
**Not Enough Time in the Day:
An Examination of Correctional Counselor Workloads in Iowa**



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American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), or the Council of State Governments (CSG).

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INTRODUCTION

The Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC), with technical assistance from the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) has undertaken a workload study of their correctional counselors working in IDOC institutions. This study was designed to provide a greater understanding of the nuanced work performed by correctional counselors. The study aims to understand:

- 1) What are the most common tasks, case (e.g., interviews, group facilitation) and non-case related (e.g., administrative work, training, report writing), associated with correctional counselors?
- 2) How much time is associated with these tasks?
- 3) Are there tasks in which counselors must sacrifice quality for timeliness?
- 4) Are these tasks and their prevalence in alignment with the department's evidence-based practice (EBP) goals?
- 5) What barriers interfere with the work of correctional counselors?
- 6) Are there enough counselors to cover the department's institutional obligations?

While workload studies have been utilized heavily in judicial settings for several years an extensive literature review found no studies of the workload of correctional counselors. This research is the first study completed in an institutional corrections setting with correctional counselors. This study adapted the time study methodology from prior studies completed on prosecutors, judges and community corrections officers.

The research is exploratory in nature and seeks a better understanding of the most common tasks and activities associated with the correctional counselor work, the amount of time associated with these tasks and activities, time associated with non-case related activities and tasks, institutional variations in activities and if counselors perceive they process an inadequate amount of time to satisfactorily complete specific tasks, and consideration of whether the current workforce parameters appropriate to meet the agency's mission.

TIME STUDY

Methodology

Workload studies have been conducted with a variety of criminal justice occupations including prosecutors, judges, and community supervision officers. There have, however, been no known attempts to examine the workloads of correctional counselors. The current study adapted the time study methodology from these occupations for use with correctional counselors. With the input of an advisory committee of subject matter experts gathered from correctional facilities across Iowa, a task analysis was conducted resulting in a list of core correctional counselor activities. This list was integrated into a time study form and online application (developed and maintained by IDOC's IT department) that study participants used to track the time (in minutes) engaged in a given activity over a four-week time period (April 18 – May 13, 2016). In addition to tracking the activity type and time (including any travel and wait time), correctional counselors recorded person(s) involved, method of contact, location, related form(s) or assessment(s), adequacy of time, task completion, and barriers.

The time study instrument was pretested twice, once in paper form and again as a web-based application, with three correctional counselors. Each counselor was asked to spend a day documenting their activities and then participated in debriefing sessions. These debriefing sessions, as well as consultation with the advisory committee, led to refinements to the instrument including the activity list. All correctional counselors were invited to participate in the study and provided brief webinar training on how to participate one week prior to the start of the four-week data collection period. To preserve confidentiality, APPA provided unique identification numbers for each participant. Staff associated all the activities they recorded with their ID number and only the principal investigator at APPA had access to the participant key (subsequently destroyed). Interim data checks were conducted each week. At the conclusion of the data collection period, participants were provided one additional week to make final additions and edits to their data. The dataset was then extracted for analysis, supplemented with offender data provided by the IDOC.

Sample

Of the 119 individuals employed as correctional counselors at the time, 117 participated in the time study (98.3%). Table 1 displays demographical information for the study participants. Correctional counselors were stationed in the Anamosa State Penitentiary (ASP) ($N=10$, 8.5%) including Luster Heights (LUH) ($N=1$, 0.9%), Clarinda Correctional Facility (CCF) ($N=9$, 7.7%), Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF) ($N=14$, 12.0%), Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (ICIW) ($N=10$, 8.5%) including Minimum Live-Out (MLO) ($N=2$, 1.7%), Iowa Medical & Classification Center (IMCC) ($N=13$, 12.0%), Iowa State Penitentiary (ISP) ($N=10$, 8.5%) including the John Bennet Unit (JBU) ($N=1$, 0.9%), Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility (MPCF) ($N=12$, 10.3%), Newton Correctional Facility[†] (NCF) ($N=15$, 12.8%) including the Correctional Release Center (CRC) ($N=4$, 3.4%), and North Central Correctional Facility (NCCF) ($N=6$, 5.1%). Nine (7.7%) chose not to specify the location in which they worked. There were slightly more male ($N=64$, 54.7%) correctional counselors than female ($N=53$, 45.3%). Most were white ($N=89$, 76.1%), with one (0.9%) American Indian or Alaskan Native, seven (6.0%) African American, while six (5.1%) marked other and the remaining 14 (12.0%)

[†] A separate time study will be conducted for Newton, because the initial data collected and included in this report were not reflective of the job activities of the institution's correctional counselors.

chose not to specify their race. In addition, only three (2.6%) indicated they were Hispanic or Latino. The average age of correctional counselors was 48 with a standard deviation of 10 years, meaning on average a respondent's age varied about 10 years from the mean. In other words the age ranged from about the late-30s to the late-50s. Note 11 participants did not provide age information. On average counselors had worked in their current position for 11 years with a standard deviation of eight years, meaning officers generally ranged between three and 20 years in experience. The average was slightly higher for years employed at the IDOC with an average of 15 years and a standard deviation of nine years. Note 11 chose not to respond to years in current position and nine chose not to respond to years at the IDOC. Nonresponse can be attributed to some having concerns about preserving their confidentiality, of which some participants were quite adamant.

Table 2 provides demographical information on 4,844 offenders directly associated with recorded activities, excluding offender group activities. This included 375 offenders at ASP (7.7%) with an additional 25 (0.5%) at LUH, 314 (6.5%) at CCF, 698 (14.4%) at FDCF, 262 (5.4%) at ICIW with an additional 88 (1.8%) at MLO, 874 (18%) at IMCC, 215 (4.4%) at ISP with an additional 108 (2.2%) at JBU, 538 (11.1%) at MPCF, 707 (14.6%) at NCF with an additional 169 (3.5%) at the CRC, and 278 (5.7%) at NCCF. Another 151 (3.1%) appear to be associated with reentry transition and located within residential centers and associated facilities. The remaining 42 (0.9%) did not possess location information. In terms of classification 306 (6.3%) were maximum, 3,018 (62.3%) medium, and 1,428 (29.5%) minimum level. There were no classification data for 92 (1.9%) offenders. The offender population was predominantly male ($N=4,481$, 92.5%); white ($N=3,492$, 72.1%) or African American ($N=1,237$, 25.5%); English-speaking ($N=4,283$, 88.4%); and in possession of a high school degree ($N=1,418$, 29.3%), GED ($N=2,014$, 41.6%), or less ($N=1,137$, 23.5%).

Table 1: Correctional Counselor Demographical Information

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Facility		
Anamosa State Penitentiary (ASP)	10	8.5
Luster Heights (LH)	1	0.9
Clarinda Correctional Facility (CCF)	9	7.7
Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF)	14	12.0
Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (ICIW)	10	8.5
Minimum Live-Out (MLO)	2	1.7
Iowa Medical & Classification Center (IMCC)	14	12.0
Iowa State Penitentiary (ISP)	10	8.5
John Bennett Correctional Center (JBCC)	1	0.9
Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility (MPCF)	12	10.3
Newton Correctional Facility (NCF)	15	12.8
Correctional Release Center (CRC)	4	3.4
North Central Correctional Facility (NCCF)	6	5.1
Missing Data	9	7.7
Sex		
Female	53	45.3
Male	64	54.7
Race		
American Indian and Alaskan Native	1	0.9
Black or African American	7	6.0
White/Caucasian	89	76.1
Other	6	5.1
Missing Data	14	12.0
Hispanic/Latino		
Yes	3	2.6
No	114	97.4
Age (<i>N</i> =106)	<i>M</i> =47.6	<i>SD</i> =9.6
Years in Current Position (<i>N</i> =106)	<i>M</i> =11.3	<i>SD</i> =8.4
Years at Department of Corrections (<i>N</i> =108)	<i>M</i> =15.3	<i>SD</i> =9.3

Note. *N* = 117.

Table 2: Offender Demographical Information

Variable	N	%
Facility		
Anamosa State Penitentiary (ASP)	375	7.7
Luster Heights (LUH)	25	0.5
Clarinda Correctional Facility (CCF)	314	6.5
Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF)	698	14.4
Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (ICIW)	262	5.4
Minimum Live-Out (MLO)	88	1.8
Iowa Medical & Classification Center (IMCC)	874	18.0
Iowa State Penitentiary (ISP)	215	4.4
John Bennett Correctional Center (JBCC)	108	2.2
Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility (MPCF)	538	11.1
Newton Correctional Facility (NCF)	707	14.6
Correctional Release Center (CRC)	169	3.5
North Central Correctional Facility (NCCF)	278	5.7
Other*	151	3.1
Missing Data	42	0.9
Custody Classification Level		
Maximum	306	6.3
Medium	3,018	62.3
Minimum	1,428	29.5
Missing Data	92	1.9
Sex		
Female	363	7.5
Male	4,481	92.5
Race		
American Indian and Alaskan Native	74	1.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	40	0.8
Black or African American	1,237	25.5
White/Caucasian	3,492	72.1
Missing Data	1	0.0
Hispanic/Latino		
Yes	291	6.0
No	4,546	93.8
Missing	7	0.2
Primary Language		
English	4,283	88.4
Spanish	122	2.5
Other	30	0.6
Missing Data	409	8.5

Educational Attainment		
Associate's Degree or Higher	129	2.7
Professional Certificate/Training	116	2.4
Some College	30	0.6
High School Degree	1,418	29.3
HiSET/GED	2,014	41.6
Less than High School/GED	1,137	23.5
Age (N=4,844)	M=36.3	SD=12.1

Note. N = 4,844.

*Includes ANCHOR Center – Residential (N=2), Burlington Residential Facility (N=1), Council Bluffs Residential Correctional Facility (N=1), Forensic Psychiatric Hospital (N=14), Des Moines Women's Residential Correctional Center (N=1), Larry A. Nelson Residential Center (N=1), and the Lodge (N=132).

Results

While it would seem the majority of a correctional counselor's activities would be spent interacting with offenders, Table 3 demonstrates this constitutes only about half of the activities. More specifically, 38.2% ($N=11,963$) of the activities recorded by study participants involved direct one-on-one contact with offenders. Only 4.9% ($N=1,531$) of these activities involved group work with multiple offenders. Eleven percent ($N=3,540$) of the activities were solitary in nature (e.g., data entry, report writing). About ten percent involved a variety of individuals ($N=2,966$), while another eight percent ($N=2,512$) involved work with colleagues. Other persons involved at a much lesser extent, at or below one percent of the total number of activities, included administrative staff ($N=218$), attorneys ($N=75$), the Board of Parole (BOP) ($N=78$), court ($N=9$), law enforcement ($N=16$), offenders' families ($N=383$), the public ($N=53$), supervisors ($N=310$), treatment providers ($N=472$), and victims or their families ($N=10$). Note 1,309 (4.2%) of the activities were associated with other individuals not listed and another 5,907 (18.8%) activities were not accompanied by a person selection (i.e., missing data). Most likely the missing data are associated with solitary activities, which if combined with the category for "no one" would put solitary activities up to about 30%. In terms of activity duration with a given person type the highest average was associated with offender groups at 59.8 minutes or one hour. However, in terms of total time groups accounted for 91,545 minutes or 1,526 hours. It appears solitary activities (e.g., paperwork, data entry, report writing) comprised the most time with no one (including the missing data) comprising 331,290 minutes (5,422 hours), followed by one-on-one interactions with offenders comprising 217,389 minutes (3,623 hours), multiple person types at 114,200 minutes (1,903 hours), colleagues at 87,611 minutes (1,460 hours), other at 62,963 minutes (1,049 hours), treatment providers at 21,783 minutes (363 hours), supervisors at 6,271 minutes (105 hours), administrative staff at 5,927 minutes (99 hours), offenders' families at 5,679 minutes (95 hours), BOP at 2,335 minutes (39 hours), public at 1,489 minutes (25 hours), attorneys at 771 minutes (13 hours), victims and their families at 204 minutes (3 hours), law enforcement at 181 minutes (3 hours), and court at 100 (2 hours).

Table 4 displays the same activity information broken down by contact method. Face-to-face interactions ($N=11,999$, 38.3%) and computer work ($N=10,930$, 34.9%) comprised the bulk of the activities. Face-to-face interactions averaged about 30 minutes and consumed a total of 376,172 minutes (6,270 hours). Computer work also averaged about half an hour in a given sitting and consumed 306,008 minutes (5,100 hours) of the correctional counselors' time. Email and kiosks were involved in 3,257 activities (10.4%), followed by office phone and voicemail needs ($N=1,762$, 5.6%), and mail needs ($N=162$, 0.5%); each averaging about one-quarter of an hour in duration. In terms of total time, email and kiosks consumed 50,705 minutes (845 hours), phone and voicemail 23,990 minutes (400 hours), and mail 2,767 minutes (46 hours). Finally, other methods were used in 3,242 activities, consuming 190,096 minutes of counselors' time (3,168 hours).

Table 3: *Frequency and Time of Activities Associated with a Given Person Type*

	<i>N</i>	%	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Σ
Administrative Staff	218	0.7	180	27.2	25.7	5,927
Attorneys	75	0.2	107	10.3	14.1	771
Board of Parole (BOP)	78	0.2	240	30.0	38.4	2,335
Court	9	0.0	25	11.1	7.0	100
Group (multiple offenders)	1,531	4.9	480	59.8	58.8	91,545
Law Enforcement	16	0.1	45	11.3	11.7	181
Offenders (individually)	11,963	38.2	450	18.2	20.9	217,389
Offenders' Guardian/Family	383	1.2	320	14.8	23.2	5,679
Public	53	0.2	180	28.1	39.2	1,489
Staff (colleagues)	2,512	8.0	570	34.9	74.2	87,611
Supervisors	310	1.0	210	20.2	23.8	6,271
Treatment Providers	472	1.5	450	46.2	55.7	21,783
Victims/Victims' Families	10	0.0	75	20.4	21.3	204
Multiple Individual Types	2,966	9.5	720	38.5	59.0	114,200
Other	1,309	4.2	720	48.1	78.2	62,963
No One	3,540	11.3	480	28.6	52.8	101,279
Missing Data	5,907	18.8	600	38.9	71.4	230,011

Note. *N* = 31,352.

Table 4: *Frequency and Time of Activities Associated with a Given Activity Method*

	<i>N</i>	%	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Σ
Computer	10,930	34.9	480	28.0	41.6	306,008
Email/Kiosk	3,257	10.4	330	15.6	17.2	50,705
Face-to-Face	11,999	38.3	720	31.4	48.4	376,172
Mail	162	0.5	75	17.1	13.6	2,767
Office Phone/Voicemail	1,762	5.6	200	13.6	15.6	23,990
Other	3,242	10.3	720	58.6	106.8	190,096

Note. *N* = 31,352.

In terms of activity location the office was clearly the predominant place where work was completed (see Table 5). About 78% (N=24,506) of the activities were conducted in the office, averaging 21.8 minutes in duration, and constituting 533,208 minutes (8,887 hours) of correctional counselors' time. Other locations were identified in about 5% of the activities (N=1,541), with an average duration of 55 minutes and comprising a distant 84,870 minutes (1,415 hours). Work with housing units was associated with 2,122 activities (6.8%), with an average duration of 48 minutes and constituting 67,462 minutes (1,124 hours) of time. Total time for other locations included 70,680 minutes (1,178 hours) for other building at the institution, 70,233 minutes (1,171 hours) for treatment classrooms, 49,441 (824 hours) minutes for activities outside the office (e.g., training, personal leave), and 47,353 minutes (789 hours) off-grounds. Note, the duration for off-ground activities, though rare, on average was 238 minutes (4 hours). Likewise, treatment classroom activity duration was 106 minutes, just short of two hours.

Table 5: *Frequency and Time of Activities Associated with a Given Location*

	<i>N</i>	%	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Σ
Court	516	1.6	480	47.9	100.8	24,705
Housing Unit	2,122	6.8	480	31.8	36.2	67,462
Law Enforcement	25	0.1	160	18.6	31.2	466
Off-grounds	199	0.6	720	238.0	213.9	47,353
Office	24,506	78.2	480	21.8	27.3	533,208
Other Building at Institution	1,217	3.9	480	58.1	79.8	70,680
Out of Office	553	1.8	600	89.4	131.9	49,441
Treatment Classroom	660	2.1	540	106.4	65.8	70,233
Virtual Environment	13	0.0	400	101.5	103.2	1,320
Other	1,541	4.9	600	55.1	100.0	84,870

Note. *N* = 31,352.

Twenty-two specific activity types were introduced in this study. Unfortunately, participants relied heavily on “other” as it is the most common designation (*N*=7,201, 23%) and most time consuming activity record at 173,789 minutes (2,897 hours). This was followed by treatment group work at 103,588 minutes (1,727 hours), professional development at 95,380 minutes (1,590 hours), offender requests at 79,044 minutes (1,317 hours), classifications at 77,104 minutes (1,285 hours), staff leave at 75,309 minutes (1,255 hours), assessments at 56,908 minutes (948 hours), administrative work at 45,734 minutes (762 hours), time study documentation at 41,822 minutes (697 hours), release planning at 40,506 minutes (675 hours), reception work at 39,259 minutes (654 hours), institution case plans at 22,991 minutes (383 hours), ICON data entry at 22,556 minutes (377 hours), coverage work at 17,904 minutes (298 hours), security checks at 14,682 minutes (245 hours), offender checks and investigations at 9,274 minutes (155 hours), program sponsor activities at 9,096 minutes (152 hours), quality assurance work at 6,913 minutes (115 hours), special lists at 6,472 minutes (107 hours), offender work at 5,964 minutes (99 hours), sex offender work at 3,031 hours (51 hours), court reporting at

1,490 minutes (25 hours), and keep separates at 922 minutes (15 hours). In terms of average duration activities typically ranged between a quarter-to-half an hour with exception to professional development ($M=117.3$), quality assurance ($M=51.6$), staff leave ($M=209.2$), and treatment group work ($M=66.1$). In terms of reoccurrence and excluding other, offender requests were the most common ($N=4,798$, 15.3%) followed by classification ($N=2,499$, 8.0%), assessments ($N=2,213$, 7.1%), time study documentation ($N=2,114$, 6.7%), release planning ($N=2,059$, 6.6%), treatment group work ($N=1,568$, 5.0%), administrative work ($N=1,542$, 4.9%), reception work ($N=1,135$, 3.6%), ICON data entry ($N=1,102$, 3.5%), institution case plans ($N=856$, 2.7%), coverage work ($N=826$, 2.6%), professional development ($N=813$, 2.6%), security checks ($N=502$, 1.6%), staff leave ($N=360$, 1.1%), offender work ($N=345$, 1.1%), special lists ($N=287$, 0.9%), program sponsorship ($N=234$, 0.7%), sex offender work ($N=150$, 0.5%), quality assurance ($N=134$, 0.4%), court reporting ($N=63$, 0.2%), and keep separates ($N=63$, 0.2%).

In addition to the time recorded for activities, correctional counselors were also given the ability to indicate if there was adequate time and if the activity was completed. Assessments were most often noted as possessing inadequate time at 49.8%, followed by offender checks and investigations (45.3%), administrative work (43.2%), reception work (41.9%), keep separates (38.1%), quality assurance tasks (37.3%), special lists (36.2%), offender requests (35.6%), staff leave (34.7%), time study documentation (34.6%), ICON data entry (33.8%), program sponsorship tasks (32.9%), other tasks (31.6%), classification (28.9%), treatment group work (28.9%), court reporting (28.6%), offender work (28.1%), institution case plans (27.8%), release planning (27.8%), professional development (27.2%), security checks (24.1%), coverage work (19.5%), and sex offender work (18.7%). In terms of task completion reception work was the least likely to be completed in a single occurrence with 74.0% completion, followed by release planning (74.5%), court reporting (74.6%), program sponsorship tasks (77.4%), keep separates (77.8%), quality assurance (79.9%), offender checks and investigations (80.1%), special lists (83.3%), offender requests (84.5%), assessments (84.6%), administrative work (85.3%), classification (85.8%), other tasks (87.4%), institution case plans (87.6%), coverage work (88.1%), treatment group work (89.3%), sex offender work (89.3%), professional development needs (89.4%), time study documentation (91.5%), offender work (91.9%), ICON data entry (92.5%), and security checks (97.2%).

Table 6: Frequency and Time of Activities

Activity	<i>N</i>	%	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Σ	Inadequate Time (%)	Complete (%)
Administrative Work	1,542	4.9	720	29.7	48.2	45,734	43.2	85.3
Assessments	2,213	7.1	420	25.7	32.3	56,908	49.8	84.6
Classification	2,499	8.0	480	30.9	39.7	77,104	28.9	85.8
Court Reporting	63	0.2	90	23.7	19.8	1,490	28.6	74.6
Coverage Work	826	2.6	480	21.7	35.1	17,904	19.5	88.1
ICON Entries/Updates	1,102	3.5	360	20.5	26.8	22,556	33.8	92.5
Institution Case Plan	856	2.7	265	26.9	21.2	22,991	27.8	87.6
Keep Separates	63	0.2	60	14.6	11.8	922	38.1	77.8
Offender Checks/Investigations	488	1.6	145	19.0	18.1	9,274	45.3	80.1
Offender Requests	4,798	15.3	380	16.5	20.7	79,044	35.6	84.5
Offender Work	345	1.1	180	17.3	20.6	5,964	28.1	91.9
Professional Development	813	2.6	690	117.3	159.4	95,380	27.2	89.4
Program Sponsor	234	0.7	510	38.9	57.5	9,096	32.9	77.4
Quality Assurance	134	0.4	200	51.6	43.1	6,913	37.3	79.9
Reception Work	1,135	3.6	270	34.6	36.3	39,259	41.9	74.0
Release Planning	2,059	6.6	400	19.7	21.6	40,506	27.8	74.5
Security Checks	502	1.6	150	29.3	22.2	14,682	24.1	97.2
Sex Offender	150	0.5	360	20.2	33.5	3,031	18.7	89.3
Special Lists	287	0.9	210	22.6	26.1	6,472	36.2	83.3
Staff Leave	360	1.1	600	209.2	171.9	75,309	34.7	98.1
Time Study Documentation	2,114	6.7	120	19.8	16.2	41,822	34.6	91.5
Treatment Group Work	1,568	5.0	450	66.1	58.9	103,588	28.9	89.3
Other	7,201	23.0	720	24.1	40.5	173,789	31.6	87.4

Note. *N* = 31,352.

Table 7 displays data concerning nine specific forms and assessments utilized in association with a given activity. Most activities did not involve the application of an IDOC form or assessment (*N*=25,638, 81.8%). Again, other was used extensively in reference to a variety of forms and instruments not pre-identified in the study (*N*=2,183, 7.0%). Of those nine specific instruments identified, the Sexual Violence Propensity Revised (SVP) was the most commonly used (*N*=895, 2.9%), followed by institution case plans (*N*=788, 2.5%), the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry (DRAOR) instrument (*N*=713, 2.3%), custody classification assessment (*N*=673, 2.1%), Home Placement Questionnaire (HPQ) (*N*=170, 0.5%), Iowa Violence and Victimization Instrument (IVVI) (*N*=90, 0.3%), Iowa Sex Offender Risk Assessment (ISORA) and Static-99-R Combined assessment (*N*=71, 0.2%), ISORA (*N*=67, 0.2%), and Static-99 (*N*=64, 0.2%). That said, the DRAOR was the most time consuming assessment averaging 58.9 minutes (about one hour) and comprising 41,986 total minutes (700 hours) compared to the other eight instruments which averaged a half-hour or less and constituted 19,789 total minutes (330 hours) or less.

Table 7: Frequency and Time of Activities Associated with Forms and Assessments

	<i>N</i>	%	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Σ
Custody Classification Assessment	673	2.1	430	23.2	31.6	15,581
Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry (DRAOR)	713	2.3	450	58.9	47.6	41,986
Home Placement Questionnaire (HPQ)	170	0.5	170	27.2	25.6	4,624
Institution Case Plan	788	2.5	360	25.1	25.9	19,789
Iowa Sex Offender Risk Assessment (ISORA)	67	0.2	45	16.3	9.8	1,091
ISORA/Static-99-R Combined	71	0.2	65	15.1	17.0	1,073
Iowa Violence and Victimization Instrument (IVVA)	90	0.3	420	19.3	44.8	1,738
Static-99-R	64	0.2	60	19.1	12.4	1,220
Sexual Violence Propensity Revised (SVP)	895	2.9	120	13.3	11.8	11,885
Other	2,183	7.0	530	42.6	61.2	93,053
No From/Assessment Applicable to the Activity	25,638	81.8	720	29.6	54.7	757,698

Note. *N* = 31,352.

Correctional counselors rarely specified any barriers (see Table 8) beyond a shortage of time (as indicated in Table 6). Nonetheless, miscellaneous interruptions (*N*=1,975, 6.3%) and excessive caseloads (*N*=1,729, 5.5%) were the two most commonly cited barriers.

Table 8: Frequency of Barriers Associated with Activities

	<i>N</i>	%
Abandoned Task	94	0.3
Burnout	52	0.2
Client Uncooperative	92	0.3
Co-worker Difficulty	36	0.1
Cultural Misunderstanding	8	0.0
Excessive Caseload	1,729	5.5
Insufficient Training	54	0.2
Lack of Resources	105	0.3
Miscellaneous Interruptions	1,975	6.3
Paperwork	198	0.6
Technology	145	0.5
Unclear Policy	55	0.2
Unexpected Finding	133	0.4
Waiting on Others	738	2.4
Other	502	1.6
Missing Data	25,436	81.1

Note. *N* = 31,352.

Table 9 summarizes activities based on the classification of the offender. Note this applies only to individual interactions and does not include group activities. The majority of activities involving an offender concerned medium level offenders ($N=10,192$, 32.5%). Medium level facilities include CCF, FDCF, ICIW, IMCC, JBU, MPCF, and NCF. On average interactions with medium level offenders were 16.7 minutes or roughly a quarter of an hour, constituting 170,344 total minutes of the time study (2,839 hours). Minimum level offender interactions follow at 4,678 activities (14.9%) with an average duration of 18.3 minutes and constituting a total of 85,800 minutes (1,430 hours); about half the volume and half the time but with similar level of engagement. Minimum level facilities include CCFL, CRC, LUH, and NCCF. Finally, maximum level offender interactions were rarer at 758 (2.4%) with an average duration of 20.9 minutes and constituting 15,817 minutes (264 hours). Maximum level facilities include ASP and ISP. Interestingly, the percentage of activities identified as possessing inadequate time was roughly equivalent for all three groups at about 33%, with an 84% activity completion rate. These data suggest a flat rate of engagement with all offenders exist.

Table 9: *Frequency and Time of Activities Associated with an Offender*

	<i>N</i>	%	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Σ	Inadequate Time (%)	Complete (%)
Maximum	758	2.4	200	20.9	20.5	15,817	33.0	83.5
Medium	10,192	32.5	390	16.7	19.5	170,344	33.7	83.8
Minimum	4,678	14.9	240	18.3	19.0	85,800	32.9	83.8
Not Applicable to an Offender	15,724	50.2	720	43.1	70.5	677,777	34.0	87.9

Note. $N = 31,352$.

“Best 40” Prioritization Survey

The counselors who participated in the time study, along with IDOC management staff, were invited to respond to a supplemental survey to prioritize the activities that counselors perform in any given work week. One question was posed to respondents: “How should 40 hours in an average work week be spent to maximize the contribution of a correctional counselor’s role to obtain the department’s overall goal of recidivism reduction?” In practice, this can be thought of a counselor’s “best 40.” For purposes of the survey, the 22 activities were categorized by the advisory group and management staff into three areas: administrative, evidence-based programming/treatment, and security/essential-to-prison operations. The goal of the survey was to overlay what the key stakeholders believe the “best 40” activities should be versus the results of the time study and actual time spend on the activities.

Table 10 shows how the sample prioritized the activities within each category and the percentage of time that should be spent on the tasks associated with each category of activities. For the administrative category, respondents indicated that ICON entries/updates and special lists should be the highest prioritized activities. For the evidence-based programming/treatment category, classification, treatment group work, and assessments were the top-ranked activities. Among the handful of activities under security/essential-to-prison operations, offender requests were deemed the most important for counselors to complete. Finally, respondents indicated that counselors should be spending 59% of their time on evidence-based programming/treatment tasks, 24% of their time on administrative tasks, and 17% of their time on security/essential-to-prison tasks.

Table 10: Prioritization of “Best 40” Activities

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>
<u><i>Administrative</i></u>		
ICON entries/updates (generic notes, permission to correspond, transfers, funeral trip)	115	2.34
Special lists (BOP release eligibility, treatment wait lists, transfer approvals)	115	3.21
Court reporting (progress reports, BEP notification, SA completions, DOT reporting)	115	4.25
Coverage work (for CC duties)	115	4.35
Offender work (assignments, changes, payroll)	117	4.80
Sex offender registration (registrations, DRC, LOET hearing work)	118	5.70
Staff leave (sick, personal, NC)	114	6.71
Administrative work (timesheets, personnel forms, Reed Group)	114	6.82
Program sponsor (AA/NA, toastmasters, NAACP, veterans, fundraisers)	114	6.86
<u><i>Evidence-Based Programming/Treatment</i></u>		
Classification (preparation work, ICON entries, seg reviews, psych reviews, OUTS, TIP level reviews)	111	3.21
Treatment group work (preparation, facilitation, pulling/reviewing wait lists, treatment session notes, 1-on-1 interviews with offenders)	108	3.30
Assessments	111	3.31
Release planning/re-entry (HPQ, SSDI, Medicaid, driver's license, reach-in calls, transfer instance to community, transportation)	114	3.62
Institution case plan	109	3.77
Reception work (daily lists, reception reports)	111	5.86
Professional development (continued education, eLearning, staff meetings, staff training, HNT, STG, CERT)	111	6.26
Quality assurance (program fidelity, DRAOR/SVP audits)	107	6.39
<u><i>Security/Essential-to-Prison Operations</i></u>		
Offender requests (kiosks, kites, property issues, phone, visitation, detainers, special accommodations, correspondence requests, notary, information release requests, TIP applications)	114	1.68
Keep separates	110	2.63
Offender checks/investigations/discipline	108	2.69
Security checks (count, security rounds, assistance in LU)	111	3.09
Percentage of time that should be spent on administrative tasks	97	24%
Percentage of time that should be spent on EBP/treatment tasks	97	59%
Percentage of time that should be spent on security/essential-to-prison tasks	97	17%

Additional Staffing Need Estimate

The data presented in Table 6 can be utilized to create a workload formula to make staffing projections statewide or for each institution (see Table 11). For demonstration purposes, we take the number of activities in the time study multiplied by the mean to determine time needed. However, to adjust for inadequate time we take the percentage of activities noted as inadequate and multiply it by the total number of activities for a given activity type. This gives us the number of activities which were deemed as lacking adequate time by the correctional counselors for that activity type. We will generously double the mean for the number of activities deemed to have inadequate time. The need for adjustments should be evaluated by each institution and the advisory committee, collectively, to determine the appropriate time adjustment for each activity type.

Let's use the administrative work activity, as an example. The time study contained 1,542 occurrences with an average duration of 29.7 minutes, multiplying 1,542 by 29.7 equals 45,797 total minutes. Note this is very close to the actual sum of 45,734 minutes. However, we know that 43.2% of these activities were noted as having inadequate time. We want to make an adjustment for this finding. Let's first separate the number of occurrences that were adequate from those that were not by simply multiplying 1,542 by .432, which equals 666. Let's next subtract 666 from 1,542, which equals 876. In other words, we know 876 activity occurrences possessed adequate time and 29.7 minutes seems appropriate. For the other 666 occurrences, however, we need more time; meaning an adjustment to 29.7 is needed. For simplicity, we will generously double the original time so that 29.7 now becomes 59.4. Now, multiple 876 by 29.7 (26,017) and 666 by 59.4 (39,560) to get two subtotals. Finally, add these two numbers together to get the total time needed, which is 65,577 minutes or 1,093 hours. This is about 20,000 more minutes (or roughly 330 hours) over the original unadjusted figure that was constrained by limited time and resources when the time study was conducted. This process was repeated for each activity in Table 10. The original sum is included for a quick comparison and to show the increase in time projected.

Once computed, there is a time need of 1,189,536 minutes (for 4 weeks/20 business days). That translates to 19,826 hours. Note time study documentation was reduced to zero. To determine need, we must consider the number of correctional counselors and their total time available for these activities. For demonstration purposes, we will assume 117 are available (same as our sample) with 7 hours per day (7.5 hour days minus two-fifteen minute breaks). Seven hours multiplied by 60 minutes is 420 minutes. 420 minutes multiplied by 20 days is 8,400. Multiply 8,400 by 117 to get 982,800 minutes (16,380 hours). Subtract 19,826 by 16,380 to get 3,446 hours needed. Divide 3,446 by 140 to determine additional number of correctional counselors needed, which equals 25. Given two individuals did not participate in the time study, this demonstration would conclude that 23 additional correctional counselors are needed across the state. Again, this estimate is derived by generously doubling the time for all activities deemed as not possessing enough time. IDOC will use this basic structure to determine staffing needs per institution, while also incorporating the "Best 40" survey findings.

Table 11: *Demonstration of Correctional Counselor Time Need Estimates*

Activity	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	Σ	Inadequate	Time
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				Time (%)	Needed
Administrative Work	1,542	29.7	45,734	43.2	65,577
Assessments	2,213	25.7	56,908	49.8	85,196
Classification	2,499	30.9	77,104	28.9	99,529
Court Reporting	63	23.7	1,490	28.6	1,920
Coverage Work	826	21.7	17,904	19.5	21,418
ICON Entries/Updates	1,102	20.5	22,556	33.8	30,217
Institution Case Plan	856	26.9	22,991	27.8	29,429
Keep Separates	63	14.6	922	38.1	1,270
Offender Checks/Investigations	488	19.0	9,274	45.3	13,471
Offender Requests	4,798	16.5	79,044	35.6	90,849
Offender Work	345	17.3	5,964	28.1	7,647
Professional Development	813	117.3	95,380	27.2	121,288
Program Sponsor	234	38.9	9,096	32.9	10,528
Quality Assurance	134	51.6	6,913	37.3	9,494
Reception Work	1,135	34.6	39,259	41.9	55,741
Release Planning	2,059	19.7	40,506	27.8	51,831
Security Checks	502	29.3	14,682	24.1	18,254
Sex Offender	150	20.2	3,031	18.7	3,596
Special Lists	287	22.6	6,472	36.2	8,837
Staff Leave	360	209.2	75,309	34.7	101,462
Time Study Documentation	2,114	19.8	41,822	34.6	0
Treatment Group Work	1,568	66.1	103,588	28.9	133,588
Other	7,201	24.1	173,789	31.6	228,396

ADEQUACY OF TIME SURVEY

Methodology

The adequacy of time survey serves as a supplemental resource to the time study, including the opportunity for correctional counselors to more deliberately voice their time needs and concerns. The survey was constructed using a lengthier list of activities developed by the advisory committee, as well 13 items on stress and role strain, and a handful of open qualitative items for additional feedback. Each quantitative item was accompanied by a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All correctional counselors were invited to participate and provided an anonymous *SurveyMonkey* link via email. An initial email was disseminated on May 24, 2016, with follow-up email reminders sent the following two weeks. The survey was closed on June 10, 2016.

Sample

Table 12 displays demographical information on the 111 participants, a 93% response rate. IDOC facilities associated with the sample include ASP ($N=8$, 7.2%), LUH ($N=1$, 0.9%), CCF ($N=4$, 3.6%), FDCF ($N=13$, 11.7%), ICIW ($N=8$, 7.2%), IMCC ($N=13$, 11.7%), ISP ($N=5$, 4.5%), JBU ($N=2$, 1.8%), MPCF ($N=10$, 9.0%), NCF ($N=13$, 11.7%), CRC ($N=3$, 2.7%), and NCCF ($N=5$, 4.5%). Two (1.8%) selected “other” and 24 (21.6%) chose not to specify the location where they worked. A majority of correctional counselors classified their role as a caseload counselor ($N=67$, 60.4%), followed by treatment ($N=36$, 32.4%), sex offender ($N=17$, 15.3%), special needs ($N=16$, 14.4%), curriculum ($N=14$, 12.6%), reception ($N=11$, 9.9%), intake ($N=10$, 9.0%), and/or other (e.g., medical, substance abuse) ($N=9$, 8.1%). In terms of sex, about 28% ($N=31$) chose not to specify while 33% ($N=37$) identified as female and 38% ($N=43$) as male. Of the Sixty-nine respondents that provided age information, the average age was 47 with a standard deviation of about nine years. Seventy-five respondents provided information pertaining to their experience working at IDOC with an average of 16 years with a standard deviation of nine years. Seventy-four respondents provided information on experience in their current position with an average of 12 years and a standard deviation of 9 years, matching the time study.

Table 12: Respondent Demographical Information from Adequacy of Time Survey

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Institution		
Anamosa State Penitentiary (ASP)	8	7.2
Luster Heights (ASP-LUH)	1	0.9
Clarinda Correctional Facility (CCF)	4	3.6
Fort Dodge Correctional Facility (FDCF)	13	11.7
Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (ICIW)	8	7.2
Iowa Medical & Classification Center (IMCC)	13	11.7
Iowa State Penitentiary (ISP)	5	4.5
John Bennett Unit (ISP-JBU)	2	1.8
Mt. Pleasant Correctional Facility (MPCF)	10	9.0
Newtown Correctional Facility (NCF)	13	11.7
Correctional Reentry Center (NCF-CRC)	3	2.7
North Central Correctional Facility (NCCF)	5	4.5
Other	2	1.8
Missing	24	21.6
Counselor Role(s)		
Caseload	67	60.4
Curriculum	14	12.6
Intake	10	9.0
Reception	11	9.9
Sex Offender	17	15.3
Special Needs	16	14.4
Treatment	36	32.4
Other	9	8.1
Sex		
Female	37	33.3
Male	43	38.7
Missing	31	27.9
Age (<i>N</i> =69)	<i>M</i> =46.6	<i>SD</i> =8.9
Years with Department of Corrections (<i>N</i> =75)	<i>M</i> =16.1	<i>SD</i> =9.2
Years in Current Position (<i>N</i> =74)	<i>M</i> =11.9	<i>SD</i> =8.3

Note. *N* = 111.

Results

Tables 13 and 14 contain correctional counselor perceptions of adequacy of time for administrative functions. The following activities were associated with a large proportion, 30% or more, of disagreement by correctional counselors that they possessed sufficient time to complete the related tasks with satisfactory quality; Home Placement Questionnaires (HPQ) (57.6%), funeral trip preparation (54.9%), special accommodations (45.9%), correspondence reviews and approvals (44.1%), review commissary restrictions and spending (42.3%), generic notes (41.4%), scanning and copying (41.4%), attorney calls (39.6%), kiosk messages (38.7%), detainers (38.7%), marriage paperwork (37.8%), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) calls (38.7%), releases of information (37.3%), special visit requests (36.9%), family contacts (36.9%), Iowa Courts Online (36.0%), property issues (35.1%), filling out kites (35.1%), miscellaneous phone calls (35.1%), writing major/minor reports (35.0%), internet searches (32.4%), review phone number requests (32.4%), monthly reports (31.5%), and serving paperwork to offenders (31.5%).

Table 15 contains correctional counselor perceptions of adequacy of time for treatment functions. Activities in which a large proportion, 30% or more, of correctional counselors disagreed or strongly disagreed they had adequate time included session notes (45.0%), group preparation (41.4%), group individual sessions (41.4%), review intervention list for group (37.8%), victim issues (34.2%), self-help group or oversight (33.3%), program fidelity meetings (32.4%), and group facilitation (31.5%).

Tables 16 and 17 contain correctional counselor perceptions of adequacy of time for reentry and classification functions. The following activities included a large proportion, 30% or more, of correctional counselors who disagreed or strongly disagreed they possessed adequate time to complete them with satisfactory quality; Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry (DRAOR) (69.4%), Home Placement Questionnaire (53.1%), reentry services (50.4%), individual meetings (45.0%), case plans (44.1%), reach in calls (44.1%), social security disability insurance (SSDI)/ Medicaid/ driver's license (43.2%), program reviews (41.4%), classification preparation (36.9%), special lists (36.0%), contact standards (35.1%), annuals (34.2%), Board of Parole (BOP) plan preparation (34.2%), Sexual Violence Propensity (SVP) assessment (33.3%), special needs review (32.4%), classification orientation (31.5%), sex offender registration (31.5%), special population management (31.5%), and transfer instances (30.6%).

Table 18 contains correctional counselor perceptions of adequacy of time for specialized functions. A large proportion of the respondents (43% or more) indicated these activities were not applicable to their position. For those that they were applicable to, roughly half or less indicated there was inadequate time for these tasks.

Table 19 displays correctional counselor perceptions of adequacy of time for any other functions. A large proportion of respondents, 30% or more, indicated they possessed inadequate time for ongoing training (45.9%), fill-in for other areas (39.6%), peer coverage (38.7%), face time on units (35.1%), counselor meetings (34.2%), and crisis management (30.6%).

Tables 20 and 21 concern correctional counselor perceptions of occupational stress and role strain using previously validated instruments from the empirical literature. About 45% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed "when I'm at work, I often feel tense or uptight." Just under 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed "a lot of time my job makes me very frustrated or angry." Around 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed "I am usually calm and at ease

when I'm working." Almost half the respondents, about 50%, disagreed or strongly disagreed "most of the time when I'm at work, I don't feel that I have much to worry about." Forty-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed "I am usually under a lot of pressure when I'm at work." Finally, the last item on occupational stress, about 37% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed "there are a lot aspects of my job that make me upset."

In terms of role strain 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed "I know that I have divided my time properly." About a quarter of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed "I feel certain how much authority I have." Over half (57%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed "I know what my responsibilities are," yet only about 34% felt "I know what is expected of me." About a third of respondents agreed or strongly agreed "the rules that we're supposed follow never seem to be very clear." On the other hand, about 40% agreed or strongly agreed "the rules and regulations are clear enough that I know specifically what I can and cannot do on my job." Finally, nearly 40% agreed or strongly agreed "there are so many people telling us what to do here that you can never be sure who the real boss is."

Correctional counselors made numerous recommendations for correcting their workload issues. The two most obvious, and repeated, were to hire more counselors and reduce caseloads. Other proposed solutions included 1) a secretary for each facility, 2) better utilization of administrative staff (e.g., paperwork, data entry, notes, copying/scanning), 3) placement of fax machines in units where they are not currently available, 4) prohibit offenders from getting married while incarcerated, 5) hire staff specifically to perform assessments (e.g., DRAOR), 6) allow for flex time, 7) schedule fidelity meetings farther in advance, 8) allow for co-facilitation of groups, 9) hire new counselors for those facilities which experienced turnover previously (e.g., retired correctional counselors), 10) streamline the classification process and update case plans once every 6-12 months, 11) have reentry coordinator handle all offender release planning, 12) reduce caseloads for those taking on added specialized functions, 13) greater transparency in the tasks being completed by other counselors, and 14) less frequent and more relevant online training.

Table 13: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Administrative Functions

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to administrative functions.</i>							
NCIC checks	0.9	13.5	10.8	9.9	5.4	59.5	0.0
Marriage paperwork	1.8	16.2	27.9	15.3	22.5	16.2	0.0
Writing major/minor reports	3.6	27.9	26.1	23.4	11.7	6.3	0.9
Denial letters (BOP)	5.4	41.4	19.8	8.1	9.9	15.3	0.0
Home Placement Questionnaire (HPQ) verification (BOP)	4.5	17.1	13.5	28.8	28.8	5.4	1.8
Kiosk messages	6.3	39.6	15.3	19.8	18.9	0.0	0.0
Internet searches	3.6	30.6	25.2	15.3	17.1	6.3	1.8
Funeral trip preparation	2.7	16.2	18.0	29.7	25.2	8.1	0.0
Notary	5.4	26.1	18.9	9.0	8.1	32.4	0.0
Victim contact	4.5	18.9	26.1	11.7	12.6	26.1	0.0
Releases of information	6.3	29.1	25.5	21.8	15.5	1.8	0.9
Scanning/copying	4.5	35.1	17.1	18.9	22.5	1.8	0.0
Reception – run daily lists	1.8	22.5	25.2	11.7	9.0	27.9	1.8
Generic notes	8.1	38.7	10.8	20.7	20.7	0.9	0.0
Correspondence reviews/approval	4.5	27.9	18.9	26.1	18.0	4.5	0.0

Note. N = 111.

Table 14: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Administrative Functions (continued)

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to administrative functions.</i>							
Review phone number requests	1.8	6.3	14.4	10.8	21.6	41.4	3.6
Address special accommodations for offenders	0.9	20.7	24.3	28.8	17.1	4.5	3.6
Special visit requests	0.9	27.0	24.3	27.9	9.0	7.2	3.6
Offender payroll	1.8	10.8	21.6	11.7	9.9	40.5	3.6
Property issues	0.9	7.2	20.7	21.6	13.5	32.4	3.6
Detainers	0.9	17.1	24.3	23.4	15.3	14.4	4.5
Family contacts	2.7	21.6	31.5	22.5	14.4	2.7	4.5
Review commissary restrictions/spending	0.9	9.9	16.2	27.0	15.3	27.0	3.6
Monthly reports	0.9	18.0	24.3	16.2	15.3	19.8	5.4
Voicemail/email messages	2.7	38.7	24.3	18.0	11.7	0.9	3.6
Review emails	3.6	45.9	17.1	15.3	11.7	1.8	4.5
Filling out kites	0.9	21.6	22.5	18.9	16.2	13.5	6.3
Iowa Courts Online	0.9	11.7	23.4	20.7	15.3	24.3	3.6
Miscellaneous phone calls	2.7	24.3	30.6	20.7	14.4	1.8	5.4
Attorney calls	1.8	18.9	29.7	19.8	19.8	5.4	4.5
DHS calls	1.8	20.7	27.0	18.9	19.8	6.3	5.4
Substance abuse assessment calls	0.0	7.2	21.6	13.5	14.4	38.7	4.5
SOTP (Sex Offender Treatment Program) hearing calls	0.0	10.8	21.6	14.4	10.8	38.7	3.6
Serving paperwork to offenders (e.g., court papers, BOP decisions)	4.5	31.5	26.1	18.0	13.5	2.7	3.6
Entering leave requests	5.4	35.1	32.4	11.7	5.4	4.5	5.4

Note. N = 111.

Table 15: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Treatment Functions

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to treatment functions.</i>							
Group facilitation	9.0	24.3	10.8	16.2	15.3	11.7	12.6
Group preparation	5.4	14.4	13.5	22.5	18.9	11.7	13.5
Group individual sessions	3.6	14.4	12.6	18.0	23.4	15.3	12.6
Group start/closure in ICON (Iowa Corrections Offender Network)	4.5	23.4	19.8	15.3	12.6	11.7	12.6
Session notes	2.7	12.6	12.6	21.6	23.4	14.4	12.6
Review intervention list for group	2.7	14.4	18.0	20.7	17.1	14.4	12.6
Victim issues	3.6	10.8	19.8	19.8	14.4	18.9	12.6
Self-help group oversight	2.7	5.4	18.0	13.5	19.8	27.9	12.6
Program fidelity meetings	2.7	6.3	18.9	11.7	20.7	27.0	12.6

Note. N = 111.

Table 16: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Reentry/Classification Functions

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to reentry/classification functions.</i>							
Special needs review	1.8	9.0	20.7	20.7	11.7	23.4	12.6
Program reviews	2.7	13.5	20.7	27.0	14.4	9.0	12.6
Annuals	4.5	22.5	19.8	21.6	12.6	6.3	12.6
TIP (Transitional Incentive Program)	2.7	17.1	21.6	17.1	8.1	20.7	12.6
Job changes	1.8	10.8	26.1	12.6	12.6	23.4	12.6
Special lists	2.7	6.3	28.8	22.5	13.5	13.5	12.6
Reception reports	2.7	9.0	19.8	12.6	9.9	33.3	12.6
ISORA8 (Iowa Sex Offender Risk Assessment)	0.9	3.6	16.2	11.7	13.5	41.4	12.6
Static-99	0.9	3.6	14.4	11.7	12.6	44.1	12.6
DRC review	0.9	8.1	23.4	15.3	9.9	28.8	13.5
BOP (Board of Parole) enter plan/review	5.4	28.8	17.1	15.3	14.4	5.4	13.5
BOP interviews	5.4	27.9	21.6	14.4	10.8	7.2	12.6
BOP preparation of plan	6.3	24.3	16.2	18.0	16.2	4.5	14.4
BOP update IVVI	2.7	11.7	27.9	13.5	11.7	19.8	12.6
OUTS review – update ICON (Iowa Corrections Offender Network)	1.8	11.7	21.6	10.8	10.8	30.6	12.6
Custody classification assessment	7.2	36.0	17.1	13.5	9.9	3.6	12.6
SVP (Sexual Violence Propensity) assessment	8.1	27.0	17.1	21.6	11.7	1.8	12.6
Transfer instances	4.5	31.5	18.0	18.0	12.6	2.7	12.6

Note. N = 111.

Table 17: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Reentry/Classification Functions (continued)

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to reentry/classification functions.</i>							
DRAOR (Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry)	1.8	3.6	7.2	18.0	51.4	5.4	12.6
Case plans	3.6	20.7	14.4	22.5	21.6	4.5	12.6
Reentry Services	2.7	9.9	19.8	19.8	30.6	4.5	12.6
SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance), Medicaid, driver's license	0.9	4.5	15.3	18.9	24.3	22.5	13.5
Classification – orientation	2.7	16.2	19.8	14.4	17.1	16.2	13.5
Classification – seg reviews	0.9	4.5	20.7	12.6	11.7	36.9	12.6
Classification – OUTS	0.9	10.8	19.8	13.5	10.8	31.5	12.6
Classification – preparation	2.7	21.6	19.8	20.7	16.2	6.3	12.6
HPQ (Home Placement Questionnaire) confirmations	2.7	6.3	18.0	28.8	24.3	7.2	12.6
Reach in calls	0.9	8.1	20.7	18.9	25.2	13.5	12.6
Interstate compact	1.8	16.2	26.1	13.5	10.8	18.9	12.6
Keep separates	2.7	21.6	28.8	13.5	14.4	6.3	12.6
Sex offender registration	0.0	14.4	20.7	13.5	18.0	20.7	12.6
Individual meetings	3.6	20.7	16.2	22.5	22.5	1.8	12.6
Annual interstate compact reports	0.0	2.7	18.0	9.9	10.8	45.9	12.6
Contact standards	0.9	9.9	19.8	17.1	18.0	21.6	12.6
Review job evaluations	0.9	10.8	27.9	11.7	16.2	19.8	12.6
Special population management	1.8	7.2	27.9	12.6	18.9	18.0	13.5

Note. N = 111.

Table 18: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Specialized Functions

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to specialized functions.</i>							
Tracking report comments	0.0	2.7	18.0	11.7	9.9	43.2	14.4
IMCC follow-up, serve no contact	0.0	2.7	14.4	8.1	7.2	53.2	14.4
DNA, fingerprints	0.0	2.7	9.9	1.8	4.5	66.7	14.4
Specialized teams (e.g., CERT, HNT, STG)	0.9	5.4	12.6	9.9	11.7	44.1	15.3

Note. N = 111.

Table 19: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Adequacy of Time for Other Functions

Activity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	N/A (%)	Missing (%)
<i>To what extent would you agree or disagree you generally have enough time to satisfactorily complete the following activities, as they pertain to other functions.</i>							
Count	1.8	6.3	12.6	4.5	5.4	52.3	17.1
Half hour checks	0.0	0.0	9.9	6.3	9.0	57.7	17.1
Fill in for other areas	0.0	8.1	13.5	19.8	19.8	21.6	17.1
Crisis management	2.7	17.1	22.5	17.1	13.5	9.0	18.0
Peer coverage	0.9	18.0	15.3	18.0	20.7	9.9	17.1
Rounds	0.9	11.7	13.5	10.8	13.5	32.4	17.1
Face time on units	3.6	26.1	10.8	14.4	20.7	6.3	18.0
Counselor meetings	5.4	27.9	12.6	17.1	17.1	1.8	18.0
Court progress reports	1.8	22.5	18.9	14.4	14.4	9.0	18.9
Emergency responses	5.4	22.5	28.8	9.9	9.9	5.4	18.0
Searches/strips	0.0	0.9	11.7	7.2	12.6	49.5	18.0
Debrief	0.0	4.5	19.8	10.8	15.3	31.5	18.0
Trips	0.0	5.4	13.5	8.1	16.2	38.7	18.0
Investigations	0.0	5.4	19.8	10.8	13.5	32.4	18.0
Introductory Training (e.g., new employee orientation)	0.0	6.3	22.5	9.9	10.8	32.4	18.0
Ongoing Training (e.g., eLearning, continuing education)	2.7	14.4	16.2	22.5	23.4	2.7	18.0
Review of offender disciplinary report decisions	4.5	19.8	17.1	14.4	14.4	12.6	17.1
Cell moves/ unit moves	1.8	11.7	17.1	5.4	9.9	36.9	17.1
Indigent hygiene requests	2.7	14.4	17.1	13.5	6.3	28.8	17.1
Committee/ workgroup involvement (e.g., wellness)	1.8	9.9	20.7	12.6	17.1	20.7	17.1

Note. N = 111.

Table 20: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Occupational Stress

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Missing (%)
When I'm at work, I often feel tense or uptight.	19.8	25.2	16.2	16.2	3.2	18.9
A lot of time my job makes me very frustrated or angry.	18.9	19.8	20.7	16.2	4.5	19.8
I am usually calm and at ease when I'm working.	4.5	21.6	24.3	27.0	3.6	18.9
Most of the time when I'm at work, I don't feel that I have much to worry about.	5.4	9.9	17.1	36.9	11.7	18.9
I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work.	17.1	27.9	20.7	11.7	3.6	18.9
There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset.	13.5	23.4	23.4	15.3	4.5	19.8

Note. N = 111.

Table 21: Correctional Counselor Perceptions of Role Strain

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Missing (%)
I know that I have divided my time properly.	11.7	34.2	24.3	7.2	3.6	18.9
I feel certain how much authority I have.	9.9	26.1	16.2	18.9	8.1	20.7
I know what my responsibilities are.	16.2	40.5	12.6	10.8	0.9	18.9
I know exactly what is expected of me.	12.6	20.7	24.3	19.8	2.7	19.8
The rules that we're supposed to follow never seem to be very clear.	12.6	26.1	24.3	13.5	4.5	18.9
The rules and regulations are clear enough here that I know specifically what I can and cannot do on my job.	9.9	31.5	19.8	13.5	6.3	18.9
There are so many people telling us what to do here that you can never be sure who the real boss is.	21.6	18.0	23.4	12.6	5.4	18.9

Note. N = 111.

CONCLUSION

This workload study was the first to be completed with correctional counselors in adult correctional institutions. This study used methodology adapted from prior studies completed in allied justice environments. It included the 119 counselors employed by IDOC at the time of the study and had an outstanding response rate of 98.3%. Counselors who participated had worked in their positions for an average of 11 years. Data provided include activities with over 4,800 offenders at nine facilities.

Common Tasks

The study identified the most common tasks (22) of the counselors and found that only about half of the activities were spent in interaction with the incarcerated offenders. Of those, one-on-one contact with offenders comprised 38.9% of the interactions. Group work with offenders constituted about 5% of the interactions. Counselors spent 11% of their time in solitary work, including activities like data entry, documentation, and report writing. They reported having spent an additional 8% of their time in work related meetings with peers and colleagues. Unfortunately, 20% of activities documented in the study were characterized as “other” and not specified as to the type or if any interaction with another individual. This was a limitation of the current study.

Time Associated with Tasks

Group work with offenders averaged the longest duration at just at one hour for each session. However, groups only represented less than 5% of the total activities collected. Solitary activities took most of the time (5,422 hours). Data entry or documentation took about 30 minutes per event, with other activities, such as phone calls, kiosk and emails, taking about 15 minutes each time. Face-to-face interactions with offenders took the second most amount of time (3,623 hours) in which each interaction lasted about 30 minutes, on average. Office meetings were the most frequently documented location of activity, followed by offender treatment/groups and visits to housing units.

Adequate Time for Tasks

In addition to recording time by activity, the counselors indicated whether there was adequate time to complete a given activity and whether it was completed in the allotted amount of time. Counselors noted they lacked sufficient time to fully complete the activities for more than a third of those recorded during the study. Activities most often identified as lacking adequate time were assessments, administrative work, reception work activities, and quality assurance tasks. In terms of completion of tasks, reception work was the least likely to be completed in one occurrence. Others needing more than one occurrence were release planning, court reporting, and program sponsorship tasks. Assessments were also examined in terms time needed. The DRAOR was found to be the most time-consuming assessment, averaging at about an hour to complete. The other eight examined assessments averaged 30 minutes or less to complete.

Alignment with Evidenced-Based Practices

The IDOC, through the SRR initiative, has begun the work of establishing EBPs that will enhance their services and lead to recidivism reduction. This has included comprehensive training of staff and the integration of core correctional practices. This study found that alignment with EBPs is still underway, as time spent with offenders across risk levels was not reflective of significantly more time and efforts being devoted to higher risk offenders. The average time per interaction with a maximum-level offender was 20.9 minutes, with medium-level offenders receiving 16.7 minutes, and low-level offenders receiving 14.9 minutes. Additionally, group/treatment time was only found to be a little less than 5% of all offender/counselor activities. This percentage would be expected to rise as more core correctional practices continue to be implemented by IDOC.

Counselors who participated in the time study, as well as IDOC management staff, responded to a supplemental survey to prioritize activities that counselors perform in a given work week. The question was posed, “How should 40 hours in an average work week be spent to maximize the contribution of a correctional counselor’s role to obtain the department’s overall goal of recidivism reduction?” This was characterized as a counselor’s “best 40.” As previously stated, the purpose of this survey was to overlay the stakeholders’ beliefs of their “best 40” with the results of the time study and the actual time spent on activities. Survey responses showed that ICON entries and specialized lists should be the highest prioritized administrative activities. In the evidenced-based programming/treatment category, classification, treatment group work, and assessments were ranked as most important. And, in security/essential to prison operations, offender request was deemed most important. Respondents indicated that counselors should be spending 59% of their time on evidenced-based programming/treatment; 24% on administrative tasks, and the remainder of their time on security/essential to prison tasks.

Barriers to Counselor Work

Counselors identified the major barrier to their work was a shortage of time. They defined both excess caseloads and interruptions as somewhat common barriers to task completions as well. Counselors identified activities that need more time as session/group notes, planning activities for specific offenders, correspondence, and assessments. Counselors made recommendations for corrections to balance their workloads with the most frequent suggestions being to hire more counselors, reduce caseloads, and add additional clerical staff at each facility to manage paperwork and data entry.

Need for Additional Counselor Staff

The data gathered in the work study can be used to create a workload formula but this must be adjusted by each institution allowing for their specific mission and work to meet that mission. This information can then be overlaid by the findings of the “best 40” survey to determine staffing level needs for each institution.

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