

Research and Rationale for the Use of Administrative Responses

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Behavioral Approach

- “Most problem behaviors develop, are maintained, and change primarily through learning” (Spiegler & Guevremont, 2010).

Operant Conditioning

- Behavior is learned
 - Changes in our environment
 - Positive/pleasurable changes - behavior will likely continue
 - Negative/unpleasant changes – behavior less likely to continue
- Behavior can be changed/manipulated
 - Manipulation of the environmental consequences

Reinforcements and Punishments

- Reinforcements
 - Positive reinforcements – application of a pleasurable stimulus
 - Negative reinforcements – removal of an undesirable stimulus
- Punishments
 - Positive punishments – application of an undesirable stimulus
 - Negative punishments – removal of a desirable stimulus

Broader Scope of the Use of Reinforcements and Sanctions

- Schools
- Medical Professions
- Employee Performance
- Substance Abuse Counseling

Applications in CJ Settings

- DC Superior Court Drug Intervention Program
- Hawaii Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE)
- Wyoming Intensive Supervision Program

Key Issues in the Design of Administrative Response Programs in Felony Probation Caseloads

General Compliance versus Specific Behavior Approaches

General Compliance Approach

- Focuses on general compliance with all conditions of supervision
 - Sanctions imposed for all instances of noncompliance
 - Reinforcements given for general compliance
 - Earned compliance credits/goodtime
- Issues/Concerns
 - Certainty is a key component of operant learning
 - Relative importance of probation conditions
 - Maintaining a distinction between sanctions and rewards

Specific Behavior Approach

- Apply sanctions and reinforcements to specific conditions of supervision
 - Getting and keeping a job
 - Attending treatment program
 - Controlling anger
 - Staying drug free
- Issues/Concerns
 - High detection behaviors
 - Do we ignore other behaviors?

Risk and Behavioral Applications

Risk and Behavioral Applications

- Risk Principle
 - The level of supervision and treatment should be commensurate with the offender's level of risk
- Risk principle implies reinforcements and sanctions should be applied to higher-risk offenders
- Low Risk and YAVIS Syndrome

Structured Discretion for Supervision Officers

Importance of Structured Discretion

- Why discretion is essential?
 - Celerity
 - Behavior and consequence have to be linked in time
 - The effects of the consequence diminish exponentially with the passage of time
- Why structure is essential?
 - Appropriateness of responses
 - Consistency of responses
 - Fairness

Perceptions Matter

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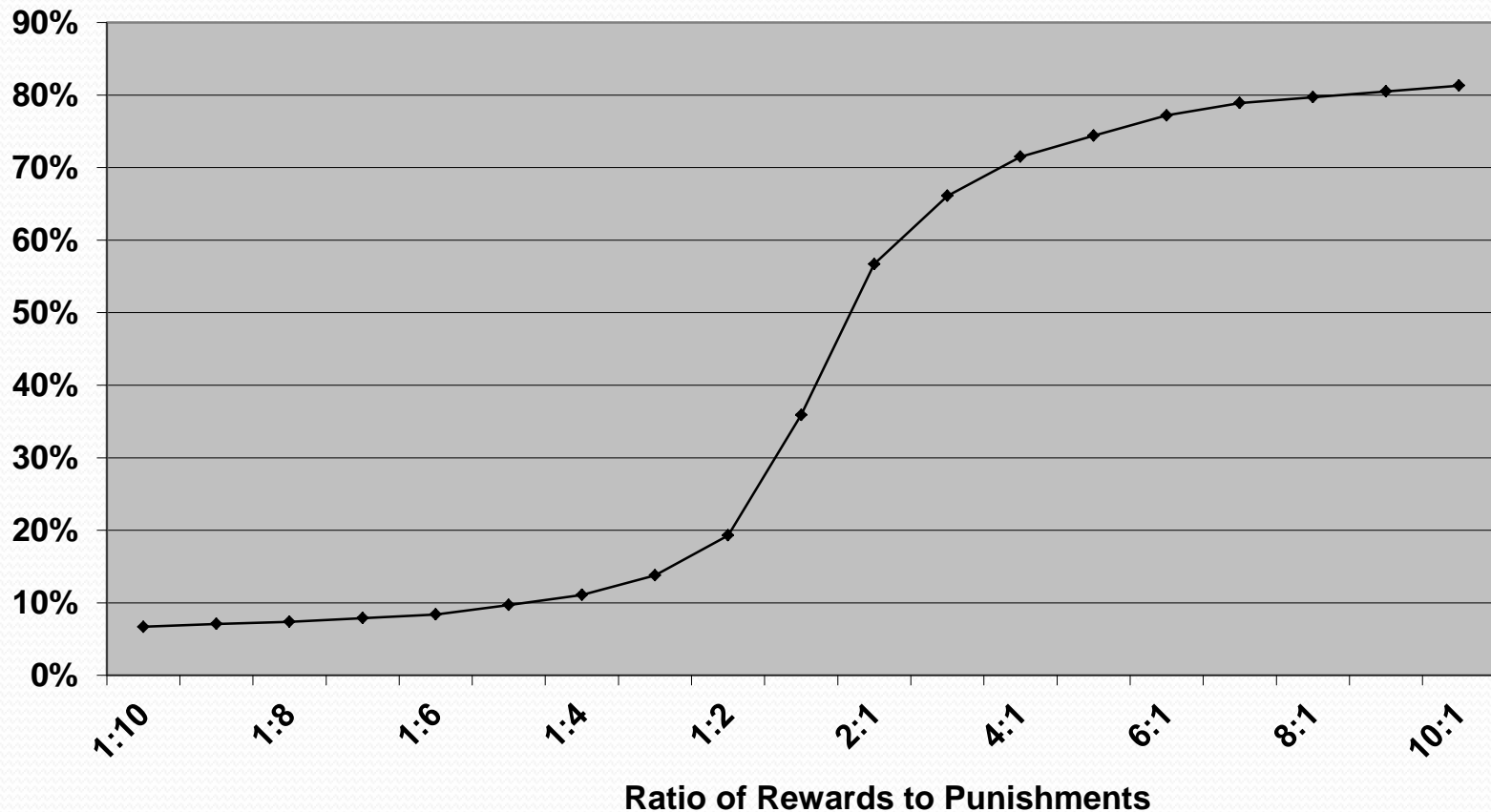
- We cannot assume that what is punishing for one is equally punishing for another; nor can we assume that what is rewarding for one is equally rewarding for another.
- Wyoming ISP study
 - Offenders do not view jail as being substantially more punitive than community based sanctions
 - Punitiveness of treatment oriented sanctions
 - Disconnect between offender and officer perceptions
- More research is needed

Ratios of Reinforcements to Punishments

Ratio of Reinforcements to Sanctions

- Reinforcements are more effective than sanctions at changing behavior
- Reinforcements and sanctions are most effective at changing behavior when used in concert
- Achieving at high reinforcement to sanction ratio provides the best opportunity for success
 - 4:1 reinforcement to sanction incentive

Ratio of Rewards to Sanctions and the Probability of Success



Collateral Issues Surrounding the Use of Sanctions and Rewards

Collateral Issues

- Collateral benefits of reinforcements and sanctions
 - Change officer behavior
 - Improved offender/officer relationships
- Be realistic of expectations
 - Can we expect sanctions and reinforcements to result in long-term behavioral change?