

Cumberland County

Adult Probation Newsletter

Welcome!

Hope everyone enjoyed their summer and that you continue to stay healthy and safe. Adult Probation has remained busy throughout the summer, but we wanted to take time to share with everyone the new initiatives in our office, new hires, and other staff changes.



Motivational Interviewing (MI) By Angie Chiara-Williams



Angie

Motivation: the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way

Interview: talk to someone to discover their opinions or experience.

It has been three years since I attended my first Motivational Interviewing (MI) training. At that time, I had no idea how much MI would improve my life professionally and personally. MI is not just a technique or tool to use, but it is a better way to interact with people in a way that helps us achieve our goals. In essence, it is the entire “tool belt” of communication.

What most of us were trained to do is to question, direct and give advice. This comes from a good place. Most of the time, we know what is best for the person we are trying to help, and it is clear to see what they need to do to improve their lives. So, what is wrong with telling them what to do? What is wrong with us pointing out to them the ways in which they have made bad decisions? The easiest way for me to understand the concept of Motivational Interviewing (MI) was to put myself in the other person’s shoes. We can imagine it with our doctors, our families, and our employers. What if every time we spoke with our supervisor, it was all about what we were doing wrong? What if they didn’t listen to us and just told us what to do and how to do it? Would we want to work harder for that person? Would we want to make the changes they were asking of us? Would we comply, but not really change? Now, apply that to your children. What if all we did was question, direct or punish? Would that work to change behavior or just gain compliance in the short term? MI is reaching for more than compliance; we are reaching for behavior change. So, when I think of MI, I think of what would work for me, because, after all, this is about human behavior, and at the end of the day, regardless of status or circumstances, we are all human beings.

At the trainings I offer, the overwhelming feedback from the participants is that MI is more difficult than they thought it would be. To be successful at MI, it is more about learning what **not** to do. If we can learn to listen more, direct less and avoid the “righting reflex”, the other skills will fall into place with practice. This is not an easy task. As I said before, we are all human beings. We all have bad days or have experiences that influence our behaviors, just as the people we are trying to help. Our challenge, as professionals, is to build **Partnership**, interact with **Acceptance** and **Compassion** and to **Evoke** an individual’s own reasons for change regardless of our own values and beliefs. This is the **P.A.C.E.** of MI. It is a “heart set” not just a “skill set”.

The advice I give to my trainees is that if you leave MI training willing to be more openminded, listen more/talk less and provide more positive feedback to the people we serve, then you are taking a step in the right direction. The skills will come with practice, but without the heart of MI, the skills will not matter. Whether your goal is to help the people in front of us or to help society, MI is a way to accomplish your goal. The people we see come to us with a need for behavior change and helping them to change these behaviors, through the use of MI, will help the individual and society. For me, I have seen the benefits of MI in all aspects of my life. It really has benefited not just the individuals I work with but my family and my outlook on others. I no longer go home frustrated that someone won’t do what they are supposed to do or do what I think they should do. MI has helped me to understand others rather than try to make them understand me. Three years ago, MI was just this training I was attending, now it is a way of life. I am thankful for MI and thankful for the support to implement this amazing program into, not just probation and parole, but all areas of human services.

Office Changes



Jenna

- Jenna Kurtz was hired as a Probation Officer on September 13, 2021. Jenna previously served in a temporary capacity with the department prior to being hired fulltime. Jenna is a 2021 graduate of Shippensburg University
- Kyle Latimer was hired as a Probation Officer on September 13, 2021. Kyle previously worked at Camp Hill State Prison as a Correctional Officer and as a Sheriff's Deputy in Dauphin County. Kyle received his bachelor's and master's degree from Kutztown University.



Kyle

Staff Accomplishments

- PO Brad Stubbs completed the Probation/Parole Officer Basic Firearms Academy on 9/1/2021.
- PO Caleb Bartlett completed the Probation/Parole Officer Basic Training Academy on 8/6/2021.

New Initiatives

- Adult Probation, in partnership with Career Link, will be hosting a Job Fair on October 28, 2021, at New Life Community Church from 10-2. The Job Fair will spotlight 15 local employers who are willing to hire individuals who have been involved with the criminal justice system. Many thanks to the folks at Career Link, Pastor Ryan from New Life Church and Chris Sechrist and the Communications Department for all your help!!
- Many of our offenders do well under supervision and don't get enough recognition for the changes and progress they make in their lives. Starting in October 2021, PO's can submit names to Administration of those individuals who are making progress and improving their lives in some way. Those individuals will get a call or contact with Chief Darby Christlieb. We believe that offenders will feel rewarded if their progress is recognized from the top of the organization.
- Our Re-Entry Office has moved to its own location. Prior to September of this year, our Re-Entry Coordinator, Ashley Rohm, had an office in the Reed Building. There were reentry supplies stacked at the Courthouse, the Reed Building and DRC. In September, Ashley and all the reentry supplies have re-located to the old prison (DRC). In this office, our offenders can find clothing, and other basic needs, like hygiene materials and food. Ashley can also meet with offenders in this location to address any other reentry matters our offenders have. Anyone under active supervision in Cumberland County has access to Ashley's services.

Looking for a New Start?

find it at our Job Fair

If you are, or have been, involved in the Criminal Justice System and are looking for employment, this Job Fair is for you!

When: **October 28, 2021** . Thursday . 10am - 2pm

Where: **New Life Church**
64 East North Street . Carlisle

- Details:**
- Job fair is for individuals involved with **Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, and Domestic Relations** (re-entrants welcome)
 - Food service, warehousing, office work, and retail employers will be represented
 - Bring resume' (if possible) and a form of identification
 - On-site resume' assistance
 - Apply on-site
 - Potential on-site interviews

Questions: Ashley Rohm, Cumberland Re-Entry Coordinator • aroh@ccpa.net • 717.240.6522

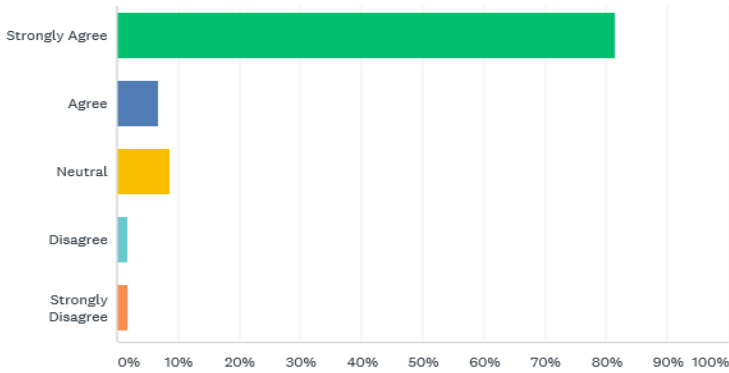


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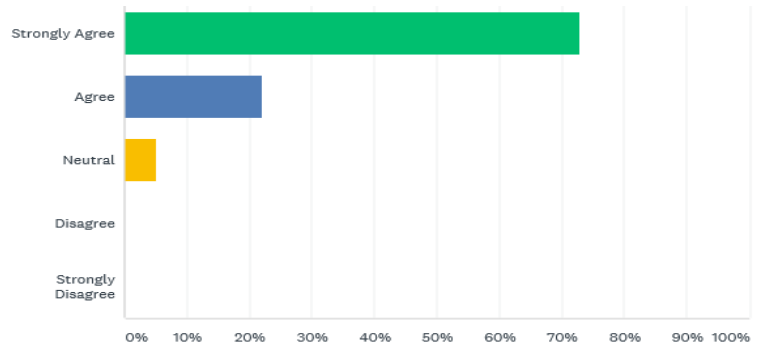
EBP Initiative

The Adult Probation Department has implemented numerous evidence-based practices over the past five years in an effort to improve outcomes. Implementing research driven practices alone is not enough to ensure that desired outcomes, such as reductions in recidivism, are being achieved. In fact, many evidence-based programming efforts fail because the effective implementation of continuous quality improvement (CQI) strategies are overlooked. Programming is not continuously evaluated and assessed to determine if it is meeting rigorous standards. Soon fidelity becomes an issue and the very tools and practices that were put in place to improve outcomes become ineffective, not achieving the desired outcome and sometimes even have a negative effect. In order to maintain fidelity, the department has put into place several quality improvement protocols to ensure our practices hold true to expectations. As an example, the department has an inter-rater reliability process for the ORAS assessment tool, where certified trainers routinely re-score assessments conducted by officers to ensure the tool’s fidelity. Coaching sessions with officers follow if scoring does not meet quality control standards. Ensuring quality improvement with our assessment tool is critical because the tool determines the offender’s risk level which governs the amount of contact an officer has with an offender. An improper risk score could result in a dangerous offender, who is in need of much attention, receiving very little contact from an officer. Another example of a simpler quality improvement method is through surveying, where a target population completes a survey to provide feedback about the agencies effectiveness. The department implemented an offender exit survey as part of our quality control program. At the time of case closure, offenders are asked to complete an anonymous survey. Many of the questions on the survey pertain to our Motivational Interviewing and Professional Alliance initiatives. Research shows that a probation officer’s effective and collaborative interaction with an offender can have a positive impact on offender success. As shown in the following graphs, the feedback from offenders overwhelmingly shows that the department is obtaining desired outcomes, officers are using the skills obtained through training to foster an effective and collaborative working relationship with the offenders they supervise.

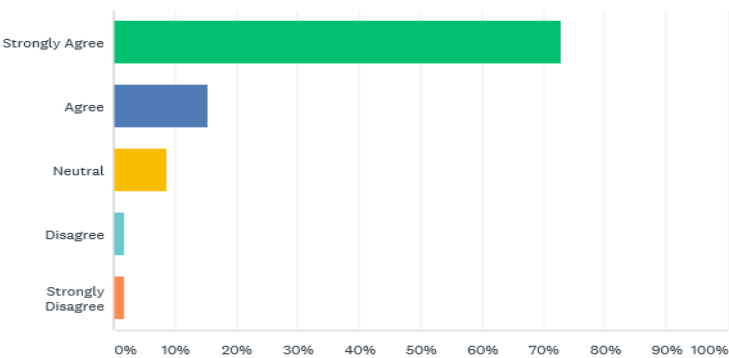
Q: I was treated with respect by my supervising officer.



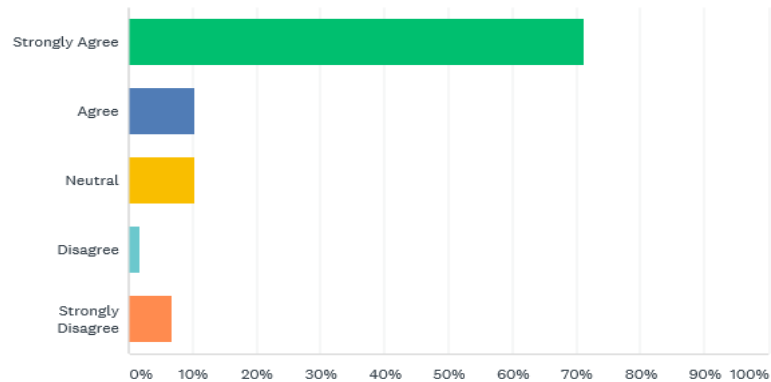
Q: I understood the expectations of what I needed to do in order to successfully complete my supervision.



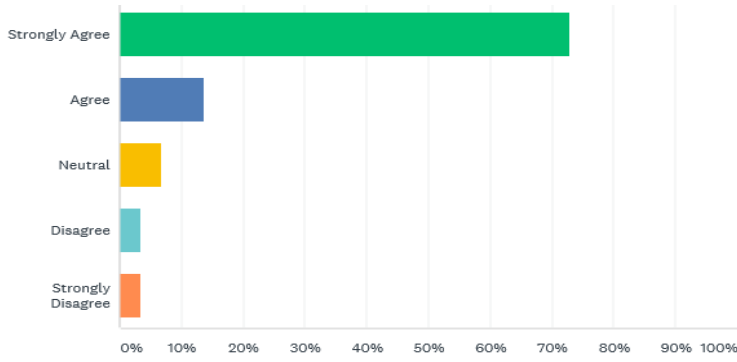
Q: The rules of my supervision were clearly explained to me.



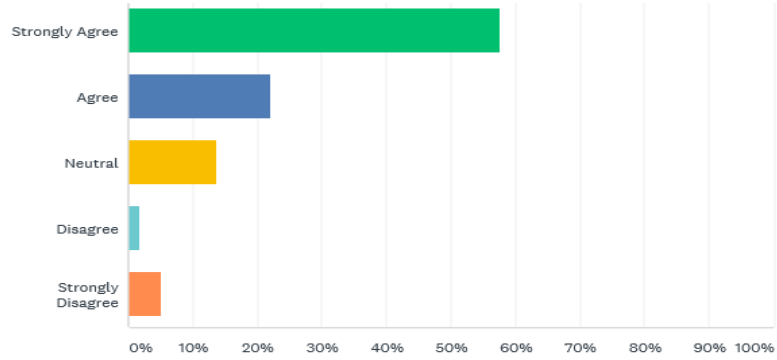
Q: My supervising officer cared about my success.



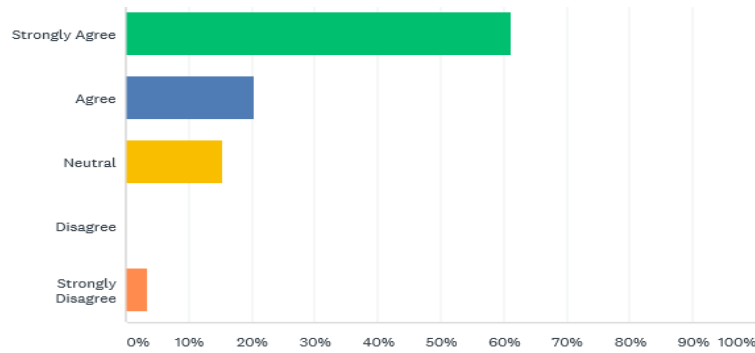
Q: My supervising officer listened to me.



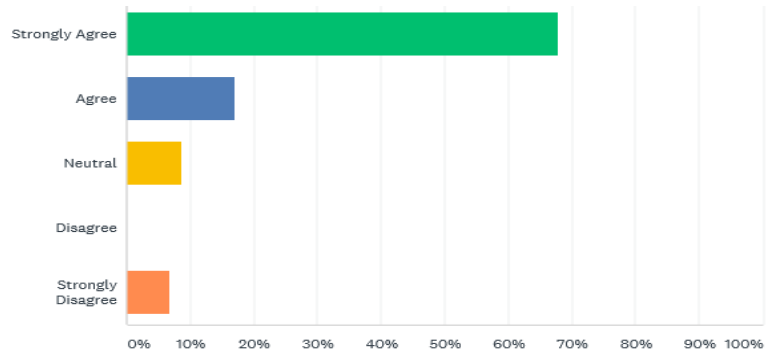
Q: My supervising officer conducted field visits in a professional and respectful manner.



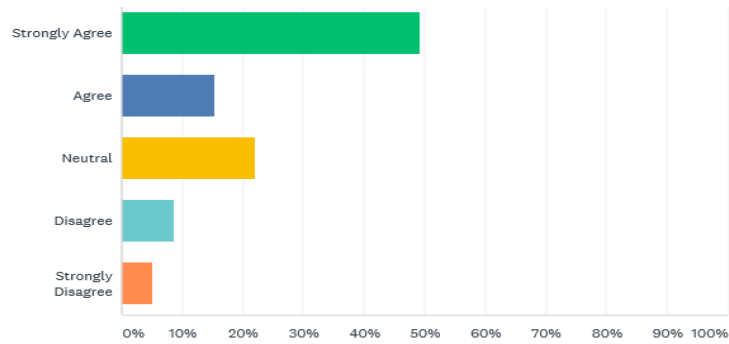
Q: I was given the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge to succeed.



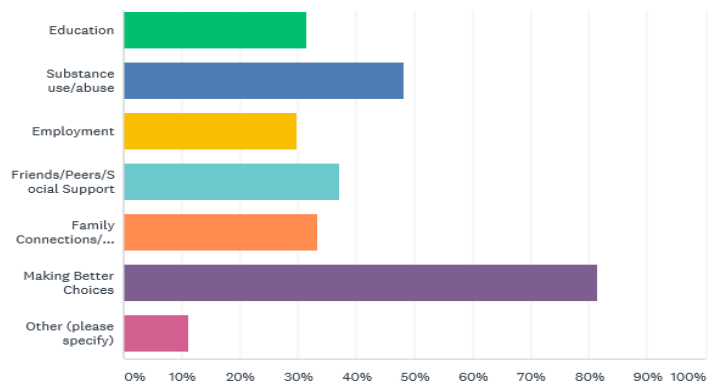
Q: I would feel comfortable contacting my supervising officer in the future if problems come up.



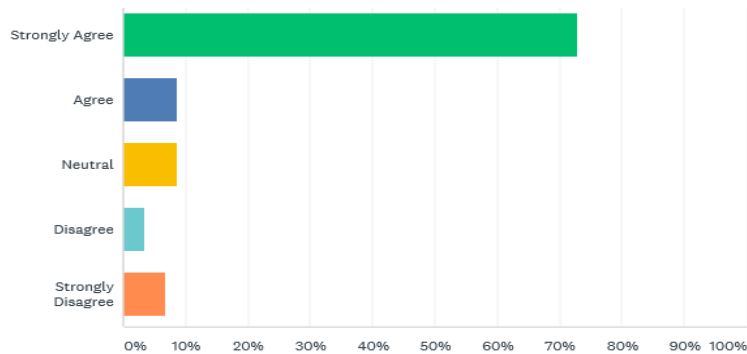
Q: I had input in my case plan.



Q: Do you feel that you made improvements in any of the following areas during your probation supervision? (check all that apply)



Q: My supervising officer treated me as an individual and not just like everyone else.



Department Statistics (July 1 - September 30, 2021)

- 178 ORAS/CST Assessments Completed
- 203 Pre-Sentence Investigations Completed
- 983 Successful Field Visits Made
- 284 Additional Attempted Field Visits
- 81 Pre-Parole Investigations



Our Vision

The Cumberland County Adult Probation Office is committed to rebuilding the lives of the people we serve to provide for healthier and safer communities.

Our Mission

To increase the quality of life of offenders by focusing and building on their strengths and working towards reducing their thinking errors and harmful behavior patterns. Our office is focused on meeting the individual needs of our offenders through the use of Evidenced-Based practices by utilizing opportunities for offender rehabilitation and treatment. By doing this, we will be able to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

Guiding Principles

- Engages collaboratively with our stakeholders and the community
- Honors the belief that people can change
- We value impartiality, accountability, professionalism and a strong work ethic
- Promotes honest, respectful and forthright communication
- Integrity and ethical conduct is essential at all times