

# Behaviour Management of Young People in Custody

Global & Cross Sector  
Perspectives

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Global and Cross Sector Perspectives

### ABSTRACT

Evolving a contemporary evidence based system for managing the behaviour of youth in the care of NSW's juvenile justice centres is at the heart of achieving Juvenile Justice NSW's purpose to *empower young people to fulfil their potential without offending*.

This paper details the significant challenges and shifts associated with the behaviour management of young people in custodial settings within the context of the sectors history. Compelled by the call for solutions that are concurrently rehabilitative and safety focussed, it goes on to examine the evidence base and best practice principles associated with effective contemporary behaviour management of young people across sectors and jurisdictions.

Approaches to behaviour management that have proven effective across diverse sectors and jurisdictions are explored in detail, with challenges and benefits highlighted. Common elements of success are underscored and integrated into discussion of key considerations pertinent to the design and implementation of a best practice behaviour management framework for NSW's juvenile custodial facilities. A series of brief case vignettes are included as an Appendix in order to document the lived experience of juvenile justice behaviour management reform within NSW's and across other national and international jurisdictions.

This paper highlights positivist reform as the watershed moment in the history of behaviour management this decade. Across sectors and jurisdictions, contemporary behaviour management of young people is observed as reflecting movement away from traditional operant approaches that incorporate control and disciplinary focussed punitive practices, towards positivist relationship oriented, trauma informed, multi-tiered, rehabilitative and personal development focussed methods.

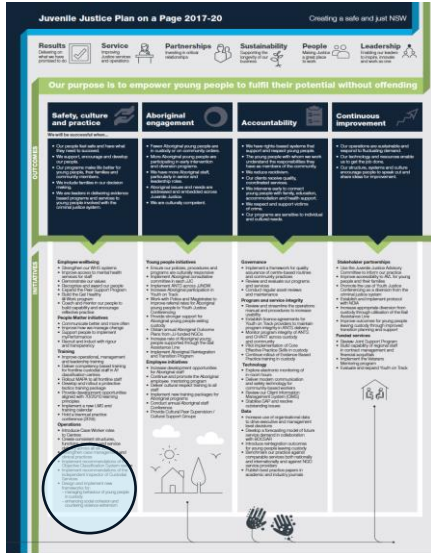
However, also highlighted are issues implicit in the culture and nature of the secure care environment that present challenges in translating knowledge of 'what works' into practice within the juvenile custodial context. This review indicates that in order to successfully enact change, strategic leadership is paramount. It concludes that strong, consistent and transparent messaging is required, and staff must be engaged in a long-term journey of comprehensive organisational culture shift.

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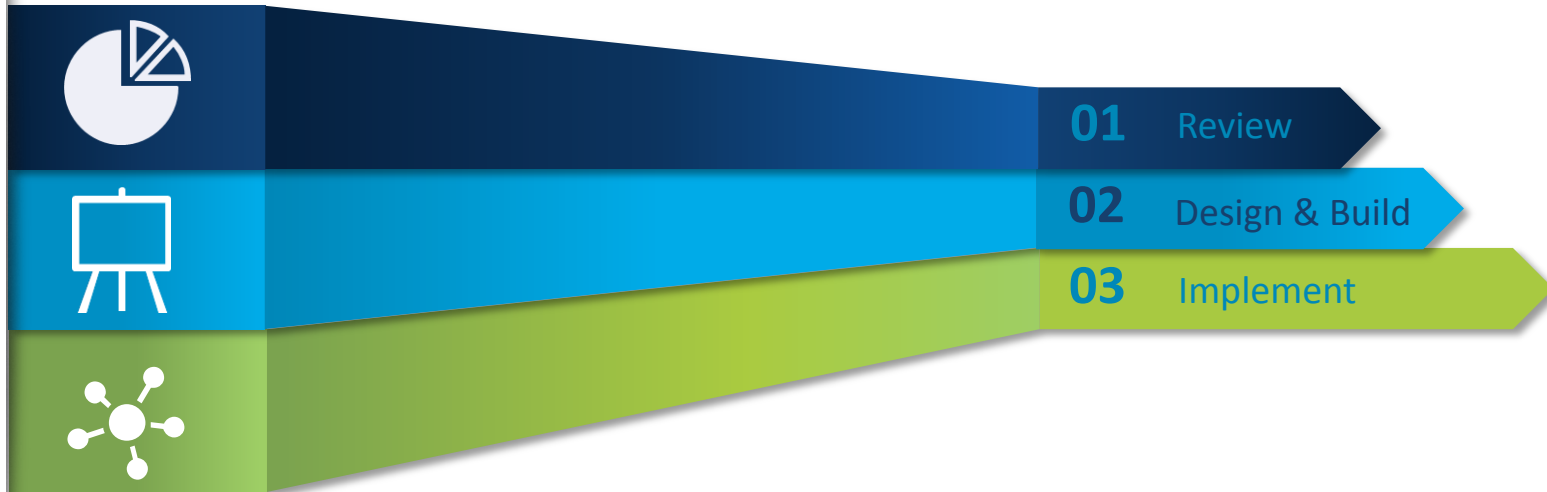
# Behaviour Management Framework



**Safety, culture and practice**

*Design & implement a new framework for managing behaviour of young people in custody*

## Overview



### Review

- Staff Feedback
- JJAC Consultations
- Literature Review
- ICSR

### Design & Build

- Framework
- Philosophy & Practice
- Environment
- Crisis Management
- Training & Change Management

### Implement

- Pilot
- Staged Roll Out
- Quality Assurance
- Evaluation



# Literature Review

## SECTORS

Education  
Disability  
Out of home care  
Youth mental  
health (secure  
care)

## JURISDICTIONS

Australasia  
Europe  
Americas

1

Identify approaches to behaviour management of young people highlighted as **current best practice**.

2

Identify **key elements** of successful behaviour management.

3

Identify critical **success factors & barriers associated** with behaviour management **reform**.





# SCOPE



Infrastructure  
Classification  
Daily Routines  
Rewards & Sanctions  
Youth Empowerment

Universal  
Individual  
Coordination  
Collaboration



PRACTICE (INTERVENTION FOCUS)

Structural  
Framework &  
Overarching  
Approach

ENVIRONMENT

CRISIS MANAGEMENT  
PROTOCOLS

CULTURE, TRAINING & CHANGE  
MANAGEMENT



Philosophy  
Culture  
Framework  
Skills



De-escalation  
Use of force &  
restraints  
Isolation &  
confinement



# METHOD

## SEARCH STRATEGY



- Bibliographic data bases
- Peer reviewed 2000+
- Google (Grey Literature)
- Case studies

## QUALITY APPRAISAL



- Hierarchical determination
- Triangulation

## STUDY SELECTION



- Meta-analyses
- Systematic reviews
- Applicable case studies

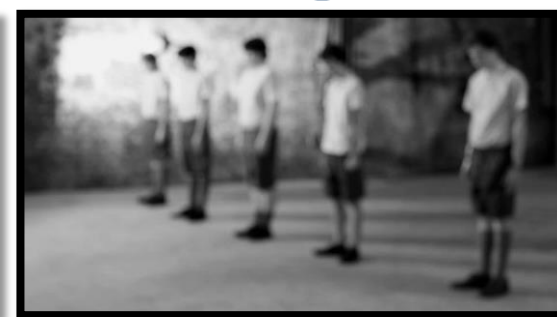
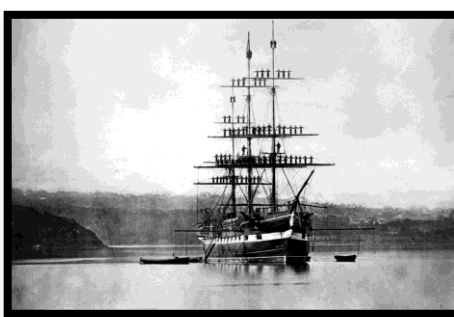
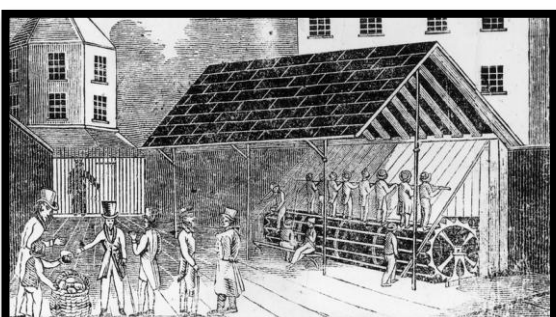
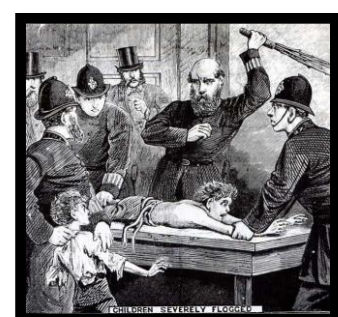
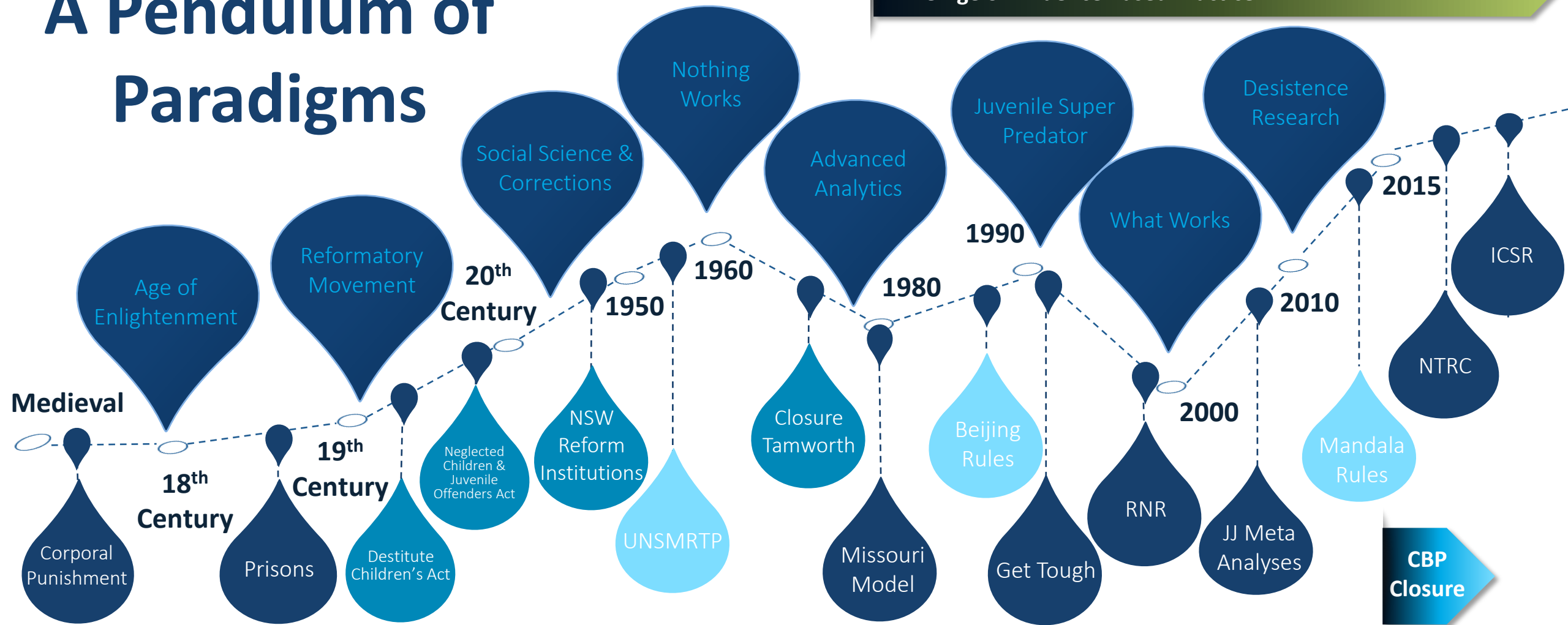
## LIMITATIONS



- No single system of appraisal
- Inter-rater reliability

# A Pendulum of Paradigms

The Age of Evidence Based Practice



ICS Report Expanded

BMR

**SAFE,  
JUST,  
US**

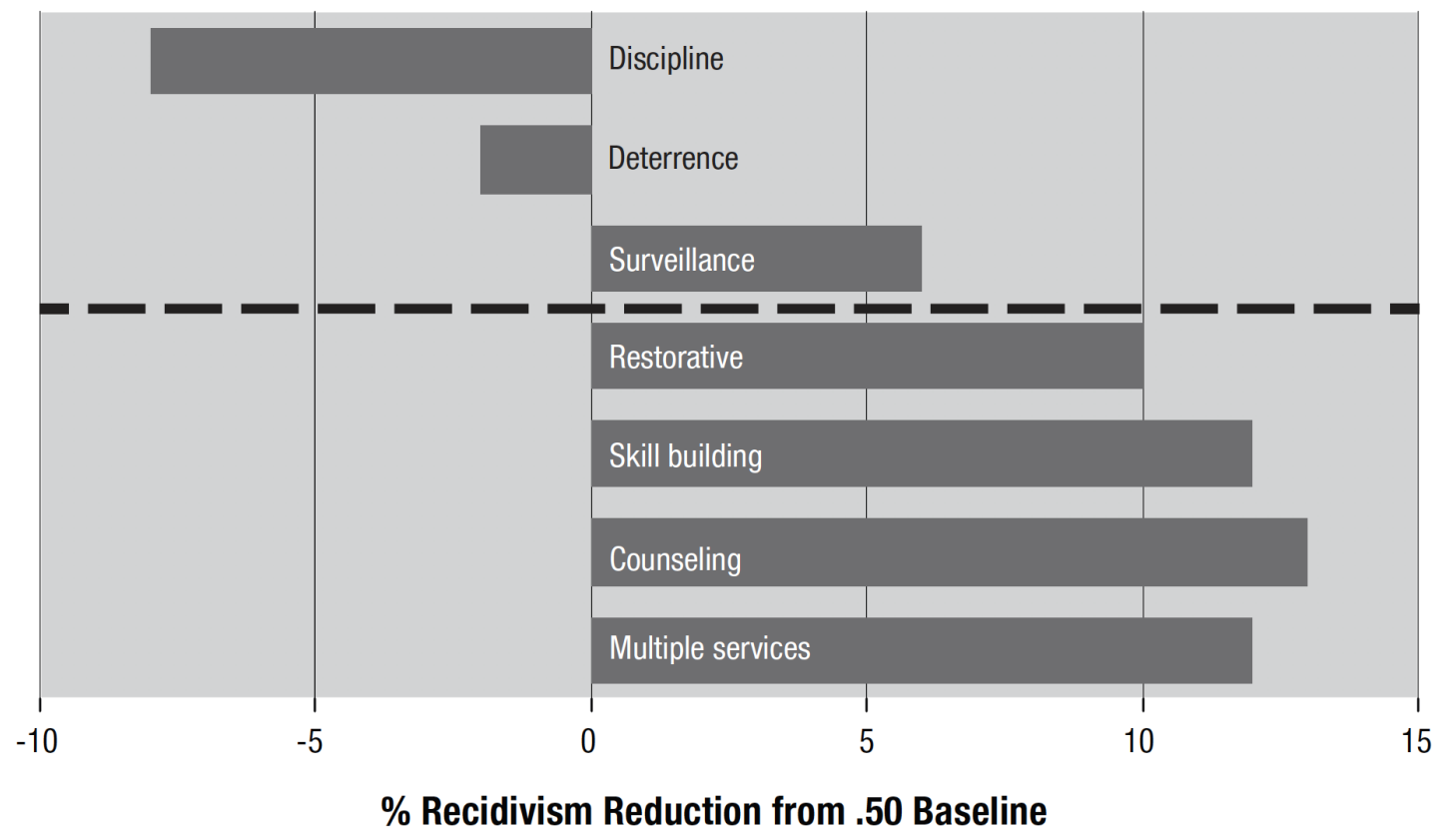
Creating a safe  
and just NSW.



# Evidence Based Practice in Juvenile Justice

Our purpose is to empower young people to fulfil their potential without offending

**Figure 1.** Mean recidivism effects for the program categories representing control and therapeutic philosophies







# Evidence Based Behaviour Management



A framework for structuring and enhancing implementation of a continuum of evidence based approaches

**Positive Behaviour Intervention & Support (PBIS)**

A practice framework informed by the neurological, cognitive and psychosocial impacts of trauma.

**Collaborative Problem Solving**

A conceptual and therapeutic framework that posits problem behaviour arises from skills deficits

**Trauma Informed Care & Practice**



Positive relationships and environment



Data informed and responsive to individual needs



Continuum of targeted approaches (step up-step down)



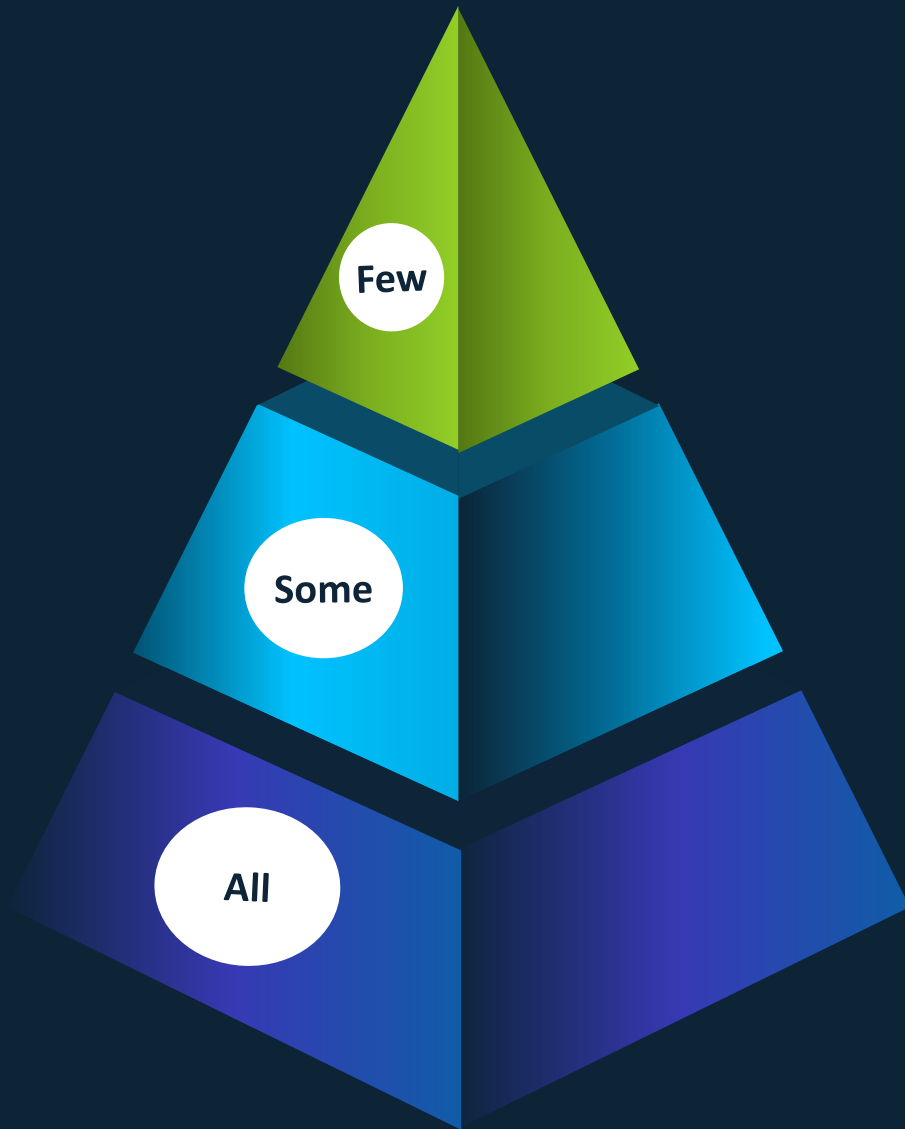
Teach and build skills



Proactive and collaborative



# Evidence Based Behaviour Management



INDIVIDUALISED



TARGETTED



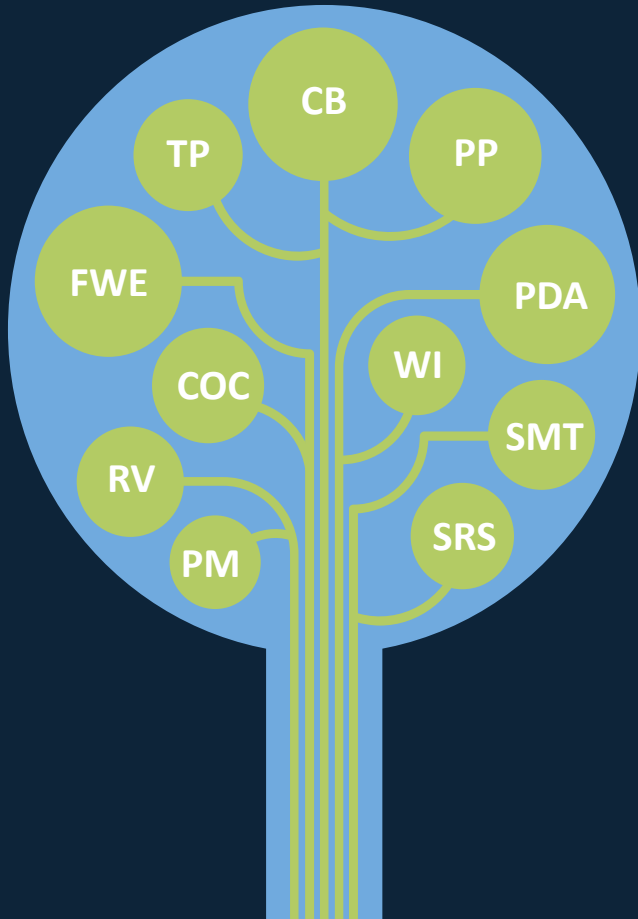
UNIVERSAL



Data  
Informed

A constant effort **focused on achieving positive behaviour**, rather than an immediate response to controlling problem behaviour.

# Elements of Success



## **Core Belief**

All young people can change problem behaviour if provided appropriate support

## **Positivist Philosophy**

Strengths focused ecology and culture that values and promotes positive relationships amongst all staff and young people.

## **Therapeutic Philosophy**

Continual effort focused on eliciting positive behaviour, rather than an immediate response to controlling problem behaviour.

## **Personal Development**

### **Approach**

Focus on improving future behaviour rather than punishing past behaviour.

## **Facility Wide Expectations**

Clear and consistent expectations for staff and young people

## **Workforce Identity**

Youth workers; not guards; every interaction an opportunity to effect change

## **Continuum of Care**

Proactive multi-tiered suite of services, strategies and interventions

## **Skilled multidisciplinary teams**

Problem behaviours are dealt with in a timely manner, based on robust assessment of the underlying causes and possible deficits, followed by tailored intervention.

## **Rule Violation**

Consequences are transparent, predictable and timely. Both staff and young people involved in inception of graduated consequences and sanctions

## **Punitive Measures**

Punishment, sanctions and controls do not deal with underlying precipitants and therefore elicit change. Disciplinary exclusion, restraint, and use of force only used only for immediate safety, are time limited and closely monitored

## **Strategic Reform Strategies**

Role embedded, team-focused, multidisciplinary and participatory. Active monitoring of quality and fidelity

Create the preconditions and reinforce a stable and safe environment, where problem behaviours are less likely to occur, and when they do occur, the underlying causes are more apparent and conducive to a constructive response, both immediately (e.g., de-escalation) and across the longer-term (e.g., teaching emotional and behavioural regulation)

# Key Considerations

Leadership

Staffing

Environment

Structured Day

Youth  
Empowerment

- Strong
- Holistic
- Consistent
- Courageous
- Model
- Long-term

- Resistance
- Valuing
- Embedding
- Expanding
- Identity (youth workers)

- Small
- Close proximity to home
- Project positive behavioural expectations

- Active & Engaged
- Comprehensive
- Staff Involved
- Minimum downtime

- Self Control
- Advocacy
- Channel Dissatisfaction
- Grievance System



Structural  
Framework &  
Overarching  
Approach

PRACTICE (INTERVENTION FOCUS)

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

CULTURE, TRAINING & CHANGE MANAGEMENT

ENVIRONMENT



**02** Design & Build

**03** Implementation





Review



Design &  
Build



Implement

## Review

- ICSR
- Consolidate out of scope areas

Staff  
Feedback

JJAC  
Consults

Lit  
Review

DRMP

JJCWs  
(Custody)

MAPA

Mindfulness

CEPS Pilot

DBIF

DRMP

EBP

JJCWs  
(Custody)

De-esc

Safety, culture  
and practice



*Design & implement a new framework for managing behaviour  
of young people in custody*