

# **Community Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT):**

## **Overview of Published Validation Studies**

*August 2013*

In 2006, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) implemented a new instrument designed to assess juvenile offenders with regard to risk, needs, and strengths related to the same risk factors as outlined in the extant "what works" literature (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). The Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT) is heavily adapted from the validated Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment, *Back On Track!*, which has been in use throughout the country since 1998 (Barnoski, 1997; 2004). This process was similar to that of the development of the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), which is also based on the Washington model (Orbis Partners, 2000). Though the Washington State tool has been validated, it is essential for any risk assessment to be validated in every locale in which it is implemented, and to be re-validated periodically. There are two evaluations of the C-PACT validation, using Florida DJJ data, which have been published in peer-reviewed academic criminology journals. Each of these two evaluations used different samples from different years of DJJ referrals (equivalent to an adult arrest).

The first validation study was published in 2009 in the *Journal of Criminal Justice* (Baglivio, 2009). This study examined whether the C-PACT was a predictive of both male and female delinquency, and explored gender differences in the risk factors most predictive of subsequent offending. The study included 8,132 youth (30.2% female; 61.1% White) in the analysis. Results revealed youth assessed as higher risk to re-offend are in fact more likely to do so within the one-year follow-up, showing for every one unit increase in overall risk (ex. going from low to moderate risk), there is a one and a half times increase in the likelihood of offending. Overall risk to re-offend (as assessed by the C-PACT) was found to be a significant predictor of re-offending, for both male and female youth. The ability of the PACT to predict recidivism for both males and females was a critical piece of the current study. The significant prediction of a new referral for female juveniles was essential for the PACT to achieve the desired goal and to have empirical rebuttal of the notion prediction instruments are unable to predict female offending. For males and females, the relationship between social history (many of which are dynamic/changeable factors) and recidivism is stronger than that between criminal history (number and seriousness of prior offending) and recidivism. This finding illustrates the importance of rehabilitation and that re-offending likelihood is not just a function of past offending.

The second study was published in *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* in 2013 (Baglivio & Jackowski, 2013). The validity of the Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT) across gender/race/ethnicity in a juvenile sample of 15,168 youth was examined. Results demonstrate recidivism increases as PACT score increases. For the full sample, recidivism as measured by both subsequent referral/arrest and by adjudication/conviction occurred as expected. Low-risk youth re-offend at the lowest rate followed by moderate, then moderate-high, then high. These results signify that for the full sample of youth completing FDJJ probation supervision, the PACT is operating as intended. The PACT classifications hold true when measured by both official arrest and conviction. While simplistic, this analysis is perhaps the most important measure of whether the instrument is operating as intended. Findings suggest similar prediction of referral/arrest and adjudication/conviction across gender and race/ethnicity subgroups. 95% confidence intervals overlapped for all subgroups on thirteen of nineteen measures examined, indicated those items behaved identically for each gender/race/ethnicity subgroup. However, which factors predict recidivism across subgroups differ. Criminal history was the most prevalent predictor across subgroups. "Gender responsive" item inclusion measuring abusive/traumatic circumstances did not improve prediction. This study confirmed findings of the previous analysis, with a different sample of Florida youth and help illustrate the C-PACT tool equally classifies risk to re-offend across race/ethnicity and gender subgroups.

#### References:

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2003). *The Psychology of criminal conduct* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
- Barnoski, R. (1997). *Standards for improving research effectiveness in adult and juvenile justice*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Barnoski, R. (2004). *Assessing risk for re-offense: Validating the Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Baglivio, M. T. (2009). The assessment of risk to recidivate among a juvenile offending population. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37, 596-607.
- Baglivio, M. T., & Jackowski, K. (2011). Examining the validity of a juvenile offending risk assessment across gender and race/ethnicity, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 11, 26-43.
- Orbis Partners. (2000). *Youth Assessment Screening Inventory (YASI)*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Author.