

# Field Service Case Plans:



Bane



Gain?

## Or

FOUR JURISDICTIONS' EXPERIENCES STRIVING for a comprehensive, objective, integrated, mission driven, outcome-based case management tool for probation and parole.

Assessing and developing a plan of action is a daily event for most of us. When our car is running roughly, we take it to the mechanic who runs a series of tests and calls us with a recommendation. When our child is ill, we take him to a doctor, who examines the symptoms and prescribes a medical intervention. It should be no different for the probation and parole officer. When a crime occurs, the offender, victim, and community all suffer harm and incur needs. These needs call for an assessment and a plan of action. It is the authors' assertion that the development and use of case plans is one of the most important issues for today's corrections professional. Few jurisdictions use them, and those that do usually fail to integrate the best practices of assessment, risk/need reduction, asset building, restorative justice, and community involvement.

This article was written precisely for the individual agent or manager who understands the need for case plans and is looking for a way to integrate the principles, theories, and research findings that demonstrate the most effective intervention strategies. Case plans should not be confused with case management. Plans are written, structured *tools* that direct the offender and the probation/parole agent toward targeted activities and outcomes. Case management is the *process* used by the agent to monitor the offender, ensure that the court order is met, and make any appropriate referrals. In fact, the need for case plans has arisen, in part, from inadequacies in case management and administrative confusion over priorities. For example, many staff have bemoaned "mission creep," the movement over time from certain community based, public safety, and rehabilitation focused activities to a process driven by

paperwork and monitoring. This situation is described in the juvenile field by Rhine, Neff, and Natalucci-Persischetti (1998, p. 41) as follows:

*...[T]he case management role in supervision is too often reduced to monitoring youth through a standard set of contacts, making service and program referrals, and completing prescribed paper-work in the form of field notes and other reports. Within a restorative justice model, this offender-centered, case driven emphasis is too passive to manage the risk effectively or address the public safety concerns presented by juvenile offenders. It also is insufficient as a strategy of intervention to build or rebuild ties to the community.*

The field of corrections is becoming more knowledgeable and sophisticated. New research serves as a road map for effective practice. Program evaluations elevate or diminish long-held beliefs and techniques in the area of probation and parole. Increased awareness of responsibility factors, which match the intervention with individual needs, suggest that one give more careful forethought to supervision strategies and service placements in order to ensure that the intervention is effective by meeting the criminogenic need. Restorative and community justice principles call for paying closer attention to the needs and input of other customers, such as the victim and community. Because of this expanding arena of inclusive factors, case planning is screaming for some attention.

How does a probation or parole officer channel all the information and diverse mission objectives into one's daily routine? For many, if not most, it is a hit and miss proposition dependent on the officer's workload, interest, or perhaps the day's pressures. Daily routines speak to caseloads comprised of individual cases. Carefully administered, case plans can address not only the targeted interventions on these individual cases, but also the management of case priority. In Georgia, the state uses a

caseload priority management model to address this. Daily activities are prioritized according to risk, need, customer focus (i.e., victim, offender, and community), and potential liabilities to public safety. The specific objectives are identified, and then priority is given to certain case aspects driven by policy. In other attempts at case planning, where there is silence on the subject of priority, one may be given the impression that risk, need, customer focus, and liability have equal importance, allowing judgments to be made that may or may not address agency priorities.

Simply put, *properly developed and administered case plans target specific strategies for maximum and measurable effectiveness.* They are structured so key objectives are not forgotten or unduly minimized, and so less essential activities are given a lower priority. They increase the offender’s ownership, acceptance, and work toward completion of the plan. Agencies seeking to implement best practices can be overwhelmed with mission statements, vision statements, action plans, strategic plans, challenges, outcomes, objectives, goals, performance plans, and so on. For those agencies that have not exerted much effort toward planning, visions, and outcomes, case plans provoke questions about what agency staff truly believe about the work they perform. Case plans are perhaps the most effective single vehicle for pulling together the diverse agency activities into a case-by-case, laser-like purpose. Properly developed, these plans are clear, specific, and measurable, and they ultimately tie directly back to the agency mission and outcomes. Without such a tool, hitting the mark is like hitting golf balls in the fog. It may sound great off the tee, and it may look good upon its initial flight, but nobody really knows where it lands.

Never before has the need for case planning been more evident. This article was written as a beginning point for future discussions. The information contained here is appropriate for all agencies that do not use a case plan as well as for those whose case plans lack integration with the wealth of knowledge and newly articulated correctional objectives.

### Critical Integration Components

What are the key components that should be present in a case plan process? Certain assumptions must be made about what is important enough to be included. Each agency needs to identify its own priorities by reviewing or developing its mission and vision statements. For the purpose of this article, however, the key components to be integrated include the processes and objectives summarized in Figure 1.

#### Assessment tool(s) and processes:

Offender assessment is useful in order to maximize the use of existing staff and fiscal resources, identify offender risk levels, and for the development of a case plan. Indeed, many probation agencies have resisted the use of assessment tools and have relied on professional judgment. The two primary types of decision making (Dawes, Faust, Meehl, 1989) can be described as clinical (when the decision maker combines and processes information in his/her head) and actuarial (whereby human judgment is diminished and decisions are based solely on empirically established relations between data and the event of interest). In the process of predicting behavior based on either clinical or actuarial methods, research clearly shows actuarial approaches to be superior. In fact, Dawes et al. (1998, p. 1670) report, “There is no

controversy in social science that shows such a large body of qualitatively diverse studies coming out so uniformly...as this one.”

The number, complexity, and validity of these assessment tools have increased in recent years. James Bonta (1993) described this evolution in terms of generations, with significant enhancements made with each advancement. First generation methods were more subjective and non-empirical than second generation. Third generation tools provided for the identification of criminogenic factors that lead to case plans that address offender needs. Fourth generation tools are now reportedly being developed and tested. For purposes of developing a cognitive/behavioral based probation system, it is critical that the assessment process answer three fundamental questions (Carey, 1997).

- Which offenders should receive the bulk of available resources?
- What are the criminogenic factors that need to be addressed?
- What is the most appropriate intervention for the individual offender?

At a minimum, an effective case plan process must include proper assessment of the offender’s risk and needs. Certain strategies work best with certain offender profiles. A wide assortment of tools is available to improve responsiveness. For offenders, such tools may include, as a matter of illustration, the LSI (Levels of Service Inventory), the CMC (Client Management Classification), IQ testing, the Colors test, or an anti-social sentiment scale. Additionally, assessments help address victim and community needs. For victims, impact statements, structured interviewing, and victim-offender dialogues can generate a set of needs that might be addressed, in part, through a case plan. And, for the community, a community impact statement, community forums, community conferencing, or circle sentencing are potential means to assess the harm caused by the crime as well as subsequent community

**Figure 1**  
**KEY COMPONENTS OF A CASE PLAN**

Key Process or Objectives	Primary Purpose(s)
1. Assessment tool(s):	Reduce recidivism/risk by identifying criminogenic factors and responsivity needs; and better resource allocation
2. Motivational interviewing	Increase likelihood of cooperation and completion by offender
3. Asset building	Increase likelihood of cooperation and completion by offender
4. Risk/need reduction	Improve public safety by reducing recidivism/risk
5. Restorative and community justice	Hold offender accountable; mend harm; community participation, ownership, and safety
6. Accountability system	Increase probation/parole officer effectiveness

needs. The information collected should be validated or verified for integrity purposes. Some tools contain validation or reliability scales as well as other automated, continuous renorming devices. These assessment devices should be validated to the jurisdiction's own population.

### **Motivational interviewing:**

A motivational interviewing process encourages clients to more fully explore goals and increase ownership of the case plan. It involves an understanding of human behavior and the use of certain techniques to reduce resistance and increase one's motivation to address needs. It transfers existing assets, desires, and personal goals of the participant to the plan for addressing probation/parole related objectives. The process focuses on the individual's assets and attempts to build on those strengths to accomplish the justice related objectives (Miller & Rollnick, 1991).

### **Asset building:**

Human service interventions often concentrate exclusively on the presenting problem(s). Intervention strategies are devised to address deficits contributing to that problem(s). However, clients also come with assets. It is precisely these assets that can be successfully deployed to help address the areas of need. Building upon one's assets can increase resiliency and add protective factors that prevent future crime (Benson, 1993). A case plan, then, identifies assets that contribute to an individual's personal success, strengthening and using them to address the case plan strategies.

### **Risk/need reduction:**

Significant published research gives corrections professionals key information to guide in the development of programs designed specifically for risk/need reduction purposes as well as efficient use of limited resources. The following six statements summarize the meta-analysis research (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen, 1989; Cullen and Gendreau, 1989; Gendreau, 1996b):

1. Out of more than 500 validated studies reviewed, none supported the efficacy of punishment in reducing recidivism, and 40% supported the efficacy of treatment programs.
2. On the whole, treatment programs reduced recidivism by an average of approximately 15%. When responsivity factors (i.e., matching the offender with the most appropriate form and delivery of treatment) were considered, treatment programs reduced recidivism by an average of 25% to 50%.
3. The most effective programs used a cognitive/behavioral approach as opposed to non-directive client-centered counseling, unstructured psychodynamic therapy, and various forms of punishment.
4. Risk factors with the highest correlation to criminal behavior were antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, temperament/personality factors, and parental/family factors.
5. Behavioral intervention was most effective when applied to offenders in the moderate to high-risk levels as opposed to low risk or extremely high-risk groups.
6. Treatment worked best when it was longer (i.e., up to six months or longer), was provided outside of a correctional setting (i.e., in the community), was oriented toward building behavioral skills (i.e., experiential), and included the offender's family issues.

A higher risk offender is influenced by certain criminogenic factors such as anti-social thinking patterns, anti-social peers, temperament,

family issues, and so on. Most of these factors are dynamic in nature and can be changed with appropriately designed interventions. The case plan should include a section that addresses the risk/need factors, and this is crucial for medium and higher risk offenders. Low risk offenders generally do not benefit from correctional interventions to reduce risks. Therefore, case plans for low risk offenders should concentrate more exclusively on other objectives, such as restoration of the victim. For extremely high-risk offenders with extensive criminal backgrounds who are enmeshed in anti-social subcultures, risk reduction priorities must give way to public safety components almost exclusively as well as other objectives, such as restoration and input of the victim and community.

### **Restorative and community justice:**

The concept of restorative justice is one that views crime as a violation of one person by another, rather than as an offense against the state. Dialogue and negotiation are typical, with a focus on problem solving for the future rather than establishing blame for past behavior. Crucial elements of restorative justice include empowering victims in their search for closure through a better understanding of what happened, impressing upon offenders the real human impact of their behavior, and promoting restitution to victims (Umbreit, 1994). Instead of ignoring victims and placing both the victim and offender in passive roles, restorative justice places them in active and interpersonal problem-solving roles. (Zehr, 1990) It balances the objectives of public safety, accountability, and competency development (Maloney, Romig, & Armstrong, 1988).

The philosophies of restorative and community justice guide correctional agencies toward the creation of mission statements and objective outcomes that also address the needs of victims and communities. According to Zehr (1990), restorative justice seeks to answer the questions:

- What was the harm?
- What needs to be done to mend the harm?
- Who is responsible for repairing the harm?

Traditionally, case plans focused almost exclusively on the offender. With the principles of restorative and community justice as guideposts, case plans must be broadened to take into account both victim and community needs. The offender is usually the key player who can best begin the process of making things right, to the degree that reparation is possible. For example, the offender often holds information that the victim needs to help process the crime event and its emotional aftermath. The offender may need to meet with the community so its members understand what led to the crime, contribute suggestions on how to respond to this case, and generate ideas on how to best protect members from future criminal behavior. If the case plan is to integrate restorative principles and other customer needs, there must be opportunity within it for the offender to be held accountable for addressing those needs as part of making amends.

**Accountability system:** Imagine a chief executive officer telling the shareholders that she cannot be held responsible for company profits. After all, she cannot control the economy. She cannot control the fact that a neighboring plant held a strike and her company employees went on a sympathy strike. Further, she could not have foreseen the sudden and unexpected rise in the cost of goods.

Imagine a medical surgeon saying that he should not be held accountable for patient recovery. He can control his role in surgery, but any good recovery requires cooperation on behalf of the patient, and he

cannot control how one behaves when he or she leaves the hospital. Some patients react adversely to medication and techniques despite repeated prior success with other patients.

Imagine a major league baseball pitcher, in the middle of contract negotiations, advocating for a more lucrative contract because he's a good pitcher, but stipulating that statistics not be used to determine the conditions of the contract. After all, he is on a losing team and he cannot control the number of runs his team scores. At times, he has had to pitch in Denver where the thin air affects his ability to maximize the effectiveness of his curve ball. He also asserts the manager makes poor decisions on taking him out of games, sometimes leaving him in too long, and other times taking him out too soon.

The CEO, surgeon, and major league baseball pitcher all have a common concern: they cannot control all the variables that determine whether they will be successful. Yet, that is precisely what happens. The Board holds the CEO responsible for profits, the hospital medical staff is accountable for medical care, and baseball players face favorable and unfavorable consequences from team owners for their field performance. They are not held to these standards because they have *control* but because they have considerable *influence*.

The same can be said of probation and parole staff, managers, and directors. If the profession did not have influence and if the probation agent cannot affect change, then one wonders why we spend taxpayer funds to provide correctional services. Our resistance to accountability comes from many directions, but it does not change the fact that we do have influence. Case plans provide a structured method to increase the likelihood that the core agency objectives are being met through day-to-day activities. For example, the probation officer can influence the amount and percent of restitution collected if this is a high priority and if the officer has the freedom and encouragement to find means for the offender to pay or work off the restitution. Some examples include repay work crews, revenue recapture, business partnerships, employment programs, and the use of specialized collections staff. Other examples of outcome based practices include the percent of offenders who are employed, percent testing negative for drugs or alcohol, and percent who meet their victim face-to-face in a mediation.

Accountability is enhanced when there is clarity around roles. Ultimately, it is the offender who is being held accountable for past behavior. Yet, the players involved with that offender all have a unique role, whether that is the probation/parole officer, administration, the courts, or the service vendor. Each contributes a necessary component and needs to be accountable for his or her part of the whole picture. Clarity of responsibility becomes crucial. For example, the vendor might be responsible for carrying through on the plan that precipitated the referral, including making adaptations in the strategies if the original intervention is ineffective, and the vendor is responsible for ongoing communication with the probation officer. Ultimately, however, each player is responsible for being adaptive and showing initiative when problems arise. It is not helpful when one shrugs his or her shoulders and says, "It is not my job," or "It's not my fault." All players must fulfill their role in ensuring that the final goal is reached — i.e., that the offender is successful and the victim and community are restored.

### Key Case Plan Characteristics

For a case plan to be wholly functional and practical, certain features must be present. These characteristics bridge the *use* of case plans with the intended *results*. Implementing case plans that fall short of practicality and effectiveness will not be effective in the long run, as they will waste

time and effort of field officers. Failing to take these key features into account may contaminate good will and initiative on behalf of the professionals using them, making any later resurrection extremely arduous. The features listed below are designed to make case plans useful to both the offender and the case manager.

#### 1. *Short, specific, clear, measurable, and presented in a usable format*

The case plan must be a practical tool for all involved. It must be helpful for the supervising agent, adding value to the work product and process. If it is not helpful, it will not be used or it will be used improperly. It must be meaningful to the offender, or it becomes another official paper easily misfiled or discarded. To be meaningful, it must be specific. Practicality calls for shortness and ease of operation. It cannot have lofty, abstract goals or strategies. It must say exactly what is meant. Finally, it must be administratively useful and measurable so a determination can be made as to how effectively it is used and whether the processes employed are producing the intended outcomes.

#### 2. *Goal dates*

How often do we set goals only to have a long lapse before we realize that the goal was never reached? One only has to look at the annual ritual of New Year's resolutions to see how frequently this occurs. A case plan has an accountability element to it. It is not an individual effort; rather at least two parties derive the plan (i.e., the supervising agent and the offender), and often others participate, such as parents, significant others, and/or other service providers, law enforcement, community members, and victims. Accountability requires a date by which time the objective is to be reached. The lack of a completion date renders the goal less urgent, less important, and allows for other activities to hinder goal achievement.

#### 3. *Short term objectives attached to long term goals*

Many goals are not easily accomplished in short time frames. Unlike, for example, fifty hours of community service work, which might be completed in a month, some goals require a number of steps over a long period of time. Some longer-term examples include acquiring a GED or college/vocational degree, getting out of debt, and choosing new, pro-social friends. Long term goals often result in frustration and discouragement. When these goals are longer term (i.e., over three months), breaking them down into shorter-term objectives will help the

***“All players must fulfill their role in ensuring that the final goal is reached — i.e., that the offender is successful and the victim and community are restored.”***

individual see progress and acquire confidence and satisfaction. For example, obtaining employment (objective), can lead to developing basic employment skills (objective), which leads to self supportive, gainful employment (objective), which leads to self sufficiency (goal).

#### 4. Involvement by key players when appropriate

When do we do what we say we will do? It is when we believe in its importance, when we gain some benefit from it, and when others we care about expect it. This last point — when others we care about expect it — is a key factor in case plans. If you promise to do something in the presence of others who will hold you accountable to your words, the chances of fulfilling that expectation is greatly enhanced. Too often, only two individuals complete case plans: the offender and the supervision agent. Yet, the implications of the case plan go far beyond these two individuals. The plan affects the offender’s family, the victim, a neighborhood, an employer, a pastor, and others. Although case plans contain some data privacy constraints, they may be more effective through broader involvement of others. What would be the implications if the victim signed off on the case plan, particularly if the offender participated in a victim/offender dialogue? What about a spouse or a parent signing the plan indicating their commitment in providing support and monitoring? A case plan can be effective without the participation of others, but with some cases, and in some circumstances, the plan is greatly strengthened by such involvement. Further, as case managers increasingly collaborate with other partners, the commitment and accountability to those partners also could be solidified with written agreements. A case plan is a natural place for signing off on these agreements. This can be especially important when certain public safety concerns are evident. More individuals aware of, and committed to, an offender’s requirements add to the number of eyes, ears, and general support needed to enhance public safety.

#### 5. Distinction between ordered and voluntary goals

To avoid confusion and subsequent power struggles, the case plan should make it clear which goals are voluntary. Some expectations are required by court order or agency policy, such as negative urinalysis or payment of restitution. Others are in the victim’s or offender’s best interests, but may not be required should probation or parole be revoked. Legal and political factors can cloud this issue. For example, a positive urinalysis may require a formal revocation response on a high profile case for political reasons, even though normal case management intervention might successfully handle it informally. Clarity can avoid unnecessary and unproductive conflict should a disagreement arise after the case plan is in place and noncompliance occurs.

#### 6. Parsimonious

In most jurisdictions, probation and parole staff is stretched to their limit with high workloads and diverse expectations. Resources are limited and must be applied judiciously. A common mistake when applying case plans is identifying too many goals. The goals range from behavioral expectations, to risk/need reduction strategies, to restorative objectives, to “because it’s good for you” conditions. Neither the offender nor the agent has sufficient time to pursue a set of goals that address all possible issues and opportunities. The case plan should focus on those key goals that meet the primary objectives of probation as well as those identified by the client as important. Extraneous goals should be avoided to prevent

a “fogging up” of the entire plan. Sometimes, multiple goals might be important; however, the timing by which those goals could be addressed should be staggered. For example, substance abuse treatment and abstinence might be the first goal before other goals are attempted, such as employment or even restitution. The offender’s use of alcohol and other drugs jeopardizes accomplishment of other goals.

#### 7. Realistic

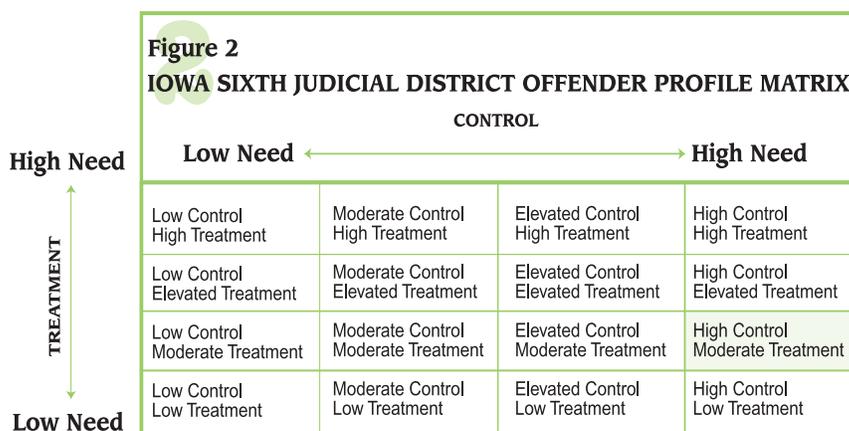
The offender ultimately owns the case plan. It is his or her life, needs, and obligations that must be addressed in the plan. As such, the offender’s assets and limitations must be considered. An offender who has not had a stable job in twenty years should not be encouraged to set a goal of becoming the CEO of Honeywell. However, the client can be encouraged to take small steps toward the possibility of someday holding a regular job. To allow the offender to set unrealistic goals is a set up for failure. One should, however, be careful to walk the fine line between not discouraging an individual’s dreams and visions while being practical and realistic. Some form of short-term failure should be expected. Rarely does anyone set goals and successfully achieve them on the first try. Offenders often have to overcome extreme obstacles and personal challenges as they work toward their goals. Rather than automatically blaming the offender or probation officer, one might examine the case plan and ask whether it was realistic in the first place.

#### 8. Fluid and dynamic

Case plans should reflect the dynamic features of people’s lives. Individuals are not static. Their circumstances change. Their views change. Their goals change. As such, the case plan should be dynamic enough that goals and strategies can be adapted to these circumstances. This does not mean it should be altered without careful consideration. Most plans should be somewhat stable by containing strategies such as acquiring a good paying job, addressing anti-social thinking, and getting assistance around anger management or chemical health. However, when changes are needed, it is usually the strategies and not the goals that need to change. Therefore, the supervising agent should hold the offender accountable to the goal while avoiding rigidity around how that goal is achieved.

#### 9. Transitional planning

Case plans can provide a link to transitional services. These plans often are present in institutions but not in field services. The opportunity exists to provide a seamless approach where the case plan begins in the institution and is continued and reinforced in the field. Much has been written on the importance of solid transitional planning. The most



effective programs contain strong aftercare and transitional programming. Case plans afford the entire field an excellent opportunity to fulfill best practices. A major barrier, of course, is whether the agencies delivering institutional services are under the same administrative authority as those in the field, or whether they possess similar objectives and priorities. When they differ, seamless planning becomes much more difficult. Communication, disagreements, and diverse priorities provide significant challenges to this tremendous opportunity of seamless, continuous case planning, from assessment to institutional care to field case management.

### Four Jurisdictions' Experiences

The experiences of four community corrections programs in developing case plans are reviewed. All four have struggled with the challenge of whether and how to create case plans. All four have made significant strides in meeting most of the characteristics noted earlier in this paper. Some of the jurisdictions have successfully integrated the concepts of risk/need reduction and restorative justice; some have emphasized one over another. None of the four have “arrived” at a tool that meets all nine characteristics *and* combines the risk/need reduction and restorative justice objectives, as well as asset building, motivational interviewing, accountability systems, and transitional planning. However, they provide a good place to start. Finally, some are highly sophisticated tools that rely on automation. While the use of technology and integration of research is laudable, the reader should not interpret the tools as a replacement of human interaction. Corrections is a human service profession, and people-business requires interpersonal processes.

### Sixth Judicial District, Iowa

The Sixth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services encompasses a six-county area, with the administrative office located at Cedar Rapids. It provides an array of community-based programs designed to enhance community safety and assist adult offenders on supervision in becoming socially responsible individuals. Specialized programs were added to the traditional probation and parole supervision, including residential facilities providing 24-hour supervision, electronic monitoring, and a wide range of rehabilitative programming, including intervention, education, and treatment to address the identified needs of offenders. The district supervises more than 2,500 offenders on a daily basis.

In an effort to address an offender's risk, needs, and responsivity characteristics, an automated Matrix system was developed. The Matrix uses several assessment tools such as the Level of Service Inventory (LSI-R), Client Management Classification (CMC), American Society of Addictive Medicine (ASAM), the Brown for ADHD, and the Iowa Classification System. It synthesizes the information and uses it to plot a position on a sixteen-cell matrix (see Figure 2 as an example of an offender profile falling in one of the cells). Using the computer mouse to “pop the screen open” the agent finds the supervision and treatment strategies available to work with that particular offender. Other options on the left side of the computer screen give additional alternatives, such as responses to violating behaviors, thresholds (e.g., the maximum sanction that can be imposed by the probation officer without supervisory approval), and the like. On the right side of the screen are common definitions of terms or a bibliography of research material available upon request. For example, an agent exploring the use of the LSI could check the bibliography and find the four most predictable factors pertaining to

**Figure 3**

### CASE MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

THRESHOLD	
Sanctions	Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full Residential</li> <li>● Incarceration</li> <li>● Residential Treatment</li> <li>● Revocation</li> <li>● Contempt 90+ Days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identified criminal orientation and value system</li> <li>● Remorseless – a general lack of concern for the effect of one's actions upon others</li> <li>● Aggressively non-compliant – refers to behavior, not verbalization</li> <li>● Conscious decision to engage in criminal acts</li> <li>● Focus on control and community safety</li> <li>● Gang history</li> <li>● Continuum of types (anti-social to psychopath)</li> </ul>
THRESHOLD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prison</li> </ul>	

antisocial issues.

The Matrix provides a high-tech approach to assessing the risk and needs of the offenders and matching them with the treatment resources and supervision strategies that the Sixth District has available. For example, the Sixth District has developed diagnostic and treatment services for persons with ADHD and those dually diagnosed with both substance abuse and mental health problems. Further assessments may also be provided, and this information is entered into the computer for consideration for a case plan.

To manage scarce resources, the Matrix allows for the development of protocol and policy. Continuums of sanctions and treatments are available. Protocol is developed to reduce the likelihood of “ratcheting up” responses for the lack of compliance. The Matrix consists of two axes: risk (control) and need (treatment). The instrument operates on the principle that to supervise offenders, one must assess both areas and use that information in developing a supervision and treatment strategy. It breaks down the client population into four major groups, then into the sixteen subgroups. Each subgroup has specific control and treatment options staff may choose depending on the offender's case management history and available resources. The Matrix synthesizes the information and provides users with a range of case management interventions consistent with an offender's risk level and criminogenic needs (Figure 3). By entering information unique to the individual offender, programming can be targeted and matched to the offender profile, thus maintaining the principle of responsivity.

The Matrix is fluid, allowing offenders to move up and down on both axes depending on their response to supervision. It is designed to interface with a database to provide outcomes on offender success rates, program effectiveness, client profiles, and other information. The agent will see an aggregate percentage indicating the success of all other agents who previously used that option. Finally, it allows the Sixth District to identify resource gaps, or needed services, and options that do not work well with targeted populations.

### Dakota County, Minnesota

Minnesota is a Community Corrections Act state. As such, Dakota County operates supervision services for all juveniles and adult offenders (felons, gross misdemeanors, and misdemeanors), pre-trial, post

# 4

## DAKOTA COUNTY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS CASE PLAN

Client's Name:	John Doe	DOB: 3-24-76	File #:	4762A
Offense(s):	Criminal damage to property (felony)	Date Rec/Sent: 4-17-99	Agent:TA	

Court Order	<b>A: Offender: How will you remain crime free and successfully complete probation?</b>		
	Summary: (Criminogenic Needs) Anti-social thinking, anti-social peers, chemical health, recreation, family	Due Date	Date Completed
X	Strategies: 1. Complete cog class (MRT) 2. Complete chemical health treatment and aftercare 3. Re-establish ties to estranged parents 4. Join Health Club and make at least one new, appropriate friendship	6-1-00 7-30-99 12-31-99 6-1-00	

Court Order	<b>B: Victim: How will you restore the victim financially and otherwise?</b>		
	Summary: Knew victim (business owner), victim willing to be involved, wants regular updates	Due Date	Date Completed
X	Strategies: 1. Pay restitution of \$1,532 at \$100/month	8-1-00	
X	2. Partake in victim offender mediation and fulfill any agreement	9-30-99	
	3. Complete 25 hours community work service at work site chosen by victim	12-31-99	
	4. Give victim written update of progress every six months through probation officer	10-99 and every six months	

Court Order	<b>C. Community: How will you repay and protect the community?</b>		
	Summary: Business community upset, Chamber of Commerce involved	Due Date	Date Completed
X	Strategies: 1. Participate in crime repair crew, 25 hours 2. Write letter for Chamber of Commerce newsletter asking for crime impact information and suggestions for repair of harm. Follow up as deemed appropriate with probation officer consultation. 3. Gain a community mentor and meet at least monthly 4. Write up an action plan indicating red flags and triggers for crime, and how will respond	12-31-99 11-1-99 8-30-99 10-30-99	

<b>D. Other Goals:</b>			
Summary:			
1.			

<b>E. Contacts:</b>			
Summary: (weekly, monthly, home visits, work visits, office visits) Begin with bi-weekly office contacts, one home and work visit ever two months			

Staffing Date: 5-3-99	Review Date: Every six months beginning 11-3-99
_____ Offender's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Probation Officer's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Signature (representing _____)	_____ Date
_____ Signature (representing _____)	_____ Date

adjudication, and supervised release. Cases are assigned to probation officers based primarily on risk/need level. The Department provides supervision services to approximately 7,000 offenders on a daily basis. Due to high caseloads, service and outcome decisions are made through a combination of risk/need and staff resources. Staff who work with offenders placed in group supervision, for example, are not expected to

change offender behavior, as the client to staff ratio makes any such expectation unrealistic. Certain restorative outcomes, however, can be achieved in group supervision (such as financial restitution, apology letters, referrals to victim/offender dialogue, etc.). Staff who manage the higher risk offenders have capped caseloads that allow them the opportunity to provide a variety of direct and referred services to address diverse objectives.

These objectives are captured on the case plan. As a result, only agents supervising higher-risk offenders use case plans.

Dakota County has been merging the philosophy of restorative and community justice with the research on what works in reducing recidivism. To promote a balanced and consistent approach to dealing with offenders on capped caseloads, the case plan (Figure 4) was formulated. It is short (i.e., one page), uses LSI assessment information for section A, and integrates the needs of the victim and community in the offender's plan for restoration. The tool is automated. Additional screens are provided to help guide the agent and offender in selecting the strategy. Each screen identifies some examples of what might be appropriate for the section. For example, under section A, the offender, some strategies to reduce future crime might be support groups, life skill classes, cognitive/behavioral courses, chemical health

treatment, spiritual support, employment programs, and the like. Under section B, the victim, examples include victim selection of community service site, video letters of apology, behavioral contracts, circle process, wage assignments, and similar options. Section C, the community, includes examples such as community conferences, newspaper apologies, crime repair crew, community impact panels, and other strategies. Figure 4 shows an actual case example using a fictitious name.

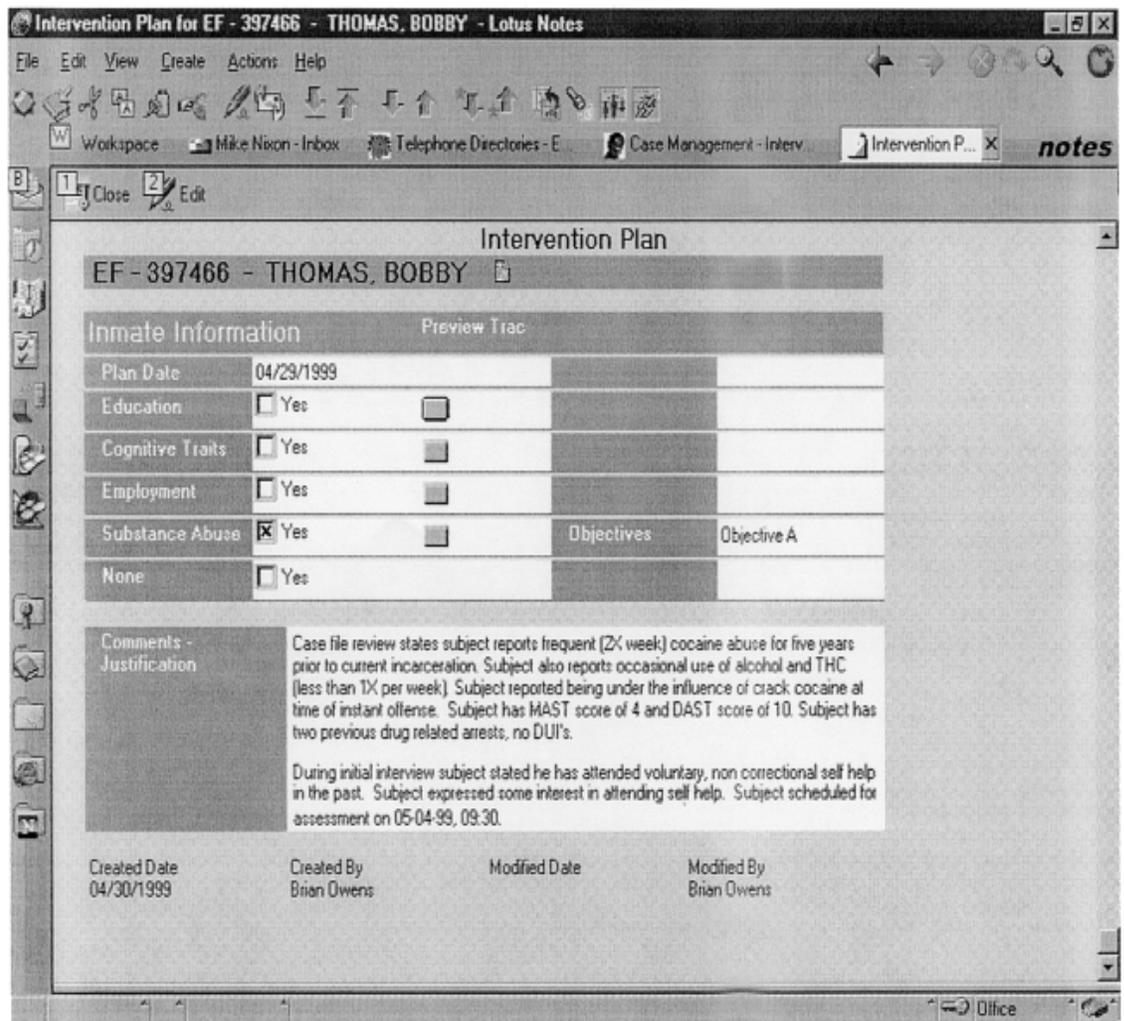
### State of Georgia

The Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles is a constitutionally authorized executive branch agency charged with the responsibility of approving and supervising the conditional release of those eligible from a current state inmate population of approximately 39,000 inmates. About 20,000 parolees are under the supervision of some fifty field offices distributed throughout the state. Officers assigned to field offices investigate cases pending release for suitability to return to the community and supervise those released. Although caseloads fluctuate, the typical parole officer supervises a caseload averaging 65 to 79 offenders.

Georgia recently shifted from the traditional field notebook method of planning and recording supervision details to a laptop computer/The network server approach. All field officers and supervisors were issued

## Figure 5

### GEORGIA CASE PLANNING SYSTEM



laptop computers to aid in the supervision of offenders. The computers are linked through a statewide network allowing information to be shared by all users. These computers are loaded with user-friendly software that provides a “point and click” menu to record relevant information. Simultaneous to this development, the supervision philosophy shifted toward an emphasis on the findings of the “what works” literature. Recognizing the existence of a body of empirically proven research, the focus was shifted from the traditional surveillance model of parole to one that balances the traditional surveillance approach with the research driven treatment approach.

Georgia employs a “supervision track” approach to field supervision. findings of “what works” literature were integrated into the agency mission and four key intervention areas are focused on statewide. These include employment, education, substance abuse, and cognitive traits. The cognitive traits track includes intervention in many areas of cognition to include sex offenders, anger management, cognitive skills, and domestic violence. Figure 5 illustrates an example of an automated screen showing one of the four areas checked as an intervention priority — in this case, substance abuse.

Field office managers are responsible for developing supervision tracks in these four key areas, based on the resources available in their

area. Supervision tracks state the goals, objectives, expectations of both the offender and officer, and desired outcomes in each of the four areas. Where Georgia may significantly differ from other agencies employing case planning is that once the key criminogenic need areas are defined by the supervising officer, the actual development of the treatment intervention is determined jointly between the treatment provider and supervising officers in accordance with the responsivity of the offender. Figure 6 is the plan for the offender working on substance abuse issues.

As metropolitan areas will generally have more resources available to them, it is plausible that the outcomes might be better. The outcomes collected on each of the four criminogenic factors, then, can be compared to areas with similar levels of resources. This is not to say that those areas that lack resources have no recourse. They can assist in the development

of resources such as NA, AA, or GED programs either in the community or within their own office.

### State of Ohio

The Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) is the State agency responsible for confining and treating serious juvenile offenders committed by the 88 juvenile courts in Ohio. The Department has responsibility for youth during the period of time they spend in ODYS institutions and treatment centers and later during a period of parole supervision in their home communities. On October 1, 1998 ODYS began using a “unified” approach to case planning that draws upon and integrates principles associated with the “What Works” literature and Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ). The process is unified in that, like the Georgia plan, it emphasizes planning for transition. It is intended to help staff and youth prepare for transition, first from a reception center to an institution, and then from the institution to parole. The

process draws upon “What Works” principles by guiding staff toward interventions that begin with a general assessment of risk, target criminogenic needs, and respond appropriately to each youth’s particular characteristics and needs. Planning takes place within a BARJ framework to make sure there is balance in the planning and that youths are expected to achieve outcomes meeting victim and community needs as well as those that are more offender-centered.

The case planning process begins with a battery of assessments completed at the Department’s two reception centers. Among the assessment instruments used is the juvenile version of the Level of Service Inventory (LSI). The LSI measures risk of reoffending and youth needs that are directly related to that risk. The information is used by parole officers and institution treatment teams to set goals and objectives with each youth that correspond to the areas of highest risk and need and to identify interventions that will be used. See Figure 7 as an illustration of goals and objectives. A key feature of this unified process is the way goals and objectives are determined. Institution intervention strategies are developed only after the youth’s parole officer makes a recommendation regarding community outcomes the youth will be expected to achieve. Parole officers make these recommendations after reviewing the results of the reception assessments (including the LSI) and after meeting with the youth’s family. Institution-based interventions are selected with an eye toward helping the youth become successful in the community. To ensure that BARJ principles are addressed, every youth must have at least one public safety objective, one objective stressing accountability to victims, and one competency development objective included in the case plan regardless of the priority assigned to these areas by the youth’s LSI scores.

**6**  
**Figure 6**

### OFFENDER PLAN-GEORGIA

The image shows two screenshots of a software interface for an offender plan. The top screenshot displays the following information:

- TRAC:** Substance Abuse
- GOAL:** Parolee will be drug free while on Parole.
- Objective A:** Parolees will participate in a substance abuse program.
- Plan:** SPECIAL CONDITION CASES: Parole files will be reviewed for drug/alcohol use/abuse, observing for past treatment self report information and substance abuse related arrest. Discuss drug/alcohol history with parolee during Officer of record interview and refer those deemed appropriate for a substance abuse assessment. If appropriateness of Special Condition is in question consider deferral of Special Condition. Present case to CPO or designee if deferral is sought. Deferred parolees will be placed on Objective B of the Substance Abuse Trac. Every effort should be made to ensure that the parolee keeps the appointment to include transportation to the appointment if needed. Document in F.L.O.I.D. recommendations of the counselor subsequent to the assessment. Monitor and record attendance daily, record progress, maintain records and reward and sanction as appropriate.

The bottom screenshot displays the following information:

- TECHNICAL VIOLATION CASES:** Any parolee who is discovered to be positive for illegal substances either through testing or admission will be referred for a Substance Abuse Assessment as outlined in the Special Condition Cases at the discretion of the supervising officer. If the supervising officer is in question as to whether or not the case meets the requirements then they should refer the case to the CPO or designee.
- HOMERVILLE, WHITHWORTH, OR PULASKI GRADUATES:** All Homerville, Whitworth, and Pulaski graduates will be tested for illegal substances each time they report to the Parole Office, to include the initial interview. Refer all Homerville, Whitworth, and Pulaski cases using the same process as outlined under Special Condition Cases; however, no deferrals are allowed. Monitor and record attendance daily, record progress, maintain records and reward and sanction as appropriate.
- Outcomes:** A record will exist of parolee and Parole Officer action. This record can be used for disciplinary action, funding justification, or commutation.

### Summary of Four Jurisdictions

The following are two summaries of the strengths and areas in need of improvement for the four jurisdictions examined. The summaries include



## INTERVENTION PLAN-OHIO

### INTERVENTION PLAN

NAME: David Doe

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

**Risk Level:**     High                      Moderate                     Low

**Goal:**    To help assure public safety, youth will abstain from alcohol and illegal drugs.

**Expected Community Outcomes:** To remain abstinent through the first 30 days of parole supervision. To attend the 4<sup>th</sup> St. NA group one (1) time per week through the first thirty (30) days of parole supervision.

**TARGETS**

1.        Did youth actively participate in substance abuse treatment as identified in their plan?  
           On Target     Not on Target    Achieved    Not Achieved    N/A
2.        Did youth work a relapse prevention plan consistent with their degree of need?  
           On Target            Not on Target    Achieved    Not Achieved    N/A

**PROGRESS NOTES:**  
 David is participating in morning meditation. He is completing assigned tasks from the Design for Living Curriculum. Although he has expressed a desire to stop drinking and smoking marijuana daily – behaviors he reported when telling his life story -- he denies having an alcohol or drug problem. When questioned about this inconsistency in thinking by his peers, David becomes notably frustrated, angry, and threatening toward them. While these behaviors require correction, they are consistent with youth that are in denial about their substance abuse.

**INTERVENTION PLANNING:**  
**Expected Community Outcomes:** To remain abstinent through the first 30 days of parole supervision. To attend the 4<sup>th</sup> St. NA group one (1) time per week through the first thirty (30) days of parole supervision.  
**Specific Youth Difficulties:** David is cannabis dependent. He reports “using” behaviors at least five (5) days per week and is usually alone while using. *He becomes quickly angered when questioned about having a substance abuse and alcohol problem. He projects the image of a drug-dealer to hide his substance abuse and alcohol problems.*  
**Strengths to Build On:** He understands the effects his using behaviors have on him. He understands basic addiction principles. *He works well on completing written curriculum assignments alone.*  
**Intermediate Behavioral Objectives:**

1.        *To recognize and openly admit to having an alcohol and substance abuse problem before the next reporting period.*
2.        *To actively participate in all Substance Abuse related programming through the next reporting period.*
3.        *To give two presentations prior to the next reporting period: 1. How substances abuse has positively and negatively affected his life. 2. To give four examples of how denial protects a youth with a substance abuse problem.*

**Intervention Plan:** (Describe structured programs, related services, and referrals):  
 David will be encouraged and given opportunities to actively participate in all meditation and education sessions and work on step 1 of 12 in his step-recovery group. He will be provided leisure time to prepare his presentations and receive staff feedback before each presentation. Staff will provide opportunities for youth to safely, openly, and appropriately discuss their perceptions about David’s substance abuse behaviors.

<u>Person(s) Responsible:</u>	<u>Activity:</u>	<u>Completion Date:</u>
Social Worker	Step & Lecture Groups	By Next Report
Social Worker	Provide Opportunity to Present	By Next Report
JCO’s	Design for Living Curriculums	By Next Report
Staff Team	Provide Presentation Feedback	By Next Report

the characteristics as well as key content areas. A word of caution: First, the information contained within Figures 8 and 9 is based on self-report. Each jurisdiction rated its own system's compliance with the corresponding feature. Second, the actual case plan tool and the processes put in place to implement case planning are evolving in each jurisdiction. All of the agencies are experiencing "growing pains" in case plan implementation that call for adaptations. The scores below indicate their self-evaluation at a singular point in time. The key used is as follows:

- Fully present
- Partially present
- Not present

### Summary Of Four Jurisdictions' Case Plan Experience

#### Obstacles, Resources and Training

The use of case plans is a concept much like others. As a concept, theory, tool, construct, model, or framework, it is still just an idea. It is not valid on its own terms. The resources available, political context, historical agency background, dynamics between management and staff, availability of other methods already in place, and other factors must be considered. These other variables could either render case plans irrelevant or be directive as to how they could best be applied. For example, how does one take into account the vast differences in resource availability between jurisdictions or even within a single agency, or the nature of case specialization? How does one deal with case plans when caseloads are already too high to maintain core activity? What strategies can be used when institutional and field case plans do not have similar outcomes as goals and the two staffs are from different agencies? What happens when managers' opposition toward measuring results makes them unwilling to implement accountability systems? How does one deal with resistance of labor unions over the use of written plans, measures, and accountability systems?

These are real issues and real obstacles to effective use of case plans. These complications make case plans difficult to implement, and they serve as illustrations as to why case planning is important to achieve. The inability to discuss case plans usually means other influences dictate the activities of line staff work. That is, the decisions on day-to-day work is more likely to be process

**Figure 8**

### SUMMARY OF FOUR JURISDICTIONS' CASE PLAN EXPERIENCES

#### A. Key Integration Components

Jurisdiction	Assessment Tools	Motivational Interviewing	Asset Building	Rick Reduction	Restorative and Community Justice	Accountability System	Comments
Cedar Rapids, IA	●	●	●	●	●	●	Uses assessment tools to target strategies and provide guidance to case plan.
Dakota County, MN	●	●	○	●	●	○	Seeks to integrate restorative and community justice with risk reduction principles.
State of Georgia	●	○	●	●	●	●	Uses assessments to reduce risk and need. Emphasizes accountability
ODYS-State of Ohio	●	○	●	●	●	●	Applies a battery of tests while offender is in reception center. Uses treatment teams and parole officer recommendations.

**Figure 9**

### SUMMARY OF FOUR JURISDICTIONS' CASE PLAN EXPERIENCES

#### B. Key Case Plan Strategies

Characteristics of Greatest Strength										
Jurisdiction	Assessment Tools	Goal Dates	Shorter Objectives	Key Players	Voluntary and Ordered Goals	Parsimony	Realistic	Dynamic	Transitional	Comments
Cedar Rapids, IA	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Highly sophisticated, automated process that integrates research while limiting intervention options based on offense and risk/need.
Dakota County, MN	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	One page case plan with listing of examples provided for consideration. Used for higher risk/need cases only.
State of Georgia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	Identifies four problem areas (substance abuse, employment, cognitive traits, and education) and resources are targeted accordingly.
ODYS-State of Ohio	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Provides useful tool with specific outcomes and strategies broken down into short-term activities and due dates.

and activity oriented (e.g., reports filed, contact standards, number of violations reported) instead of aligning activity, outcomes, theory, and performance measures. It means caseload size, for example, drives the actual activities, and eventually the outcomes achieved, instead of the agency making decisions around how to manage the caseload differently to achieve intended outcomes.

What all of this means is that agencies need to be conscious about what is driving staff activities and whether those activities link up to the mission. Case plans force the discussion and call into question how the activities achieve the intended outcomes. Training then becomes vitally important and should include a review of the theory (what do we believe to be true about the work we do?), research (what do we know about effectiveness?), mission (who are we trying to serve and for what purpose?), and performance indicators (how do we know if our work is having the intended results?). For a field that has had significant autonomy in how it performs its work, case plans may be perceived as a threat to that independence. The goal of case plans is not to reduce professional judgment but to guide that judgment toward knowledge and agency values in a written format for maximum clarity and accountability for all involved.

Probation and parole has been a field under fire and intense scrutiny in recent years. In some jurisdictions, it is under threat of elimination. The profession needs to take seriously the demand for results and accountability. Its very survival may depend on it. As such, we cannot ignore or cast aside the political demands that we produce results and that we demonstrate measurably improved public safety and restoration. It seems to be a reasonable demand.

## A Call for Papers

As noted earlier, each of the four jurisdictions highlighted in this article has put into place certain components of the integrated and comprehensive case plan. Despite the quality of the highlighted tools and practices, each agency is missing one or more key features. And, no outcomes have been reported on their relative success. They are simply models and tools that are too young in application to know yet whether they have improved results. If the earlier assumptions are accepted (i.e., that the goal is to merge the concepts of motivational interviewing, assessment tools, outcomes, restorative justice, assets, and risk/need reduction), then significant progress may be made by seeking a way to integrate the strengths of each of the four case plans versions.

The authors of this paper do not purport to know case plan practices throughout the United States. Tools with certain advantages likely exist or will be developed soon. The authors urge professionals in the field to write about their experiences and disperse their knowledge. Corrections professionals are experiencing an exciting era. Case plans are becoming a crucial part of modern day practice. As we merge philosophies and research, the need for effective tools has never been greater. This paper is intended to be a beginning point to exchange our expertise and advance the practice.

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