, the probation department becomes responsible for supervising all offenders placed under probation supervision by the court. Depending upon a number of complex issues, the offenders placed under probation supervision may have committed almost any type of criminal offense, and may range from first offender to "career" criminals. In addition, the individual offenders placed under probation supervision vary considerably in terms of risk and needs/strengths in the types of living problems (e.g., alcohol or drug abuse, family situation difficulties, lack of education or employment) which they face.

Considering the complexity involved in supervising such a diverse client population, some form of differential supervision focus becomes imperative. For the Massachusetts Probation Service the method of focusing the decision-making process for probation supervision strategies is the Risk/Need Client Classification System.

A major requirement for using an effective differential probation supervision system is an adequate case analysis and planning procedure. An effective probation supervision program involves careful planning by probation officers, their supervisors, clinical consultants, and, when appropriate, the active participation of the offenders themselves. The results of a careful

case analysis and planning process leads to goal directed activities resulting in effective action steps and timely due dates.

As mentioned in Chapter IV of this report, the supervising probation officer, as a "leader" in the supervision process must realize the client's task-relevant maturity in any of the ten need areas found in Needs/Strengths Form (RN-3A 7/80).

In determining the offender's task-relevant maturity, an analysis of the client's ability and motivation, in each of the ten needs/strengths area is illustrated:

| ABILITY | MOTIVATION | TASK-RELEVANT MATURITY |
|---------|------------|------------------------|
| NO      | NO         | I                      |
| NO      | YES        | II                     |
| YES     | NO         | III                    |
| YES     | YES        | IV                     |

The probation officer's intervention style as a case manager should be related to the client's task-relevant maturity.

Relationship of Client Task-Relevant Maturity and Probation Officer Supervision Style

| TASK RELEVANT MATURITY | PROBATION OFFICER BEHAVIOR   | SUPERVISION STYLE |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1                      | High Task/Low Relationship puts the emphasis in probation officer's supervision behavior around getting the task done.     | I                 |
| 2                      | High Task/High Relationship puts equal emphasis in probation officer's supervision behavior on both task and relationship. | II                |
| 3                      | High Relationship/Low Task is to find out why a client is not doing something that he/she is capable of doing.             | III               |
| 4                      | Low Task/Low Relationship - there is no sense making a problem where one does not exist.                                   | IV                |

Although there is some overlap, the four styles of probation supervision which are encouraged in the use of the Risk/Need Client Classification System can be expressed in the following diagram:

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| III<br>EMOTIONAL<br>NEEDS<br>COUNSELING | II<br>CONCRETE<br>NEEDS<br>COUNSELING |
| IV<br>SELF-HELP                         | I<br>SURVEILLANCE                     |

I. SURVEILLANCE

While usually associated with police work in the sense of watching someone, the term "surveillance" can also have a helpful intention. Surveillance is not intended to serve the single purpose of catching a client in the act of committing a crime or violating conditions of probation. Rather, it can be used as a form of continuous support and structure for a client who is not able to deal with issues which in the past have resulted in dysfunctional and generally destructive behavior. When surveillance is properly used, the client is continually sensitized to the possible results of a course of action that has made him/her vulnerable in the past.

II. CONCRETE NEEDS COUNSELING

When a client shows a high level of enthusiasm and motivation toward dealing with problem areas in his/her life, sometimes in the spirit of good intentions, we forget to analyze the present situation and the client's ability to meet his/her needs in specific problem areas. The absence of concrete

needs counseling is suggested as a major contributing factor to recidivism rates. This type of counseling includes some of the following areas: employment, education, financial, medical, housing, etc. High Task, as well as High Relationship, behavior on the part of the supervising probation officer seems to have the best potential for success.

### III. EMOTIONAL NEEDS COUNSELING

Most probation officers are not trained psychologists or social workers and should not attempt to provide in-depth psychological counseling without the aid of qualified professionals. However, in most cases there is a need for human warmth and understanding, and this can be provided by the probation officer.

The services that a probation office and its personnel provide depend upon the needs of the clientele they serve. In this type of Style III supervision, we are referring to a person who has demonstrated past ability to handle his/her own needs in various problem areas such as employment, education, financial management, marital/family relationships etc., but who is not presently willing (motivated) to deal with the problems. The initial role of the probation officer is to motivate the client toward using his/her ability in the problem area(s).

It is quite obvious that in both the concrete needs counseling and the emotional needs counseling areas that one probation office would have a difficult time attempting to provide all the services needed by the clients. In fact, it would be unrealistic and inefficient for a probation office to provide services for all the needs of the clients, especially since there are, in many instances, community resources available to the probation department. Local communities usually have many programs that can be utilized

by the probation department. These include: alcohol programs, psychiatric treatment, employment agencies, community volunteers, counseling (family, group, marital, etc.), health care clinics and many more such services.

### IV. SELF-HELP

If there is no problem in any specific need area in a client's life, do not create one. If a client has the motivation and ability to function in a law-abiding manner, he/she is entitled to opportunities to use his/her skills and knowledge. A good "rule of thumb" for probation officers is "don't ever do anything for people that they can do for themselves".

In summary, in order to be as effective as possible in the role of a probation case manager, the probation officer must learn the fine line in supervising clients between not enough help and too much help.

The following material is presented to serve as a guideline in the further clarification of issues and problems in Assessment of Client Needs/Strengths.

### EDUCATIONAL

#### Identification of Problem

The absence of a high school diploma may be an indication of inadequate academic or vocational skills. (A high school diploma, however, does not automatically mean competence). While job experience without a diploma may be adequate under some circumstances, most situations call for a high school diploma to satisfy basic needs for employment, job security and/or promotional potential.

More specifically, a client exhibits a problem in the area of academic/vocational skills if any of the following interfere with daily functioning:

1. General lack of reading or writing skills.
2. Poor motor skills (coordination).
3. Lack of math skills (ability to make change, keep time, read calendar, etc.).
4. Lack of specific vocational skills.
5. No regular or equivalency high school diploma.

All the sources normally contacted in doing a Pre-Sentence or Post-Disposition Investigation can be helpful in determining the client's current situation and his motivation and ability to pursue an academic or vocational education. Factors in the investigation which are particularly important are school records, assessments by school personnel and current ability tests.

It is important to determine the client's attitude toward education, his perception of his academic ability and his actual ability. It is also important to determine from medical and social records whether the client has any particular physical or emotional deficiency which would affect his/her participation in an educational setting. For example, the client might have a speech, hearing, or visual problem or a particularly strong emotional reaction to testing procedures; there may also be special educational problems such as dyslexia and dysgraphia. If education is to be a planned intervention strategy, the following are considerations having a private place which can be used for studying; having enough time set aside both for attending school and for doing homework; frequently there must be family support; transportation must be available; and the necessary financial arrangements must be explored and planned.

#### Service Plan Approach (Educational)

The first phase in forming a supervision plan is to identify the client's short and long range academic and vocational goals. Although many Massachusetts Probation clients have not experienced much success in an educational setting, and seldom have concrete educational objectives, goals can be explored and developed based upon long-range vocational ambitions or aspirations. Information concerning prerequisites and available resources for satisfying the prerequisites for a particular vocational ambition can be provided by the probation officer or a referral source.

The second phase in case planning is to prepare step-by-step, realistic plans with the client. It is imperative that goals be realistic in relation to the client's abilities if the client is to experience any degree of success. It is important that the individual steps of the implementation strategy be readily accomplished so the client can experience successes along the way. This also provides the probation officer with the opportunity to encourage and congratulate the client for accomplishing his own goals. Plans should be quite explicit, whether verbal or written arrangements with the probation officer; contracting between client and probation officer in a written form is sometimes helpful.

It is important to remember that educational intervention strategies must be primarily voluntary on the part of the client. The contract may make certain demands upon the probation officer as well as the client. For example, in the first stages of implementation, the probation officer may accompany the motivated client to an academic or vocational referral source.

When the case plan is implemented, it is important for the probation officer to monitor the client's progress through collateral and personal contacts. Since this is primarily a voluntary intervention strategy, the probation officer generally takes a supportive and treatment strategy, reinforcing periodic client success and putting failures into proper perspective. It is essential that the ongoing monitoring and information gathering be used in a reevaluation and reformulation of the original plan, sometimes explicitly renegotiating a new written or verbal contract with the client.

#### When to Make a Referral

Referrals should be made in cases when the probation officer, alone or in conference with the supervisor, reviews the case and determines that the probation officer lacks time and/or the specific expertise necessary to provide effective service delivery. However, when a referral is made, the probation officer continues to maintain primary case responsibility in close liaison with collateral contacts to insure an effective relationship with the resource. When resources are used, it is important that roles are clearly defined and proper communication and coordination exist.

### EMPLOYMENT

#### Identification of Problem

Probation officers deal with a unique segment of the labor force. Although some clients possess the skills necessary to obtain and maintain gainful employment, many suffer from chronic unemployment, sporadic employment or under-employment. Some of the underlying factors of an employment problem are: family disorganization; emotional instability; low motivational levels;

low self-esteem; lack of training, education or skills; lack of desire for change; physical or emotional handicaps; race, class and sex discrimination. With men and women under supervision, a number of these handicaps and disabilities may be present in varying degrees.

Identification of employment problem areas can usually be detected if the probation officer asks him/herself some of the following questions regarding the area of employment:

Does the client possess any marketable vocational skills?  
What are the realities of using these skills?  
What are the personal assets and liabilities, as well as job market limitations, which might have a bearing on this question?  
What are client's work values and habits? Evaluate the client's need and interest for further vocational development.  
What, if any, are client's vocational goals?  
Are they realistic? Evaluate client's abilities to benefit from on-the-job training and/or vocational education programs.  
Are there any factors which could either interfere with or limit the client's participation in such programs?  
How might these factors be dealt with so as to alleviate or eliminate their interfering or limiting effect?

#### Service Plan Approach (Employment)

1. In cases where clients have manifest deficiencies in terms of lack of saleable skills, low motivation or poor attitude, probation officers have traditionally operated as motivators, teachers and disciplinarians working to manage and overcome the client's limitations. Traditionally, probation officers have used practical approaches such as accompanying the client on employment visits, encouraging early rising and structuring employment search. Advocacy or community resource developer roles played by probation officers can be utilized to deal with prejudicial attitudes and practices by certain employers. Role-playing can assist a client in learning how to make a positive impression during job interviews.



2. Training and Vocational Placement: In cases where clients require basic types of training to acquire saleable skills or in situations where clients possess the ability to acquire more sophisticated or complex skills, the probation officer functions to inform the client of opportunities, sometimes to motivate the client, and to help locate funding to cover the client's financial needs. This strategy is, of course, a long-range strategy and sets economic self-sufficiency as a longer-range goal.

#### When to Make a Referral

When the client does not possess the necessary skills or training to qualify for work in the existing job market, the probation officer should seek an appropriate educational training resource. However, in cases where clients have suitable skills, attitudes and behavior to seek, secure and maintain appropriate employment, a referral should be made. Here, the probation officer extends the least amount of personal involvement, merely making the client aware of existing opportunities and referring him to responsible persons in public and private employment agencies. In these cases the client must have demonstrated an ability to "follow through" with assignments.

#### MARITAL/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

##### Identification of Problem

Stresses within a marriage or family can negatively affect the personal and social adjustment of the client. Disorganization or stress is likely to create conditions resulting in a high probability of client

failure under supervision and requires early detection and treatment. It is important to note that a positive relationship within a marriage and/or family can provide support and strong motivation for the client to successfully adjust to probation supervision.

To determine if a problem exists, the probation officer should:

1. Explore the client's social history using the Pre-Sentence or Post-Disposition Investigation material and/or files from previous periods of supervision.
2. Interview the client and family members to determine their perception of problems.
3. Contact collateral sources having knowledge of the client and family (schools; public and private social service agencies; medical resources).
4. Possibly request a psychological or psychiatric evaluation.
5. Assess the client's needs based on strengths, weaknesses and overall functioning of the family unit.
6. Determine the way(s) in which the client's family (distinguish parental from marital) is lending support to client.
7. Evaluate the family's potential for providing the client with continuing support (distinguish financial and emotional).
8. What specific, concrete types of family pressures are affecting the client?
9. Is the client dealing with the pressures or problems?
10. Do the pressures and/or client's ability to deal with them indicate that future difficulties should be anticipated?

##### Service Plan Approach (Marital/Family Relationships)

1. Individual, marital and family counseling, divorce counseling (degree and treatment modalities depend on needs and probation officer's expertise). Counseling areas could include personal adjustment, employment,

budgeting, intra-family relationships, sexual dysfunction and relationships outside the family.

2. Group counseling (parent groups; couple groups).
3. When appropriate, special effort should be made to cooperate with community social services staff to coordinate and insure that services to the client and his/her family are provided during a period of probation supervision.

#### When to Make a Referral

1. Referrals should be made when the probation officer, alone or in conference with the supervisor, reviews the case and determines that he/she lacks the time and/or expertise to provide treatment.
2. Referrals should be made if there may be a need for "diagnostic" evaluation. Evaluation can take place at any stage in the probation supervision process.
3. When a referral has been made, the probation officer maintains primary case responsibility and contact with the resource to insure that proper communications and coordination exist.

#### SOCIAL

##### Identification of Problem

A problem exists when a client has a lack of positive associates or when his/her companions or associations are a group that is detrimental to the client's ability to successfully complete the period of probation supervision. Associations can be assessed and evaluated via the routine investigatory process.

These are questions which should help to further clarify the issues:

1. Try to determine client's interaction (frequency, quality) with peer groups.
2. Is the man or woman a leader, a follower -- cooperative, argumentative?
3. Does he or she spend most time alone or with groups?
4. Is this a change from the past?
5. Try and determine readiness for improvement.
6. What are client's needs and abilities at social and recreational activities?
7. How important and/or necessary are such activities to the client?
8. If possible, relate the client's current emotional make-up and his/her past activity level to his/her present social needs.

#### Service Plan Approach (Social)

1. Individual or group counseling by the probation officer.
2. Encouragement or arrangement of positive personal relationships.
3. Restrict specific relationships as condition of probation.
4. Arrange specialized treatment program with probation officer; follow-up to insure that treatment is progressing.
5. Environment manipulation such as group or foster homes, half-way houses, placement with friends or relatives, etc.
6. Positive approach to leisure time management -- spare time activities.

#### When to Make Referrals

When negative companions are due to problems with alcohol, other drugs, mental ability, etc., refer to an appropriate treatment program

## ALCOHOL USAGE

### Identification of Problem

Alcohol abuse is the deliberate use of alcohol in a way that interferes with the client's physical and/or mental health, his relationships with other people or his ability to hold a job. It is both a cause and a symptom of individual disorganization.

The Pre-Sentence or Post-Disposition Investigation phase of receiving a new probationer is an ideal medium for gaining insight into the client's attitude and behavior. Parts of the Pre-Sentence or Post-Disposition Investigation which are particularly relevant to an assessment of alcohol usage are:

1. Police reports indicating alcohol abuse problems.
2. Employment reports indicating alcohol abuse problems.
3. Client's medical problems, especially liver, kidney and "nerve" problems.
4. The pattern of behavior of an alcoholic client when drinking (quantity, frequency and length of time of alcohol abuse).
5. Family attitudes toward alcohol abuse and toward the abusing client.

Some additional questions that may be used in analyzing or clarifying some of the above points:

1. What is the client's level of awareness as to his/her underlying reasons for abusing alcohol?
2. What is the probation officer's impressions of possible underlying reasons for client's abusing alcohol?
3. To what degree is the client able and/or willing to deal with his/her abuse of alcohol?
4. Does the client desire assistance or treatment regarding alcohol abuse?
5. How dysfunctional is client's lifestyle? (i.e., marital/family, financial, medical, employment problems)

6. What type of assistance or treatment is most appropriate?

### Service Plan Approach (Alcohol Usage)

Treatment should involve the client's immediate family unit. The treatment goal is socially acceptable behavior that allows functioning on a daily basis and minimizes or eliminates self-destructive behavior and/or behavior detrimental to persons or property.

#### Confrontation

- a. The client should be confronted with the results of the study and diagnosis of his alcohol abuse. Confrontation is accomplished in a constructive manner with the final goal of this phase being a client's acceptance of the fact that he abuses alcohol.

#### Voluntary Treatment

- a. Treatment options and community resources are discussed in detail with the client.
- b. The client is guided and his decision-making process is monitored, but the client makes his own decisions about treatment plan involvement.
- c. The client is required to give specific details of his/her treatment plans and, in the probation officer's presence, make a commitment to begin treatment.
- d. The probation officer's responsibility is appropriate face-to-face contact with the client, monitoring treatment progress and modifying goals of the action plan based on client progress.

#### Directive Treatment

- a. Forced treatment is indicated when alcohol abuse is deemed a critical factor in the individual's disorganization and the client's unwillingness to involve him/herself in voluntary treatment, or is personally unable to successfully engage in voluntary treatment. Forced treatment should be made a special condition of probation, in writing, and a signed Consent to Release of Information form should be secured. The condition must be an enforceable one.

- b. A treatment program of the type where progress can be measured should be used.
- c. Treatment options include, but are not limited to: out-patient treatment; in-patient treatment; half-way house placement (both as treatment resources and after-care facilities); chemical support; psychiatric and psychological counseling. These may be used in any combination, but can be augmented by casework support by the probation officer.

#### Crisis Intervention

- a. Voluntary or forced detoxification may be necessary.
- b. Clients who display assaultive or aggressive behavior as the result of drinking should be supervised more carefully as they may require immediate action by the probation officer at any time.

#### Modification of Case Planning

Modification of plans and goals at any point in the probation supervision process should be the logical consequence of set-backs, resistance or failure. This can include a logical progression from voluntary treatment to directive, or between treatment options enumerated under the Directive phase. In the face of frequent, chronic or severe set-backs, bringing the case back before the court may be considered.

#### When to Make a Referral

While the probation officer should usually take immediate action to insure early treatment involvement of alcohol abusive clients, referrals are appropriate at any phase of the probation supervision process. Familiarity with community resources and knowledge of the client's needs may narrow available treatment options that are appropriate.

#### OTHER DRUG USAGE

##### Identification of the Problem

Drug abuse is the use of illicit chemicals, other than alcohol, which interferes with: health (psychological or physiological); family relationships; or vocational, educational or legal aspects of one's behavior.

An operational treatment approach assumes study of the client's background and a diagnosis of his drug abuse problem. The following sources may indicate the existence of drug abuse:

1. Client, family and/or peer group interviews.
2. Pre-Sentence and/or Post-Disposition Investigation.
3. Testing and evaluations.
4. Information obtained from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.
5. School and other social service agencies (assuming the probation officer has access to these sources).

##### Service Plan Approach (Other Drug Usage)

1. The client should be educated as to the consequences of continued illicit drug activity.
2. Probation Officer and client should discuss the results of problem identification and diagnosis.
3. After the severity of the problem is established, appropriate treatment modalities should be discussed. Included would be a continuum of level of structures, i.e., from low level (probation officer and/or out-patient counseling and urine surveillance) to high level (secured, in-patient treatment).
4. A resource listing of drug treatment agencies utilized by probation officers will facilitate the referral and agency selection process.

5. After a treatment plan is devised, the probation officer's responsibility should include initiation and monitoring of the referral, if appropriate. Consent to Release of Information forms should be signed.
6. Treatment agencies' responsibilities, in addition to treating the client, should include submission of treatment plans, progress reports, staffing, mutually agreed upon dates of discharges, and other pertinent agreed upon responsibilities.
7. In cases of involuntary treatment, i.e., when the client does not agree with the treatment plan but the severity of the problem requires therapeutic intervention, the treatment should be written into the agreement as a special condition of probation. This procedure is also recommended, but is left to the discretion of the probation officer, in cases of voluntary treatment.
8. In the case of a drug abuse client, one should anticipate treatment failures which may necessitate modification of the current treatment plan. If modification of the current treatment plan is warranted, then reassessment and development of a new treatment plan may be necessary. An amended agreement is strongly recommended.

#### When to Make a Referral

If the client does not respond to the individual counseling, a referral to a specialist or to another resource may be necessary. The probation officer in conference with the supervisor, should review the situation to determine if the probation officer has time and/or expertise necessary to provide effective treatment.

#### COUNSELING

##### Identification of Problem

The need for some form of counseling is indicated when a client lacks ability and/or willingness to deal with the normal emotional stresses of everyday life. Probation clients who demonstrate emotional dysfunction can usually be dichotomized into two types of behavioral groups. First, those clients who handle their emotions by internalizing them (turned inward) and show various

degrees of depression and/or anxiety. Secondly, there is a group of clients who externalize (act out) their emotions. The external demonstration of the dysfunctional use of emotions leads to acting out behavior and creation of potential volatile situations.

Some of the following questions and issues should be considered in determining which clients are suitable for counseling.

1. What is the client's ability to express him/herself verbally and non-verbally.
2. What is the client's ability to think in the abstract, his/her level of anxiety, awareness of his/her feelings, self concept, sense of reality, ability to control his/her own behavior?
3. Is the client able to identify any emotional problems he/she might have?
4. Is the client interested or willing to work on his/her emotional problem(s)?
5. If it is appropriate to refer client for counseling, should it be individual, group, family or marriage, etc.?
6. Has the client any past history in dealing with school or agency counseling?

#### Service Plan Approach (Counseling)

1. Mild Depression: Attempt to mobilize individual's energy toward more positive, productive and self-fulfilling or satisfying behaviors.
  - a. Identify client's existing interests and attempt to create or structure opportunities for success through contracting concrete goals.
  - b. Attempt to stimulate new, easily obtainable interests.
  - c. Help the individual to learn new ways of perceiving him/herself, responding and relating to others; e.g., assertiveness training.

2. Severe Depression:

- a. Seek and encourage psychiatric treatment.
- b. Secure psychiatric evaluation.

3. Anxiety:

- a. Provide appropriate reassurance.
- b. Establish contracts and develop concrete goals (decision-making, adjustment of the client or his family to the consequences of decisions).
- c. Engage in reality testing to honestly evaluate fears.
- d. Be aware of the probation officer's own anxiety (keep one's cool).

4. Acting-Out Behaviors: These individuals tend to be the most difficult to deal with because they do not recognize that they have a problem and if they do, they may not want to do anything about it.

- a. Avoid traditional insightful approaches (exploring behavior's origins).
- b. Develop concretely structured programs with realistic expectations, i.e., contracts (effects of behavior). It is important that the probation officer follow through with all terms of the agreement.
- c. Provide close surveillance.
- d. Assertiveness training is frequently helpful in teaching clients to meet needs without alienating others.

5. Potential Volatile Situations

- a. The primary consideration of all potentially volatile situations is the safety of all parties concerned. If gentle persuasion appears to be ineffective, attempt to remove yourself and others from the scene.
- b. Do not escalate the hostility.
- c. Give the individual an out and terminate the interview when it appears appropriate.

- d. Attempt to secure reinforcements such as another probation officer or someone else in the office or notify the court officer.
- e. Effective ways of dealing with hostility either in anticipation of or following the precipitating event:

1. Allow individual to ventilate.
2. Retain calm voice throughout interview.
3. Avoid personal confrontation (It's the job, not me.)
4. Acknowledge probation officer's mistakes.
5. Teach individual displacement techniques and alternative physical ways of relieving anger (running, hitting a punching bag).

When to Make a Referral

1. Consultation with psychiatric services, such as court clinic, local mental health facilities, other community agencies, fellow probation officers, as well as supervisory conferences, should be considered if the need for a referral is questioned.

2. A referral should always be made whenever the probation officer feels he/she is unable to effectively deal with the problem. A referral should be made in anticipation of actual crisis situations, when severe problems present themselves.

HEALTH

Identification of Problem

Because physical health is closely associated with behavior and self concept, it is important to explore this need area at the time of a Pre-Sentence or Post-Disposition Investigation. The following questions can be used during an interview to determine health needs.

1. Do you have any health problems which worry you?
2. Have you ever missed work/school or been unable to care for yourself or your family for several days at a time because of serious illness or accident?
3. Have you ever been hospitalized for a physical problem?
4. When was the last time you saw a doctor or dentist?
5. Do you have any medical problems that inhibit you from engaging in certain vocational training programs, work placements, or physical activities?
6. Are you presently taking any medication or receiving treatment for any health problems?
7. Do you have health insurance or are you now receiving medical assistance?

#### Service Plan Approach (Health)

Since the probation officer does not do any actual treatment of physical problems, the probation officer should counsel client by educating and informing the client of the existing problem, considering client perspective, prior attempts to deal with the situation and alternative solutions available. Then the appropriate referral should be made.

#### When to Make a Referral

1. At the request of the client.
2. When the probation officer perceives a situation as serious or demanding immediate attention such as contagious or fatal diseases, conditions which result in inability to keep a job or produce extreme social ostracism, or a degenerative condition.

3. When non-urgent health concerns which improve well-being and lifestyle are expressed by the client, the probation officer should give information to the client about resources or make appointments with the agreement of the client. (Examples of these concerns would be immunization, relaxation and exercise, weight control and general health education programs.)

#### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

##### Identification of Problem

The type of physical as well as emotional living arrangements in which a client finds him/herself involved will seriously impact the client's positive or negative behavior while under probation supervision. For instance, family relationships with parents and siblings are affected by living arrangements. Also the neighborhood and peer social relationships will affect the client regarding availability and values toward employment, education, alcohol and other drug usage.

##### Service Plan Approach (Living Arrangements)

1. Because the probation officer will generally have very limited flexibility in dealing with problems concerning the client's living arrangements, it is important for the probation officer to make a subjective judgment regarding what type of living arrangements (i.e., present home, foster care, group home, living with relative, living with friend) would be most beneficial for the client. This has to be tempered with a judgment as to what is realistically available for the client.

2. A clear and concise analysis should be made as to the client's willingness and ability to deal with or to change his/her living arrangements.
3. A clear and concise analysis should be made as to the influence (positive and negative) of the people with whom the client lives.

#### When to Make a Referral

1. At the request of the client.
2. When the probation officer perceives a serious situation that demands immediate attention.

#### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

##### Identification of the Problem

Financial management problems are viewed as being an integral part of other behavioral problems. In our society, a person's worth is generally measured in economic terms thus supporting the view that many offenses stem from economic motivation.

The offense may be a cue to a financial management problem (worthless checks, welfare fraud, forgery, embezzlement, shoplifting theft). An interview is necessary to establish whether the motivation for the crime was primarily economic rather than the result of some other behavioral manifestations. In addition to the client's view of his or her financial management status, the following sources may indicate the existence of a problem.

1. A listing of the client's assets and liabilities.
2. Present address and number of recent moves.
3. Prior bankruptcy.
4. Client utilization of a checking account.

5. Information from spouse or other family members and friends.
6. Type and length of employment, and present net income.
7. A discrepancy between stated income and standard of living (determined as the result of a home visit).
8. Personal habits such as gambling, drinking or use of drugs may indicate abnormal expenditures.

#### Service Plan Approach (Financial Management)

Probation officers may help establish service plans in the following ways:

1. The probation officer should evaluate the probability of the client having financial difficulty while under probation supervision.
2. The probation officer should help client to realistically look at the implications of his/her behavior as a result of financial management problems.
3. The probation officer should explore and recommend action which might reduce or eliminate financial problems while under probation supervision.
4. The probation officer should help the client establish a budget.
5. The probation officer should help the client contact resources designed to handle credit and financial management problems.

#### When to Make a Referral

Referral is appropriately made in the following instances:

1. At the request of the client.
2. When the probation officer does not have time or expertise to deal with the problem.
3. When there is an apparent need for some type of financial assistance, such as medical assistance, food stamps or SSI.



**END**