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MRT-Moral Reconation Therapy®



MRT-Moral Reconation Therapy® is the premiere cognitive-behavioral program for substance abuse treatment and for criminal justice offenders. Developed in 1985 by Gregory Little, Ed.D., and Kenneth Robinson, Ed.D., more than 120 published reports have documented that MRT-treated offenders show significantly lower recidivism for periods as long as 20 years after treatment. Studies show MRT-treated offenders have rearrest and reincarceration rates 25% to 75% lower than expected.

MRT programs are used in 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 7 countries. A 1999 report by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy estimated that the combined cost benefit to taxpayers and crime victims for the MRT program results in an \$11.48 cost benefit for every dollar spent.

Correctional Counseling, Inc., has developed MRT-based programming for individuals with chronic substance abuse problems, anger management and domestic violence issues, and much more.

A Proven Concept

MRT is a cognitive-behavioral counseling program that combines education, group and individual counseling, and structured exercises designed to foster moral development in treatment-resistant clients. As long as clients' judgments about right and wrong are made from low levels of moral reasoning, counseling them, training them in job skills, and even punishing them will have little long-lasting impact on their behavior. They must be confronted with the consequences of their behavior and the effect that it has had on their family, friends and community. Poor moral reasoning is common within at-risk populations.



MRT addresses beliefs and reasoning. It is a systematic, step-by-step group counseling treatment approach for treatment-resistant clients. The program is designed to alter how clients think and make judgments about what is right and wrong. The MRT system approaches the problem of treating resistant populations as a problem of low levels of moral reasoning. In this case, "moral" does not refer to a religious concept, but rather the theoretical conceptualization of psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg. Moral reasoning represents how a person makes decisions about what he or she should or should not do in a given situation.

How We Get Results

Briefly, MRT seeks to move clients from hedonistic (pleasure vs. pain) reasoning levels to levels where concern for social rules and others becomes important. MRT research has shown that as clients complete steps moral reasoning increases in adult and juvenile offenders.

MRT systematically focuses on seven basic treatment issues:

- confrontation of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors
- assessment of current relationships
- reinforcement of positive behavior and habits
- positive identity formation
- enhancement of self-concept
- decrease in hedonism and development of frustration tolerance
- development of higher stages of moral reasoning



Who Does It Work For?

Drs. Little and Robinson initially developed MRT as the cognitive-behavioral component in a prison-based therapeutic community. Because of its remarkable success, corrections officials then tested and widely implemented the program in general inmate populations, with juvenile offenders, in parole and probation settings, in community corrections, in hospital and outpatient programs, in educational settings, and in drug courts. MRT is

found to be effective with both genders in adult and juvenile populations. MRT is used with a variety of populations and measured objective outcomes are consistent in all settings.

Benefits of MRT-based Programming

- MRT is easy to implement.
- MRT is designed and developed to target issues specific to an offender population.
- MRT is designed to address issues of a treatment resistant population.
- MRT has shown to reduce the recidivism rate of offenders by between 30% and 50% for periods up to 20 years after release.
- The program has been used effectively in different programs at many sites.
- MRT improves offender compliance to rules in an institution or while under supervision in the community.
- MRT is delivered in open-ended groups, which allows for maximizing resources.
- MRT easily meshes and blends with other types of programming including self-help groups, education, counseling and behaviorally oriented programs.
- MRT will increase offenders' moral reasoning, decrease dropout rates, increase sense of purpose and reduce antisocial thinking and behavior.
- When implemented in a variety of criminal justice settings, MRT provides a continuum of care.
- The cost of implementing MRT is highly competitive.

Training Opportunities

Correctional Counseling, Inc. conducts monthly MRT trainings in Memphis, TN, along with numerous trainings for agencies nationwide upon request. MRT training consists of a four-day, 32-hour initial course. [Click here](#) for a list of upcoming training events. Refresher courses and one-day advanced MRT training are available also.

Completion of MRT is required for individuals and agencies before being able to deliver MRT training to offender populations or to purchase client workbooks. All clients participating in MRT must have an official MRT workbook.

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