



StaySafe: An App to Help Probationers Make Better Decisions on Health Risk Behaviors

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StaySafe Development Considerations

Abstract

This poster presents development and theoretical considerations for a tablet computer-based application, *StaySafe*, for improving decision-making skills regarding health risk behaviors during the critical first six months for offenders under community supervision. *StaySafe* is being adapted from concepts derived in part from the prison-based *WaySafe*, an evidence-based group curriculum, to extend ideas into community settings when offenders are most at risk.



An important goal for *StaySafe* is to develop and test an application to help probationers make better decisions regarding health risk behaviors.

Need for Programming in Community Corrections



- ✓ High risk drug and sexual practices
- ✓ Offenders engaging in risk behaviors prior to CI involvement often actively seek and engage in risky drug and sex behaviors after supervision
- ✓ Programming to address HIV and Hepatitis B & C is lacking for many probationers

Critical Elements

- Simple** - adapts mapping EBP for tech-driven use
- Engaging** - vicarious learning (watch someone else solve a problem and then weigh in on their choice)
 - virtual learning (imagine the steps you'd take to solve a your problem)
 - menu of relevant personal problems
 - game-like elements
- Sustainable** - developed after gathering input from clinical and community corrections

StaySafe Design Considerations

- ✓ Adapt concepts from the group-based *WaySafe* including evidence-based TCU Mapping-Enhanced counseling to use in community corrections for an individual-based application
- ✓ Focus on issues relevant for offenders in the community under community supervision, developed with input from probationers, probation officials and counseling/clinical staff
- ✓ Use an evidence-based problem solving schema – WORK-IT
- ✓ Use repetition to practice and learn the schema (12 *StaySafe* sessions including 9 WORK-IT sessions and 3 Participant Choice sessions that provide a change of pace and reinforce learning)
- ✓ Use interactive tablet computers to develop an interface that probationers can easily use with minimal staff assistance before or after meetings with probation officers
- ✓ Can be administered by probation departments with minimal staff training and time and requiring minimal maintenance
- ✓ Make available at no cost to probation departments (other than the cost of the touch screen computers)

Theoretical Considerations

Judgment & Decision Making (JDM)

Experiential – Episodic memory. Matching a current or expected situation with a similar situation and accompanying behavioral decision from episodic memory.
 > Judgments and decisions about risks often based on experiential system, are rapid, and stem from automatic reference to previously stored episodes

Analytic – Semantic memory. Abstract, slower, requiring more cognitive effort. Often context-free, with focus on abstract process.
 > Executive functions including anticipation, goal selection, planning, initiation of activity, self-regulation and use of feedback.

Experiential System (Gist)	Analytical System (Verbatim-based analysis)
Intuition	Analysis
Quick processing	Slower, more deliberate processing
Automatic	Intentional
Unconscious	Conscious

Dual-Process Model of JDM

Probationers are capable of analysis but tend not to use it.

- Susceptible to bias
 - Influenced by emotion, arousal, and rewards
 - Promoted by social norms & values
- Accurate "Gist" processing requires**
- Retrieval of memories, schemas
 - Integration of "what" is known with "how" to proceed

The Power of Imagination

Studies have suggested (e.g., Cooper et al, 2001) that mental practice can have beneficial effects on learning compared with studying the material.



✓ This benefit occurred when participants had the pre-requisite schemas for integrating the material but not when schema did not exist.

Cooper, Tindall-Ford, Chandler, & Sweller (2001). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*.

Maximize Use of Technology

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	RELEVANCE FOR TABLET APP DEVELOPMENT
Dual Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use words and pictures • Make connections - visual and audio
Cognitive Load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize visibility of text and graphics • Contiguity of words near graphics • "Brain-friendly" content structure
Active Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOI – selecting, organizing, integrating • Personalize materials – "this program is about..." vs. "You are about to start ..."

Hybrid Model

Virtual or imaginary elements ask the participant to "think" about some of the steps rather than making explicit responses.

- ✓ Helps automate the schema
- ✓ Assists in internalizing the process so that it is readily available when risk situations are encountered in the community
- ✓ Repetition of the process helps reinforce schemas and increase their availability to episodic memory

Select a problem



StaySafe Story Board

Watch someone make a decision



Think about their decision



Use WORK-IT to think about the problem you selected



12 StaySafe Sessions

1. WORK-IT Introduction & Demonstration
2. WORK-IT
3. WORK-IT
4. WORK-IT
5. Participant Choice activities
6. WORK-IT
7. WORK-IT
8. Participant Choice activities
9. WORK-IT
10. WORK-IT
11. WORK-IT
12. Participant Choice activities

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