

## Effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program: From pilot to national implementation (R-07, 1991)

This report examines the effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program in relation to:

- postrelease outcomes of offenders -- reduction of recidivism;
- selection of appropriate offenders for participation in intensive rehabilitative programming -- identification of high risk offenders; and
- pre/post-test changes made by participants on a variety of attitudinal and cognitive skills factors -- positive effects on targeted dimensions.

The effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program is assessed using a sample of offenders who participated in the program since the national implementation began in 1990.

The issue of the program's effects on recidivism is examined using postrelease follow-up data for offenders who participated in the initial Cognitive Skills Training Program pilot project. The readmission rate for participants is compared with the rate for a group of offenders who were selected for participation but did not take part in the program.

The selection of high risk offenders is addressed by examining the characteristics of offenders chosen following the national implementation of the Cognitive Skills Training Program. Finally, the program's effectiveness in producing intended changes on the attitudinal and cognitive dimensions which the program addresses is investigated using pre/post-test psychometric data which have been gathered for the national implementation sample. (See a description of the Cognitive Skills Training program in "Focusing on Successful Reintegration: Cognitive Skills Training for Offenders," Research Branch, CSC-1992, No. R-19.)

In brief, the investigation of two samples of offenders who took part in the program revealed that, in comparison to non-participants, participants were less likely to recidivate following release. There is also evidence that the program is effective in producing positive changes on the intermediate targets which are associated with recidivism.