

## **Effectiveness of a Community-Based Intervention on Criminal Thinking among Adults with Mental Illness Who Are at Risk of Recidivism**

People with mental illness or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders represent a greater proportion of probationers and parolees than the general population. They are also more likely to have their community supervision revoked and to be re-arrested. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a community-based mental health program's intervention on criminal thinking among people with mental illness. This research project involves two parts: 1) what is the level of criminal thinking that suggests risk for recidivism among people with mental illness? 2) what is the influence of the intervention on criminal thinking among people with mental illness?

The study used a mixed method approach using a one group pre-test—post-test design along with qualitative interviews. An availability sampling method was used to recruit study participants at a community mental health agency. The criminal thinking, as a dependent variable, was measured by the Texas Christian University's Criminal Thinking Scale (CTS). The program performance was assessed by re-administering the CTS after 3 months of intervention to measure changes in the clients' criminal thinking. Additionally, data collected from the interviews were used to reveal attitudes and circumstances that comprise part of the participant's criminogenic and non-criminogenic risk.

The results revealed that the majority of program participants' mean scores were higher when beginning the program. However, almost all participants' scores showed a decrease in the level of criminal thinking patterns, with a majority of the mean scores dropping in value. Qualitative data collected from the interviews also revealed the study participants' motivation to change, which reduces the risk of recidivism. The findings suggest that as part of a community-based collaborative treatment effort, the program is effective in helping reduce the risk of recidivism.

**Keywords:** community; criminal thinking; mental illness; treatment; recidivism; probationers; TCU Criminal Thinking Scales