

New research into completers and non-completers of offending behavior programs

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A University of Leicester study has highlighted the importance of ensuring high-risk and impulsive offenders complete rehabilitation programmes and that some offenders require extra support to engage with the programmes.

The study by Dr Emma Palmer, a Reader in Forensic Psychology and the Course Director of the MSc in Forensic Psychology, and Lisa Humphries, who is on the DCLinPsy training course at Leicester, has been published in the Journal *Legal and Criminological Psychology*.

They looked at 299 male offenders serving a community order with the requirement to attend an offending behaviour programme in England and Wales and examined whether there were significant differences between those offenders who completed and those who did not complete an offending behaviour programme. The researchers used the measures of impulsivity, social problem solving, and criminal thinking.

The study results showed that offenders who did not complete the programme had significantly higher levels of non-planning impulsivity than those who did. The researchers also found out from their results that non-completers were at a higher risk of reconviction.

No significant differences were found between completers and non-completers for social problem solving and criminal thinking, as well as no significant differences between the two groups for age.

Dr Emma Palmer said: "It is a well-established research finding that those offenders who complete programmes have lower rates of reconviction than no treatment comparison groups and that non-completers have worse reconviction outcomes than both completers and those offenders who do not participate in programmes.

"Therefore, the finding that non-completers of offender rehabilitation programmes have higher levels of impulsivity than those offenders who complete has obvious implications for practice, suggesting that some offenders need extra support to engage with rehabilitation programmes.

"Although these programmes usually include impulsivity as a treatment target it is likely also to be beneficial to these high risk [offenders](#) to receive additional pre-programme work and/or ongoing support during the programme itself."

More information: *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/lcrp.12089/pdf

Provided by University of Leicester

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