

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

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Correctional Program Officer Perceptions of Alternative Program Delivery Methods: Emerging Research Results

CPOs view remote delivery as a good option for offenders unable to attend in-person sessions, but is not preferred.

Why we are doing this study

In May of 2017, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) launched a pilot study of Alternative Program Delivery (APD) of correctional interventions. This pilot was designed to determine if presenting correctional interventions over teleconference or videoconference is a viable option for recently released offenders living in remote communities or who do not have the means to travel to a parole office that offers the interventions they need to take.

What we are doing

Correctional Program Officers (CPOs) completed surveys following their delivery of APD interventions to assess the programs' quality. The data represents 69 completed surveys from eight different CPOs.

What we have found so far

The majority of offenders (94.2%) received their intervention through teleconference delivery, whereas the remainder received it through videoconference delivery. The problem CPOs most commonly reported was the offender not having reliable phone access and having poor connectivity on the calls, although the majority of CPOs (58%) did not encounter problems. When needed, technical support was rated 8.5/10, on average. The majority of responses (73.9%) highlighted the importance of parole officers or caseworkers in delivering program materials to the participant.

Table 1 presents CPOs' perceptions of APD in comparison to in-person delivery of interventions. The majority of CPOs reported no difference, except with respect to their ability to explain content, which was seen as worse in the APD format. Of note, when differences between the two formats were reported, CPOs were significantly more likely to rate the alternative delivery format as worse, with very few rating them as better, much better, or much worse.

When solicited for any other comments or feedback, the most common comment was that, although teleconferencing is not the best form of delivery for these programs, it is a good alternative for when in-person delivery is not feasible (65.2%).

Table 1. CPO Perceptions of APD Outcomes Compared to In-person Delivery of Interventions

	As compared to in-person delivery, how do you think the delivery format affected...				
	Much worse	Worse	No difference	Better	Much better
	%				
Offender's ability to express their thoughts and feelings	†	14.7	80.9	†	-
Working alliance	†	32.4	60.3	†	-
Your ability to explain the content	-	51.5	48.5	-	-
Offender's comprehension of content	†	26.5	69.1	†	-
Offender's ability to make links between content and their life	-	29.4	67.6	†	-
Your ability to help the offender deal with daily problems and high risk situations	†	29.4	67.6	†	-
The quality of the offender's self-management	-	44.1	54.4	†	-
Offender's motivation and engagement	†	11.9	76.1	10.4	-

†. Numbers suppressed due to frequency < 5.

What it means

CPOs generally viewed APD as a viable option when in-person delivery is not feasible. APD appears to be comparable to in-person delivery with only the minority of CPOs rating indicators as worse than in-person delivery. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement to address technology issues and more research is needed to directly assess the effectiveness of remotely delivered correctional interventions.

For more information

For questions and/or more information, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#).

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